

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, May 13, 2025
MINUTES

Call to Order

The Rock Valley College (RVC) Board of Trustees Committee of the Whole meeting convened on Tuesday, May 13, 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 Chairperson Paul Gorski. Due to the absence of Board Secretary Dr. Jenna Goldsmith, Trustee Kristen Simpson was appointed Secretary Pro Tempore.

Roll Call

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

Mr. Paul Gorski	Ms. Kristen Simpson
Ms. Gloria Cardenas Cudia	Mr. Robert Trojan
Ms. Crystal Soltow	Mr. Nico Mikos, Student Trustee

The following Trustees were absent at roll call: Dr. Jenna Goldsmith, Mr. John Nelson

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. Tracy Luethje, Executive Assistant to the Vice President of Operations, Attorney Matthew Gardner, Robbins Schwartz.

Board Member Attendance by Means Other than Physical Presence

A motion was made by Student Trustee Mikos, seconded by Trustee Cudia, to allow Trustee John Nelson to join the meeting via teleconference. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote. Trustee Nelson joined the meeting via telephone.

Communications and Petitions

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

Recognition of Visitors

Dr. Patrick Peyer introduced Isiah Blake, newly elected student trustee, who gave a brief review of his background, noting that he is looking forward to working with the trustees.

Review of Minutes

There were no comments on the minutes from the April 8, 2025, Board of Trustees Committee of the Whole meeting.

General Presentations

1. Studer Education Update: Dr. Julie Kunselman

Dr. Spearman introduced Dr. Julie Kunselman who provided a review of the accomplishments of the three-year partnership with Studer Education. She reviewed the shared purpose, the nine principles framework, the evidenced-based leadership framework, and how each employee knows how what they do every day relates to student success. She also explained how the scorecard and data have helped move forward with consistency of execution, increasing retention and persistence, and enrollment growth. Departments are working together to improve the work environment, thus resulting in continuous improvement toward creating a culture of organizational excellence. She also reviewed the accomplishments and practices, as well as next steps for the continued partnership, which includes quarterly meetings, align the scorecard, and develop next level leaders.

Highlights of the extensive discussion include:

- Studer Education administered the employee culture surveys, which provided anonymous feedback by employees.
- Dr. Kunselman met with Dr. Spearman monthly, the Cabinet and next level managers quarterly.
- Dr. Kunselman led sessions at the Staff Professional Development Day.
- Although the original proposal called for monthly calls with the Board Chair, the Chair at the time met with Dr. Kunselman, then made the choice to step away because he trusted the work Studer was doing.
- When the partnership with RVC began, Studer Education was part of Huron, but it has been a standalone since January 2025. Studer works with both K-12 and higher education institutions.
- Dr. Spearman explained that Studer Education was highly recommended by the Belvidere School District. Studer has done an outstanding job with helping align goals and administer anonymous surveys, as that's where the raw truth helps administrators process it, and figure out the appropriate rollout plan to address the issue(s).
- Trustees would like to have feedback from Cabinet. Board Chair Gorski will create an app to provide anonymous response.
- Trustees would like to have a quarterly or semi-annual report.
- Trustees would like more time to consider the renewal contract and recommended it be brought back in June.

Teaching, Learning & Communications Discussion: Board Liaison Trustee Goldsmith

1. FY2025 Enrollment Update

Ms. Heather Snider, vice president of institutional effectiveness and communications, presented the FY2025 and FY2026 Enrollment Update. Since the meeting packet was distributed, enrollment numbers have increased, and she expects to see more enrollment after finals week.

Trustee Trojan commented that it's good to see that the fall to spring numbers are relatively flat, as they have always dropped in the past.

2. Strategic Plan Update: Adult Education Career Pathways for Job Placement

Dr. Patrick Peyer, vice president of student affairs, provided a high-level overview of adult education programs including General Educational Development (GED), English as a Second Language (ESL), and Integrated Career and Academic Preparation System (ICAPS). He also reviewed enrollment data for each of the programs, employment outcomes, and career pathways information being planned for marketing. In response to trustee questions, Dr. Peyer and Dr. Amanda Smith, chief academic officer, explained that classes

are held at various times and locations in Belvidere, Rockford, the current downtown location and the main campus, with the goal of being as accessible as possible.

