

**City of Rock Island  
Community Development Commission  
City Council Chambers, City Hall, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
1528 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, Rock Island, IL**

**February 16, 2026 Meeting Minutes**

**1. Call to Order**

KJ Whitley called the meeting to order at 5:35 PM.

**2. Roll Call**

KJ Whitley called the roll.

Andrea Muller, Calvin Dane, Herschel Jackson, Jeremy Crafton, KJ Whitley and Richinda Sakho were present.

Jen Osing was absent.

Staff present included Community Development Manager Nichole Mata, Housing Officer Jennifer Graff, Budget Specialist Melissa Holderfield and Urban Planner Eunice Amisah-Mensah.

No remote attendance.

**3. Public Comment**

There were no public comments.

**4. Approval of the Previous Meeting Minutes**

Crafton moved to approve the meeting minutes for January 20, 2026. Jackson seconded the motion. The motion passed on a 6-0 vote.

**5. Old Business**

Brainard presented a report regarding permit and licensing fee updates explaining that the effort was still underway but would be included as part of the 2027 budget process.

**6. New Business**

Whitley stated that we received six public service grant applications. Speakers were asked to introduce all individuals with their organization, purpose of their funding, requested amount, any match dollars that they received and what their overall budget is.

Narmin from Prairie State Legal was the first speaker. Their staff consists of six attorneys, one pro bono coordinator, one community resource specialist and three support staff. The requested amount is \$50,000 to provide civil legal services to low and moderate income residents for the people of Rock Island. Many residents face housing instability, domestic violence, loss of income, consumer debt issues, and other barriers to public benefits. In 2023 and 2024, Prairie State Legal's Moline office assisted one thousand, twenty-three clients, handling one thousand, sixty-one cases. Most of these cases were evictions, foreclosures and fair housing disputes. These funds would help with preventing evictions, homelessness, preserving safe and stable housing, assisting residents in maintaining or restoring income through public benefits and protecting residents from vulnerable exploitation and abuse. Whitley asked how many residents did they serve in 2025? Narmin stated that she doesn't have any 2025 data yet.

Jerry Jones, Director of the Martin Luther King Center was the next to speak. He brought with him one of his program managers, Mrs. Lamboi. The MLK center is requesting \$150,000 in funds to help with their summer day camp and after school program. The after school program runs from August to May and summer day camp runs from June to July. Five of the thirteen schools in the Rock Island - Milan School District are underperforming. The after school program assists ages five to seventeen years of age and the summer day camp has an age range of five to fourteen years of age. The after school program starts at 3pm and ends at 6pm and assists students with homework, life skills and academic enrichment. Summer day camp runs from 9am and ends at 3pm and assists with academic and enrichment activities, recreation, field trips and fun. Meals are provided. Another goal that wasn't listed in their application is socio-emotional development. This would include trauma informed care training for staff, parent workshops and individual and group counseling. Whitley asked if they know how many children they helped last year in the summer day camp and the after school program. Mr. Jones stated that there were sixty-five children enrolled in the after school program and one hundred twenty for the summer day camp. Whitley asked about other sources that they have to pay for these programs. Mr. Jones stated that the CDBG funds will help pay for the staff members to work with the children. They do have a state grant through Teen Reach and another state grant from R3.

