

**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  
May 27, 2025**

**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, May 27, 2025. Board Chair Paul Gorski called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

**Roll Call**

Mr. Paul Gorski  
Ms. Kristen Simpson  
Dr. Jenna Goldsmith  
Ms. Gloria Cardenas Cudia

Mr. Bob Trojan  
Student Trustee Mr. Nico Mikos  
Incoming Student Trustee Mr. Isiah Blake

The following trustees were absent: Ms. Crystal Soltow, Mr. John Nelson

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; Ms. Ellen Olson, Vice President of Finance/Chief Financial Officer; Ms. Heather Snider, Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness and Communications; Dr. Patrick Peyer, Vice President of Student Affairs; Mr. Rick Jenks, Vice President of Operations, Chief Operations Officer; Dr. Hansen Stewart, Vice President of Career Technical Education and Workforce Development; Ms. Ann Kerwitz, Assistant to the President, Ms. Araceli Olvera, Interim Executive Assistant, Ms. Tracy Lutheje, Executive Assistant to the Chief Operations Officer, Attorney Matt 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.

**Recognition of Visitors**

At 5:17 p.m., President Spearman recognized Andy Shaw, Zone Administrator of Ogle/Lee Enterprise Zone.

At 5:18 p.m., President Spearman presented a plaque to outgoing Student Trustee Nico Mikos to recognize his service on the board. Student Trustee Mikos shared that the Board has been amazing; he wishes Isiah Blake success and luck; he appreciates everyone's patience; and he's excited for his next journey at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign where he will study geographic planning.

Following, Jennifer Thompson, Executive Director of College Communications, took pictures of Student Trustee Mikos with the Board of Trustees and President Spearman.

At 5:21 p.m., Attorney Matt Gardner swore in Incoming Student Trustee Isiah Blake. Afterwards, Jennifer Thompson took pictures of Student Trustee Blake with the Board of Trustees and President Spearman. Then, Student Trustee Blake took his place with the Board of Trustees.

#### **Bond Issue Notification Act (BINA) Hearing**

At 5:22 p.m., Board Chair Gorski stated that a public hearing is being held to receive public comments on the proposal to sell funding bonds in an amount not to exceed \$56,250,000 for the purpose of paying claims against the District, namely, the General Obligation Debt Certificates (Limited Tax), Series 2025A, dated April 21, 2025, and related costs of issuance. There were no further comments, either written or oral testimony.

Board Chair Gorski asked for a motion and a second to adjourn the BINA Hearing. A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Cudia, to adjourn the BINA Hearing. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

#### **General Presentations**

There were no general presentations.

#### **Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Cudia, to approve the minutes of the April 8, 2025, Committee of the Whole meeting and the April 22, 2025, Regular and Reorganization meeting. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

#### **Action Items**

##### **1. BR8273 – Claims Sheet (Check Register – May 2025)**

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the claims sheets from the Ellucian check register for the period from April 1, 2025 to April 30, 2025. The total is \$3,540,424.54.

A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Cudia, to approve BR8273. Trustee Gorski stated that all the action items on the agenda were reviewed and discussed at the May 13, 2025, Committee of the Whole Meeting. With no other further discussion, the motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

**2. BR8274-A – Purchase Report A – FY2025 Amendments**

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the items marked with asterisks on Purchase Report A – FY2025 Amendments.

A motion was made by Trustee Cudia, seconded by Trustee Simpson, to approve BR8274-A. Trustee Gorski asked about any changes since the May 13, 2025, Committee of the Whole Meeting. Vice President Ellen Olson stated that there were no changes. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

**3. BR8274-B – Purchase Report B – FY2025 Purchases**

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approved the items marked with an asterisks on Purchase Report B – FY2025 Purchases.