3. 2025 Completion Ceremonies

Dr. Patrick Peyer, vice president of student affairs, reviewed the 2025 Completion Ceremonies, noting that the only change is for the start time of the Highway Construction Careers Training Program (HCCTP) Completion Ceremony. That event will begin at 3:00 p.m. on Thursday, June 5, 2025.

In response to a question from Trustee Trojan, Dr. Peyer indicated that he will follow-up on the total number of graduates compared to last year.

Early College Items: As an introduction to the Early College items on the agenda, Dr. Hansen Stewart, vice president of career and technical education and workforce development, provided an overview of the Career Pathways Jump Start, Dual and Articulated Credit, Running Start, and Senior Semester programs, as well as agreements with the area high school districts.

The Career Pathways Jump Start Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) program allows high school students to take dual credit courses that meet the requirements for a high school diploma and an RVC certificate in Fundamentals of Mechatronics, Certified Manufacturing Associate, Industrial Welder, Automotive Maintenance and Light Repair, Basic Electronics or 30 credits toward the Aviation Maintenance program certificate.

To provide consistency across school districts and align with the Dual Credit Quality Act, RVC developed the Dual and Articulated Credit Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that offers dual credit for high school courses. These dual credit courses, taught by qualified high school instructors, are designed to allow eligible students to receive college credit while still in high school.

Running Start is a formal program that allows qualified students to attend RVC for their junior and senior high school years. Students may enroll in a two-year degree completion program in which students take courses that meet the requirements for both a high school diploma and an RVC associate degree simultaneously, or a one-year program that meets the requirements for both a high school diploma and one year of RVC credit courses simultaneously. The Running Start program will be administered through the Early College office at RVC in conjunction with the high schools enrolled in the program.

Dr. Stewart added that more IGAs and MOUs would be presented to the Board in June and July.

4. Career Pathways Jump Start Intergovernmental Agreements (IGA)

- a. Winnebago Community Unit School District #323 (New)

5. Dual and Articulated Credit Memoranda of Understanding (MOU)

- a. Oregon Community Unit School District #220
- b. South Beloit Community Unit School District #320
- c. Winnebago Community Unit School District #323

6. Running Start Intergovernmental Agreements (IGA)

- a. Durand Community Unit School District #322
- b. South Beloit Community Unit School District #320
- c. Winnebago Community Unit School District #323

In response to a question from Trustee Trojan, Dr. Stewart will confirm if scholarships are available through the RVC Foundation.

7. *Informational Only* / Library Engagement

No questions or comments were made on this topic.

Board Chair Gorski announced that the Athletic Fields Renovation topic from the Operations Discussion section would be presented next for the benefit of Trustee Soltow, who needs to leave early.

Operations Discussion: Board Liaison Trustee Trojan

2. Athletic Fields Renovations

Dr. Patrick Peyer presented a review of current conditions of the RVC athletic fields used for baseball, softball, and soccer. Due to the age of the fields, and the failing irrigation system, the athletic department researched the pros and cons, and pricing to re-seed/sod the fields and replace the irrigation system, or to replace the grass with turf. Cost estimates for both options were presented.

Based on the research, the recommended renovation plan is to replace the fields with turf from Field Turf USA and to use national consortium pricing through Sourcewell. Although \$1.3 million has been budgeted for the project, an additional \$3.1 million is needed to complete the project using turf. Vice President of Finance Ellen Olson explained that the College will have the \$3.1 million available as a result of funds received from the Internal Revenue Service for the Employee Retention Credit for Quarter 1 of the 2021 calendar year. (Details are noted on the draft Purchase Report B.)

Extensive discussion ensued regarding the safety and injury data for playing on turf. Athletic Director Darin Monroe and Director of Plant Operations and Maintenance Jimmy Johann helped answer questions regarding safety and injury data for turf and grass, maintenance and repair needs of grass fields, use/effect of chemicals and pesticides, which field surfaces are used by other schools, and preferences of the athletes.

Trustees indicated they would like to have an update on injury reports for both turf and grass at the next meeting.

At 7:02 p.m., Trustee Crystal Soltow left the meeting.

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. Software – (Administrative Software – Plan Operations and Maintenance)

1.	Brightly Software, Inc.	Cary, NC	\$6,000.00*(1)
			Not to Exceed

B. Testing Professional Services – (Capital – Downtown West Site Improvements)

2.	Terracon Consultants, Inc.	Downers Grove, IL	\$5,000.00*(2)
			Not to Exceed

C. Books – (Books and Binding Costs - Library)

3.	Midwest Library Service	Bridgeton, MO	\$9,000.00*(3)
			Not to Exceed

D. Software – (Administrative Software – Financial Services)

4.	Prophix Software, Inc.	Ontario, Canada	\$2,683.00*(4)
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Any questions?

