

Rock Valley College
Community College District No. 511
3301 N. Mulford Road, Rockford, IL 61114
BOARD OF TRUSTEES COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
5:15 p.m. Tuesday, July 8, 2025
MINUTES

Call to Order

The Rock Valley College (RVC) Board of Trustees Committee of the Whole meeting convened on Tuesday, July 8, 2025, in the Performing Arts Room (PAR, Room 0214) in the Educational Resource Center (ERC). The meeting was called to order at 5:15 p.m. by Chairman Paul Gorski.

Roll Call

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

Mr. Paul Gorski	Mr. Robert Trojan
Dr. Jenna Goldsmith	Mr. John Nelson
Ms. Crystal Soltow	Mr. Isiah Blake, Student Trustee

The following Trustees were absent at roll call: Ms. Gloria Cardenas Cudia and Ms. Kristen Simpson.

Also present: Dr. Howard J. Spearman, President; Dr. Keith Barnes, Vice President of Cultural Excellence; Dr. Patrick Peyer, Vice President of Student Affairs; Dr. Terrica Huntley, Vice President of Human Resources; Ms. Heather Snider, Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness and Communications; Dr. Hansen Stewart, Vice President of Career and Technical Education and Workforce Development; Mr. Rick Jenks, Vice President of Operations; Dr. Amanda Smith, Vice President of Academic Affairs; Ms. Ellen Olson, Vice President of Finance; Ms. Ann Kerwitz, Assistant to the President; Ms. Carly Huotari, Assistant to the President, Ms. Tracy Luethje, Executive Assistant to the Vice President of Operations, Attorney Matthew J. Gardner, Robbins Schwartz.

Board Member Attendance by Means Other than Physical Presence

There were no Board Members attending by any other means.

Communications and Petitions

There were no public comments, communications, or petitions to be recognized.

Recognition of Visitors

There were no visitors to be recognized.

Review of Minutes

Trustee Nelson stated that he felt the minutes from June 10, 2025, were lacking some important points. He will put the information in writing and send it to the President's office.

General Presentations

There were no general presentations. However, Dr. Spearman, president, introduced and welcomed Ms. Carly Huotari, who will be joining the team in the President's office as Assistant to the President. Dr. Spearman stated that Carly has a K-12 background, and most recently, she served as a part-time instructor for the Adult Education English as a Second Language (ESL) program at RVC. Dr. Spearman said she will replace Araceli Ivera, who has decided to attend RVC as a student in the nursing program.

Teaching, Learning & Communications Discussion: Board Liaison Trustee Goldsmith

1. FY2025 Enrollment Update

Ms. Heather Snider, vice president of institutional effectiveness and communications, presented the FY2026 Enrollment Update. Since the meeting packet was released, Fall is 5% ahead of FY25, accounting for 80% of the budget and 88% of the stretch goal. Ms. Snider stated that RVC's year-to-date performance for the entire fiscal year is 7% ahead of last year, with 86% of the budget and 82% of the stretch goal achieved.

2. Human Services Generalist Certificate

Dr. Amanda Smith, vice president of academic affairs, presented the Human Services Generalist Certificate. Dr. Smith explained that the Human Services Generalist Certificate is designed to prepare students to become compassionate, skilled, and culturally competent professionals who positively impact the well-being of those served. The courses will cover human resource theory, group processes, families and children, ethical and legal issues, addictions, and crisis intervention. The Human Services program is proposed to address the need for increased social work and human services in the region. Dr. Smith provided labor market data and program objectives along with the courses needed to complete the Human Services Generalist Certificate. Dr. Smith explained that this certificate is the first of a series of stackable certificates that will lead to an Associate of Arts degree in Science and Human Services, as well as a Bachelor's degree. Discussion ensued.

3. Studer Education Professional Development Partnership

Dr. Smith explained that RVC has been working with Studer Education on the proposal for continued work and noted that in the version presented at tonight's meeting, two board retreats were added for continued collaboration and alignment with the board with higher levels of accountability. Board Chair Gorski stated that he didn't specifically recall asking for board retreats, but noted that it is always a good idea. He also wanted to inform the fellow trustees that Studer Education offers three basic services: coaching, training, and strategic planning assistance. Board Chair Gorski added that, according to the Cabinet survey and discussions with Dr. Spearman, the three services were highly regarded. Board Chair Gorski stated that the Studer Education agreement will be on the agenda at the July 22, 2025, Regular Board meeting for a final vote on a two-year contract with one-year extensions.

Trustee Trojan asked if the only additions to the agreement were the two board retreats, and Dr. Spearman stated that there were some changes with some of Studer's language. Still, overall, yes, everything is the same except for the added board retreats. He explained that if RVC moves forward with Studer Education, the board can decide whether to take advantage of the retreats. Trustee Trojan would like to know what Studer Education has done to effect a change at RVC. Discussion ensued.

