



# UNITED STATES LUGE ASSOCIATION

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

November 16, 2024, 4:00 PM ET

Zoom meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/97360256383?pwd=igtO5E3AhO7foQXRfhwxbbkvjibf32.1>

### ATTENDING:

Board of Directors	US Luge Association Staff/ Guests
Robert Hughes, President	Scott Riewald, CEO
Ty Danco, Treasurer	Amy Chapin, Director Operations/ Administration
Robert Pokelwaldt, Secretary	
Bruce Norman	
Jennifer Wesslehoff	
Jeff Young	
Larry Dolan, Eastern Club Rep	
Michael Thomas, Western Club Rep	
Summer Britcher, Athlete Rep	
Chris Mazdzer, Athlete Rep	
Zachary DiGregorio, Athlete Rep	
Tucker West, Athlete Rep	

### ABSENT:

None	
------	--

- I. Welcome and Call to Order at 4:04 PM ET** **R Hughes**  
Chairperson Robert Hughes opened the meeting and welcomed Board members.
- II. Approval of the Meeting Agenda** **R. Hughes**
- Motion to approve the agenda for this meeting**  
**(L. Dolan, J. Young)**  
Motion was approved unanimously with no abstentions.
- III. Conflict of Interest Disclosure** **R. Hughes**  
The Board was asked if anyone had a conflict of interest related to any of the agenda items. No conflict of interest disclosures were reported.
- IV. Approval of October 2024 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes** **R. Hughes**
- Motion to approve the October 2024 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**

**(J. Wesselhoff, R. Pokelwaldt)**

Motion was approved unanimously with no abstentions.

**V. Discussion of Meeting Attendance by USLA Staff and Membership**

**S. Riewald**

Discussion around the openness of Board of Directors meetings to staff and membership attendance.

- Staff could attend the meetings, but participation should be at the discretion of the CEO.

**VI. Chairperson's Report**

**R. Hughes**

**US Luge Federation Foundation**

There was a presentation and discussion of the report completed by Ron Rossi, a former executive director of the US Luge Association, at the request of R Hughes. The document provided a history of the US Luge Federation Foundation (USLFF) as well as an overview of recent activity. The document noted that the Foundation had become inactive over a period of years and that established policies/ procedures/ controls that had been in place were not consistently followed during that time. Concerns were expressed about re-establishing appropriate checks and balances to control spending. Suggested action items are to:

1. Re-populate the Foundation Board, and
2. Establish procedures/ checks and balances for how money will be moved between the Foundation and the USLA (e/g/. dual signatures to withdraw funds)
3. Confirm who has access to various Foundation accounts and make appropriate changes.

A slate of potential Foundation Members was presented for consideration:

Group A: Three (3) members from the USLA Board

Ty Danco (Provisional Chair)

Michael Thomas

Chris Mazdzer- USLFF Athlete Representation (brought forward post meeting)

Group B: One (1) USLA Member – Not on the USLA Board

Chris Coughlin

Group C: Four to ten (4-10) individuals; do not have to be USA Luge Members

Ray Wierzbicki

Bob Miller

Don Simkin

Ron Rossi

It was asked, and confirmed by A Chapin, that the USLA's Directors and Officers insurance covers USLA and Foundation Board members.

It was suggested we consider the size of the Foundation Board and choose a size that would optimize effectiveness in fundraising, potentially adding more members to facilitate this.

**Motion to approve the slate of candidates presented, including the athlete representative brought forward by the Internal Athlete Council post the Board meeting.**

**(T. Danco, T. West)**

Motion was approved unanimously with no abstentions. Discussion followed:

- Athlete participation: If any athlete wants to participate, and learn about finance, they are welcome to attend as non-voting members.
- Athlete representation: 33% athlete representation is not a requirement as the Foundation is separate from USA Luge, and this has been confirmed by the USOPC.

## VII. US Luge Association Committees

R Hughes

Bob led the discussion on committee selections (proposed in a *Potential Committee Representation* document) and term limits. Request was made to consolidate information on term limits and S Riewald was tasked with reviewing term limits from the by-laws. If any current committee members have exceeded term limitations it was proposed that the term requirements be waived through the next Olympics. C Mazdzer raised a concern about potential turnover after the next Olympics. There are many new committee members as well as individuals who have had long tenures on committees. Need to stagger positions, Foundation will look to stagger terms (follow foundation by-laws).

**Motion to approve committees as proposed, with a waiver for individuals who have exceeded term limits to stay in their current roles through the 2026 Olympic Winter Games. (L. Dolan, T. Danco)**

**Motion to approve the Committees as proposed in the Committee Representation document, with the caveat that we will waive term limit regulations until the 2026 Olympic Games. (I. Dolan, T. Danco)**

Motion was approved unanimously with no abstentions. Discussion followed:

- Concern about high turnover of committees, with the potential entire committees could roll off at the end of the quad.
- While committee members will not be excused because they have exceeded a term limit, there is a need to develop transition plans for long-standing committee members to provide balance between organizational expertise and new blood coming into the committees.

## VIII. Selection Procedures Review and Approval

S Riewald

Two policies/ procedures developed and approved by the USLA staff in conjunction with the National Team Committee were presented to the Board for formal approval.

- World Championship Selection Procedures
- Team Relay Selection Procedures

Noted that all policies, at some point in the selection process, include an aspect of discretion which introduces some level of uncertainty. S. Britcher and C. Mazdzer, both board members and representatives from the NT Committee, discussed the policies and talked through the justification of the criteria, noting that the discretion only applies to athletes who have not qualified outright for the team. Additionally, there is no guarantee/ expectation that USA Luge will send a full team to the World Championships. It was emphasized that the policy is primarily for this year, as there will be new Olympic Selection Procedures developed for the next Olympic year. Tier criteria are in place for

scenarios where we have more athletes competing to qualify than we have slots. There was no targeted discussion around the Team Relay policy.

**Motion to approve World Championship Selection Procedures as presented.  
(L. Dolan, J. Young)**

Motion was approved unanimously with no abstentions.

**Motion to approve Team Relay Selection Procedures as presented.  
(T. Danco, L Dolan)**

Motion was approved unanimously with no abstentions.

**IX. Financial Update and Discussion**

**R. Hughes**

Emphasized the focus on fiscal oversight and responsibility. Looking to the next year, there is an Olympic Games and two domestic World Cups, and the organization needs to be positioned well to handle the costs associated with those events while also weaning from the financial dependence the USLA has developed with the Foundation. S Riewald provided an update on the organization's financial situation, stating that they were within budget and spending patterns were consistent with expectations. There has been a \$25,000 donation from the USOPC to improve our financial tracking and expense management. Target is to develop the 2025—2026 high performance, along with a well-developed budget, before May 2025.

Additional notes related to finances:

- The State of NY has dedicated \$96 million for facility/ infrastructure upgrades associated with the possibility of Lake Placid serving as a Plan B (backup) for the 2026 Olympic Winter Games, in the event
- Partnership with ORDA, inclusion of World Cup broadcast costs in the ORDA budget for consideration in their operations budget.
- USOPC Grant allocations - \$94,000. (\$25,000 for World Cup costs)
- Possibility of a relationship with Triumph, a fabrication and machining company in Park City.
- Housing in Park City – prior to the 2002 Games, the USLFF had purchased a house – both to support training and as an investment. Would a similar situation work for the 2034 Games. Need to consider this in conjunction with our plans on how to use Park City. Current housing costs exceeds what we have in the Foundation.
- Accounts receivables – still are awaiting delivery of funds from the State of NY as reimbursement for World Cup costs from December 2023.

**X. Other Business**

**R. Hughes**

- Contact list – has been distributed to Board of Directors.
- Natural Track – S. Riewald provided some history around the organization's approach to Natural Track and the need to revisit a formal stance from the board related to how we support natural track luge. Our charge is to win medals at the Olympic Games – so we need to consider how natural track plays into this mission, and subsequently how the discipline should be supported. Natural Track is not a discipline in the Games and there currently is no pathway for this.

R. Hughes stated that he has spoken with the FIL and there has been no traction for Natural Track as an Olympic discipline and the FIL is putting its energy into the development of Alpenluge, which is similar to our Luge Challenge. This is a clear recreational outlet and also has the potential for recruitment.

- Next Meeting – looking to schedule the next meeting during the international training week leading into the World Championships (January 28/29, 2025).
- Athlete Update – T. West expressed things are going well, but still concerns about the reduced staff supporting the team this season. Team culture, and the opportunity to have training in Park City, were really beneficial.
- Park City Meet and Greet – thanks were expressed to M. Thomas and J. Wesselhoff for organizing the opportunity for the National Team to integrate with the Wasatch Luge Club.
- Thank you extended by R. Hughes to everyone who is participating on the Board and Committees both for their time and expertise.

**XI. Adjourn**

**R Hughes**

Without objection, the board meeting was adjourned at 5:09 PM ET.

**(S. Britcher, L. Dolan)**