

**Rock Valley College Board of Trustees
Illinois Community College District No. 511
3301 Mulford Road, Rockford, IL, 61114
Educational Resource Center, Performing Arts Room, Room 0214
Regular Meeting
November 18, 2025, 5:15 p.m.**

MINUTES

Call to Order

The Regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of Community College District No. 511, Winnebago, Boone, DeKalb, McHenry, Ogle, and Stephenson Counties, Illinois convened in the Performing Arts Room (PAR), Room 0214, in the Educational Resource Center (ERC) on the main campus on Tuesday, November 18, 2025. Board Chair Paul Gorski called the meeting to order at 5:17 p.m.

Roll Call

Mr. Paul Gorski
Ms. Kristen Simpson
Ms. Gloria Cardenas Cudia
Student Trustee Mr. Isiah Blake

Mr. Robert (Bob) Trojan
Mr. John Nelson- arrived at 5:17 p.m.
Dr. Jenna Goldsmith

The following trustee was absent at roll call: Ms. Crystal Soltow.

Also in Attendance: Dr. Howard Spearman, President; Dr. Amanda Smith, Vice President of Academic Affairs/Chief Academic Officer; Dr. Terrica Huntley, Vice President of Human Resources; Dr. Patrick Peyer, Vice President of Student Affairs; Mr. Rick Jenks, Vice President of Operations; Dr. Hansen Stewart, Vice President of Career Technical Education and Workforce Development; Dr. Keith Barnes, Vice President of Cultural Excellence; Ms. Ann Kerwitz, Assistant to the President; Ms. Carly Huotari, Assistant to the President; Ms. Tracy Luethje, Executive Assistant to the Chief Operations Officer; Attorney Matthew Gardner, Robbins Schwartz.

Board Members Attendance by Means Other Than Physical Presence

No board members attended by means other than physical presence.

Communications and Petitions (Public Comment)

There were no communications, petitions, or public comments.

Board Chair Paul Gorski announced that he received an invitation from the Boone County Museum of History for the Funderburg House Christmas Party being held on December 13, 2025 in Belvidere, IL. All trustees are invited. Within the envelope were free Funderburg House tour passes, to be used on different dates, which were passed out to the trustees. Trustee Bob Trojan received the invitation for the Christmas Party.

Recognition of Visitors

There were no visitors to be recognized.

General Presentations

There were no general presentations.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Trustee Nelson, seconded by Trustee Trojan, to approve the minutes of the October 14, 2025, Committee of the Whole meeting and the October 28, 2025, Regular meeting. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Action Items

1. BR8329 – Claims Sheet (Check Register – October 2025)

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the claims sheet from the Ellucian check register for the period from October 1, 2025 to October 31, 2025. The total is \$6,158,253.52.

A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Simpson, to approve BR8329. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

2a. BR8330-A – Purchase Report A – FY2026 Purchases

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the items marked with an asterisk on Purchase Report A – FY2026 Purchases.

A motion was made by Trustee Simpson, seconded by Trustee Nelson, to approve Board Report 8330-A. Vice President Ellen Olson stated that no changes have been made since the November 4th Committee of the Whole meeting. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

2b. BR8330-B – Purchase Report B – FY2026 Amendments

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the items marked with an asterisk on Purchase Report B – FY2026 Amendments.

A motion was made by Trustee Nelson, seconded by Student Trustee Blake, to approve Board Report 8330-B.

Discussion ensued. Vice President Ellen Olson said Purchase Report B has been added since the November 4th Committee of the Whole meeting. Additional testing services are needed for the Downtown West Campus, so an extra amount needs to be approved by the Board. The increase requested is \$22,000.00, bringing the new total expenditure to \$62,000.00, not to exceed. Board Chair Paul Gorski asked if these services have already been completed. Vice President Ellen Olson stated that they have not. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

3. BR8331—Athletic Golf Program NJCAA Division II Request

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the Athletic Program request to change the NJCAA's Men's and Women's Golf program status to Division II, effective beginning FY2027.

It is further recommended that Rock Valley College fund the Men's and Women's Golf scholarships beginning in FY2027 and allocate a portion of approved athletic (BR #8223) scholarships for Men's and Women's Golf to cover partial tuition and fees for courses needed to earn a degree at Rock Valley College.