4. Strategic Plan Goals Update: Implement Culture Survey Action Steps

Ms. Snider explained that the Employee Culture Survey was administered to faculty and staff in Fall 2021 and Fall 2023. Items are aligned with RVC's Strategic Plan Pillars III (Exceptional Training Opportunities) and IV (Cultural Excellence), and are used to track progress toward scorecard targets. Every category showed improvement from Fall 2021 to Fall 2023; however, scores on professional development and communications remained below a 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. Ms. Snider described the actions implemented. A popular action taken was holding Cabinet meetings at various RVC locations and having lunch with the staff and faculty. Another successful action has been for the Office of the President to send Board Meeting Recaps and Leadership Updates to the campus community. Ms. Snider provided further information, highlighting both the successes and the next steps to be taken to determine whether the action steps related to communications have improved the scores.

5. Kishwaukee Education Consortium Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Dr. Hansen Stewart, vice president of career technical education and workforce development, presented the 2025-2027 Medical Technician Memorandum of Understanding between Kishwaukee Education Consortium, OSF St. Anthony Medical Center Northern Region, and RVC. Dr. Stewart explained that this Dual Articulated Credit initiative is designed to provide qualified high school students the opportunity to enroll in an EMT dual credit class at the Kishwaukee Education Consortium, which will lead to advanced standing for certificate and degree opportunities. This initiative facilitates students' transition from secondary coursework into RVC.

OSF St. Anthony Medical Center Northern Region will provide a dual credit instructor who is qualified to deliver dual credit instruction in compliance with the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), and the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). The Kishwaukee Education Consortium will also provide support to ensure the delivery of quality instruction. Discussion ensued.

6. and 7. Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grant Subaward Agreement: Highland Community College and McHenry County College

Ms. Snider stated that RVC was awarded a Strengthening Community Colleges (SCC) grant of \$5,585,017 for a period from May 1, 2024, to April 30, 2028. The purpose of the SCC Grant program is to support community colleges in developing workforce training programs that meet local and regional labor market demands by enhancing collaboration between community colleges and employers.

RVC applied for the grant as a consortium with advanced manufacturing programs offered by RVC, Highland Community College, and McHenry County College. RVC can be reimbursed up to \$1,060,899 for the expenses incurred from May 1, 2024, to April 30, 2028, for the Highland Community College SCC Training Grant subaward agreement, and \$1,061,488 for the expenses incurred for the McHenry County College SCC Training Grant subaward agreement from May 1, 2024, through April 30, 2028. Discussion ensued.

8. *Informational Only / Land Acknowledgement

Rock Valley College is committed to creating an environment where everyone is empowered to contribute to the organization's success. The Administration at RVC requests that a formal statement be issued recognizing and respecting Indigenous peoples as the traditional stewards of the land on which an institution, event, or activity takes place. It acknowledges the historical and ongoing relationships between Indigenous communities and their ancestral territories. The decision to read the statement at an event or activity will be at the discretion of the host.

Finance Discussion: Board Liaison Trustee Cardenas Cudia

1. Purchase Reports

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

Purchase Report A – FY2025 Amendments

A. Roof Repairs – (Maintenance Services Buildings – Plant Operations and Maintenance)

1.	BP Roofing Solutions	Loves Park, IL	\$ 7,100.00*(1)
			Not to Exceed

Purchase Report B – FY2026 Amendments

A. Software – (Academy for Teaching and Learning Excellence (ATLE) – Instructional Software)

1.	Instructure, Inc.	Salt Lake City, UT	\$ 6,748.20*(1)
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B. Library Databases – (Publications and Subscriptions – Library)

2.	NILRC	Buffalo Grove, IL	\$ 2,000.00*(2)
			Not to Exceed

Purchase Report C – FY2026 Purchases

A. Minivans – (Capital Service Equipment – Fleet Replacement)

1.	Bob Ridings Fleet Sales, Inc.	Taylorville, IL	\$ 134,094.00*(1)
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B. Fire Alarm Upgrade – (Other Capital Outlay – PHS Fire Alarm Upgrade)

2.	P&H Electric Corp.	Stillman Valley, IL	\$ 577,500.00*(2)
			Not to Exceed
	Hartwig Mechanical, LLC.	Rockford, IL	\$ 660,358.00
	The Morse Group	Beloit, WI	\$ 663,432.00
	Kelso-Burnett	Rockford, IL	\$ 792,000.00

C. New Utility Service – (Other Capital Outlay – Downtown West Project)

3.	City of Rockford	Rockford, IL	\$ 26,132.40*(3)
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Chairman Gorski would like Vice President Jenks to verify and determine when the sewer invoice will be approved and sent to RVC, so that payment can be planned accordingly.

2. Cash and Investment Report

Vice President Olson presented the Cash and Investment Report through June 27, 2025, and stated that a revised report would be presented at the Regular Board Meeting on July 22, 2025, covering the complete month.

Total operating cash is \$38,227,541. Total operating cash and investments are \$105,690,572. The operating cash and investments have changed by \$1,956,795 since May 31, 2025. Total capital funds are \$79,384,989. Since May 31, 2025, the change in capital funds has been \$5,766,565. Ms. Olson stated that the total operating cash and investment funds were 103.91% of the FY2025 operating budget.

