

Rock Valley College

Rock Valley College Board of Trustees
Illinois Community College District No. 511
3301 North Mulford Road, Rockford, IL 61114

Educational Resource Center, Performing Arts Room, Room 0214
REGULAR MEETING
May 26, 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, May 26, 2026. Board Chair Paul Gorski called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

Roll Call

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

Mr. Paul Gorski	Mr. Robert (Bob) Trojan
Ms. Gloria Cardenas Cudia	Mr. John Nelson- arrived at 5:18 p.m.
Dr. Jenna Goldsmith	Ms. Sarah Ortiz Espinoza, Student Trustee
Ms. Kristen Simpson	

The following trustee was absent at roll call: Trustee Crystal Soltow

Also in Attendance: Dr. Howard Spearman, President; 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; Dr. Patrick Peyer, Vice President of Student Affairs; Mr. Rick Jenks, Vice President of Operations/COO; Dr. Keith Barnes, Vice President of Cultural Excellence and Belonging; 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 Matthew Gardner, Robbins Schwartz.

Board Member Attendance by Means Other than Physical Presence

No trustees attended by means other than physical presence.

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Communications and Petitions (Public Comment)

Board Chair Gorski received mail from the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) regarding their events. He also received three letters from Willis Towers Watson regarding a Certificate of Insurance (COI), and forwarded them to Ms. Ellen Olson, Vice President of Finance.

Recognition of Visitors

Dr. Spearman recognized Student Trustee Isiah Blake for his year of service to the Board. Isiah Blake was presented with a plaque and took a picture with the Board of Trustees. Attorney Matthew Gardner swore in the new student trustee, Sarah Ortiz Espinoza.

General Presentations

1. **Ringland Johnson Construction (RJC)** – Mr. Greg Kladar presented the progress on the Downtown West project and the Construction Manager at Risk (CMR). He stated that this has been a successful project thus far. Less than 1% of the contingency has been used. RJC has an additional financial ask of \$60,000 for two reasons: 1) The builders risk insurance was not included in the initial Request for Proposal (RFP) response because Rock Valley College (RVC) asked that RJC carry that item and the amount would be clearly defined near the end of the project; 2) Some bid package completions went over the initial estimates.

Discussion ensued. Board Chair Gorski instructed Dr. Spearman to place the \$60,000 request on the agenda for the June 9, 2026, Committee of the Whole (CotW) meeting, to eventually be voted on at the June 23, 2026, Board of Trustees meeting.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Trustee Cudia, seconded by Trustee Trojan, to approve the minutes of the April 14, 2026, Committee of the Whole meeting, and the April 28, 2026, Final Meeting of the Present Board, Reorganization Meeting, and the First Meeting of the Newly Organized Board of Trustees. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Action Items

1. BR8381 – Claims Sheet (Check Register – April 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 April 1, 2026, to April 30, 2026. The total is \$5,646,861.89.

A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Nelson, to approve BR8381. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

2a. BR8382-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.

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A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Simpson, to approve Board Report 8382-A. Vice President of Finance, Ellen Olson, explained that four items have been added to BR8382-A since the May 12, 2026 CotW meeting: item D. for City of Rockford Utilities, Item E. for CIT Trucks, Item F. for Ellucian Company, and Item G. for Ferrilli. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

2b. BR8382-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 Simpson, to approve Board Report 8382-B. Discussion ensued. Ms. Ellen Olson explained that there have been changes since the May 12, 2026, CotW meeting. One purchase was deleted for outfitting the Downtown West Automotive and Collision Repair programs because it was a failed bid. Two items were added: Item E. for Bonza Media and Item F. for Lincoln Electric Company. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

2c. BR8382-C – Purchase Report C – FY2027 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 C – FY2027 Purchases.

A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Nelson, to approve Board Report 8382-C. Discussion ensued. Vice President Ellen Olson reported that there was a scrivener's error on the agenda. Purchase Report C should state FY2027 Purchases, not FY2026 Purchases. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

3. BR8383 – Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement: 2026-2029 IDOT Highway Construction Careers Training Program

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves an Intergovernmental Agreement between the Illinois Department of Transportation and Rock Valley College at a not-to-exceed amount of \$429,461.00 annually for Rock Valley College to administer the 2026-2029 Illinois Department of Transportation Highway Construction Careers Training Program.

