Minutes

I. Call To Order

a. Call to Order – The meeting was called to order at 6:08 p.m.

b. Pledge of Allegiance – Member Monica Sanchez led the Pledge of Allegiance.

c. Roll Call – Citizens' Oversight Committee (COC) Members present: Chair Fernando Centeno, Jr., Josefina Canchola, Dr. Monica Sanchez, Andrew Moraga, Robert Ruiz, Esi Mathis, and Adrian Garcia (Committee Members absent: Dr. Francisco Hidalgo, Margie Rodriguez, Jose Herrera, and Christian Diaz).

d. Welcome and Introductions – All COC Members present introduced themselves.

e. Open Communication for Public Comment – There were no public comments.

f. Approval of Minutes – June 21, 2016 – Chair deferred the approval of the June minutes to the next meeting since there was only one member who attended the June meeting present when the September meeting was called to order.

II. Reports/Presentations

a. Role of COC Members: Bond Council Ann La Morena Rohlin, Partner at Norton Rose Fulbright, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Role of COC Members, which included the following:

1) General Obligation Bonds: taxpayer-supported debt for a school or community college district; normally, the interest on bonds is exempt from both federal and state income taxes; districts are limited in the amount of bonds they may issue at one time.
2) Proposition 39: the District called its bond election under Prop. 39, which permits approval with 55% or more of the vote; requires a project list; and, requires establishment of a citizens’ oversight committee (COC).

3) Procedural Steps for the District: call the election, which must be consolidated with another election such as a primary or a board election; prepare a measure setting out the dollar amount authorized and its general purposes; prepare a project list; County Registrar of Voters prints the information in the ballot pamphlet; and the voters approve the bond measure/project list; the District then appoints a COC; issues the first series of general obligation bonds under the election; and begins to construct/furnish/equip projects as determined by the governing board.

4) COC’s Primary Duties, under the Education Code, are to: review information provided to the COC by the District as to the expenditure of bond proceeds; review an annual financial audit and a performance audit provided by the District to ensure bond proceeds are being spent properly; advise the public as to whether the bond construction program is being run in compliance with the law.

5) Most Important Obligation of the COC: at least annually, prepare a report to the taxpayers describing the bond construction program, identifying its successes and shortcomings, and ensure this report is posted on the District’s website; it is recommended that copies of such reports also be made available in hard copy at District sites.

6) Committee Administration: Prop. 39 requires that a COC include no less than seven (7) members with the following mandatory categories: a) an active member of a senior citizen’s organization, b) an active member of a “bona fide” taxpayers’ association, c) a representative of a local business, d) an enrolled student who is also active in student government, e) a person active in the District’s foundation or advisory council, and f) all other members may be simply interested in the District and its bond construction program – “at large” members.

7) Meeting Requirements such as the Brown Act

Member Sanchez asked who conducts the audit.

President Dreyfuss replied that the auditing firm that audits the District’s financials is the same auditing firm that conducts the bond’s audit.

Member Moraga asked what would happen, in the unlikely event, a member resigns from one of the required categories.

Council Rohlin explained that the District would contact her firm and that they would provide suggestions. But, considering that the Río Hondo
Community College District is a large one, she doesn’t foresee this being an issue.

Member Sanchez asked for examples of “bona fide” members.

Council Rohlin referenced a Homeowners Association as an example.

b. Tour of Campus: The COC Members were given a campus tour of the following sites on campus: Administration of Justice building; Soccer Field Complex; Fitness Center; Child Development Center; Central Plant; and the Applied Technology Center.

c. President’s Update: Superintendent/President Dreyfuss reported on the following items:

1) Enrollment – Enrollment is up at Rio Hondo College (RHC). The goal is to get 1% growth of FTES. RHC will get close to that. Students seem to be very engaged during the first few weeks of the fall semester. Unlike Mt. Sac that is flat in enrollment, RHC is able to grow at about 1%.

2) Grand Opening of the Rio Hondo Educational Center at Pico Rivera – The ribbon cutting took place on Aug. 11, 2016. Many elected officials attended and spoke at the grand opening including: Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda Solis, Congresswoman Linda Sanchez, Assemblywoman Cristina Garcia, and Senator Tony Mendoza’s District Director Ana Perez. They were all very impressed with the Educational Center, which is within the El Rancho Unified School District (ERUSD). This is the first time RHC is offering classes at the Center, which were all full, with the exception of one class that was cancelled. SWEC and EMEC’s classes are also all full. All three Centers’ enrollment are all strong.

3) ACCJC Follow-Up Report – The accreditation visiting team will be coming to RHC sometime between November 7-10, 2016.

4) Bachelor’s Degree in Automotive Technology – RHC started to offer a four-year degree in Auto Tech this fall semester. It only costs $10K at RHC to earn a bachelor’s degree in Auto Tech compared to $30K in the Cal State University system. RHC is the only community college in the state to offer this degree, and only the 2nd or 3rd college to offer this degree in the entire nation.

Member Moraga asked for the reasons as to why the other community colleges were mentioned above have been experiencing a flat enrollment.

President Dreyfuss explained that the graduation rate from high schools overall have been declining. She also mentioned that the economy is doing better. When the economy is strong, enrollment goes down. When the economy is weak, enrollment goes up.
Member Sanchez asked if RHC has partnerships with continuing education.

President Dreyfuss shared that the City of Pico Rivera has expressed interest in RHC offering classes to their employees as they believe education is important. RHC is now offering non-credit continuing education courses for Pico Rivera employees.

Member Moraga asked about the recent ITT Tech closures and if this will have a positive impact on enrollment at RHC.

