Rock Valley College

Community College District No. 511
3301 N. Mulford Road, Rockford, IL 61114

BOARD OF TRUSTEES COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
5:20 p.m. Tuesday, October 6, 2026

Call to Order

The Rock Valley College (RVC) Board of Trustees Committee of the Whole meeting convened on Tuesday, October 6, 2026, in the Performing Arts Room (PAR, Room 0214) in the Educational Resource Center (ERC). Board Chair Paul Gorski called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

Roll Call

The following members of the Board of Trustees were present at roll call:

Mr. Paul Gorski	Ms. Kristen Simpson
Mr. Robert 'Bob' Trojan	Ms. Terri Knight
Ms. Gloria Cardenas Cudia	Ms. Sarah Ortiz Espinoza, Student Trustee

The following trustees were absent from roll call: Mr. John Nelson and Ms. Crystal Soltow.

Also present: Dr. Howard J. Spearman, President; Dr. Amanda Smith, Vice President of Academic Affairs; Dr. Keith Barnes, Vice President of Cultural Excellence and Belonging; Dr. Patrick Peyer, Vice President of Student Affairs; Ms. Heather Snider, Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness and Communications; Dr. Terrica Huntley, Vice President of Human Resources; Ms. Saba Jaffery, Vice President of Operations; Ms. Ellen Olson, Vice President of Finance; Ms. Ann Kerwitz, Assistant to the President; Ms. Carly Diciolla, Assistant to the President; Attorney Joseph Perkoski, Robbins Schwartz.

Communications and Petitions

Chair Paul Gorski received mail from the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) regarding deadlines and upcoming events.

Ms. Erica Reed spoke about the need for Rock Valley College (RVC) to implement more domestic violence awareness events on campus, as well as in the curriculum.

Recognition of Visitors

There were no visitors.

Review of Minutes

There were no comments, questions, or revisions on the minutes from the September 8, 2026, Board of Trustees Committee of the Whole meeting.

General Presentations

There were no general presentations.

Teaching, Learning & Communications Liaison Appointment

Chair Gorski appointed Student Trustee Sarah Ortiz Espinoza as the new Teaching, Learning, and Communications Board Liaison.

1. **Human Services A.A.S. Degree (#5300)**

   Dr. Amanda Smith presented the Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.) in Human Services degree. The program was designed with advisory committees, in which community partners participated. The rollout of the degree will launch in Fall 2027, after approval by the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), Higher Learning Commission (HLC), and Illinois Community College Board (ICCB). The classes for the A.A.S. will be offered at the RVC Downtown West facility.

2. **FY2027 Enrollment Update**

   Vice President Heather Snider presented the enrollment update: enrollment is flat compared to Fall 2025, and 1% behind for the total year. At the November 2, 2026 Committee of the Whole (CotW) meeting, Ms. Snider will present the Student Profile Report and the 14th Day Census Enrollment Data Brief that is submitted to the Illinois Community College Board. Discussion ensued regarding the budget goal of 115%.

3. **Early College Report**

   Dr. Cindi Schaefer Tobin, dean of early college, presented an update on Early College for 2025-2026. Districts and private schools determine their participation in Early College at RVC. Dr. Tobin meets twice a year with each participating school district to discuss Early College offerings and feedback. Running Start, Dual Credit, and Senior Semester are the different programs that are housed in Early College. There are also special cohorts (i.e. CNC, welding) which meet off-campus, where students earn credit for high school and RVC at the same time. The dual credit courses are offered in the spring, so enrollment may grow once the spring semester begins. Summer Manufacturing and Readiness Technology (SMART) camp has grown since it was first offered in 2023. Discussion ensued. Dr. Tobin confirmed that RVC assigned student identification numbers to SMART camp attendees so that their data can be tracked from year to year.

4. **Strategic Plan Scorecard**

   Vice President Heather Snider reminded trustees that FY25 outcomes were shared at the February 2026 State of the College. FY26 outcomes will be shared in the 2027 State of the College recording, which will be released in January 2027. RVC experienced some wins in credit hour enrollment, transfer grade point average (GPA), and outcome measures. Some of the alert categories show equity gaps, especially with African American students. The non-credit revenue is informing the metrics on how these programs will be measured in the future. Discussion ensued regarding non-credit enrollment goals and how they will be re-evaluated by leadership. Student success outcome measures will be shared along with the Strategic Plan Refresh. Chair Gorski asked Vice President Snider to research two items: the percentage of students that are graduating high school and not attending RVC, and the percentage of high school students who don't attend post-secondary education.

5. *Informational Only

a. FY2027 Adult Learner (Ages 25-45) Enrollment - Vice President Snider mentioned that course and program capacities were added to the report this month.

Finance Discussion: Board Liaison Trustee Cardenas Cudia

1. Purchase Reports

Ms. Ellen Olson, vice president of finance, presented the purchase reports.