A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Cudia, to approve BR8383. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

4. BR8384 - BR8393 – 2026-2027 Dual and Articulated Credit Memorandums of Understanding (MOU)

The Board Reports read in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the Dual and Articulated Credit Memorandum of Understanding between Rock Valley College and:

- a. Belvidere Community Unit School District #100 (BR8384)
- b. Christian Life Schools (BR8385)
- c. Harlem Consolidated School District #122 (BR8386)
- d. Hononegah Community High School District #207 (BR8387)

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- e. Keith Country Day School (BR8388)
- f. Meridian Community Unit School District #223 (BR8389)
- g. North Boone Community Unit School District #200 (BR8390)
- h. Pecatonica Community Unit School District #321 (BR8391)
- i. Rockford Christian High School (BR8392)
- j. South Beloit Community Unit School District #320 (BR8393)

A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Cudia, to approve BR8384 – BR8393. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

5. BR8394 - BR8399 – 2026-2027 Running Start Intergovernmental Agreements (IGA)

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the Running Start Intergovernmental Agreement between Rock Valley College and:

- a. Belvidere Community Unit School District #100 (BR8394)
- b. Durand Community Unit School District #322 (BR8395)
- c. Harlem Consolidated School District #122 (BR8396)
- d. North Boone Community Unit School District #200 (BR8397)
- e. Pecatonica Community Unit School District #321 (BR8398)
- f. South Beloit Community Unit School District #320 (BR8399)

A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Cudia, to approve BR8394 – BR8399. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

6. BR8400 – Senior Semester Intergovernmental Agreements (IGA)

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the Senior Semester Intergovernmental Agreement between Rock Valley College and North Boone Community Unit School District #200.

A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Student Trustee Espinoza, to approve BR8400. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Other Business

1. Unfinished Business:

A. Trustee Nelson stated that he will contact the President's Office regarding his questions about the minutes from the April 14, 2026, Committee of the Whole meeting, and the April 28, 2026, Final Meeting of the Present Board, Reorganization Meeting, and the First Meeting of the Newly Organized Board of Trustees.

B. Trustee Trojan reminded Administration about the questions he asked on April 14, 2026.

C. Dr. Barnes shared a flyer with the trustees regarding the Cultural Excellence and Belonging Summer Conference being held on June 11-12, 2026, in the RVC Gym.

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2. New Business:

A. The Student Trustee report was walked in because the President's Office did not receive it on time to put it into the packet.

B. In order to celebrate the Starlight Theatre's 60th season, each trustee received an envelope with two season tickets. These tickets can be used by trustees, their constituents, or family and friends.

C. Senator Dave Syverson and his wife will attend Starlight's *Wizard of Oz* show on June 6. He is a RVC distinguished alumnus and was in a production of *Wizard of Oz* at Guilford High School.

Updates/Reports

1. President's Update

- Commencement season is nearly over, but some students are still taking classes that will impact whether or not they will graduate this year.
- Last week, RVC held the Workforce Empowerment Initiative (WEI) and Raising Aspirations through an Inclusive Student Experience (RAISE) completion ceremonies. The Highway Construction Careers and Training Program will hold their completion ceremony on June 4.
- RVC has seen growth in their completion numbers: 1,015 total graduates as compared to 865 in 2023; 760 students completed a certificate compared to 568 in 2023; 263 students graduated with an Associate of Applied Science or Associate of Science degree; 281 students graduated with an Associate of Arts degree.
- Dr. Spearman thanked the trustees (Kristen Simpson, Bob Trojan, John Nelson, and Gloria Cudia) and past presidents and their wives (Dr. Karl and Carol Jacobs, Dr. Jack and Janna Becherer, and Mike and Crystal Mastroianni) for attending the 60th commencement held at 6:00 p.m. on May 15.
- The ribbon cutting for the Downtown West campus will take place on Friday, August 14, at 10:00 a.m. The campus will open for the Fall semester on Monday, August 17, 2026.
- Dr. Spearman extended an apology about the errors on the agenda; he also ensured Trustee Trojan that the majority of his questions would be answered by May 27, 2026.

