



RESORT TAX

— BUILDING BIG SKY SINCE 1992 —

OPEN MEETING MINUTES

Monday, June 3, 2019 at 1:00 p.m.

WARREN MILLER PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

- Kevin Germain, Chair
- Steve Johnson, Vice Chair
- Buz Davis, Secretary
- Sarah Blechta, Treasurer
- Mike Scholz, Director
- Daniel Bierschwale, District Manager
- Kim Beatty, Attorney
- Kristin Drain, Tax Revenue Manager

I. Open Meeting

[01:07:24 PM \(00:00:02\)](#) Daniel Bierschwale began with introduction of staff.

[01:11:26 PM \(00:04:04\)](#) Daniel Bierschwale announced current initiatives, including Logan Simpson visioning process and ordinance revision.

A. Public Comment

[01:19:41 PM \(00:12:19\)](#) Bill McPhillips discussed disapproval of tax on alcohol and tobacco.

B. Introductions and Chairman Statement – *Discussion*

[01:14:06 PM \(00:06:44\)](#) Kevin Germain welcomed public and introduced agenda; explained rules regarding application process.

~~C. First Reading of proposed amendments to Ordinance No. 98-01-ORD – *Action*~~

[01:19:02 PM \(00:11:40\)](#) Kevin Germain explained agenda item was removed.

D. **Funds Available Estimation – Discussion**

E. **Question and Answer – Discussion**

1. **Big Sky Fire Department** William Farhat

[01:23:08 PM \(00:15:46\)](#) Steve Johnson: What is the detail of your call volume in 2018/2019 compared to the previous year and in specific the breakdown of resident and nonresident generated calls?

[01:24:01 PM \(00:16:39\)](#) Sarah Blechta: Do you have actual numbers or just percentages? What is your current FTE for this fiscal year? What is driving 10.6% increase in payroll expenses?

[01:24:46 PM \(00:17:24\)](#) Mike Scholz: How do we compare to other like communities in the state?

[01:28:58 PM \(00:21:36\)](#) Kevin Germain: Are we creating any future funding liability for this community with retirement plans? Is there future funding that is obligated or was that accrued while that person was working?

2. **Rollover: Big Sky Fire Department**

[01:31:20 PM \(00:23:58\)](#) Kevin Germain clarifies rollover request.

3. **Big Sky Search and Rescue** Steve Ditallio

[01:35:51 PM \(00:28:29\)](#) Steve Johnson: What was your call volume in 18/19 versus 17/18 and what was the breakup of resident and nonresident callers?

[01:36:47 PM \(00:29:25\)](#) Sarah Blechta requested clarification of goals.

4. **Gallatin Invasive Species Alliance** Lorri Lagerbloom

[01:38:54 PM \(00:31:32\)](#) Steve Johnson: How many requests for assistance from property owners in Big Sky did you respond to or receive in 2018?

[01:39:16 PM \(00:31:54\)](#) Sarah Blechta: Can you tell us how you can combine resources with Gallatin River Task Force to eliminate some overlap or are you already?

[01:41:11 PM \(00:33:49\)](#) Sarah Blechta requested elaboration on other revenue streams.

[01:42:18 PM \(00:34:56\)](#) Mike Scholz asked questions in relation to HOA outreach and Madison county assistance.

[01:47:16 PM \(00:39:54\)](#) Sara Blechta: Can you read back the last 4 years of site visits and total acreage?

[01:48:05 PM \(00:40:43\)](#) Mike Scholz: How many of those acres do you know were treated?

[01:49:39 PM \(00:42:17\)](#) Buz Davis encourages local HOAs to take initiative.

[01:51:14 PM \(00:43:52\)](#) Kevin Germain: (In regard to name change and broader scope) Are you getting diluted with your attention to noxious weeds in this community?

[01:52:34 PM \(00:45:12\)](#) Kevin Germain: Have you had active discussions with Gallatin River Task Force?

[01:55:20 PM \(00:47:58\)](#) Mike Scholz requested explanation for additional funds.

5. **Big Sky Chamber of Commerce** Katie Grice

[01:57:34 PM \(00:50:12\)](#) Steve Johnson: When were membership dues last increased and is there potential to raise them further?

[01:58:03 PM \(00:50:41\)](#) Sarah Blechta: What additional revenue sources do other Chambers' of Commerce have that don't have a resort tax?

[01:59:10 PM \(00:51:48\)](#) Sarah Blechta: If resort tax funding went away, how would you make up for that loss?

[01:59:31 PM \(00:52:09\)](#) Sarah Blechta: What are you doing to attract members from base level to higher tiers?