Dr. Annette Clevenger, Executive Director and Founder of Narrative QC was next to speak. They are in their sixth year of operation. They are an organization that helps young adults from the ages of seventeen to twenty-nine transition from youth to adulthood. They provide one on one life coaching, life skill classes and mental health support groups that are all tailored specifically to the individual participant's goals and plans for their life. Each participant sets goals and the life coaches walk alongside them helping them make those goals happen. The participants are finding employment, gainful employment, securing housing, moving out on their own for the first time, independence, finishing high school either by graduating or getting their GED, going to college or joining the trades. Participants also learn about financing and budgeting, healthy relationships and boundaries within systems that have often been very dysfunctional for them growing up. Last year Narratives purchased their first building, which is the former Theor's building. The store will become the Story Coffee Co later on this year. This will be the first mental health workforce development program of its kind in the Quad Cities. Narratives will provide workforce development as participants will be able to work in the coffee shop. When they are struggling mentally, they can go upstairs and work with their life coach and then head back downstairs to work. The requested amount is \$25,000. Their annual budget for 2026 is \$385,274. Whitley asked about their other funding sources. Dr. Clevenger stated that they receive money from the Hubble Waterman, and Beal Trust. They have also received ARPA funds from the City of Rock Island, which is what helped them secure the building, which is completely paid for. They also have individual donors throughout the community that invest in Narratives. Dane asked when they were expecting to open up the coffee shop? Dr. Clevenger said that she wishes she could give a straight forward answer, but she's hoping for later on this year. Crafton asked how many people went through the program last year? Dr. Clevenger said that one hundred, thirty-two people went through the program last year and thirty-five of those were funded with CDBG dollars. Crafton asked if that was the number of people that enrolled or completed the program? Dr. Clevenger stated that the interesting thing about Narratives is that nobody completes the program, and will need their services less and less. Individuals that have been in the program become mentors to their peers. Crafton went on to ask of the one hundred, thirty-two, how many came in less than five times? Dr. Clevenger stated that she doesn't have an exact number, but can tell him that it's less and ten percent to fifteen percent. Crafton asked about the prior years and how many people have entered into the program. Was it below one hundred thirty-two or above it? Dr. Clevenger stated that they have grown every year since. In the last two years, the growth has doubled from the previous year and that forty percent right now are from Rock Island. Crafton asked if twenty-five was the cut off age? Dr. Clevenger stated that they have come to realize that even at the ages of twenty-five, twenty-six and twenty-seven, they are still needing Narrative services. Last year, they raised the cut off age to twenty-nine. Crafton asked if the age increase was for the need or for further development of people that have already been in the program? Dr. Clevenger stated that it's totally a need. She found out that twenty-five, twenty-six

and twenty-seven was their age chronologically but mentally and emotionally they were about the ages of nineteen to twenty years old. Crafton asked if anybody gets turned away. Dr. Clevenger stated no and that the only person she has turned away was someone over their age requirement. Whitley asked how big is their staff? Dr. Clevenger stated that they currently have three full time employees and three part time employees. They will be adding a new life coach in June 2026. At that time they will have four full time employees.

Cindi Gramenz, Operations Manager and Frank Roe, Executive Director at Christian Care were next to speak. Request amount is \$40,000 to help support an existing program within their organization. Gramenz stated that Christian Care is the staple to Rock Island and has been here for over hundred years providing services of food and shelter. They have two emergency shelters; one is a forty-two bed facility for men, where six of those beds are specifically for veterans transitional housing programs and six are dedicated to Rock Island County for drug and mental health court beds. The other emergency shelter is Martha's House, which is for single women and women with children. They are unique as they are the only provider of shelter services for adult men on the Illinois side of the Quad Cities and outside of domestic violence, they are the only provider of shelter services for single women and women with children. They also have a community meal site, which is unique in the sense that they serve seven days a week, three hundred, sixty-five days a year. They serve breakfast, lunch and dinner with the exception of the weekends, and lunch is only served to their residents. Through their shelters, last year they served three hundred and forty-two residents. Eighty percent of those individuals were from Rock Island County. In 2025, through their community meal site, they served almost forty-six thousand meals to our community. That is a nine percent increase from the previous years. They are also seeing a huge increase in single or women with children and families within their meal site. Christian Care also has street outreach services. They are a collaborative team with Project Now to provide street outreach services for individuals who are living unsheltered. The street outreach service are for individuals who are experiencing significant mental health issues or substance abuse issues that can't function in a shelter environment. The street outreach program provides a critical piece to connect with those individuals who don't work in traditional services. Christian Care is a small non-profit, so they focus heavily on partnerships. There are many services that their folks needs, and they can't necessarily provide them in house, so they focus on connecting with partners to make sure they are getting the services that they need. Prairie State Legal is on site twice a month providing legal services. They also have a partnership with Trinity Parish Nursing and Health Ministry, who are providing basic medical and preventative health care. They also partner with someone who comes in and does life skill groups. One of their big focuses within the shelter and similar to what Narratives spoke about is that they focus on the core issues that are keeping people homeless and keeping people coming back into the system. Mental health and substance abuse are pretty significant in our community. Gramenz stated that their board of directors and their executive director focus very heavily on diverse sources of funding simply because they don't ever want to rely solely on one source to provide funding. They do receive one Federal grant from the veterans administration for their veterans transitional program. They also receive funding from the State of Illinois through the emergency solutions grant. The remainder of their funding is charitable contributions which is over fifty percent of their funding. Whitley asked what their operating budget is? Gramenz stated that is a little over \$914,000. Whitley asked how large is their staff? Gramenz stated that they currently have eighteen staff members, in which six of them are part time. Their men's mission is staffed twenty-four hours a day. They have three case managers, two are at their men's shelter and one is located at their women's shelter. Both shelters have a full time cook and a part time cook. Whitley then asked if someone stays at a Christian Care shelter tonight, are they guaranteed a bed tomorrow? Gramenz stated yes. They are an emergency shelter but they are not a night by night emergency shelter. As long as someone is there and they are following the rules and making progress, then they will have a bed. Whitley asked what are the hours that they can be at the shelter? Gramenz stated that they can be at the shelter all day. They can't necessarily be in their bunk rooms all day, but if they are staying at their facility, then they don't ever have to leave. They are a dry shelter and have an expectation of sobriety with their folks. Whitley asked if individuals are allowed to use Christian Care's address as a permanent location? Gramenz stated that some of

the folks who are enrolled with the street outreach program will use their address because they are enrolled in one of their programs, but as a general rule, if they are not enrolled into a program, they are not allowed to use their address as a permanent residence. Whitley asked what their greatest need right now for financial resources. Gramenz replied with general operations. Crafton stated that they have forty-two beds and twelve of them are set aside for vets. Gramenz stated that six are for veterans and six are for Rock Island County's drug and mental health court system. Crafton then asked, of the thirty that aren't set aside for anything, how many different people last year, from the beginning of the year to the end came in and out and stayed in those thirty beds? Mata asked how full Christian Care is? Gramenz stated that their beds are always full. Crafton state that you can't determine where people are from, when they move around. Have you ever tracked where people were born from when they come in and go? Gramenz stated no and that they track a couple of different things. When it comes to their intake, they will track where they were last permanently housed, which is where you spent the last ninety days or more. They will also track crisis logs because when somebody needs shelter, they will call their shelter and fill out a crisis log. On the crisis log, it will ask where they spent the night before. Crafton then asked in general with their waiting list, there's not much opportunity when somebody is in a crunch and needs a spot tonight that they're going to get in. Gramenz stated no and that the chances are so slim. She went on to say that with their veterans, they do have a six bed veterans program. If they can ensure eligibility, then they can get a veteran into their shelter and get them in quicker. Whitley asked that in addition to the eighteen people that they have on staff, does Christian Care rely heavily on volunteers? Gramenz stated yes, at their community meal site. This meal site is where they bring and serve. They invite people from the community to do one of two things. Either bring a meal and serve it or just simply come to the shelter and serve. Last year they had three hundred days where at least one meal was provided for by their bring and serve volunteers. She stated that it's huge because they have a full time staff and part time staff and having somebody else to do that gives them an opportunity to work in the kitchen and do other things. Without the bring and serve program, they couldn't operate their meal site. They also have volunteers who work their front desk.

Robert McIntyre, Executive Director of Spring Forward spoke next. They are requesting \$25,000 to continue and sustain their impactful out of school time, academic tutoring and enrichment programs in the Rock Island School District. Their goal is to bring at least one hundred students closer to grade level proficiency in reading and math. They are currently serving in Rock Island Academy, Longfellow, Francis Willard, RACMS, Ridgewood, as well as the Martin Luther Kind Center. They do have teachers that work there as well. Their mission is to provide educational programs at no cost to enhance the lives of families in our community. They currently service one thousand, one hundred plus students annually from four school districts. The predominance of them are here in Rock Island. They offer experience that students would not otherwise have, which includes swimming lessons and community partner enrichment. They have had five hundred plus students participate in swimming lessons through the Rock Island Parks and Recreation. When it comes to community partner enrichment, they partner with over sixty-five organizations. They also partner with the Rock Island School District, Western Illinois University, Augustana College, Blackhawk College and community volunteer groups. Their program runs September through May and is two to three days per week from 3pm to 5pm. The amount of students that they serve is thirty-five per school, one hundred students total. This year they served one hundred forty-five students. The students that they serve are under-resourced and that are in need of additional academic support, students that are below grade level proficiency and students/grades targeted in collaboration with RIMSD. Program components include small group/ one on one tutoring, homework help, community partners/enrichment, healthy meals and snacks and positive adult interaction and mentoring. Spring Forward has a strong partnership with RIMSD. They invest in programs, RIMSD hires certified district teachers, they collaborate to target students with highest academic need, they offer program space within their schools, they share data to track student growth and the administration participates in program planning. When it comes to funding, the entire budget for their afterschool programs is \$129,987. That's not just the staffing at the sites, but after school outreach, swimming lessons, food and supplies, executive director's time, program director. They have received funding from Doris and Victor Day