Operations Discussion: Board Liaison Trustee Trojan

1. Personnel Report

Rick Jenks, vice president of operations, reviewed the July 2025 Personnel Report, which included two appointments and four placeholders. There were no departures; however, the Board will receive a red-lined version at the Regular Board meeting on July 22, 2025, following the resignation of Dean Joseph Agbeko.

Chairman Gorski stated that he wanted to align the Personnel policy (3:10.090) and the Job Posting and Hiring Policy (3:20.010). Robert's Rules suggests that boards don't vote on overall reports because they would be voting on every single item in the report (ex, name, title, date, etc.). In the Board Policy Job Posting and Hiring, it states that the President shall have the authority to approve new hires, and to assign employment start dates. Therefore, Chairman Gorski would like to remove the sentence saying: "The Board shall approve the Personnel Report at each Regular Board meeting via a board report." Chairman Gorski stated that the board's role is to hire the president, attorneys, and auditors for the College.

2. Downtown West Construction Budget Update

Vice President Jenks stated that the Downtown West construction project was on schedule and discussed RVC's progress, including the project's cost. Mr. Jenks noted that he will bring a budget update to the Board on a regular, quarterly basis. Discussion ensued.

3. Change Order Update

Vice President Jenks provided an update on change orders. The first change order was for the Health Science Center for three change orders in the amount of \$505.00. The second change order was a credit coming back to RVC in the amount of <\$5,935.90>, this closed out the work on the Karl J. Jacobs Center for Science and Math (JCSM) new generator installation. The third change order was for closing out the Power Shed installation, and the fourth change order was for the security upgrade for \$2,822.29.

5. Rock Valley College Events Calendar

Vice President Jenks reviewed the RVC Events Calendar and highlighted the end-of-the-week SMART Camp celebration, scheduled to take place at the Advanced Technology Center (ATC) on July 11, 2025, and the Robotics competition, set to occur in the Physical Education Center (PEC) on July 26, 2025.

New Business/Unfinished Business

1. New Business:

Vice President Olson stated that the College received two grants up front and that RVC would need to return the money to the State of Illinois. Ms. Olson stated that the first grant to be refunded was the CTE Culinary grant for \$500,000, and the second grant to be refunded to the State of Illinois was the CTE Enrichment grant for \$359,000. Ms. Olson explained that the CTE Enrichment grant was used for the ATC SMART Camp. The College had multiple sources to pay for the SMART Camp, but was unable to utilize all of the funds before the end of the fiscal year. Discussion ensued.

2. Unfinished Business:

Dr. Spearman stated that Ms. Olson would provide a bond update, and then Mr. Jenks would speak about the tuck pointing going on at the main campus.

Ms. Olson stated that the bond sale was complete. Ms. Olson stated that on July 7, 2025, RVC received 7 bids, with a difference of 14 basis points, or 0.14%, between the lowest and highest bid. Ms. Olson stated that the estimated actual interest cost was projected at 3.51%, and the actual rate was 3.0%, resulting in a reduction in debt service obligations of \$1,132,000. This will save taxpayers money. Ms. Olson stated that RVC's last debt service payment will be on January 1, 2033, stating that RVC had a successful bond sale. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Jenks stated that in May 2025, Harris Masonry was approved to provide RVC with tuckpointing around the campus. Mr. Jenks stated that when RVC went to bid, there was a concern about the Stenstrom Student Center (SSC) bridge, and he had requested a 20% contingency due to the concerns with the SSC bridge. Mr. Jenks stated that one of the turrets on the bridge was failing and that the bridge had to be briefly closed to foot traffic. Mr. Jenks was appearing before the Board to discuss the action they wanted to take regarding the SSC bridge repair. Discussion ensued.

Adjourn to Closed Session

At 6:57 p.m., Trustee Nelson made a motion, seconded by Trustee Trojan, to adjourn to closed session to discuss: 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) The purchase or lease of real property for the use of the public body per Section 2 (c) (5), all in accordance with the Illinois Open meetings Act.

The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Reconvene Open Session

At 8:01 p.m., a motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Nelson, to adjourn the closed session and return to open session. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote. No action was taken as a result of the closed session.

Next Regular Board of Trustees Meeting

The next Regular Board of Trustees Meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 22, 2025, at 5:15 p.m., in the Performing Arts Room (PAR, Room 0214) of the Educational Resource Center (ERC) on the main campus.


Next Committee of the Whole Meeting

The next Committee of the Whole Meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 12, 2025, at 5:15 p.m., in the Performing Arts Room (PAR, Room 0214) of the Educational Resource Center (ERC) on the main campus.


Adjourn

At 8:05 p.m., a motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Nelson, to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Submitted by: Tracy L. Luethje



Dr. Jenna Goldsmith, Secretary



Paul Gorski, Chairman