President Dreyfuss informed the COC Members that a couple of RHC Deans and Directors have been looking into this, and that she is having a meeting with the Vice Presidents next week. She also explained that the problem is that ITT students paid a lot of fees, and it doesn’t seem like they are in the position to re-enroll at another college.

Member Canchola shared that there is a State Assembly bill proposing to help these students. She asked if RHC was going to make announcements to the community.

Director Retana informed the COC Members that RHC made an announcement the same week of the ITT Tech closures on social media: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn.

d. **Building Program Progress Report**: Jerome Quemada of Del Terra provided a report on the Building Program, which includes the following current and upcoming projects:

1) Bookstore and Print Shop Renovation – The start of construction began on June 8, 2016. The anticipated completion date is September 2016. The existing bookstore is 4,109 sq. ft., compared to the new area that will be 6,682 sq. ft. The existing print shop, located in the basement of the L Tower, is 937 sq. ft., compared to the new area that will be 1,760 sq. ft. This is quite an improvement. Updated photos of the renovation were shown.

2) Rio Plaza – This project is currently in the conceptual design stage. The Los Angeles County Department of Public Works funded the sidewalk from Rose Hills to College Dr. Construction of the sidewalk from Rose Hills to College Dr. started this summer and was also completed this summer. The surveying of the area to assist with the design documents of the Rio Plaza has been completed, which has been provided to the architect. The architect is working on the design documents for the County Land Developing Department. A rendering of where the tram will be picking up students, which will be ADA accessible, was shown.
3) Rio Hondo Educational Center at Pico Rivera: The general contract was awarded on June 8, 2016. The grand opening/ribbon cutting took place on August 11, 2016. The construction is nearing completion soon. Renderings of the Center were shown.

4) L-Tower Seismic Upgrade – The construction drawings were DSA approved on June 7, 2016. Construction is anticipated to start in October 2016 and go through June 2018. A conceptual rendering was shown of the renovated building.

Member Mathis asked what is currently housed in the L Tower.

President Dreyfuss shared that the College’s Institutional Research Planning Department is housed there in addition to the Foundation, Government and Community Relations, Nursing, Simulation Lab, 1-2 Classrooms; and the Print Shop.

e. Bond Quarterly Expenditure Reports: Vice President Armstrong explained there are three reports in the packet. The first report is the Projects Expenditure Summary that summarizes activities as of June 30, 2016. This report lists the different expenditures and the descriptions next to each one. The final page of this summary shows that between April and June of 2016, the College spent $872,152 quarter to date (QTD) and $170,841,227 total to date (TTD). She also noted that the Budget column includes what has been budgeted for various projects, which totals $215,134,680.

The second report titled Project Details lists the expenses per various vendors as of June 30, 2016. This detailed report is a complimentary report to the summary.

The third report titled Summary of Projects Expenditures shows the projects by numbers and descriptions with a detailed report of what was spent per fiscal year. For example, Project 18 refers to the Child Development Center (CDC), which the COC Members saw during the campus tour. Project 30 refers to the Bookstore/Printing project, which Jerry Quezada of Del Terra gave an update earlier in today’s meeting. Since this project just got started, only 1% of the budget has been spent on this project, compared to Projects 5 and 28 that have both been completed.

Member Canchola asked what happens to the difference of the amount when it is not spent.

President Dreyfuss explained that the difference is re-allocated to another bond fund project.

Member Garcia asked if the CDC will be completed.
President Dreyfuss explained that the District decided to stop this project as the need wasn’t there anymore. The difference will be re-allocated.

Member Moraga asked about the Tree Consultant and specifically what type of consultant are they providing. Is it landscaping or something else, as this seems expensive.

President Dreyfuss said that the District needs advice on what trees can be removed and not removed. This expense is not related to landscaping.

f. Election of Vice Chair: Chair Fernando Centeno, Jr. nominated Andrew Moraga as Vice Chair. Member Canchola moved the motion. Member Mathis seconded. All Committee Members voted in favor.

g. Other Business: There was no other business.

h. Future Meeting Date and Place: The next meeting will take place on December 20, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. in the Board Room. President Dreyfuss reminded everyone that on this date a photographer will take a picture of the COC Members for the Annual Report, and to please dress nicely. She also informed the COC Members that the second part of the tour will take place during the March 2017 meeting.

III. Comments from Committee Members

Member Canchola shared that during the recent CA Latino School Board Association Annual Conference she highlighted the collaboration and partnerships between RHC, ERUSD and the City of Pico Rivera, which resulted in the Rio Hondo Educational Center at Pico Center. She also shared that she highlighted Rio Hondo College’s successes at the recent Puente Program regional meeting. She invited Rio Hondo College’s leadership to encourage young Latina community college students to attend the Hispanics Organized for Political Equality (HOPE) Young Professionals Summit on Fri., Sept. 30 at the Disney Paradise Pier Hotel. More information is available on www.latinas.org.

Member Moraga had no comments.

Member Ruiz had no comments.

Member Mathis asked if all projects need to be approved beforehand.

President Dreyfuss answered "yes," and confirmed that all the projects were included in the 2004 voter-approved projects list.
Member Garcia thanked everyone for their warm welcome. He expressed that as a new COC Member, it was very nice meeting everyone.

Chair Centeno, Jr. shared that he has been receiving a lot of great feedback from many Pico Rivera residents on the Educational Center. This is a great Center for the community, which is meeting the residents' needs.

Member Sanchez agreed with Chair Centeno, Jr.’s comments about the Educational Center at Pico Rivera, where her son is currently taking an anthropology class.

IV. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m. Member Canchola moved to adjourn the meeting with a second by Member Garcia.