A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Cudia, to approve BR8274-B. Trustee Gorski asked about any changes since the May 13, 2025, Committee of the Whole Meeting. Vice President Ellen Olson stated that there were no changes. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

**4. BR8274-C – Purchase Report C – FY2026 Purchases**

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

A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Cudia, to approve BR8274-C. Trustee Gorski asked about any changes since the May 13, 2025, Committee of the Whole Meeting. Vice President Ellen Olson stated that there were no changes. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

**5. BR8275 – Career Pathways Jump Start (CPJS) Intergovernmental Agreement – Winnebago Community Unit School District #323**

**6. BR8276 – Dual and Articulated Credit Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) – Oregon Community Unit School District #220**

**7. BR8277 – Dual and Articulated Credit Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) – South Beloit Community Unit School District #320**

**8. BR8278 - Dual and Articulated Credit Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) – Winnebago Community Unit School District #323**

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Rock Valley College Board of Trustees approves the Early College Memorandums of Understandings (MOU) and Intergovernmental Agreements (IGA) with the district area high schools, which have been Attorney Reviewed.

A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Cudia, to group BR8275, BR8276, BR8277, and BR8278 and vote together. Trustee Gorski expressed gratitude to the area school districts for their partnership with RVC. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

**9. BR8279 - Running Start Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA)– Durand Community Unit School District #322**

**10. BR8280 - Running Start Intergovernmental Agreement – South Beloit Community Unit School District #320**

**11. BR8281 - Running Start Intergovernmental Agreement – Winnebago Community Unit School District #323**

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Rock Valley College Board of Trustees approves the Early College Memorandums of Understanding and Intergovernmental Agreements with the district area high schools, which have been Attorney Reviewed.

A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Cudia, to group BR8279, BR8280, and BR8281 and vote together.

Trustee Goldsmith inquired about the Early College program, specifically regarding the faculty and the criteria for courses. Vice President Amanda Smith explained that Dual Credit Instructors are high school teachers who undergo a comprehensive training process, which includes orientation with RVC faculty, observational experiences, and close collaboration to ensure that the academic rigor is consistently upheld. In contrast, Running Start Instructors are RVC faculty members.

Trustee Gorski expressed gratitude to the area school districts for their partnership with RVC.

The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

**12. BR8282 - Personnel Report**

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the personnel actions on the Personnel Report.

A motion was made by Trustee Cudia, seconded by Trustee Trojan, to approve BR8282. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

**13. BR8283 - Trust Agreement with the Capital Development Board (CDB) for Roadways, Paving, and Gutters Project**

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Rock Valley College Board of Trustees authorizes the College's Treasurer to set up a trust account through PMA Financial Network equaling \$1,098,678 for the upgrade of the RVC Roadway, Paving, and Gutters project CDB# 810-080-021. Attorney Reviewed.

A motion was made by Trustee Cudia, seconded by Trustee Trojan, to approve BR8283. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

**14. BR8284 - Lee/Ogle Enterprise Zone**

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves participation in abating real property taxes subject to its jurisdiction on properties located within the boundaries of the Lee Ogle Enterprise Zone on which improvements have been constructed as outlines in the attached Resolution. Attorney Reviewed.

A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Cudia, to approve BR8284.

Trustee Gorski asked Andy Shaw, Zone Administrator, about the relationship between the Lee/Ogle Enterprise Zone with the county of Lee County government. Additionally, Trustee Gorski stated that since he is an employee of Lee County government, he will abstain from this vote, however he would have approved it.

The motion was approved by a majority roll call vote. Trustees Trojan, Cudia, Simpson, and Goldsmith voted yes. Trustee Gorski abstained. Student Trustee Blake voted yes (student advisory).

**15. BR8285 - Fund Transfer Request of Employee Retention Credit to Capital**

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the College administration to allocate \$3,300,000 from Operating Funds to Restricted Operations and Maintenance upon receipt of the payment from the Internal Revenue Service to Rock Valley College.

A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Simpson, to approve BR8285. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

**Other Business**

1. New Business – There was no new business.
2. Unfinished Business
  - Vice President Olson stated that the College reached out to Wade Clark/Electroform to see if he would be interested in a three-year or shorter than 10-year abatement; however, he is are not interested in a shorter abatement. Mr. Clark mentioned other interested community entities; however, neither the Mayor of Rockford or anyone else in the community has moved forward to help.
  - Trustee Gorski mentioned that at the May 8, 2025, Committee of the Whole meeting, the matter regarding the Studer Education contract, the Athletic Field Renovation, and FY2026 Budget are to be discussed at June 10, 2025, Committee of the Whole Meeting.