A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Nelson, to approve Board Report 8331.

The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

4. BR8332—Authorization to Add Bowling as a Rock Valley College Scholarship Funded Athletic Program

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that Rock Valley College fund the Men's and Women's Bowling scholarships beginning in FY2027 and allocate a portion of approved athletic (BR #8223) scholarships for the Men's and Women's Bowling to cover partial tuition and fees for courses needed to earn a degree at Rock Valley College.

A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Student Trustee Blake, to approve Board Report 8332.

Discussion ensued: Trustee Nelson said there is heavy recruiting done in the area from local high schools. RVC wants to keep our good bowlers here because we provide the best education at the best price. Approval of Board Report 8332 will help us to do that. Board Chair Paul Gorski asked for a reminder on where the funds will be taken from for the bowling scholarships. Dr. Patrick Peyer stated the funds are coming from budgeted expenses that were approved for FY2027-2030, and will be delivered through fund transfers.

The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Other Business

1. New Business

- a. Vice President Rick Jenks gave an update regarding the event that happened at the Jacobs Center for Math and Science (JCSM) on the main campus on Saturday, November 15, 2025. A concerned citizen entered the JCSM with a box that contained an unknown substance. Personnel from the building contacted the RVC police, who then contacted the Rockford Fire Department. The fire department contacted the Rockford Hazardous Material Team, who then deployed the Rockford Bomb Squad to the site. The JCSM was evacuated. Once the Bomb Squad arrived, they removed the material from the JCSM. There is an ongoing investigation to find out further details. Discussion ensued about the chemical. VP Jenks stated that the chemical can be volatile if it is not known what state it is in. VP Jenks confirmed that all proper protocols were followed by RVC staff during the incident. Board Chair Paul Gorski

was given an update by President Howard Spearman as the event was unfolding, and he in turn contacted the Board of Trustees. Dr. Spearman thanked the RVC Police Department and VP Jenks for following protocol and to college communications for handling the media. Board Chair Paul Gorski asked that a summary be given to the Board after the police investigation is completed.

- b. Dr. Spearman announced that we have the opportunity to apply for a federal grant for Artificial Intelligence (AI) dollars, which is due December 3, 2025. The grant writing will be outsourced to Region 1 Planning Council (R1PC) because of the short turnaround. Board Chair Paul Gorski gave written permission, after consulting other trustees and our attorney, because of the dollar amount requested. The deadline prevented us from providing the documents in tonight's packet, but will appear in the December Board documents. Region 1 Planning Council will receive up to \$17,500 to write the grant proposal, and we have the possibility of bringing up to \$2 million in grant funds. Trustee Trojan is confident we will receive the grant based on the AI Presentation given at the November 4th Committee of the Whole meeting.

2. Unfinished Business

- a. Board Chair Paul Gorski brought up the Board Retreat that will take place on Saturday, January 31, 2026. Trustees Cudia and Simpson offered ideas of team-building at the retreat. Board Chair Gorski will work with Dr. Spearman on developing an agenda to include these team-building exercises. Trustee Trojan stated that he would still like topics like State of the College to remain on the agenda.
- b. The Legislative Luncheon will take place on December 9, 2025. Trustees Nelson, Simpson, Cudia, Goldsmith, and Student Trustee Blake will attend the event.

Updates/Reports

1. President Update

Dr. Spearman updated trustees on various topics:

- The Veteran's Day Celebration took place on November 11, 2025 in the Atrium. Milana Herman coordinated the event and Professor David Dosier provided the keynote speech. Each branch of the military was recognized. Trustee Trojan and Dr. Barnes, who have both served in the armed forces, were present at the celebration. Rock Valley College employs sixteen veterans.
- Dr. Spearman serves on the AACC Guided Pathways Commission, which talks about ways to implement pathways at community colleges. At the meeting, the AACC shared their report "Resilient by Design," which will shape their work in the coming year.
 - The Day of Philanthropy Luncheon was held today, November 18, 2025. During the luncheon, groups were acknowledged for their work done in the community. RVC's Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) chapter won the 2025 Future Philanthropist Award. Rachel Vonderheide and the Phi Theta Kappa chapter have built a culture of giving by raising funds for national causes like suicide prevention and breast cancer, as well as for local food drives and Eagle's Nest donations. Allie Carlson accepted the award.

