

Rock Valley College
Illinois Community College District No. 511
1400 Big Thunder Rd. Belvidere, IL
Advanced Technology Center (ATC), Room 1300
ROCK VALLEY COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES REGULAR MEETING
October 22, 2024, 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 Room 1300, at the Advanced Technology Center (ATC) of Rock Valley College. Board Chair Robert Trojan called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

Roll Call

Mr. Robert Trojan	Mr. Richard Kennedy
Ms. Gloria Cardenas Cudia	Mr. Paul Gorski
Mr. Kirsten Simpson	Ms. Crystal Soltow
Mr. John Nelson	Nico Mikos, Student Trustee

Also in attendance: Dr. Howard Spearman, President; Dr. Amanda Smith, Vice President of Academic Affairs/Chief Academic Officer; Ms. Terrica Huntley, Interim 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. Keith Barnes, Vice President of Equity and Inclusion; 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 Luethje, Executive Assistant to the Vice President of Operations; Attorney Joe Perkoski, Robbins Schwartz.

Board Member Attendance by Means Other than Physical Presence

There were no Board members attending by means other than physical presence.

Communications and Petitions (Public Comment)

Paul Nolley, executive director of Project First Rate, stated that in light of the fact that the Board of Trustees is being asked to make an exception to the College's responsible bid policy, he highlighted the purpose and the benefits of these policies and using them for taxpayer construction. Following, he acknowledged that by overriding apprenticeship and training requirements for certain aspects of construction, these protections will be weakened. Compromising taxpayer protection for the sake of expediency could have intended consequences. A strong responsible bidder policy equals strong protection for policymakers, constituents, taxpayers, and students at RVC. He hopes there is not a divergence from the College's strong track record on this issue.

Recognition of Visitors

There were no visitors to be recognized.

General Presentation

Attorney Joe Perkoski stated there is a point at issue with the preferred bidder who came forward to install the paint booth for the Downtown West Project. The administration provided a recommendation to suspend the policy for only this bid, which is admissible by the College's Board Policy, however Trustees Gorski and Nelson questioned the corroboration of the administration's recommendation. Robbins Schwartz attorneys provided an opinion letter that stated the college's recommendation is compliant and there is no violation of any laws.

Trustee Gorski stated that the administration could have included the manufacturing specifications in the bid. To establish strong business relationships, the College must bid on all products and allow extensions when necessary. In his opinion, the administration should have notified the board in August to layout the plan and felt the decision was arbitrary. He then asked the attorney's recommendation to the Board for the vote. Attorney Perkoski reiterated the recommendation provided by administration to the Board. Trustee Gorski asked Chair Trojan about the separation of item A and B on Purchase Report B (BR8206-B).

Trustee Nelson stated that College administration ignored board policy. Attorney Perkoski restated that the administration's approach was an attempt to achieve the objective of getting the paint booth so that the project could proceed; it was their solution. Nonetheless, it is the Board's decision to approve that approach. Trustee Nelson added that the administration could have introduced alternatives to the Board.

Chair Trojan concluded that the bidding process itself has been sound.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Trustee Cudia, seconded by Trustee Kennedy, to approve the minutes of the September 10, 2024, Committee of the Whole meeting and the September 24, 2024, Regular meeting. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Action Items

1. BR 8205 – Claims Sheet

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 September 1, 2024, to September 30, 2024. The total is \$2,465,338.75.

A motion was made by Trustee Cudia, seconded by Student Trustee Mikos, to approve Board Report 8205. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

2. BR 8206-A – Purchase Report A – FY25 Purchases

It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the marked item for purchase on Board Report 8206-A, Purchase Report – A – FY25 Purchases.

A. Air One Equipment, Inc.	South Elgin, IL	\$41,050.00
B. Stratus Networks	Peoria Heights, IL	\$80,000.00 Not to Exceed
C. Helm Service	Freeport, IL	\$109,280.56
D. Terracon Consultants, Inc	Downers Grove, IL	\$50,000.00 Not to Exceed

Trustee Gorski questioned if any changes have been made to BR8206-A since the Committee of the Whole (CotW) meeting. VP Olson explained Purchase Report A was changed to move the snow removal bid and the paint booth bid to Purchase Report B. Item D, Terracon Consultants, Inc was initially an amendment, however it's been determined that it is not an amendment because it hadn't been presented to the Board prior to CotW. Another note, Trustee Gorski shared with VP Jenks that on behalf of Lee County, Trustee Gorski contacted state representatives and senators to contact the IL Dept. of Revenue to clarify Stratus's authority to charge specifically one of the fees that they are charging the College; He will share any responses to VP Jenks. VP Jenks gave appreciation, adding that the College is working together with City of Rockford and Rock Public Schools 205 to find a solution.