**Updates/Reports**

**1. President Update**

President Spearman reported the following:

- He expressed his gratitude to his Cabinet for their outstanding leadership and their efforts in creating an environment where students, faculty, staff, and administrators can excel.
- He shared that in celebration of RVC's 60th anniversary, the College hosted a CEO Challenge, which involved 19 CEOs and raised \$78,000 in scholarship funds for students. Also, he was honored for being awarded the title of champion, or at least co-champion, in the CEO Challenge. Last, but not least, he commended

Chief Development Officer Brittany Freiberg, the RVC Foundation team, the College Communications team, and the entire planning team for their exceptional work.

- He expressed his gratitude to everyone doing their part in preparing another great atmosphere for Commencement. He thanked the following: the Plant, Operations, and Maintenance (POM) Team, the College Communications Department, the Dean of Students Office, the Adult Education Team, all the Faculty, Staff, and Administrators who volunteered, and the Board of Trustees.
- He provided an update on the success metrics of students who completed an associate's degree, GED, the WEI Program, and Truck Driver Training. The numbers in FY2025 decreased compared to FY2024; however, the numbers are subject to change as there will be extra completers after graduation. Overall, the College has met its FY2025 Credit Enrollment goal, and FY2026 has closely met and/or will exceed FY2025.

Trustee Gorski asked President Spearman to share his report with the Board in advance.

## **2. Leadership Updates**

- Dr. Patrick Peyer, vice president of student affairs, announced that Milana Herman, program manager for student employment and veterans' affairs, was added to the list of 2025 Illinois Women Veteran Leaders. He shared that the Women's Softball team had a successful 2025 season, earning a third straight trip to the NJCAA Division II National Tournament, finishing with a record of 42-11. He also shared that the Men's Baseball team had a great season, finishing with more than 40 wins for the second consecutive year, boasting a record of 42-17; Additionally, he announced that on May 22, 2025, the RAISE Completion Ceremony was held for 24 students who completed their course of study. The RAISE program (Raising Aspirations through an Inclusive Student Experience) is dedicated to helping individuals with intellectual disabilities achieve their dreams of attending college and finding employment.
- Dr. Terrica Huntley, vice president of human resources, acknowledged the Employee Recognition team for their diligent work in organizing a celebration for the Retirees of FY2025, which was led by Director of Human Resources Christine Lott. The team was thanked for continuing to highlight and recognize employee contributions.
- Ms. Heather Snider, vice president of institutional effectiveness and communications, gave an enrollment update. For Summer II (beginning June 16), enrollment is 18% ahead of last year, exceeding the budget by 29% and the stretch goal by 24%. For Fall (beginning August 16), enrollment is currently 12% ahead of last year, at 66% to budget and 64% to stretch goal. This growth stems from enhancements in our Salesforce CRM, effective communication, strengthened partnerships with local high schools and community organizations, increased outreach, and strong support from faculty and staff to connect with students.



Trustee Trojan commended the enrollment update for not decreasing, but rather remaining flat.

- Dr. Hansen Stewart, vice president of career technical education and workforce development, provided an update on revenue growth for the following years: in 2022, \$89,756; in 2023, \$188,769; in 2024, \$292,751; in 2025 (Forecasted), to surpass the 2024 revenue stream. He also reported that the completion rates for Customized Training is consistently above 90%.

Trustee Cudia asked if the SMART camp will happen this summer. Dr. Stewart affirmed that SMART Camp is ongoing.

Trustee Trojan asked how many SMART camps there would be, and Dr. Stewart confirmed that there would be about three to four weeks.