Purchase Report A – FY2027 Amendments

A. Fire tower – (DCEO and ICCB Grants – Fire Science)

1.	**City of Loves Park**	**Loves Park, IL**	**$ 300,000.00*(1)**
			Not to Exceed

Action: none

B. Contractual Service for Radios – (Tort Fund – Other Contractual Services – Public Safety)

2.	**Motorola Solutions**	**Schaumburg, IL**	**$ 56,127.20*(2)**

Action: none

C. System Installation – (Remodeling – Security System Upgrades)

3.	**Schneider Electric**	**Rockford, IL**	**$ 703,311.40*(3)**
			Not to Exceed

Action: none

2. Levy Year 2026 Estimated Taxes Required and Setting Hearing Date for Truth in Taxation

Ms. Olson presented the 2026 Tax Levy and Setting a Date for the Truth in Taxation Hearing. In 2024, there was an amendment added to the notice requirements for the Illinois Truth and Taxation Law. Taxing districts must post website notice for a period of not less than 30 consecutive days. This law also requires notice to be published in the newspaper for not more than 14 days and not less than 7 days prior to the date of the public hearing. The public hearing will take place on December 15, 2026 to accommodate the posting requirements. The proposed tax levy amount is expected to increase $2,384,537 or 8.04% for the property tax extension. The key driver of the increase is Equalized Assessed Value (EAV).

VP Olson mentioned that RVC is eligible for a special tax levy, which would be an additional $493,471 in property tax revenue. Discussion ensued regarding the special tax levy and the process, which would include passing a resolution and publishing the resolution in the newspaper. From that point, the public would have 30 days to challenge the tax. If petitions are signed by 10% of the district's registered voters, the levy would be frozen and would go to referendum. If the proposition passes, the special levy funds would be applied to the Operations and Education funds. The special levy discussion will take place at the October 20, 2026 Regular Board of Trustees meeting.

3. Cash and Investment Report

Ms. Olson presented the Cash and Investment Report through September 28, 2026. Operating cash and investments increased from $7.8 million on August 31, 2026 to $118.9 million. The percent of operating cash and investments is 109.95%. The working cash fund was flat, as there has been no activity as of September 28. Capital funds increased from $54.32 million to $55.43 million due to the receipt of property taxes.

Operations Discussion: Board Liaison Trustee Trojan

1. Americans with Disability Act (ADA) Transition and Prioritization Plan - Dr. Keith Barnes: In 2023, student and community surveys were conducted, and 49 recommendations were made. The ADA Transition and Prioritization Plan includes improvements that were made as of Summer 2026, and provides a guide for ongoing transition efforts. RVC has completed or made significant progress in 16 of the 42 categories identified in the plan, including closed captioning and sign language interpreters.

2. Athletic Fields Change Order - Vice President Saba Jaffery: There are a number of change orders for baseball/softball field site prep activities. The report also shows the refund of unused contingency of about $10,900. Only a few change orders remain and all work should be finished by the end of November.

3. Downtown West Change Order/Punch List Update - Vice President Saba Jaffery: Change orders will continue for Downtown West. As of October 1, we are at 72% closure rate on the overall punch list items. Ms. Jaffery confirmed that RVC will stay within the $1 million contingency that Mr. Rick Jenks committed to.

4. Personnel Report - no questions.

5. Rock Valley College Events Calendar - Dr. Huntley discussed key calendar events.

New Business/Unfinished Business

Unfinished Business

Dr. Spearman expressed his thanks to the campus for their commitment at all of the events that were hosted across our different campus locations during the week of September 22.

New Business

a. Discussion to Change the Date of the November Committee of the Whole Meeting There was a consensus to move the meeting from Wednesday, November 4, 2026 to Monday, November 2, 2026. The meeting will be held in the Hennig Engagement Center (HEC), in the Downtown Learning Center (DLC) on the Downtown West campus.

Next Regular Board of Trustees Meeting

The next Regular Board of Trustees Meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 20, 2026, 5:15 p.m. The meeting will be held at the Advanced Technology Center (ATC), Bob and Norma Trojan Room #1300, 1400 Big Thunder Boulevard, Belvidere, IL 61008.

Next Committee of the Whole Meeting

The next Committee of the Whole Meeting will be held on Monday, November 2, 2026, at 5:15 p.m. The meeting will be held in the Hennig Engagement Center (HEC), Rooms 208 and 212, in the Downtown Learning Center (DLC) on the Downtown West campus, located at 315 S. Winnebago Street, Rockford, IL

At 6:54 p.m., Trustee Cardenas Cudia made a motion, seconded by Trustee Knight, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Submitted by: Carly A. Diciolla

~~Ms. Kristen Simpson, Secretary~~
Secretary Pro Temp
Robert Trojan

~~Paul Gorski, Board Chairman~~
Vice Chair
Kristen Simpson