- Trustee Nelson confirmed that the ACCT views PTK as a partner, which was confirmed by Dr. Spearman.

2. Leadership Update

- Dr. Keith Barnes announced: 1) November is Native American Heritage month, which is a time to reflect on our nation's history and the contributions of Native American tribes. RVC observed this special month by hosting a Native American musician and storyteller from the Chippewa Nation. 2) The Center for Cultural Excellence and Belonging hosted its fall symposium on October 31, 2025 for about 75 participants. It included information and discussion about listening circles. 3) The 2025 ICCCA Conference is being held this week in East Peoria, IL, and Rock Valley College has 12 faculty and staff members who are presenting, including Dr. Mark Lanting, Dr. Carrie Gulbrandsen, and Dr. Keith Barnes.
- Dr. Patrick Peyer reported the enrollment report on behalf of Vice President Heather Snider. Fall enrollment is at 104.2% of budget and meets the stretch goal at 100% for the fall term. Winterim has strengthening momentum at 119% above budget and 111% of the stretch goal. Spring is 68% of budget and registration is still open.
 - Trustee Trojan commented that we are 4.2% ahead of last year, which is a significant number that he will share while he is in the community.

Dr. Patrick Peyer continued with updates from Student Affairs: 1) He wanted to answer a question that was brought up at the November 4th Committee of the Whole meeting, regarding Chief Yehl's Clery Report. The report referenced new federal legislation requiring the inclusion of hazing data in our annual Clery Report. The report referenced this as a hazing policy; Dr. Patrick Peyer wanted to clarify that this is not a policy. The Federal Stop Hazing Act is listed in the student handbook as the "Reporting of Hazing and Anti-Hazing Procedure," which is listed under the RVC Student Code of Conduct. 3) RVC has been designated "Best for Vets" because of the resources and services provided to military service members. Congratulations to Milana Herman, the Financial Aid department, Career Services faculty and staff for the work they do every day. 4) International Showcase will take place on Friday, November 21. 5) Coffee with Cabinet was held in the Educational Resource Center (ERC) this morning, November 18. Cabinet mingled with about 50 students, staff, and faculty. 6) RVC's Women's Soccer team won a national tournament bid to Topeka, Kansas. Unfortunately, the team lost both games. The Women's Soccer team finished their season with a record of 17-4-2.
- Dr. Terrica Huntley stated that Human Resources offered biometric screenings to benefits-eligible employees. There were 187 participants, which was a 10% increase from last year; 96 people received the flu shot. Vice President Huntley thanked RVCare and our benefits coordinator, Brie Grable, for arranging these services for our employees.
 - Trustee Goldsmith asked why there was an uptick in flu shots this year, and Dr. Huntley responded that people are being more mindful of staying well.
- Dr. Hansen Stewart: no report

- Vice President Rick Jenks stated that there are currently 29 active projects going on within the Operations division. Going forward, he will provide a quarterly update about the projects. Two projects, which are in the closeout phase, are the security system upgrade and phase one of the tuckpointing project. We currently have 12 projects that are in progress, including Downtown West, Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment (FFE) bids, landscaping bids, athletic turf fields, replacement boiler, lighting upgrades in the theater, fire alarms, elevator upgrade, and cybersecurity projects. There are 15 projects that are in the development or design stages, including CLII, the bridge repair, generator upgrades, and the ADA stage upgrade for the student center.
 - Trustee Nelson asked if the quarterly reports will be in writing. Vice President Jenks stated that he will present the information however the Board would like.
 - Board Chair Gorski requested that the quarterly report be part of the packet, that VP Jenks orally highlight three priority projects, and then list any operational concerns. Completion dates should accompany the information in this report.
- Dr. Amanda Smith: no report
- Vice President Ellen Olson provided the following updates: 1) The FY2025 audit work for the college has been completed, but the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report is waiting for the RVC's Foundation audit, which is a component of RVC's audit. The single audit, which includes grants, is complete but cannot be released since the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has not provided uniform guidance for FY2025. Vice President Ellen Olson said that the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report will be presented at the January 13, 2026 Committee of the Whole Meeting. 2) The Truth and Taxation Hearing for Levy Year 2025 will take place at the December 16th Regular Board meeting.