[02:00:34 PM \(00:53:12\)](#) Sarah Blechta: Have you reached out to other local networks in regard to telecom? (Sarah encourages outreach)

[02:02:03 PM \(00:54:41\)](#) Mike Scholz: With your increased rates for membership and such, how do you compare to other Chambers of Commerce?

[02:03:08 PM \(00:55:46\)](#) Mike Scholz: How many associate members do you have now?

6. **Gallatin County Sheriff's Office** Brandon Kelly

[02:04:41 PM \(00:57:19\)](#) Buz Davis: Looking at your 3-year cash flow, and you have 6 F.T.E., is that adequate staffing to meet the growth in Big Sky?

[02:05:47 PM \(00:58:25\)](#) Kevin Germain: Do you have year over year call volume increases in our community? Do you keep track?

7. **Big Sky Transportation District** David Kack

[02:07:15 PM \(00:59:53\)](#) Steve Johnson: Have local businesses been approached about subsidizing shuttle service in Big Sky itself?

[02:08:30 PM \(01:01:08\)](#) Sarah Blechta: Do your Bozeman to Big Sky fares cover the expense of the ride?

[02:09:47 PM \(01:02:25\)](#) Sarah Blechta: Have you investigated any transit systems to allow riders to see in real time arrivals, departures, any delays?

[02:10:47 PM \(01:03:25\)](#) Sara Blechta: Do you have numbers for how many riders you're seeing on your 'LINK' service and how many on your local service?

[02:12:29 PM \(01:05:07\)](#) Sarah Blechta: How many employers purchase passes, and how many passes?

[02:13:31 PM \(01:06:09\)](#) Kevin Germain asks for explanation of fewer funds from Gallatin and Madison county.

[02:15:29 PM \(01:08:07\)](#) Kevin Germain: Has your board talked about maybe having a transportation district boundary?

[02:17:03 PM \(01:09:41\)](#) Mike Scholz: How much money is it going to take to provide the same level of service?

[02:18:51 PM \(01:11:29\)](#) Mike Scholz: For the increase you get a matched dollar to dollar from MDT? Requested clarification on matched funding.

[02:21:37 PM \(01:14:15\)](#) David Kack commented about TIGER grant agreement and how it will benefit the Transportation District.

8. **Warren Miller Performing Arts Center** John Zirkle

[02:22:33 PM \(01:15:11\)](#) Sarah Blechta: How many events make up that 8,000-audience member per year number?

[02:23:29 PM \(01:16:07\)](#) Sarah Blechta: How many visitors did you have last year compared to this year?

[02:24:21 PM \(01:16:59\)](#) Sarah Blechta: Can you give me what your 'in kind' value is?

[02:25:11 PM \(01:17:49\)](#) Sarah Blechta: Why do you think you're having a dip in private donations this year?

[02:26:24 PM \(01:19:02\)](#) Mike Scholz asked about delaying improvements.

9. **Friends of the Big Sky Community Library** Kay Reeves

[02:28:56 PM \(01:21:34\)](#) Sarah Blechta: Can you tell me how many visitors you had this year compared to last year?

[02:29:29 PM \(01:22:07\)](#) Mike Scholz asked for clarification on fund and budget differences.

10. **Visit Big Sky** Tim Drain

[02:31:05 PM \(01:23:43\)](#) Steve Johnson: Would you consider a funding approach that involved matching equal contributions from visitor's bureau, resort tax board, and membership contributions?

[02:33:05 PM \(01:25:43\)](#) Mike Scholz: The sources that come from the state, where does the state get that money from?

[02:33:51 PM \(01:26:29\)](#) Sarah Blechta: How do other visitors centers get funding?

[02:36:08 PM \(01:28:46\)](#) Kevin Germain: Do you not plan to operate the visitor center on the weekends this summer?

[02:36:28 PM \(01:29:06\)](#) Sarah Blechta: How do you partner with marketing initiatives with other Big Sky entities?

[02:37:25 PM \(01:30:03\)](#) Sarah Blechta: Are you partnering with the large employers to do FAM tours?

[02:38:20 PM \(01:30:58\)](#) Mike Scholz asked for comparison in funding between Big Sky and Jackson Hole, other resort communities.

11. Big Sky Discovery Academy Karen Maybee

[02:40:25 PM \(01:33:03\)](#) Sarah Blechta: How many total families are you serving in your early childhood education program? And how many families did you serve last year with the funding?

[02:41:01 PM \(01:33:39\)](#) Sarah Blechta: Why do you anticipate being down in public grants this year?