Purchase Report B – FY2025 Purchases

A. Consulting Fee – (Other Contractual Services – General Institutional Expenses)

1.	Sheridan Wealth Advisors	Miami, FL	\$619,288.07*(1)
			Not to Exceed

B. Tuckpointing – (Site Improvements – Capital)

2.	Mike Harris Mason Contractor	Rockford, IL	\$301,860.00*(2)
			Not to Exceed
	Safe-Way Tuckpointing LLC	Rolling Meadows, IL	\$318,000.00
	Otto Baum Company, Inc.	Morton, IL	\$331,392.00

Purchase Report C – FY2026 Purchases

A. Printing and Mailing – (Print/Copy Commercial Services – Community and Continuous Education)

1.	K.K. Stevens Publishing Co.	Astoria, IL	\$80,600.00*(1)
			Not to Exceed

B. Production Contract – (Other Contractual Services – Starlight Theatre)

2.	TBD	New York, NY	\$25,000.00*(2)
			Not to Exceed

C. Production Contract – (Other Contractual Services – Starlight Theatre)

3.	TBD	New York, NY	\$25,000.00*(3)
			Not to Exceed

D. Production Contract – (Other Contractual Services – Starlight Theatre)

4.	TBD	New York, NY	\$25,000.00*(4)
			Not to Exceed

E. Production Contract – (Other Contractual Services – Starlight Theatre)

5.	TBD	New York, NY	\$25,000.00*(5)
			Not to Exceed

F. Production Contract – (Other Contractual Services – Starlight Theatre)

6.	TBD	New York, NY	\$25,000.00*(6)
			Not to Exceed

2. Cash and Investment Report

Vice President Olson presented the Cash and Investment Report through April 30, 2025. Total operating cash is \$34,597,877. Total operating cash and investments are \$99,245,776. The operating cash and investments have changed by \$3,746,584 since March 31, 2025. Total capital funds are \$70,778,111. Since March 31, 2025, the change in capital funds has been \$47,122,125. Ms. Olson stated that the total operating cash and investment funds were 97.57% of the FY2025 operating budget.

3. Third Quarter Vital Signs

Ms. Olson reviewed the 3rd Quarter Year-to-Date Financial Report as of March 31, 2025, including FY2025 Operating Funds Revenue and Expenses, as well as Fund 01 Education, Fund 02 Operations & Maintenance, Fund 05 Auxiliary Enterprises, and the monthly and year-to-date for Payroll and Health Care Costs. Vice President Olson confirmed that she believes revenue will exceed expenses by the end of the year.

4. Rockford Property Tax Rebate Program

Vice President Olson reviewed the resolution adopting the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) for the New 2025 Residential Construction Tax Refund Agreement for the City of Rockford. Other taxing districts participating in the program include the City of Rockford, Rockford Public School District #205, Winnebago County, Rockford Park District and the Greater Rockford Airport Authority.

Attorney Matthew Gardner stated that the Administration asked his firm, Robbins Schwartz, to review the Resolution and IGA. In an opinion letter sent to Dr. Spearman and the Board of Trustees, Attorney Gardner stated that he believes Rock Valley College Board of Trustees does not have legal authority to refund said property taxes.

Board Chair Gorski stated that the item should be removed from the May 27 agenda as the Board does not have legal authority to take action. Dr. Spearman will relay this information to Mayor McNamara.

5. Lee Ogle Enterprise Zone Tax Abatement Agreement

Vice President Olson reviewed the Lee Ogle Enterprise Zone Tax Abatement Agreement, noting that the Byron Nuclear Plant is not included. At the request of Board Chair Gorski, Attorney Matthew Gardner added that in contrast to the City of Rockford residential tax rebate, the College does have legal authority to participate in this agreement. Vice President Olson added that the College did something similar for All World, but she is not sure about participation in an enterprise zone. She also confirmed that Sauk Valley Community College, Highland Community College, and Kishwaukee Community College all participate in the program.

Trustees agreed to move forward with the agreement.

6. BINA Hearing Reminder

Ms. Olson reminded trustees that the BINA Hearing (Bond Issue Notification Act) would be held May 27 and that notices have been posted on building doors and in area newspapers.