3. Illinois Community College Trustee Association (ICCTA) Report

Trustee John Nelson attended an ICCTA meeting from November 13-15, 2025. At the ICCTA meeting on November 14th, they had roundtable discussions with a lot of attention on Artificial Intelligence (AI). Trustee Nelson is part of the nominating committee, where they discussed bylaws and the duties of the regional chair. The next ICCTA meeting will be in March, and the speakers will address AI and cybersecurity.

4. Student Trustee Report

Student Trustee Isiah Blake provided an update on recent student activities including SGA, Friendsgiving celebrations, BSU, and Intervarsity. He also mentioned some upcoming events, including Festival of Trees. Student Trustee Blake attended a lecture on campus on November 6 about the desegregation of Rockford Public Schools.

5. Trustee Comments

- Trustee Cudia will attend the International Showcase on Friday, which includes fun events and good food.
- Board Chair Gorski thanked Trustees Simpson and Cudia for their ideas about the Board Retreat in January. Board Chair Gorski and Dr. Spearman have been communicating about end goals for enrollment and the process for how to get there.

- Trustee Goldsmith- no comment
- Trustee Trojan gave his appreciation for the Veteran's Day celebration, organized by Milana Herman. He also talked about the Northwest Regional ICCTA Meeting that was held at the airport and wondered if we have a waitlist for our aviation program. If so, can we expand the number of courses offered to meet the demand. Trustee Trojan has organized a meeting between Dr. Stewart, Dr. Spearman, and Chris McGee to see if we can join forces between SMART camp and robotics.
- Trustee Simpson gave thanks for the response regarding the event at JCSM over the weekend.
- Trustee Nelson received a lot of information at the ACCT GLI Leadership Seminar. Jim Reed, Executive Director of ICCTA, offered to come and speak at a Board retreat. This service is already paid for through our ICCTA dues.

6. RVC Foundation Report

Trustee Trojan provided an update on the RVC Foundation. The Foundation Scholarship luncheon hosted over 400 people. As of right now, they are looking for a larger event space that can host this event next year. The Foundation will provide \$900,000 in scholarship dollars this coming year. Because of the Foundation's growth, there will be a request to the Board for an additional person to join their team.

7. Personnel Report (BR8333): The Personnel Report was accepted as presented with no questions.

8. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Report- The FOIA report was accepted as presented with no questions.

Adjourn to Closed Session

At 6:41 p.m., a motion was made by Trustee Nelson, seconded by Trustee Cudia, to adjourn to closed session to discuss the following: 1) The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees, specific individuals who serve as independent contractors in a park, recreational, or educational setting per Section 2 (c) (1) and/or; 2) Collective negotiating matters between the public body and its employees or their representatives, or deliberations concerning salary schedules for one or more classes of employees per Section 2 (c) (2) and/or; 3) The purchase or lease of real property for the use of the public body per Section 2 (c) (5); and/or 4) Litigation, when an action against, affecting or on behalf of the particular public body has been filed and is pending before a court or administrative tribunal, or when the public body finds that an action is probable, or imminent, in which case the basis for the finding shall be recorded and entered into the minutes of the closed meeting per Section 2 (c) (11), all in accordance with the Illinois Open Meetings Act.

The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Reconvene Open Session

At 6:52 p.m., a motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Simpson, to adjourn the closed session. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote. No action was taken as a result of closed session.

Next Meeting

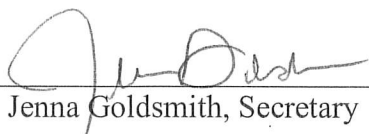
The next Committee of the Whole meeting will be held on December 2, 2025, 5:15 p.m. The meeting will be held in the Performing Arts Room (PAR, Room 0214) located in the Educational Resources Center (ERC) on the main campus.

The next Regular Meeting will be held on December 16, 2025, 5:15 p.m. The meeting will be held in the Performing Arts Room (PAR, Room 0214) located in the Educational Resources Center (ERC) on the main campus.

Adjournment

At 6:55 p.m., a motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Nelson, to adjourn the Regular meeting. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Submitted by Carly Huotari


Dr. Jenna Goldsmith, Secretary


Paul Gorski, Board Chair