

**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
February 24, 2026, 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, February 24, 2026. Board Chair Paul Gorski called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

Roll Call

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

Mr. Robert (Bob) Trojan
Mr. John Nelson arrived at 5:23 p.m.
Ms. Crystal Soltow (by phone)
Mr. Isiah Blake, Student Trustee

The following trustees were absent at roll call: Trustee Kristen Simpson

A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Cudia, to allow Trustee Crystal Soltow to attend the meeting by phone. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

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

Board Member Attendance by Means Other Than Physical Presence

Trustee Crystal Soltow attended the meeting by phone.

Communications and Petitions (Public Comment)

There were no communications, petitions, or public comments.

Recognition of Visitors

Dr. Amanda Smith announced the newly tenured faculty, which included: Mr. Matthew Cole, Automotive Technology; Ms. Samantha Flygare, Respiratory Care Program; Mr. Jonathan Cole Regnery, Mathematics; and Anthony Schiassi, Aviation Maintenance Technology.

Adjourn to Closed Session

At 5:25 p.m., Trustee Trojan made a motion, seconded by Trustee Nelson, 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) 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), all in accordance with the Illinois Open Meetings Act.

Reconvene Open Session

At 6:20 p.m., a motion was made by Trustee Nelson, seconded by Trustee Cudia, 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.

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 January 13, 2026, Committee of the Whole meeting, the January 27, 2026, Regular Board of Trustees meeting, and the January 31, 2026, Special Board Retreat meeting. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Action Items

1. BR8355 – Claims Sheet (Check Register – January 2026)

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 January 1, 2026, to January 31, 2026. The total is \$7,728,748.71.

A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Blake, to approve BR8355. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

2a. BR8356-A – Purchase Report A – 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 A – FY2026 Amendments.

A motion was made by Trustee Cudia, seconded by Trustee Nelson, to approve Board Report 8356-A. Discussion ensued. Airgas USA, LLC was added since the February 10, 2026 Committee of the Whole meeting, which includes an increase in gas consumables for the Welding Programs Lab. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

2b. BR8356-B – Purchase Report B – 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 B – FY2026 Purchases.

A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Cudia, to approve Board Report 8356-B. Discussion ensued. The Iconic Building, which houses the Adult Education and Immigration and Refugee Programs, has been sold to Urban Equity Properties. They have renamed the building the Rockford News Tower. This additional cost is an extension of rent through August 2026. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

2c. BR8356-C – Purchase Report C – FY2026 Purchases

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

A motion was made by Trustee Cudia, seconded by Trustee Nelson, to approve Board Report 8356-C. Vice President Ellen Olson provided clarification on the dollar amount. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

3. BR8357 – Resolution Calling for Bond Issue Notification Act Public Hearing Working Cash Bonds Not to Exceed \$7,900,000

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the resolution calling for the Bond Issue Notification Act (BINA) Public Hearing to receive public comments on the proposal to sell bonds to the Rock Valley College District in an amount not to exceed \$7,900,000 for the purpose of the working cash fund. **Attorney Reviewed.**

A motion was made by Trustee Nelson, seconded by Trustee Blake, to approve Board Report 8357. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

4. BR8358– Fund Transfer Request for Classroom Building II

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the College administration to transfer \$1,000,000 from Other Post-Employment Benefit Liability (Fund 19) to Restricted Capital (Fund 03) to partially fund the additional increase for the Classroom Building II project.

A motion was made by Trustee Nelson, seconded by Trustee Cudia, to approve Board Report 8358. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Other Business

1. **New Business-** no new business to report
2. **Unfinished Business-** no unfinished business to report

Updates/Reports

1. President Update

Dr. Spearman updated trustees on various topics:

- Attended the 2026 Scouting America Legacy Service Luncheon; began Black History Month with Rock Valley College's (RVC) Ebony Breakfast; participated in the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) Legislative Summit in Washington, D.C.; traveled to Springfield, IL for Governor Pritzker's State of

the State address; connected with legislators outside of RVC's district with the help of Dr. Litesa Wallace from LITE Strategies.

- RVC will hold its annual Town Hall meeting on Wednesday, February 25, 2026, online and in the Student Atrium.
- Congratulations to Dr. Amanda Smith, Chief Academic Officer, for completing the Aspen Rising Presidential Fellowship.