Foundation, John Deere Foundation, Beal Trust, Hubble Waterman and United Way. To date, the CDBG special service grant is the only state or federal grant that they have received. Whitley asked about the afterschool program, and if that is on site at the particular school? Mr. McIntyre said yes. Whitley asked if there's any crossover between what Spring Forward does and what the MLK Center is doing? Mr. McIntyre stated that they are very valid comparisons. The MLK has their own center and they are able to provide transportation to the center. They have a little more extended hours. Spring Forward is more academic. During the summer time, they do more enrichment activities. Whitley asked how long they have been up and running? Mr. McIntyre said that they were founded in 1999, but have been a non-profit since 2007. Dane asked if Mr. McIntyre can explain how they manage their attendance issues. Mr. McIntyre stated that of the one hundred forty-five that are enrolled, fifteen percent fall off or stop coming, but eighty percent do attend regularly.

Amy Schaffer, Director of the YWCA Quad Cities Empowerment Center spoke. She brought Edwin Salazar, Director of the after school program with her. The Empowerment Center is operated out of both their Rock Island and Davenport locations. Forty percent are Rock Island County residents. They don't have any barriers to intake. On site, they have a food pantry, clothing closet, hygiene items, and are a part of the National Diaper Bank Network, which means that they are able to purchase diapers, similarly to Riverbend Food Bank and how they purchase their food. For the YWCA, they are able to purchase at about half the cost if they go to Costco or Amazon. They also provide on-site laundry, on-site showers and referrals to other agencies. They help by getting to the source of the problem and help you navigate through it. The requested amount is \$50,000, which would help add a case manager position to their programming side. Currently the Empowerment Center has four individuals, two are full time and two are part time. In the last calendar year, they saw eight hundred fifty-seven percent growth with visits to their food pantry. They had two thousand, seven hundred, sixty-one visits to their empowerment center, ten thousand, four hundred and twenty individuals and one thousand, seven hundred sixty-six of those visits were food alone; serving six thousand, seven hundred and seventy-five individuals. Unduplicated households, YWCA's Empowerment Center served one hundred nine households, three hundred and ten people. All of those households were documented and proven Rock Island County residents. YWCA has upgraded their intake software, so they are able to provide better metrics. In January 2026, sixty-eight households were served over one hundred nine visits. Clients can visit their pantry once a week and can access all services, which includes diapers, hygiene items and food. Two hundred, fifty-two unduplicated individuals were served from Rock Island County. Totals for January were eight-nine food pantry visits, seventy-eight packs of diapers, fifty visits to the clothing closet, seven showers and five laundry appointments. The budget for 2026 is just over \$300,000, and majority of the funding would go to the case manager position. Whitley asked Ms. Schaffer to discuss the food pantry more. Ms. Schaffer stated that the Rock Island Center is just down the road, where they do box model food pantry. This means that families can come in and grab a box. They also have immediate bags, so folks that are out and unboxed can get food. These items include single serve items, quick to grab foods. In the Davenport center, they serve forty percent Rock Island County residents and is a full choice model food pantry. This includes fridges and freezers. Folks can access whatever they need for the week or two. Whitley stated that she's trying to understand exactly what the case manager is going to be doing for the Empowerment Center. She asked if the two hundred and two individuals with wrap around services and connect with them? Ms. Schaffer stated yes, the case manager would be connecting with folks, sitting with them and letting them tell you what is going on in their lives. This allows them to pour more time into the clients and help them navigate situations. Whitley asked if the case manager would be housed in Rock Island. Ms. Schaffer stated that they would split their time between Rock Island and Davenport.

Whitley asked Mata if they were looking at \$150,000 in 2026 to spend on the Public Service Grants? Mata state that we haven't received our allocations yet, although CDBG is funded one hundred percent, so we should receive our allocation soon. Hopefully by April 4, 2026, we should know what our allocation amount is.

Mata discussed what is going to happen at the next meeting.

## **7. Adjournment**

Crafton moved to adjourn. Sakho seconded the motion. The motion passed on a 6-0 vote. The meeting adjourned at 6:54 PM.