7. *Informational Only* / Quarterly Report-Purchase Orders \$10K-\$25K

There were no comments or questions regarding the Quarterly Purchase Activity Report for items between \$10,000 to \$25,000.

Operations Discussion: Board Liaison Trustee Trojan

1. Personnel Report

Mr. Rick Jenks, vice president of operations, presented the May 2025 Personnel Report, which included two appointments and six placeholders. There were three departures.

2. The Athletic Fields Renovations information was presented earlier in the meeting

3. Trust Agreement with the Capital Development Board (CDB) for Roadways, Paving, and Gutters Project (Project 810-080-021)

Mr. Rick Jenks, vice president of operations, explained the agreement with the Capital Development Board for the roadways, paving, and gutters project, noting that the State of Illinois has released deferred maintenance funding for RVC to repair the crumbling roads on campus. Since the Board of Trustees has approved use of capital funds for this project, implementing the trust agreement is required before the project can begin. Approving this board report will permit CFO Ellen Olson, also RVC's treasurer, to set up a trust account through PMA Financial Network equaling \$1,098,678 for the project.

Mr. Jenks confirmed that this is similar to other CDB projects where the College pays 25%, and the State pays 75% and runs the entire project.

4. Classroom Building II Update

Mr. Jenks provided a brief update on progress on the Classroom Building II CDB project. Final negotiations have been completed with the architect, with a kickoff meeting is planned for next week.

5. Change Order Update

Mr. Jenks reviewed the change orders for the Downtown West Campus construction and the LED Lighting in the Stenstrom Student Center as outlined in the meeting packet.

6. Rock Valley College Events Calendar

Mr. Jenks highlighted several items in the events calendar including the RVC Retiree Celebration to be held at 2:00 p.m. on May 21 in the Stenstrom Student Center (SSC) Atrium and the RVC Golden Eagles' Family Breakfast to be held at 8:00 a.m. on May 22, also in the SSC Atrium.

7. *Informational Only* / Quarterly Employee Personnel Update

No comments or questions were asked regarding the update.

New Business/Unfinished Business

1. New Business:

There was no new business discussed.

2. Unfinished Business:

Dr. Spearman explained that the College has not received any additional information from Electroform on their request for a 10-year tax abatement. Winnebago County and the Park Districts have declined, and Rockford Public Schools said they may support it for three years, but not 10. The property owner said he had support, but the College has not received any documents.

Chief Financial Officer Ellen Olson presented five- and ten-year projections of revenue that RVC would not receive if they agreed to the proposed tax abatement. Assuming an assessed value of \$5 million at the current tax rate, the College would lose about \$40,000 over five years and \$79,000 over 10 years. It is estimated that 15-20 new jobs would be created.

Trustees agreed that the Administration should contact the owner of Electroform to confirm if he is still interested, that the College will consider three or five years, and that trustees want to see the proposed agreement. Attorney Gardner added that he needs more information on the property and proposed agreement before drafting an opinion.

Adjourn to Closed Session

At 7:45 p.m., Board Chair Gorski made a motion, seconded by Trustee Simpson, 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 unanimous roll call vote.

Reconvene Open Session

At 7:59 p.m., a motion was made by Student Trustee Mikos, seconded by Trustee Cudia, to adjourn the closed session and return to open session. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote. No action was taken as a result of closed session.

Next Regular Board of Trustees Meeting

The next Regular Board of Trustees Meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 27, 2025, at 5:15 p.m., in the Performing Arts Room (PAR, Room 0214) of the Educational Resource Center (ERC) on the main campus.

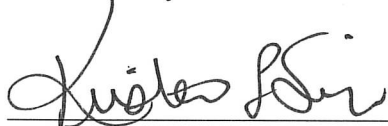
Next Committee of the Whole Meeting

The next Committee of the Whole Meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 10, 2025, at 5:15 p.m., in the Performing Arts Room (PAR, Room 0214) of the Educational Resource Center (ERC) on the main campus.

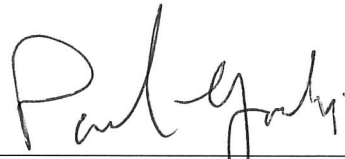
Adjourn

At 8:00 p.m., a motion was made by Student Trustee Mikos, seconded by Trustee Cudia, to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Submitted by: Ann L. Kerwitz



Kristen Simpson, Secretary Pro Tempore



Paul Gorski, Chairperson