- Dr. Amanda Smith, vice president of academic affairs, praised the recent Health Science Pinning ceremonies for Dental Hygiene, Nursing, and Respiratory Care. She acknowledged the contributions of Dean of Health Sciences Dr. Carrie Gulbrandsen, and faculty chairs Dr. Marie Navickis, Samantha Flyer, and Dr. Heidi Penny for their leadership on the programs.
- Ms. Ellen Olson, vice president of finance, announced that there were 674 scholarship applications submitted to the RVC Foundation, 353 applicants received awards, 389 awards were offered, and as of the week of May 19, 2025, 204 awards have been accepted. The total dollar amount of awards was \$664,995. She also shared that on May 22, 2025, the Foundation hosted the Alumni and Retiree Breakfast, which had great attendance featured presentations, and concluded with a finale by Starlight Theatre.
- Rick Jenks, vice president of operations, announced the successful removal of the underground storage tank at the downtown construction site. Following thorough testing and obtaining a permit from the state fire marshal, it was confirmed there was no leakage. The fire marshal approved the report, allowing construction of the footings for the Downtown Learning Center to proceed. The construction crews efficiently redirected their efforts to other areas, ensuring the overall construction timeline remains on track. As for Classroom Building II (CLII), the Capital Development Board (CDB) and Bailey Edwards Design Architecture Firm have finalized all contracts for the engineering fees of the CLII remodel. The architect recently reviewed the building, and in two weeks, the program review with future occupants and the design team will begin. Meetings will continue throughout the summer and into the fall when faculty return. During the summer, the POM and IT teams will relocate existing employee groups from CLII to temporary locations. This will prepare the building for construction to start once the drawings are finalized and final bids are received for the CDB project. He stated that his team is dedicated and doing an excellent job.

Trustee Gorski expressed appreciation to everyone working on the Downtown West construction project and Classroom Building II renovation project for their efforts in advancing these projects on schedule.

- Dr. Keith Barnes, vice president of cultural excellence, did not attend the meeting.

### **3. Illinois Community College Trustee Association (ICCTA) Report**

There was no ICCTA Report.

### **4. Trustee Comments**

- Trustee Cudia had no comments.
- Trustee Gorski shared that his grandfather, Hubert Estelle Hut, was a co-founder and later president of VanderCook College of Music in Chicago; Mr. Gorski will send questions to the President's Office regarding the RVC Music Program and request a report on the program's status at the August Committee of the Whole meeting.
- Trustee Goldsmith shared that it's an honor to be part of the board and to listen to what's happening at RVC, such as the Commencement ceremony. Additionally, she has attended many Alumni Retiree Breakfast events since returning to Rockford and appreciates the experience.
- Trustee Trojan acknowledged Ann Kerwitz and Kris Fuchs for helping with Commencement to prepare the Board; He was a speaker at the Respiratory Care (RC) Pinning Ceremony and is grateful for the first scholarship recipient who received funds from his wife's scholarship. She shared highlights of the program for his speech, such as recommending the Respiratory Care Program to her aunt and sister, and they are current students in the program. He is astonished by all the information he's learned regarding the RC programs.
- Trustee Simpson gave kudos to the ceremonies and everyone who helped. She stated it was a wonderful and emotional day.

### **5. Student Trustee Report**

Isiah Blake delivered an introductory report, sharing his journey as a first-generation student at RVC since 2024. Before this, he was in the workforce. Throughout his time at RVC, he has held leadership roles including Vice President and President of the Student Government Association, and now Student Trustee, where he enjoys supporting his fellow students. Isiah plans to earn his Associate's Degree, then transfer to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign for a Bachelor's Degree in Linguistics and English as a Second Language, followed by a Master's in Language Pathology.

### **6. RVC Foundation Report**

Trustee Trojan gave his report, stating that on July 30, 2025, the Foundation will reopen scholarship applications to reward more funds; the budget proposal total is \$970, 000 in scholarship dollars. New Nursing scholarships are estimated at \$1 million and \$1.1 to \$1.2 million will be offered to another potential field of study.



## **7. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Report**

The FOIA report was accepted as presented.

### **Adjourn to Closed Session**

At 6:12 p.m., a motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Simpson, 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.) The purchase or lease of real property for the use of the public body per Section 2 (c) (5), and/or 3.) Litigation has been filed, is pending, or probable 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 6:24 p.m., a motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Simpson, to adjourn closed session. No action was taken as a result from this closed session. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

### **Next Meeting**

The next Committee of the Whole meeting will be held on June 10, 2025, 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 June 24, 2025, in the Performing Arts Room (PAR, Room 0214) located in the Educational Resources Center (ERC) on the main campus.

### **Adjournment**

At 6:28 p.m., a motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Cudia, to adjourn the Regular Meeting. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Submitted by Araceli Olvera

  
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Dr. Jenna Goldsmith, Secretary  
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Paul Gorski, Board Chair