2. Leadership Team Update

- Dr. Patrick Peyer announced the many athletic accomplishments for the 2026 Spring season: the women's softball team participated in the National tournament and finished 12th in the nation; the men's baseball team wrapped up an outstanding season with an overall record of 36-18, and qualified for the Region 4 Final Four; the cumulative athletic GPA was 3.1, which is a department record. Dr. Peyer also thanked several individuals and departments for their involvement in commencement activities.
- Vice President Heather Snider provided enrollment updates for FY26 and FY27. The data was as of May 22, 2026, when Colleague shutdown for the SaaS migration. Summer I enrollment is 5% behind last year, 1% ahead of budget, and 96% to the stretch goal. FY26 is closing strong with enrollments being 3% ahead of last year, 7% ahead of budget, and 3% ahead of the stretch goal. Registration will re-open for Summer II and Fall after the SaaS migration.

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Summer II enrollment is 13% behind last year, 11% ahead of budget, and 7% ahead of the stretch goal. Fall enrollment is 1% ahead of last year, 67% to budget, and 64% to the stretch goal.

- Dr. Hansen Stewart reminded trustees that the Highway Construction Careers and Training Program will hold their completion ceremony on June 4 at 3:00 p.m. This program boasts a 100% completion rate.
- Vice President Rick Jenks provided a reminder about the SaaS upgrade, which will be completed by Monday, June 1. The IT team is monitoring the upgrade. Mr. Jenks also confirmed that the Stenstrom Student Center bridge project is finished and has passed inspection for public use.
- Vice President Ellen Olson announced that the finance department successfully closed on the 2026 Working Cash Bonds, and that the FY27 Public Budget Hearing will take place on June 23, 2026, before the Regular Board of Trustees meeting.

3. Student Trustee Update

- Student Trustee Sarah Ortiz Espinoza shared her background, her studies at RVC, and her goals for serving on the Board of Trustees over the next year.

4. RVC Liaison Report

- Trustee Trojan addressed the shortage of applicants for engineering scholarships and his concern regarding this matter. For this year's Foundation scholarships, they received 697 applications with \$825K available for awards.

Trustee Bob Trojan left the meeting at 6:20 p.m.

5. ICCTA Report

- Trustee Nelson notified the board that Illinois Community College Trustees Association (ICCTA) held its final meeting of the year on May 6-7. Elections have taken place for the upcoming year. He encouraged other board members to get involved in ICCTA, and once again thanked Trustee Cudia for her upcoming attendance at the ICCTA Awards Banquet in June. Further, he reported that funding for community colleges is expected to remain flat.

6. Trustee Comments

- Trustee Goldsmith commented on the success of this year's Caskey lecture and the impact of retiring professor, Dr. Michelle Rotert.
- Trustee Cudia echoed praise for outgoing Student Trustee Blake and commended the administration for the seamless organization and execution of numerous end-of-year ceremonies and celebrations.
- Trustee Simpson reported that she attended seven ceremonies and particularly enjoyed seeing several relatives and/or acquaintances graduate.
- Trustee Trojan highlighted his attendance at four commencement ceremonies, noting it was "heartwarming" to see five recipients of his scholarship graduate during the respiratory care pinning ceremony.
- Chairman Gorski reiterated thanks to outgoing Student Trustee Blake and praised incoming Student Trustee Espinoza for her willingness to step up and serve in this capacity.

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7. Personnel Report (BR8401)- Information only; the Personnel Report was accepted as presented with no questions.

8. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Report- Information only; the FOIA was accepted as presented with no questions.

Next Meetings

The next Committee of the Whole meeting will be held on June 9, 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 June 23, 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.

Adjourn to Closed Session

At 6:34 p.m., Trustee Nelson 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) 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); and/or 3) Security procedures and the use of personnel and equipment to respond to an actual, a threatened, or a reasonably potential danger to the safety of employees, students, staff, the public, or public property per Section 2 (c) (8), all in accordance with the Illinois Open Meetings Act.

Reconvene Open Session

At 7:09 p.m., Trustee Nelson made a motion, 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.

Adjourn

At 7:11 p.m., a motion was made by Trustee Nelson, seconded by Student Trustee Espinoza, 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