2. Leadership Update

- Dr. Keith Barnes- Women's History Month is in March; RVC will attend the "Women of Achievement" YWCA Leadership Luncheon on Monday, March 2, 2026; from February 16 – March 6, students are invited to complete the Viewfinder Culture Survey, and they can choose to enter a drawing for a tuition waiver; Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) recognized African American Board of Trustee members and Presidents on Facebook during Black History Month; RVC will conclude Black History Month with a presentation on 100 years of Black culture and innovation.
- Dr. Patrick Peyer- thank you to Dr. Elaine Dussard, Executive Director for Trio Federal Programs, for organizing and hosting the National Trio Day event on Saturday, February 21, 2026; Trio students participated in breakout sessions and also wrote letters to Congress thanking legislators for their continued support; Men's and Women's Basketball will be participating in the regional tournament at the end of February.
- Dr. Terrica Huntley provided a follow-up on a question asked at the February 10, 2026, Committee of the Whole meeting regarding the new RVC Foundation position; the Coordinator of Fund Development and Engagement position has been posted, and Human Resources will follow up with the Board when the position has been filled.
- Vice President Heather Snider gave the enrollment update: spring enrollment is 2% ahead of last year, 10% ahead of budget, and 5% ahead of the stretch goal; spring headcount is higher than fall headcount because dual credit courses taught at the high schools are recorded in the spring; when Summer II, Fall, Winterim and Spring are combined, FY26 year-to-date credit hour enrollment is 4% ahead of last year, 8% ahead of budget, and 3% ahead of the stretch goal.
- Dr. Hansen Stewart announced that RVC will be hosting the Workforce Collaborative on Thursday, March 19, 2026, from 7:30 – 11:30 a.m. in the Student Atrium; RVC has invited local manufacturers and industry partners; trustees should contact Ann or Dr. Spearman if they plan to attend.
- Vice President Rick Jenks reported that the RVC police have been working to hire a new officer and sergeant for the Downtown campus; the RVC Starlight Theater will begin their auditions on Thursday, February 26; for the Downtown West project, eight of the nine Architect Special Instructions (ASI) have been cleared and this has allowed contractors to return to construction so deadlines can be met.
- Dr. Amanda Smith spoke about how the College has implemented a software solution for syllabus management; RVC will host the Regional Academic Challenge in Engineering and Science (ACES) on Friday, February 27, and the Illinois Council

of the Teachers of Mathematics High School Mathematics contest on Saturday, February 28.

3. **Illinois Community College Trustee Association (ICCTA) Report-** Trustee John Nelson reported on topics discussed during the executive board meeting in Washington D.C., namely that the Community College Baccalaureate is unlikely to pass this year due to lack of funds; the next ICCTA meeting will be held on March 20-21, 2026, at Moraine Valley Community College in Palos Hills, IL.
4. **Trustee Comments**
 - Trustee Bob Trojan commented that the College celebrated the 10th anniversary of the NIU-RVC Baccalaureate Program, and over 100 graduates have entered the workforce over the last decade.
 - Trustee John Nelson attended the ACCT Legislative Summit in Washington, D.C., where he attended a seminar on pending legal issues, including free speech on community college campuses.
 - Trustee Jenna Goldsmith recognized Maria and the library staff for assisting a visiting author in gaining access to rare materials.
 - Chairman Paul Gorski acknowledged the passing of Reverend Jesse Jackson, civil rights activist; also, the College submitted an application for an Equity and Inclusion award to be presented at a summer ICCTA conference.
 - Trustee Crystal Soltow talked about her experience at the ACCT Legislative Summit in Washington, D.C., and her realization that people go to great lengths to have their voices heard; she enjoyed fellowship with passionate people who support community colleges.
 - Trustee Gloria Cudia noted that her findings during the Legislative conference aligned with state-level reports given by Jim Reed, ICCTA Executive Director.
5. **Student Trustee Report-** Student Trustee, Isiah Blake, reported on his attendance at the ACCT Legislative Summit from February 8-11, 2026; he highlighted the importance of Workforce PELL Grants for short-term certificates and child care support; he will share these ideas with the RVC Student Government Association (SGA); on March 6, he will be participating in a student committee to prepare for Student Lobby Day in Springfield, IL on April 16.
6. **RVC Foundation Liaison Report-** Trustee Bob Trojan stated that in April, the RVC Foundation will host the CEO Challenge, with a goal of raising \$100,000; the RVC Foundation is accepting scholarship applications until April 1, 2026; \$900,000 is available for those scholarships.
7. **Personnel Report (BR8359)-** Information only; 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 7:16 p.m., Trustee Trojan made a motion, seconded by Trustee Nelson 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) 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), all in accordance with the Illinois Open Meetings Act.

Reconvene Open Session

At 8:00 p.m., a motion was made by Trustee Nelson, seconded by Trustee Cudia, 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 Meeting


The next Committee of the Whole meeting will be held on March 10, 2026, at 5:15 p.m. The meeting will be held in the Performing Arts Room (PAR, Room 0214) located in the Educational Resource Center (ERC) on the main campus.

The next Regular Board of Trustees meeting will be held on March 24, 2026, at 5:15 p.m. The meeting will be held in the Performing Arts Room (PAR, Room 0214) located in the Educational Resource Center (ERC) on the main campus.

Adjournment

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

Submitted by Carly A. Diciolla



Dr. Jenna Goldsmith, Secretary



Paul Gorski, Board Chair