



NYS Olympic Regional Development Authority  
Board Meeting Minutes  
January 22, 2021

Present: Kelly Cummings, Chair  
William Beaney  
Stephen Hunt, ESD  
Thomas Keegan  
Andrew Lack  
Betty Little  
Arthur Lussi  
Diane Munro  
Christopher Pushkarsh, OPRHP  
Jeffrey Stefanko, DEC  
Elinor Tatum

Also Present: Michael Pratt, President/CEO  
Michelle Crew, General Counsel

Introduction: Chairperson Kelly Cummings called the meeting to order at 1:12 p.m. and welcomed everyone in attendance.

Ms. Cummings then asked for a roll call, and confirmed a quorum was present. Ms. Cummings explained that the meeting was being videotaped and a link to the recording would be made available on [www.orda.org](http://www.orda.org).

Minutes: On a motion by Mr. Lussi, seconded by Ms. Tatum, the minutes of the Board of Directors meeting held on November 20, 2020 were approved without changes.

All in favor, motion carried unanimously.

President's Report: Mr. Pratt discussed the early season, as the venues managed under COVID-19 protocols. Considerations included the growth of season passholders, the need to control capacities through capping ticket sales, and limited terrain as operations got underway amid some challenging weather. Because demand for ORDA's products was high, there were some challenges with customers unable to obtain tickets when they desired, but the mountains were carefully using updated technology and historical data to manage and monitor attendance.

Guidances for New York State ski areas was being successfully implemented, including with employee safety. Mr. Pratt noted that while ORDA had 24 cases of COVID-19 among employees since the pandemic began in March 2020, none of those had been traced back to the workplace. A survey of passholders found that 86% found the COVID-19 communications to be clear and



effective, but the venues will continue working hard and improving under the new challenges.

A snow slide early on Christmas morning forced a 15-day closure of the Overlook Lodge at Belleayre Mountain. Mr. Pratt commended the staff for their hard work on a quick cleanup, repair, and reopening effort.

ORDA's numerous award-winning sustainability efforts were discussed, which include solar arrays for Gore and Whiteface Mountains, the recognition of the Olympic Region as a LEED Gold Community, hybrid grooming tractors, e-Zamboni, electric vehicle charging stations, efficient building systems, and salt reduction communication efforts. Ms. Little suggested ORDA's salt reduction signage be shared with other state entities. Mr. Pratt also highlighted ORDA's branded hiking centers, which include hikes for varying abilities and can serve to lighten traffic on overused trails in the region.

Mr. Pratt discussed event planning and the start of the Olympic Center hosting the NWHL season. ORDA is busy coordinating test events for the World University Games (WUG), which will be held in under two years. He said that the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC) has been very supportive of the WUG, and have a national governing body of sport working group dedicated to Team USA participation during the Games. Mr. Pratt emphasized close collaboration with several state agencies for safety, transportation, and technology. The Development Authority of the North Country (DANC) has been at ORDA facilities assessing connectivity. Mr. Lack asked for a measure of the scale of the Games, and Mr. Pratt explained that WUG would feature twice the number of athletes and twice the number of events as the 1980 Olympic Games. Events will be spread through neighboring communities such as Potsdam, Canton, Saranac Lake, and North Creek. Mr. Lack emphasized the importance of the community's knowledge of the size of the WUG, so everyone had a common understanding of the importance and urgency of the planning effort. Ms. Cummings noted this was only the second time the Games were held in North America, and Ms. Little discussed the large European draw they held. Mr. Pratt detailed two housing projects in progress that would have lasting positive effects on the community after the Games concluded.

Mr. Lussi asked about the Sprung Structures the board has previously approved. Due to the pandemic, the ski resort who offered them did not proceed with dismantling the structures. Mr. Pratt noted it was a good opportunity, but unfortunately did not work out.

Ms. Munro asked about the Overlook Lodge, and Mr. Pratt explained that the damage primarily affected an addition as well as exterior windows and doors. Most damage was non-structural except for one post, and the safety and integrity of the building was not compromised.

Ms. Little inquired about the new foodservice at Mt. Van Hoevenberg, which is now open. The new offerings have been well received by customers.



Mr. Lussi commended Mr. Pratt for his vision on installing the RFID gates and direct ticketing in advance of COVID-19, and noted that the ORDA staff has been attentive to maintaining and enforcing safety protocols among guests.

New Business:

Resolutions:

**#402** Resolution Committing Capital and Granting Approval for the President & CEO to Enter into an Agreement for Lift Modernizations at Whiteface Mountain for Components of the Face Lift and Cloudsplitter Gondola

On a motion by Ms. Little, seconded by Mr. Lack.

All in favor, motion carries unanimously, adopted Resolution #402.

**#403** Resolution Committing Capital and Granting Conditional Approval for the President & CEO to Enter into an Amended Agreement for the Olympic Sports Complex – Transformation Projects Site Work

On a motion by Ms. Munro, seconded by Mr. Keegan.

Amid the extensive bidding process, there was a geotechnical report included that expected the site to have ledge rock, which could be blasted and utilized as aggregate on site. Unfortunately, the material was actually boulders, which prevented the use of anticipated aggregate needed for the rest of the project. Due to the change, aggregate needed to be trucked in, which created the need to amend the agreement.

All in favor, motion carries unanimously, adopted Resolution #403.

**#404** Resolution Committing Capital and Granting Approval for the President & CEO to Enter into Agreements for the Olympic Ski Jumping Complex Outrun Reconstruction Project

On a motion by Ms. Tatum, seconded by Ms. Little.

Mr. Pratt explained that this exciting project would allow certification and homologation of both winter and summer jumping. USA Nordic has noted the significance to its sport of this improvement and it would allow them to base in Lake Placid. Ms. Little asked if this was the first year of refrigerating the tracks, and it was explained that was completed during Fall 2019, so this was the second winter. Mr. Pratt explained that the refrigeration has resulted in a much faster recovery time from adverse weather than was previously possible.

All in favor, motion carries unanimously, adopted Resolution #404.



**#405** Resolution Committing Capital and Granting Approval for the President & CEO to Enter into an Agreement for the Update and Extension of ORDA's Workers' Compensation Insurance Policy

On a motion by Mr. Lussi, seconded by Ms. Little.

Mr. Pratt explained that while ORDA had been experiencing steady increases in its workers' compensation costs a few years ago, more recent actions including enhanced work safety programs and the actions of a newly hired Risk Manager are among reasons that costs are reducing. The proposal from PERMA extends the current three-year agreement to four years. Mr. Pratt noted newly reduced costs and PERMA's partnership with safety programming. Ms. Tatum asked about how worker incidents are monitored, and Mr. Pratt said that ORDA continually analyzes types of injuries and department-specific safety. Cindy Dady, ORDA's Risk Manager, explained that ORDA has focused on trends to address any specific areas of concern and that safety results are communicated on a weekly basis with managers.

All in favor, motion carries unanimously, adopted Resolution #405.

**#406** Resolution Approving and Adopting a Background Check Policy

On a motion by Ms. Munro, seconded by Mr. Lack.

Ms. Crew said that this new policy complies with NY law and SafeSport, which is a required protocol of the USOPC. This policy will only affect certain segments of employees, including some administration staff, those handling cash or financial accounts, Snow Sports School staff, and those who would be in regular contact with potentially vulnerable guests. Ms. Munro asked about costs and third-party administrators for compliance with the policy. ORDA would pay for the background check services required, and HR processes would remain very similar to how they are presently executed.

All in favor, motion carries unanimously, adopted Resolution #406.

**#407** Resolution Approving and Adopting an Open Data Policy Pursuant to Executive Order 95

On a motion by Mr. Lussi, seconded by Mr. Lack.

Ms. Crew explained that EO 95 is focused on using technology to improve citizen engagement. As part of the Open Data NY effort, the types of information shared under this policy would include events calendars, maps of the mountains, attendance numbers, and bid information. She noted that the bid information would be particularly helpful, as that is the type of request often associated with FOIL. A data coordinator will be designated to compile and publish the



information, and Ms. Munro asked if that was anticipated to require another staff person. Presently the effort is planned to be done by existing staff.

All in favor, motion carries unanimously, adopted Resolution #407.

Chair:

Ms. Cummings announced that the next meeting is presently scheduled for Friday, March 19, 2021 at 1:00pm.

In closing, Ms. Munro requested an organizational chart and some explanation of ORDA's financial terms. Both of these items will be addressed.

Adjournment:

On a motion by Ms. Little, seconded by Ms. Tatum, the meeting of the Olympic Development Authority Board of Directors was adjourned at 2:18 p.m.