[02:41:54 PM \(01:34:32\)](#) Sarah Blechta: How many businesses are represented by the families that attend Discovery?

[02:42:13 PM \(01:34:51\)](#) Mike Scholz: (Regarding amount families received in assistance), what is 35%?

[02:43:06 PM \(01:35:44\)](#) Mike Scholz: The school is operable 9 months a year?

12. Gallatin Valley Snowmobile Association Daniel Kristensen

[02:44:37 PM \(01:37:15\)](#) Steve Johnson: What portion of the proposed new groomer that you plan to purchase with the request funds?

[02:44:58 PM \(01:37:36\)](#) Sarah Blechta: Why do you think you had a decreased in riders?

[02:45:28 PM \(01:38:06\)](#) Mike Scholz: Is this groomer used anywhere else? What percentage is used in Big Sky?

[02:46:26 PM \(01:39:04\)](#) Mike Scholz: Beside state funding, are there other communities that contribute like Big Sky does?

13. Arts Council of Big Sky Brian Hurlbut

[02:47:21 PM \(01:39:59\)](#) Steve Johnson: Do you receive any funding from the businesses that surround the stage at town center?

[02:48:06 PM \(01:40:44\)](#) Sarah Blechta: Can you explain the community investment and development line item? It is a position?

[02:48:52 PM \(01:41:30\)](#) Sara Blechta: Do you have a way of tracking how many people are attending the concerts?

[02:49:29 PM \(01:42:07\)](#) Sarah Blechta asked for an explanation for the increase in requested funding with a decrease in expenses.

[02:50:23 PM \(01:43:01\)](#) Mike Scholz asked about payroll and programing expenses regarding their 3-year plan.

14. **Big Sky Community Food Bank** Sarah Gaither

[02:53:09 PM \(01:45:47\)](#) Sarah Blechta: How many families were served last year compared to this year?

[02:53:39 PM \(01:46:17\)](#) Mike Scholz: (regarding answer to Sarah's question) What do you attribute that to?

15. **Women in Action** Kay Reeves

[02:55:30 PM \(01:48:08\)](#) Sarah Blechta: Can you tell me how many people were served last year compared to this year?

[02:56:37 PM \(01:49:15\)](#) Buz Davis: Why didn't you ask for more help with counselors?

[02:58:07 PM \(01:50:45\)](#) **Motion:** to take a break: Kevin Germain

[02:58:11 PM \(01:50:49\)](#) **Second:** Sarah Blechta

[03:07:47 PM \(02:00:25\)](#) **Return**

16. **Big Sky Community Organization** Ciara Wolfe

[03:08:30 PM \(02:01:08\)](#) Steve Johnson: Will the other local entities that are planning, considering operating from the proposed community center, be charged rent or any other fee?

[03:10:06 PM \(02:02:44\)](#) Sarah Blechta: On your user account graphics is it calendar year or fiscal year?

[03:10:42 PM \(02:03:20\)](#) Mike Scholz: Could you speak to what type of operating overhead you see in the future and how much of that burden would fall on Resort Tax with the addition of the new facility?

[03:11:32 PM \(02:04:10\)](#) Mike Scholz: In dollars what does that 20% represent?

[03:12:37 PM \(02:05:15\)](#) Kevin Germain asked questions related to the 'Platinum LEED' and continued funding.

[03:17:20 PM \(02:09:58\)](#) Mike Scholz asked about cost of 'Platinum LEED' plaque.

[03:18:55 PM \(02:11:33\)](#) Kevin Germain: Do you really need resort tax dollars to get this building built?

[03:20:50 PM \(02:13:28\)](#) Sarah Blechta asked to expand on the infrastructure costs.

[03:22:09 PM \(02:14:47\)](#) Sarah Blechta: Is Langless the same group building/remodeling the fire station?

[03:23:33 PM \(02:16:11\)](#) Public comment in support of community center project.

17. **Habitat for Humanity of Gallatin Valley** Dustin Shipman & David Magistrelli

[03:25:07 PM \(02:17:45\)](#) Steve Johnson: Can you describe how this funding request is related to the recent mil levy and the results of that?

[03:25:36 PM \(02:18:14\)](#) Mike Scholz: Will you be taking on any debt with this building?

[03:26:40 PM \(02:19:18\)](#) Mike Scholz: Who receives the rent?

[03:27:15 PM \(02:19:53\)](#) Kevin Germain: What is the total project cost?

[03:28:33 PM \(02:21:11\)](#) Mike Scholz: The rent is used up in maintenance?

[03:29:06 PM \(02:21:44\)](#) Buz Davis: What is the cost per square foot?

18. **Big Sky Community Housing Trust** Laura Seyfang

[03:30:40 PM \(02:23:18\)](#) Steve Johnson: What specific projects are under consideration?

[03:32:41 PM \(02:25:19\)](#) Sarah Blechta: How many individuals have you given down payment assistance?

[03:33:41 PM \(02:26:19\)](#) Sarah Blechta asked for clarification on budget items.

[03:34:49 PM \(02:27:27\)](#) Sarah Blechta: Do you have any concerns about starting a new project before completing the current projects?

[03:38:31 PM \(02:31:09\)](#) Sara Blechta: How are you educating realtors and clients in dead restriction?

[03:40:02 PM \(02:32:40\)](#) Mike Scholz discussed revenue options and asked for clarification on the organization's rules compared to HUD rules.

[03:44:33 PM \(02:37:11\)](#) Sarah Blechta asked about number of projects planned for next year.

[03:45:26 PM \(02:38:04\)](#) Mike Scholz asked about housing study and number of units to meet needs, current and continued.

[03:46:37 PM \(02:39:15\)](#) Kevin Germain: Have you as a board, talked about using the resort tax as a long-term bonding opportunity?

[03:47:59 PM \(02:40:37\)](#) Mike Scholz clarified 'sinking fund.'

19. **Rollover: Madison Conservation District** Ethan Kunard

[03:49:39 PM \(02:42:17\)](#) Kevin Germain: Are you going to still monitor Jack Creek this year?

20. **Wildlife Conservation Society** Kris Inman

[03:50:48 PM \(02:43:26\)](#) Steve Johnson: How many bear conflicts were reported in Big Sky this year compared to last year?

[03:51:24 PM \(02:44:02\)](#) Sarah Blechta: Tell us more about your plan to engage the community with your 'Bear Aware' program.

[03:54:12 PM \(02:46:50\)](#) Sarah Blechta: How many HOAs and/or homeowners are currently certified through your certification program?

[03:54:57 PM \(02:47:35\)](#) Kevin Germain: What percentage of cans are bear proof?

[03:56:18 PM \(02:48:56\)](#) Kevin Germain: Does L&L offer non bear proof containers? What if we funded a program to subsidize cost?

[03:58:42 PM \(02:51:20\)](#) Mike Scholz: Did you say 30% of the HOAs are not compliant?

[03:59:38 PM \(02:52:16\)](#) Kevin Germain requested forecasted revenue and funding for upcoming years.

21. **Gallatin River Task Force** Kristen Gardner

[04:00:52 PM \(02:53:30\)](#) Steve Johnson: Does your funding request include funding for the engineering study regarding evaluation of wastewater treatment options in the canyon?

[04:01:32 PM \(02:54:10\)](#) Steve Johnson: Could that study be expanded to address political aspects and sentiments of property owners?

[04:02:28 PM \(02:55:06\)](#) Sarah Blechta: Is anyone else funding your Headwaters Alliance program?

[04:03:29 PM \(02:56:07\)](#) Do you think there is any opportunity to combine resources with the Invasive Species alliance?

[04:04:12 PM \(02:56:50\)](#) Sarah Blechta asked for clarification with education and outreach increase.

[04:05:52 PM \(02:58:30\)](#) Kevin Germain: How much has been spent to date, and how much of that has been funded by the resort tax?

[04:07:04 PM \(02:59:42\)](#) Kevin Germain: Regarding canyon study, what is the participation of the Big Sky Water and Sewer District?

[04:09:46 PM \(03:02:24\)](#) Kevin Germain: Do you have any 'on the ground' upcoming projects?

[04:11:14 PM \(03:03:52\)](#) Mike Scholz asked about 28% increase in requested funds.

22. **The Post Office** Al Malwowski

[04:14:25 PM \(03:07:03\)](#) Kevin Germain: Can you explain cost increase?

[04:16:13 PM \(03:08:51\)](#) Mike Scholz questions cost and probability of including the canyon in the zip code.

23. **Parkview West Association** Dennis Downing

[04:19:52 PM \(03:12:30\)](#) Sarah Blechta: How many nonresidents access the property?

[04:20:27 PM \(03:13:05\)](#) Sarah Blechta: How do you as a group raise awareness that nonresidents can use the area?

[04:21:46 PM \(03:14:24\)](#) Kevin Germain: Have you approached the Forest Service for funding?

[04:24:01 PM \(03:16:39\)](#) Read statement from Chief Farhat.

[04:24:52 PM \(03:17:30\)](#) Steve Johnson questions the public access use of bridge and the need for fire protection.

[04:26:00 PM \(03:18:38\)](#) Sarah Blechta: Who actually owns the bridge?

[04:26:56 PM \(03:19:34\)](#) Mike Scholz asked question to Chief Farhat regarding dry hydrants and fire protect needs of canyon.

[04:28:28 PM \(03:21:06\)](#) Sarah Blechta asked about National Forest interest and continued funding.

[04:31:01 PM \(03:23:39\)](#) Ann Van Den Eden: Public comment regarding county ownership and responsibility of bridge/road maintenance.

24. Big Sky Skating and Hockey (BSSHA) Ryan Blechta

[04:32:50 PM \(03:25:28\)](#) Kevin Germain: Are you working to become part of the BSCO?

[04:33:21 PM \(03:25:59\)](#) Kevin Germain comments about the extension of season due to the new refrigerated ice system.

[04:33:50 PM \(03:26:28\)](#) Mike Scholz: Is your request less than 25% of total budget?

[04:34:48 PM \(03:27:26\)](#) Mike Scholz: How confident are you on raising the other 75%?

25. Morning Star Learning Center Stephanie Byam

[04:35:50 PM \(03:28:28\)](#) Sarah Blechta: How are you ensuring that funds are continued to be used for local families?

[04:36:11 PM \(03:28:49\)](#) Sarah Blechta: Are you planning on keeping your rates stable for the 19/20 fiscal year? How many businesses are represented by the families that attend Morning Star?

[04:36:38 PM \(03:29:16\)](#) Kevin Germain discusses a needs-based system for subsidies.

[04:38:02 PM \(03:30:40\)](#) Kevin Germain: Is part of the resort tax dollars used for scholarship system?

[04:39:07 PM \(03:31:45\)](#) Mike Scholz: Am I correct that with the reduction it puts rates where they are with Bozeman?

26. The Montana Land Reliance Jessie Wiese

[04:40:08 PM \(03:32:46\)](#) Mike Scholz: How much of your support comes locally?

[04:40:40 PM \(03:33:18\)](#) Kevin Germain: Was that unrestricted to help fund your position in this office?

[04:41:02 PM \(03:33:40\)](#) Mike Scholz: How much emphasis do you put on your easements? (in regard to keeping public access open)

[04:42:20 PM \(03:34:58\)](#) Kevin Germain: Is this the only office and position funded by tax dollars?

[04:44:01 PM \(03:36:39\)](#) Kevin Germain: How much of your time out of this office is spent in Big Sky?

[04:44:33 PM \(03:37:11\)](#) Mike Scholz: What successes have you had since last year?

27. Big Brothers Big Sisters of Gallatin County

[04:45:51 PM \(03:38:29\)](#) Steve Johnson: Is there any relationship between your organization and Big Sky Youth Empowerment?

[04:46:34 PM \(03:39:12\)](#) Sarah Blechta: How does Big Brothers Big Sisters of Gallatin County fall in line with our resort tax mission?

[04:47:35 PM \(03:40:13\)](#) Sarah Blechta: Are the funds you're requesting segregated specifically to Big Sky or would they end up in the greater valley area?

[04:47:46 PM \(03:40:24\)](#) Kevin Germain: Does BBBS receive any other public tax dollars to support their mission?

[04:48:43 PM \(03:41:21\)](#) Kevin Germain: Are you still seeking additional funding?

[04:50:44 PM \(03:43:22\)](#) Mike Scholz: You don't get any funding from the national office, is there a reason for not that?

28. Big Sky Water and Sewer District Terry Smith & Scott Buecker

[04:52:12 PM \(03:44:50\)](#) Scott Buecker explained possible expansion, upgrades, and projects related to water and sewer needs.

[04:56:35 PM \(03:49:13\)](#) Kevin Germain: Is the water and sewer district going to take a larger look at the needs of this community; and can these request show there's a benefit to more than just the users of the water and sewer district?

[04:59:25 PM \(03:52:03\)](#) Kevin Germain: Are there ways to show tax collectors outside the district a bigger picture benefit?

[05:00:29 PM \(03:53:07\)](#) Mike Scholz, Steve Johnson, Kevin Germain, and BSWSD discuss benefits within and outside the district and possibility of expansion or creation of additional district.

[05:07:42 PM \(04:00:20\)](#) Buz Davis: Regarding rates, are you looking at impact fees too?

[05:09:59 PM \(04:02:37\)](#) