

**Illinois Community College District #511
Rock Valley College
3301 North Mulford Road
Rockford, IL 61114**

**Board of Trustees Special Meeting – RVC Downtown-West Update
October 17, 2023, 5:15 p.m.**

MINUTES

Call to Order

The Special meeting of the Board of Trustees of Community College District No. 511, Winnebago, Boone, DeKalb, McHenry, Ogle, and Stephenson Counties, Illinois, convened in Room 0214, known as the Performing Arts Room (PAR), in the Educational Resource Center (ERC) on the main campus of Rock Valley College on Tuesday, October 17, 2023. Board Chair Gloria Cudia called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

Roll Call

The following trustees were present at roll call:

Ms. Gloria Cardenas Cudia	Mr. Bob Trojan
Mr. Paul Gorski	Mr. John Nelson
Mr. Richard Kennedy	Ms. Crystal Soltow
Student Trustee Juan Noguera	

The following trustee was absent: Ms. Kristen Simpson

Board Secretary Trojan announced there was a quorum and the meeting continued.

Also in attendance: Dr. Howard Spearman, President; Dr. Amanda Smith, Vice President Liberal Arts and Adult Education/Chief Academic Officer; Mr. Rick Jenks, Vice President Operations/Chief Operations Officer; Mr. Jim Handley, Vice President Human Resources; Ms. Ellen Olson, Vice President Finance/Chief Financial Officer; Ms. Heather Snider, Vice President Institutional Effectiveness and Communications; Dr. Patrick Peyer, Vice President Student Affairs; Mr. Keith Barnes, Vice President Equity and Inclusion; Dr. Hansen Stewart, Vice President Industry Partnerships and Community Engagement; Ms. Ann Kerwitz, Assistant to the President; Ms. Betsy Saucedo, Assistant to the President; Attorney Matthew Gardner, Robbins Schwartz.

Communications and Petitions (Public Comments)

1. Ms. Cathy Brown , representing WGC (Westgate), spoke in favor of the new Rock Valley College downtown location.
2. Ms. Ann Thompson Kelly, former Rockford alderwoman, spoke in favor of building the new RVC downtown campus. On behalf of the Westgate Coalition, NAACP and Eliminating Racism, she offered to host an evening meeting for the Board of Trustees.
3. Alderman Jeff Bailey, representing Rockford's 13th ward, spoke in favor of building the new RVC downtown campus.

Presentation: RVC Downtown-West Update

Dr. Howard Spearman opened the discussion by stating the purpose of the special meeting is to have an in-depth discussion about the RVC Downtown-West project. In preparation for the meeting, Administration solicited questions from trustees, and received 10 from Trustees Trojan and Gorski. All of the trustees have received the presentation, a summary and the questions posed by trustees via email. Due to the complexity of the presentation, Dr. Spearman requested that trustees ask any additional questions after each section. He added that he has been invited over the last several weeks to speak to constituents about the new downtown facility, and thanked the community members for participating in tonight's meeting. Speakers for the Downtown-West Update will be:

- Mr. Rick Jenks, vice president of operations
- Ms. Heather Snider, vice president of institutional effectiveness and communications
- Dr. Hansen Stewart, vice president of industry partnerships and community engagement
- Dr. Amanda Smith, vice president of liberal arts and adult education
- Ms. Ellen Olson, vice president of finance

Facilities Renovation and Maintenance History

Dr. Spearman introduced Chief Operations Officer Rick Jenks who reviewed the Facilities Renovation and Maintenance History including the following:

- The history of the College's downtown campus commitments
- New RVC Downtown Cost Estimate
- Stenstrom Center for Career Education (SCCE) Notes
- Allocated Expenses for Past, Present and Future
- Top Construction Priorities
- Cost Increases for RVC Downtown
- CLII Used for Automotive Location

Questions, Comments and Answers:

1. For the benefit of community members who are present, Trustee Gorski explained that the Stenstrom Center has been sold to RPS 205. He noted that trustees have reviewed this subject often in the past, and although trustees are not against the downtown location; they're dealing with sticker shock due to the increased estimate of the projected cost. He thanked Administrators for bringing this information to trustees as soon as they knew about it.
2. What is the cost per square foot for CLII and the Performing Arts Venue? The estimated cost is \$475 per square foot for new construction, \$350 per square foot for remodel.
3. Can you show a net cost change? Yes, we can add the cost to add cost of POM, police, and other personnel.
4. If construction begins in 2024-2025, what years are the architects using to calculate their cost estimate? The DKA architects based their projected calculations on 2024 and 2025.
5. What is the total cost of bond amount? Ellen will cover that later.
6. Adding Police, Fire and Automotive downtown is a surprise. Would automotive be a better fit on property adjacent to the Advanced Technology Center? If there is not much in CLII now, are we better off tearing it down? During the 8-9 months of negotiations with RPS 205 to purchase the Stenstrom Center, placing Automotive downtown was explained to the Board numerous times. Placing Police and Fire training has also been mentioned several times. The Belvidere property was purchased for other reasons. Although the Automotive program could go in the ATC, having it in downtown Rockford will place it closer to that part of the community. Previous direction from the Board and Dr. Spearman indicated that Automotive would be in the downtown area. Although there

have been conversations by previous Board members and administrators about putting Automotive at the ATC, there is not enough existing space for both Automotive and E-vehicle training. It also has been shared with the Board that E-vehicle training would stay with Automotive at the downtown location. College personnel have visited other community colleges and confirmed that E-vehicle training is an add-on component to automotive training.

7. Student Trustee Noguera commented that he has surveyed students regarding the Automotive and E-vehicle programs. Students have responded that having Automotive in downtown Rockford and E-vehicles at the ATC in Belvidere would create an undue hardship for students having to travel between locations.
8. Are you comfortable with other cost estimates in the Facilities Master Plan? Although they were done by a different architect, Mr. Jenks is confident in the estimates.
9. Wouldn't Automotive fit better at the ATC than downtown Rockford? Expanding the College's footprint to our underrepresented constituents on the west side of Rockford is part of the Access and DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) components in the College's Strategic Plan. Placing Automotive at the ATC would require new construction, which may not be a cost savings.
10. Since the College is consolidating its footprint in Rockford, where will the Cold Forming program go? The College is not sure as of now, but it will be downtown.

Data Trends and Enrollment Projections

Ms. Heather Snider, vice president of institutional effectiveness and communications, reviewed Data Trends and Enrollment Projections, including the following:

- Outcomes of Past investments
- Labor Market Demand for Downtown Programs
- Enrollment Trends and Projections
- Community Outlook

Questions, Comments and Answers:

1. Trustee Trojan would like to see the enrollment trend for the aviation and engineering programs further back than three years following the opening of those new buildings. Complete information on this was presented to trustees about this time last year.
2. Since aviation, engineering, and the ATC required additional staff and programming following the opening of the new buildings, what will be added programming downtown and will additional staff be needed? New programs may include Fire Science, Human Services, Diesel Service Mechanics and Collision Repair.
3. What is in adult education? This includes GED programs and English as a Second Language that would help constituents in the surrounding zip codes of downtown Rockford.

Career and Technology Educations (CTE) Programs

Dr. Hansen Stewart, vice president of industry partnerships and community engagement, then presented information on Career and Technology Education (CTE) Programs including:

- Auto Body and Collision Repair Trends
- Automotive Service Trends
- Electric Vehicle Service Trends
- Diesel Service Trends

Questions, Comments and Answers:

1. Will fewer workers be needed to do repair work on electric vehicles compared to gas-powered vehicles. Dr. Stewart will check with the advisory board to get their thoughts.
2. Dr. Spearman added that the College needs to be flexible in order to provide training for both non-credit and credit programs. For example, the Rockford Mass Transit asked the College to provide training for their employees, and we were able to respond.

Liberal Arts and Adult Education Programs

Dr. Amanda Smith, vice president of liberal arts and adult education, presented information regarding Liberal Arts and Adult Education Programs proposed for the new downtown site including:

- Early Childhood Education
- Human Services
- Public Safety
- Community Services
- Community Space

Questions, Comments and Answers:

1. Dr. Smith confirmed that the goal is to create a space for internal and external events for the community to build up the culture of education.
2. Winnebago County's one percent sales tax created the Winnebago County Mental Health Board, and grant and partnership opportunities may be available for additional funding.

Debt Service – Bonds

Ms. Ellen Olson, vice president of finance/chief financial officer, presented information on Debt Service – Bonds including:

- Existing debt service
- Current debt service payment

Questions, Comments and Answers:

1. As of June 30, 2022, the legal debt margin of the College was \$134,429.97. With the principal bond repayment in FY2023 of \$10,670,000, thus reducing outstanding bond indebtedness to \$45,055,000, the legal debt margin of the College as of June 30, 2023 is \$160,822.075.
2. Does the existing debt service include any Capital Development Board (CDB) money for downtown? No. The College has been waiting about 10 years for the CDB to release funds for Classroom Building II (CLII).
3. If we get funds from CDB while we're building downtown, how do we handle fixing CLII at same time? We have no answer for that right now.
4. What is cost to move staff and programs out of CLII if we cannot use it? The College has adequate funds so that staff can be moved out of CLII without bonding.
5. Can the College start the needed work on CLII now rather than wait for CDB? The Board needs to understand the seriousness of the needed work on CLII, as it may require \$35 million.
6. What percentage of CLII is being used? If it's not many, there's no need to renovate it. The building is used by both credit and non-credit programs.
7. Due to the high occupancy rate in the Student Center, some programs would be moved to CLII to give students more space in the Student Center.
8. Is there value to keep CLII up and running? CLII is about 80% to 90% full with office space, not classroom space. An effort was made to use it following COVID, as we've

learned that if we want students to stay on campus, we need to give them space. We've found that many high school students hated online learning during COVID, and, as a result, there is an increase in face-to-face classes.

Vice President Olson announced that in November, a resolution will be brought for trustees' consideration that will permit the College to reimburse itself for a portion of the capital expenditures associated with the new facility in downtown Rockford. These items may include design costs, architecture and engineering services, demolition and potential EPA mitigation costs.

10-Year Projections and 10-Year Forecast Assumptions

Vice President Ellen Olson continued her presentation by explaining the 10-Year Projections and 10-Year Forecast Assumptions.

Questions, Comments and Answers:

1. Is the College looking to legislators for additional funding? Yes. Local legislators have been invited to attend a legislative breakfast to be held Wednesday, October 18 to hear more about the College's Facilities Master Plan and RVC downtown.
2. A flat 110,000 credit hours indicates no increase in downtown enrollment. Dr. Spearman agrees that the College needs to increase non-credit student enrollment; the increased enrollment will be a combination of both credit and non-credit hours, as the 110,000 is only credit hours.
3. Can we afford bonding for downtown? How? Yes, the College can afford bonding \$52 million for downtown. Bonds are paid from the tax levy and would increase the levy by three cents.
4. How do we pay for CLII? The total cost is estimated at \$35 million if trustees decide to renovate CLII. Because this is a CDB project, the College's cost would be about \$13 million to renovate both CLII and the Performing Arts Venue (PAV). (CLII-25% and PAV 25% = \$13 million)
5. Since the College's funding comes from taxes, tuition and state, and based on hours over 10 years, what is the projection of the overall population of students the College is looking for? The number of high school graduates is decreasing, which is why we're looking at ways to upskill adults in the workforce.
6. Is the College looking at any downtown partnerships that would help that? Yes, the College is building with the adult community in mind. Remember, the Rockford area has an estimated 35,000 adults who do not have a high school education.
7. What percent of students need financial aid? Approximately 50% receive grants and/or loans.
8. Funds 01 and 02 show a net loss in FY2028; what are your concerns about that? The College is looking at identifying enrollment growth and patterns, especially the need to focus on adult education and short-term credentials.
9. Why do projections go to 2034? It seems too far. Three years isn't enough. Trustee Gorski added that he appreciates the longer report, as it shows a shortfall in FY2028, only four years out.

Board Chair Cudia thanked administrators for answering the many questions and expressed her appreciation for the 10-year projections.

In summing up the presentations, Dr. Spearman identified possible next steps.

1. Trustees need to reach a consensus on how to move forward.
2. The College can ask the architects to create different building designs.
3. The architect team will reach out to the community for input.
4. Determine the bonding amount, with or without CLII.

Vice President Ellen Olson added that bonding is a six-month process and will need at least a two-month discussion at the Board level.

Trustee Trojan added that he would like to see how Automotive could fit into the Advanced Technology Center, especially if Stellantis is there.

Date of Next Decennial Committee Meeting: October 24, 2023, 5:15 p.m. The meeting will be held in Room 1300, Advanced Technology Center (ATC), 1400 Big Thunder Blvd., Belvidere, IL. *Location for this meeting only.*


Date of Next Regular Meeting: October 24, 2023, 5:45 p.m. The meeting will be held in Room 1300, Advanced Technology Center (ATC), 1400 Big Thunder Blvd., Belvidere, IL. *Location for this meeting only.*

Date of Next Committee of the Whole Meeting: November 7, 2023, 5:15 p.m. The meeting will be held in Room 0214, Performing Arts Room (PAR), Educational Resource Center (ERC) on the main campus.

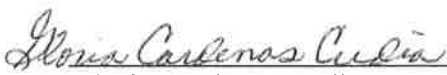
Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, at 7:30 p.m. a motion to adjourn was made by Trustee Nelson, seconded by Trustee Trojan. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Submitted by Ann L. Kerwitz



Robert Trojan, Secretary



Gloria Cardenas Cudia, Board Chair