A motion was made by Trustee Gorski, seconded by Student Trustee Mikos, to approve Board Report 8206-A. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

3. BR 8206-B – Purchase Report B – FY25 Purchases

It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the marked item for purchase on Board Report 8206-B, Purchase Report – B – FY25 Purchases.

A. Khione Management Services LLC	Cicero, IL	\$28,790.00 Not to Exceed
B. Platinum Equipment, LLC	Shakopee, MN	\$396,194.00

Regarding Item A., Snow Removal Services, Chair Trojan motioned, seconded by Trustee Nelson to separate item A Snow Removal Services and Item B Professional Services and vote on them separately. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Chair Trojan motioned, seconded by Student Trustee Mikos, to reject all bids and explained that according to our legal counsel, Section 3-27.1 of the Community College Act, the Board of Trustees must “award all contracts for purchase of supplies, materials or work involving an expenditure in excess of \$25,000 ... to the lowest responsible bidder.” There are a number of exceptions to Section 3-27.1, and when one of the exceptions applies, the Board does not have to award to the “lowest responsible bidder” and has the discretion to award a contract to any vendor of its choosing. In this case, exception “(j) applies: and it reads: “contracts for repair, maintenance, remodeling, renovation, or construction, or a single project involving an expenditure not to exceed \$50,000 and not involving a change or increase in the size, type, or extent of an existing facility.”

Chair Trojan restated that the Board will select a new vendor for the snow removal services. At the Committee of the Whole meeting, Trustee Soltow proposed to change the preferred vendor to Minnihan's Tree Service LLC because it is local to the district.

The motion to reject all bids was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Chair Trojan motioned, seconded by Trustee Soltow, to accept the proposal of Minnihan's Tree Services LLC in Garden Prairie, IL for \$28,800. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Chair Trojan motioned, seconded by Trustee Cudia, to suspend board policy 5:10.120 Purchasing which includes Responsible Bidder Compliance.

Trustee Gorski stated, under Robert’s Rules, under sections 25 and 67, motion to suspend cannot be applied to bylaws, charters, policies, laws, or ordinances. Suspension can only be applied to standing rules and parliamentary rules. It would be an ad hoc amendment to board policy without a first and a second reading. Attorney Perkoski clarified the College’s board policies allow the Board to suspend any policy if they don’t violate the law. The policy can be found in the Board Bylaws under section 1:10.070 Board Policies Section 3. Suspension.

The motion failed by majority roll call vote. Trustees Nelson, Simpson, Gorski, Kennedy, and Student Trustee Mikos (Advisory) voted no. Trustees Soltow, Cudia, and Trojan voted yes.

Attorney Perkoski advised Chair Trojan of the following two options: 1) table the motion to the next meeting, or 2) vote on the paint booth bid with the policy in place. Chair Trojan tabled Item B Professional Services to the next meeting.

President Spearman asked for a recommendation on how to move forward with rebidding for the paint booth. Attorney Perkoski’s recommended addressing the specifications that meet the Responsible Bidding Ordinance (RBO) requirements, including the apprenticeship program when sending out the bid, thus College administration and consultants can identify bidders who meet the RBO requirements.

Trustee Cudia asked about the company that requested more information and why they were denied; Trustee Gorski confirmed that it was Miller Engineering. Also, from her understanding, the warranty is the key factor for Platinum, and any issues afterwards would have a cost. VP Jenks explained the process of having or not having a warranty. Next, she asked if there would be a delay for the opening of the Downtown West Campus. VP Jenks would respond at a later time after consulting with the Architects.

4. BR 8207 – 2024 Tax Levy year and Truth-In-Taxation-Hearing

It is recommended that the Rock Valley College Board of Trustees approves the following estimates for the amount of taxes necessary to be raised by taxation for the year 2024 as follows:

Educational Purposes – Fund 01	19,949,394
Operations and Maintenance Purposes – Fund 02	3,469,460
Protection, Health, Life, or Safety – Fund 03	1,500,000
Financial Audit Purposes – Fund 11	60,000
Liability Protection Settlement Fund – Fund 12	
Liability Insurance /Tort & Risk Management	1,510,000
Social Security and Medical Insurance	490,000
Total Tax Levy	26,978,854

The total tax levy is \$26, 978,854. This represents a 12.14% increase, excluding debt service, over the 2023 tax levy. To provide public disclosure, a hearing on the proposed 2024 Tax Levy under the Truth in Taxation law of the State of Illinois will be held on December 17, 2024, at 5:15 p.m. in the Educational Resource Center (ERC), Room 0214, Performing Arts Room (PAR), on the main campus of Rock Valley College at 3301 N. Mulford Road, Rockford, Illinois. Rock Valley College will publish the Notice of said hearing as required by Statute.

A motion was made by Trustee Gorski, seconded by Trustee Nelson, to approve Board Report 8207. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

5. BR 8208 – Resolution Calling the Parameters Issuance of Working Cash Bonds Not to Exceed \$14,700,000.

It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the resolution to provide for the issue of not to exceed \$14,700,000 General Obligation Community College Bonds, of the District for the purpose of creating a working cash fund of the district, providing for the levy of a direct annual tax sufficient to pay the principal and interest on said bonds, and authorizing the proposed sale of said bonds to the purchase thereof. **Attorney Reviewed.**

A motion was made by Trustee Gorski, seconded by Trustee Nelson, to approve Board Report 8208. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Trustee Nelson commented that this bond needs to be appropriated if we are going to be reimbursed by the state and it is for the renovation for classrooms on the main campus.

6. BR 8209 – Personnel Report

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the following personnel actions listed on Board Report 8209.

A motion was made by Trustee Gorski, seconded by Cudia, to approve Board Report 8202. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

7. BR 8210 – Second Reading: Adoption of Board Policy Manual Article 1: Board of Trustees Bylaws

It is recommended that the Board of Trustees adopts Article 1: Board of Trustees Bylaws of the Rock Valley College Board Policy Manual as reviewed and revised by Robbins Schwartz attorneys and College Administration.

A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Kennedy, to approve Board Report 8210. Trustees Soltow, Cudia, Simpson, Kennedy, and Trojan voted yes. Trustees Gorski and Nelson voted No. Student Trustee Mikos (Advisory) was absent during the time of the vote. The motion was approved by majority roll call vote.

Other Business

1. New Business

There was no new business.

2. Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business.

Updates/Reports

1. President's Update

Dr. Spearman expressed his gratitude to the 60th Anniversary Celebration planning committee for a wonderful event on Thursday, Oct. 10. The event celebrated RVC's 60th Anniversary, attracted students, employees, and community members. On October 17, Rock Valley College Foundation hosted the 60th Anniversary Luncheon for donors, alumni, and retirees. Dr. Spearman thanked all the trustees, students, alumni, employees, and community members who attended the events to celebrate RVC.

2. Leadership Team Updates

- Keith Barnes, vice president of equity and inclusion, congratulated Eric Brown, ADA compliance coordinator, for receiving the Advocate of the Year Award for his time and work with RAMP, a non-profit, non-residential Center for Independent Living (CIL). Mr. Barnes gave recognition to Meilyn Morales and Omar Ramirez for being appointed as co-chairs for the Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI). Mr. Barnes gave appreciation to Dr. George Hernandez, psychology professor, and Dr. Kenneth Coleman, dean of advising and retention, for their service and leadership as co-chairs of the HSI Committee. Lastly, Mr. Barnes announced the Fall 2024 DEI Symposium on Oct. 30, 2024 at 12:00 p.m. in the SSC Atrium, and invited board members, students, and employees to join for a lively discussion.
- Dr. Patrick Peyer, vice president of student affairs, shared that Rock Valley College (RVC) hosted the annual State University Transfer Fair on Oct. 2 and the Private Illinois College and University Transfer Fair on Oct. 23. In addition, RVC held its annual Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society Induction Ceremony on Oct. 18, inducting 60 new students.
- Terrica Huntley, interim vice president of human resources, shared that the RVC Talent Acquisition Specialists, Gigi Santana and Betsy Saucedo, are completing Advanced Recruitment Training Systems (AIRS). The Benefits team is preparing for the upcoming Open Enrollment period for eligible employees. The Golden Eagles Scholars Leadership Academy Gold Tier started its second cohort on Friday, Oct. 18, and the Blue Tier will start its second cohort next month.
- Heather Snider, vice president of institutional effectiveness and communications, expressed her gratitude to the trustees, faculty, staff, students, and community members who participated in the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Site Visit on Oct. 14 and 15. Ms. Snider gave a special thanks to Sonnie Glusman, executive assistant, and Dr. Danielle Hardesty, philosophy professor, for taking lead with the subcommittees. The official report will come at a later date. Ms. Snider and the HLC Assessment Academy team attended the Results Forum in St. Charles, IL, marking their graduation from the academy. Lastly, she announced that the College, in partnership with David Sidney of Place Foundry and Dominick Demonica of DKA, will host a series of four community engagement sessions for RVC Downtown West. The first session will be on Oct. 29 at 5:20 p.m. at the Rockford Police Department Precinct 1 located at 1045 West State St. and the second session will be on Nov. 7 at 10:00 a.m. in the RVC SSC Atrium.
- Dr. Hansen Stewart, vice president of CTE and workforce development, gave an update on Manufacturing Day activities that welcomed high school students to the ATC on Oct. 4 and 18. He shared feedback from the students who raved about the Virtual Welders, TDT Simulator, riding in the Automatic Truck, and Excavator Simulator. Lastly, Dr. Stewart gave a shout out to Craig Jones, Instructor for Truck Driver Training.

- Rick Jenks, vice president of operations, provided an update on the main high-voltage power feed to the transformer that contractors stuck on Sept. 24, 2024. He gave thanks to IT, POM, the Boiler House team, Communications and Marketing, and Police teams for their hard work and quick responses to the emergency situation. To conclude, he welcomed Harold Cubillo, new director of environmental health and safety.
- Dr. Amanda Smith, vice president of academic affairs, highlighted the professional development opportunities that RVC offers three days a year to instructional employees. In addition, Dr. Terry Wandtke, professional development specialist, facilitates two additional academies: 1) the Adjunct Academy, and 2) the Academy for Non-tenure Faculty, which is provided to our 27 tenure-track faculty members. Dr. Smith gave thanks to Dr. Wandtke and the whole CITI team.
- Ellen Olson, vice president of finances, gave an update on the bond ratings with S&P Global Rating and the Series 2024 Bond Status. The College has been assigned an “AA-” long term rating and underlying rating on the outstanding general obligation debt with a stable look. Bond sales are scheduled for Tuesday, Oct. 29, and the closing is on Nov. 18.

3. ICCTA Report

There were no updates.

4. Trustee Comments

- Trustee Cudia asked for clarification on lobbying services, feedback on the ICCTA Northwest Region meeting on Oct. 1, and the HLC report.
- Trustee Gorski would like more transparency regarding bidding.
- Trustee Kennedy commented on RVC’s 60th Anniversary celebration, highlighting the growth of Rock Valley College over the years, and praised the College’s and Foundation’s efforts of bringing opportunity to the community. He expressed gratitude to the College for participating in Making Strides 2024 American Cancer Society Walk on October 5. He congratulated the women’s soccer team and softball team for having a successful season. He addressed the team efforts between the administration and the Board trying to reach the same goals, and how policies and procedures in higher education are essential to operate in a smooth, equitable manner. He stated that while the addition to the Downtown West campus will bring a positive impact for the community, the goal can be accomplished without compromising the College’s policies. Lastly, he expressed his admiration to the administration and the Board, and hoped to continue to make Rock Valley College the gold standard in our region.
- Trustee Trojan announced that the Annual Trustees Retreat will be on Jan. 25, 2025.

5. Student Trustee Report

Student Trustee Nico Mikos reported student and community events on-campus. He shared that RVC is a Rockford Early Voting Site for Rockford residents in the Karl J. Jacobs Center for Science and Math, room 0208. The Starlight Theatre Friends Reception will announce the 2025 Season to theatre donors on Oct. 22 in the Student Atrium from 5:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. On Oct. 23, the Black Male Completion Initiative Club is having a forum from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. in the Stenstrom Student Center, room 1126. Rock Valley College is hosting a Trunk or Treat event in Parking Lot 1 on Friday, Oct. 25 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. On Oct. 30, Fall Festival Day will be held at the SSC Grounds & Gazebo 001 from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

6. RVC Foundation Liaison Report

There were no updates.

7. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Report

The FOIA Report was accepted as presented.

Adjourn to Closed Session

There was no closed session.

Next Meeting

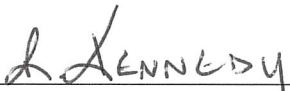
The next Committee of the Whole meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 5, 2024, at 5:15 p.m. The meeting will be held in the Performing Arts room (PAR, Room 0214) located in the Educational Resource Center (ERC) on the main campus.

The next Regular Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 19, 2024, at 5:15 p.m. The meeting will be held in the Performing Arts room (PAR, Room 0214) located in the Educational Resources Center (ERC) on the main campus.

Adjournment

At 6:52 p.m., a motion was made by Trustee Nelson, seconded by Student Trustee Mikos, to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Submitted by Araceli Olvera


Richard Kennedy, Secretary


Robert Trojan, Board Chair