

# St. Lawrence County Industrial Development Agency

## 2021 Mission Statement and Performance Review

### Mission Statement

*(Reviewed and Reaffirmed in Public Session on March 30, 2021)*

*The mission of the St. Lawrence County Industrial Development Agency (“IDA”) is to promote, encourage, attract, and develop job opportunities and economically sound commerce and industry in St. Lawrence County. To accomplish its mission, the IDA constructs and owns industrial sites and buildings, administers loan packaging and industrial revenue bond financing, and provides a variety of tax-reduction incentives.*

### Performance Goals

- *To create new employment opportunities for St. Lawrence County citizens through the attraction of or the creation of new businesses*
- *To create new employment opportunities for St. Lawrence County citizens through the expansion of existing businesses*
- *To retain existing employment opportunities*
- *To leverage the greatest level of private investment in St. Lawrence County businesses*
- *To educate County businesses, elected officials, and community representatives regarding available economic development resources*
- *Act as a liaison with businesses and government to help coordinate economic development services and reduce bureaucracy*
- *Work cooperatively with area economic development agencies to market County assets and economic development resources to potential new or expanding businesses*
- *Ensure a transparent and accountable operation with responsibly managed Agency assets*

### 2021 Performance Review (January 2021 – December 2021)

- *As the COVID-19 Pandemic expanded into a second year, the St. Lawrence County Reopening Task Force remained active. As the economy reopened, guidelines began to loosen an emphasis was placed on assisting with the vaccination process. Efforts also continued to focus on helping businesses and residents obtain the most up-to-date information and guidance possible to resume events, activities, and business operations.*
- *The IDA and our local development partners helped to coordinate the County’s vaccination effort. An IDA-LDC staff member was assigned to work with the SLC Public Health Department to assist with the vaccine rollout process. This included helping with site layout plans, contacting and scheduling volunteers to help process registrants for vaccination site locations, and reaching out to companies to solicit employees to utilize vaccination clinics.*

- The IDA contacted businesses to set up on on-site vaccination clinics with the St. Lawrence County Public Health Department. As a result, vaccination clinics were held at Arconic, ALCOA, Corning, and with multiple businesses at the OBPA industrial park through a clinic held in an OBPA building in the park. IDA personnel also assisted to increase citizen participation for getting vaccinated by helping to facilitate points of distribution (POD) at village and town volunteer fire halls.
- Staff worked closely with the Small Business Development Center to connect businesses with information relative to new assistance programs that were designed to provide relief from losses associated with the pandemic. The Small Business Development Center provided the following information which reflects the total amount of funding awards provided to the businesses which utilized the assistance of the SBDC in St. Lawrence County:
  - Economic Injury Disaster Loan (“EIDL”): \$10,383,094
  - Paycheck Protection Program (“PPP”): \$13,632,722
  - Paycheck Protection Program (“PPP”) First Draw Forgiveness: \$52,204
  - Paycheck Protection Program (“PPP”) Second Draw Forgiveness: \$3,597,738
  - Restaurant Revitalization Fund: \$1,276,831
  - Shuttered Venue Operators Grant: \$142,000
  - Child Care Stabilization Grant: \$57,800
  - New York State Pandemic Recovery Grant: \$121,101
  - Covid-19 LDC Funding: \$15,000
  - State Trade Expansion Program: \$22,000

*“The SBDC and St. Lawrence County IDA have always had a strong working relationship. Over the course of the pandemic, we have worked even more closely to assure that the businesses in St. Lawrence County received the assistance they needed to survive and thrive into the future.”*

*- Dale Rice, Executive Director of the SUNY Canton SBDC*



- Local ads were placed to encourage the continued compliance with Covid regulations and the support of local businesses. As an example, the following radio ad ran during local high school sports broadcasts:

“ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY IS **OPEN FOR BUSINESS** AND YOUR FAMILY, FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS ARE WORKING HARD TO KEEP YOU SAFE AND KEEP JOBS IN ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY. SO, WHEN YOU GO OUT, PLEASE SLIP THAT MASK ON, MAINTAIN SAFE DISTANCING, AND STAY LOCAL, SHOP LOCAL, and SUPPORT LOCAL! THAT WILL HELP KEEP ST LAWRENCE COUNTY **OPEN FOR BUSINESS!** THIS MESSAGE BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE ST LAWRENCE COUNTY I-D-A. IF YOUR BUSINESS NEEDS HELP AND GUIDANCE CONTACT THEM AT [WWW.SLCIDA.COM](http://WWW.SLCIDA.COM)”

- The IDA assisted Atlantic Testing Laboratories (“ATL”) with the acquisition of a bigger, more dynamic drilling rig. As part of the acquisition, the IDA-LDC provided an equipment loan in the amount of \$344,500 to ATL through the St. Lawrence River Valley Redevelopment Agency fund.



The purchase of the new drilling rig will create two jobs at ATL’s drilling division, which is headquartered in Canton and currently employs over 20 workers.

The SLCIDA also worked with ATL to complete a Consolidated Funding Application for which they received an award in the amount of \$390,000 from New York State for renovations of their drilling and vehicle/equipment maintenance building in Canton.

*ATL’s new CM E-55LC/300 rubber track drill*

- The IDA is undertaking a project with Corning which includes a 30,000 square foot addition to the company’s Canton facility. The project will result in the expansion of Corning’s manufacturing capabilities and also includes investments in environmental control systems.

Over the last seven years Corning has added over 100,000 square feet of space to the plant in Canton. In the past ten years, the company has increased their employee count from 235 employees to approximately 300 workers.

Corning has excellent global recognition, demonstrating the County’s ability to attract and support top tier employers. Higher technology jobs like the ones at Corning also provide diversification in the workforce and employment opportunities for local college graduates.



*Corning Canton Plant in the Town of DeKalb*

- The NYS Lake Ontario Resiliency and Economic Development Initiative (“REDI”) program was established to help businesses along the lake and St. Lawrence River that were impacted by flood damage in 2017 or 2019.

The IDA has been working with businesses that received awards to assist them in reaching the requirements for local matching funds mandated by the program.

To assist with these local match requirements, the St. Lawrence River Valley Redevelopment Agency authorized an allocation of funds from the Community Development and Environmental Improvement Program (“CDEIP”) and the IDA is assisting local awardees as they complete their repair projects.



*Wrights Sporting Goods and Marine, Morristown, pier work*

- The IDA and Arconic continue to work on plans for the conceptual development of a business park on excess Arconic property in Massena. Funds for this effort have been provided, in part, by a \$90,000 Consolidated Funding Application grant from Empire State Development. The goal is to create a comprehensive, cohesive view for developing the property as a mixed-use industrial, technology, commercial and agri-business campus. The feasibility study of the Arconic property in Massena will provide the information and data needed to prepare the sites for future development activities.



*Arconic Property for Potential Development in Massena*

- As a way of expanding the workforce pipeline in the County and assisting the Fort Drum Community with job opportunities for transitioning soldiers & their families, we have combined efforts with the St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce and partnered with the Fort Drum Transition and Employment Assistance Program to participate in tabling events and job fairs on Post.
- Additionally, the IDA Chairman, CEO and IDA-LDC Project Manager met with the newly appointed Commanding General at Fort Drum to welcome him and inform him about opportunities for recruiting transitioning soldiers and their families for available job openings with St. Lawrence County employers.
- The St. Lawrence County Property Development Corporation (“PDC”) accepted the transfer of the former Newell manufacturing building from the City of Ogdensburg.



*The former Newell Building in Ogdensburg*

The IDA secured \$200,000 in 50/50 in grant/loan funds from the Development Authority of the North Country and \$500,000 in grant funds from the Northern Border Regional Commission to continue with the rehabilitation of the building. As these funding sources are reimbursement-based, the St. Lawrence County IDA – Civic Development Corporation authorized a loan in amount of up to \$500,000 to the PDC to assist with the up-front financing. The second phase of the rehabilitation project, expected to cost approximately \$1 million, is near completion. This phase included reinstalling water, sewer, electrical, gas, and heating systems, as well as a new building entrance, corridors, office space, and restrooms.

Phase 1 renovations included a new roof, façade, and environmental containment issues, which constitute the shell of the building. Phase 2 takes the building from a shell to a more completed structure which will be ready for specific tenant finishing work. Marketing the property is already underway, but the process has been somewhat hampered by the difficulties for Canadian prospects to cross the border during the pandemic.

- As New York State continues to encourage renewable energy development projects, 14 community-scale solar development projects were approved for PILOT assistance by the IDA. These projects will represent over 53 MW of renewable energy production capacity in the County and will provide over \$250,000 in new PILOT revenue for the County and local taxing jurisdictions in the first year of the PILOT agreements, a figure that will increase by 2% per year over the life of the PILOTs. There are numerous similar projects in the development pipeline as well as a small number of larger, utility-scale projects.

- In September 2021, LC Drives, LLC closed their manufacturing operation in Potsdam. As part of an effort to keep the approximately 120 employees in St. Lawrence County and help recruit them to other businesses in the County, the SLCIDA organized a job fair, involving Clarkson University and other resource partners, that was held at the Best Western in Canton. The job fair was quickly assembled and held within a few days of the announcement of the business closure. Our close relationships with employers helped us get approximately 20 employers to attend the event to meet with as many displaced workers as possible.
- In effort to get program information out in-person and gradually bring back networking opportunities for businesses, the SLC Chamber and the IDA hosted a series of in-person, outdoor networking opportunities referred to as “Nature and Networking” events in various areas around the County. Local development partners from the Small Business Development Center at SUNY Canton, BOCES Adult Education, the St. Lawrence County Workforce Development Board, NYPA – Economic Development, and other local developers presented materials and engaged in conversations with local businesses and entrepreneurs with a focus on employee recruitment and retention and workforce issues.
- As a result of the Northern New York Power Proceeds Allocation Act, approved in 2014, the net earnings from the sale of up to 20 megawatts of hydropower are used for awards to eligible businesses in St. Lawrence County through a Northern New York Economic Development Fund (NNYEDF) created by the Act. The legislation also creates a Northern New York Power Proceeds Allocation Board, whose purpose is to make recommendations to NYPA for awards from the fund.

During the first five years of the Act’s implementation, net earnings generated from the sale of up to 20 MW of hydropower into the wholesale electricity were made available as a source of capital for qualified businesses. The 20 MW is drawn from hydropower previously sold to out-of-state electricity customers and redirected to New York State during the 2003 St. Lawrence-FDR project relicensing. After five years of the Act’s implementation, the amount of unallocated power available for sale to generate funds was limited to 10 MW. The Power Proceeds Allocation Board has made numerous recommendations to NYPA for projects, and NYPA has awarded approximately \$2,000,000 in St. Lawrence County utilizing this unique and successful program.

The SLCIDA and St. Lawrence River Valley Redevelopment Agency reached out to our New York State representatives requesting that the Northern New York Power Proceeds Allocation Act be amended to remove the limit of 10 MW being made available for sale to fund the Northern New York Economic Development Fund. A bill passed in the Senate but stalled in the Assembly. Efforts to increase the local monetization of power will continue.

- IDA Building Occupancy continues to grow, with the following companies currently leasing or acquiring space in IDA developed or owned properties:
  - Canton Commerce Park: Michels Corporation
  - Potsdam Commerce Park: From the Heart Cabinetry
  - Massena Industrial Park: Fockler Industries, US Ecology (formerly Op-Tech), AmTech Yarns, Curran Renewable Energy, and New York Power Tools
  - Canton Industrial Building: Michels Corporation

- The Northern New York Power Proceeds Allocation Board (“NNYPPAB”) continues to make funding recommendations to the New York Power Authority for projects that demonstrate clear economic development benefits to St. Lawrence County. The Northern New York Power Proceeds Act, passed in December 2014, allows for NYPA to deposit the net earnings from the market sale of 10 megawatts unutilized hydropower from the St. Lawrence-FDR Power Project in Massena into a fund, which can then be used to support economic development projects in St. Lawrence County.

The NNYPPAB is comprised of the following members appointed by the Governor: Chairman Patrick Kelly, CEO of the St. Lawrence County Industrial Development Agency; Robert McNeil, McNeil Accounting Services, Lisbon; and, Theresa Phalon, President and CEO of North Country Savings Bank, Canton. Appointments to fill vacancies created by the resignations in 2021 of Ian Maxwell, Ogdensburg, and Roger Sharlow, Waddington have been submitted to the Governor’s office.

As of December 2021, Power Proceeds’ deposits exceeded \$5.6 million, with awards of \$2.2 million, leaving \$3.4 million currently available for qualifying projects. Supporting 217 jobs and \$18.8 million investments, projects which have received awards include:

○ Canexsys	\$200,000
○ Clarkson University	\$60,000
○ North Country Children's Museum	\$170,000
○ Empire State Mines	\$330,000
○ Kingston Pharma LLC	\$200,000
○ AmTech Yarns, Inc.	\$370,000
○ SLC Chamber of Commerce	\$220,305
○ Queenaire Technologies, Inc.	\$59,600
○ Criscitello & Criscitello LP	\$95,000
○ Structural Wood Corporation	\$169,112
○ St. Lawrence Power and Equipment Museum	\$25,000
○ In-Law Brewing Company LLC	\$51,000
○ Atlantic Testing Laboratories, Limited	\$220,000

**St. Lawrence County Total:                    \$2,170,017**

- In 2021, the SLCIDA continued to assist with tuition costs for the Class-A Commercial Driver’s License training program at SUNY Canton’s CREST Center through funds provided by an award the IDA received from the USDA Rural Business Development Grant “RDBG” program. The goal with this award was to assist at least 12 adults as they worked to obtain their Class-A Commercial Driver’s License. Now that the grant is completed and funds have been expended, the SLCIDA was able to assist a total of 18 adults with RDBG funds, six more than what was planned. During 2021 there were 22 students enrolled in the CDL-A program. 16 successfully completed the program and passed their NYSDMV road test to obtain their license and 6 students remain active in the program

- In November 2021, the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) announced that six prisons across the state will officially close on March 10, 2022, including the Ogdensburg Correctional Facility. SLCIDA staff worked with our State elected officials and local community members to highlight the economic and community benefits provided by the prisons and the critical need for the prison to remain open. Numerous resolutions, letters of support, news articles, signatures, and facts and figures about the facility and region were assembled in a binder that was delivered to Governor Hochul’s office. IDA staff helped to lead the efforts of the OCF Task Force to demonstrate that the local facilities are successful and operate very well. If the facility cannot remain open as a prison, a number of proposals were made to allow the building to stay open and keep OCF staff employed in St. Lawrence County. IDA staff continue their efforts to seek a plan for how to revitalize the current facility and keep the other two facilities operational.
  
- The IDA is furthering its efforts to work in partnership with the Workforce Development Institute (“WDI”) to address workforce challenges and opportunities. Numerous projects around the County received assistance from the WDI, including Barkley's Safe and Lock with Standard Work and Training, Riverside Iron with a purchase and training of a CNC Plasma Table, the Potsdam Co-Op with business strategic planning, and Kunoco with a project to upgrade skills of employees to prepare them for management roles. The WDI also worked with St. Lawrence University to provide OSHA 30 for the internal environmental and safety team and with the Cornell Cooperative Extension to establish an Agricultural Food Academy with a variety of training programs for small producers looking to find more markets and grow their business.
  
- The St. Lawrence County Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership (“STL-CEL”) program was established in October 2019 through a collaboration of the SLCIDA, SUNY Canton, University at Buffalo-CEL, NYPA and the member organizations of the Small Business Working Group, chaired by Marijean Remington. Modeled on the successful UB-CEL Core Program, it is designed for entrepreneurs to overcome business challenges, create new opportunities, and develop meaningful connections within the local business community. Ten business leaders participated in the inaugural year, with another 11 taking part in the second year of the program, which started in October 2021 after a one-year absence due to COVID-19. Participants meet weekly in the IDA multi-purpose conference room.

More than 70 people are involved in delivering the program, including 2 program facilitators, 4 administrators, 15 core competency workshop presenters, 11 mentors and 40 Clinic Reactors. The STL-CEL program is part of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy’s goal to better connect the businesses of the County and to provide enhanced startup and expansion services. The CEL program is part of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy’s goal to better connect the businesses of the County and to provide enhanced startup and expansion services.

- The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (“CEDS”) was due for an update in 2021. Several partners assisted with providing detailed information for inclusion in the CEDS and for the revision of the document. The report is updated every five (5) years and was approved by the St. Lawrence County Board of Legislators in early 2022.



- In December 2021, Governor Hochul announced that the Village of Massena had been awarded \$10 million in funding through the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (“DRI”). The Local Planning Committee, which is co-chaired by Massena Mayor Gregory M. Paquin and IDA CEO Patrick Kelly, includes local and regional leaders, stakeholders, and community representatives. They attend a variety of meetings to brainstorm ideas, provide direction to consultants, review planning products and prioritize actions. The IDA also served as a non-voting member of the local planning committee for the Potsdam Downtown Revitalization Initiative (“DRI”) planning and implementation discussions.
- IDA CEO Patrick Kelly was appointed Chairman of the New York State Economic Development Council (“NYSEDC”) in 2020. He will continue to serve as Chairman until his term expires in May 2022. The NYSEDC is the state's principal organization representing economic development professionals. The organization’s 900 members include the leadership of Industrial Development Agencies and Local Development Corporations, commercial and investment banks, underwriters, bond counsels, utilities, chambers of commerce, higher education institutions, and private corporations.

The purpose of NYSEDC is to promote the economic development of the state and its communities, to encourage sound practices in the conduct of regional and statewide development programs, and to develop education programs that enhance the professional development skills of its members.

The SLCIDA also remains active with a number of local and regional organizations, including the North Country Alliance, Drum Country Business, the St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce, the North Country Chamber of Commerce, and numerous other committees and working groups focused on community, economic, and workforce development in the region.

- The Office of the State Comptroller conducted a routine review on both the SLCIDA (Project Approval and Monitoring) and the SLCIDA-LDC (Disbursements). The reviews began in April and finished in December 2021. The recommendations from each review were minor and will be addressed with easily incorporated adjustments to the SLCIDA’s application and monitoring processes and the SLDIDA-LDC’s disbursement and payment processes.
- Board members approved the 2020 Independent Audit reports in June of 2021. The reports showed no findings. Legislators have been provided the reports electronically. In addition, the reports are available on our website at [www.SLCIDA.com](http://www.SLCIDA.com).
- As part of our Public Authority Law compliance program, annual policy reviews are conducted by the IDA and its affiliated organizations. Conflicts of Interest, Procurement, Investment and Assessment of Internal Controls, Property Disposition, Investment of Funds, Whistleblower, Code of Ethics, Defense & Indemnification, and Compensation, Reimbursement & Attendance policies were reviewed. Performance documents for 2020 were also reviewed.
- At the IDA’s Annual Meeting, the following officers were elected to a one-year term: Brian W. Staples (Chair); Ernest J. LaBaff (Vice-Chair); Lynn Blevins (Secretary), Patrick J. Kelly (CEO) and Kimberly A. Gilbert (CFO). The firm of Silver and Collins was reappointed as General Counsel.

- Appointments/Reappointments: Lynn Blevins was reappointed in June 2021 and Mark Hall was reappointed in December 2021. Both will fill another three-year term.
- The IDA also continued aggressive marketing efforts to better inform local businesses of our resources, to attract outside businesses to St. Lawrence County, and seek-out alumni and former residents of the area to return to the County. Some of those efforts include:
  - Direct outreach was undertaken to numerous businesses in the following industry sectors:
    - Food production
    - Glass manufacturing
    - Plastics and plastic manufacturing, molding, extrusion
    - Fiber, yarn, filament, thread manufacturing
    - Paper/packaging industries
    - Music industry
    - Businesses whose operations would benefit from the graduates, faculty, and facilities at the local universities
  - The IDAs in Jefferson, Lewis, and St. Lawrence County, the Development Authority of the North Country, Advocate Drum, and National Grid, in conjunction with various County Chambers, partnered to develop a campaign for marketing the entire region for both industrial development and tourism.

The marketing campaign referred to as “Lets Meet,” part of Drum Country, is highlighted by marketing the area under the “Drum Country” umbrella using <http://drumcountryny.com>. It will focus downstate and nationally to highlight the benefits of setting up business and industry as well as individual and family relocation to the “Drum Country” area. This is part of a wider regional goal to attract residents and grow the population of the North Country.



- The creation and utilization of advertising and media promotion pieces, including placements in North Country This Week and Northern New York Newspapers. The IDA took part in an internet streaming advertisement series during the Clarkson University hockey games. Ads were also posted on the Northern New York Newspapers websites and North Country Now to attract former residents and businesses from outside the area to St. Lawrence County.
- With the border reopening in November 2021 and the rehabilitation phase of the Former Newell Manufacturing Building near completion, a postcard campaign highlighting the vacant space and close proximity to Canada, was distributed into Ontario and Quebec.

- Maintaining memberships in Canadian trade organizations to facilitate access to events (virtual this year) and to maintain key contacts with Canadian companies and multiplier organizations.
- Continued collaboration with NYPA to enhance the IDA's website and expanded social media presence. The new site represents a significant improvement in our efforts to offer interactive tools relating to our sites, workforce, and information about the County.

Notable highlights to the website and related social media platforms include:

- The Jobs page on the website was redesigned with a different Featured Listings grid and includes a list of additional resources and a submission form for easy "job listings" for companies.
- A Military-to-Civilian Life page was designed to provide information about resources available in St. Lawrence County such as Education and Training, Jobs, Business Opportunities, Housing, Quality of Life, Community, and Veteran's Support Programs that would attract transitioning soldiers and their families to the County. This page will be on display on our laptop at the Tabling Events and Job Fairs on Post at Fort Drum.
- As a way of enhancing the website and social media posts in order to keep the content fresh and informative local businesses in the County were interviewed for profile sections on the website. These business included Atlantic Testing Laboratories (Canton), Russell's Groom and Board (Brasher), Pepsi Cola Bottlers (Ogdensburg), Five Mile Farm (Lisbon), NCC Systems (Potsdam), Potsdam Specialty Paper (Potsdam), Small Town Supply (Gouverneur), Clifton Fine Hospital (Star Lake) and drone shots of Benson Mines, the former Newell Manufacturing Facility, SUNY ESF Ranger School in Wanakena, Clarkson University and SUNY Canton, and The Seaway International Bridge (Massena).
- The development of a branding logo for the "Come Home to St Lawrence County" campaign to encourage alumni and previous residents to come back to the county.
- The utilization of paid and organic posts for the County Chamber and IDA's Nature & Networking events.
- Weekly posts were scheduled to promote the SUNY Canton Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership Core Program.
- Continued to develop social content highlighting prominent community events that benefit workforce development and important stories from community members.
- Weekly posts have included information about key sectors in the local economy.

Website and social media analytics include:

- 10,814 new users have visited the site over the course of the year
- Users spent an average of 2 minutes on the site
- The majority of the visitors (88.6%) are new visitors
- 40% of audience came from organic search (search engine)
- 10% of audience came from social media
- 6% of audience came from a referral

Social media analytics key takeaways in 2021:

- A minimum of 2 posts per week were added to all of our social media platforms.
- Facebook page reaches increased significantly to 164,965, a 19% increase in page likes with 50 new likes for the year
- Instagram and LinkedIn have seen increases in performance impressions
- Twitter page and profile visits increased 100% this past year with 56 new followers as a result of the increase in posting frequency
- LinkedIn impressions stayed consistent over the course of the year, but jumped to 3,658 in December, likely due to a post about Clarkson University



## St. Lawrence County Industrial Development Agency

### Additional Questions

1. Have the board members acknowledged that they have read and understood the mission of the public authority?

ANS: Yes – the Board members reviewed and approved (by formal resolution) the mission statement and performance measures of the board.

2. Who has the power to appoint the management of the public authority?

ANS: Management is appointed by the board members of the authority.

3. If the Board appoints management, do you have a policy you follow when appointing the management of the public authority?

ANS: The Board of the St. Lawrence County Industrial Development Agency appoints its Chief Executive Officer and Chief Financial Officer. The Chief Executive Officer appoints management and staff.

4. Briefly describe the role of the Board and the role of management in the implementation of the mission.

ANS: The Board, with assistance of management, works to develop the authority's mission, and evaluate the authority's goals and performance.

Management ensures that the Board's mission and goals are carried out in a manner which achieves the intended public purpose - a process involving program evaluation, reporting, feedback and recommendation.

5. Has the Board acknowledged that they have read and understood the responses to each of these questions?

ANS: The Board acknowledges its understanding of this document by formally approving the document in public session.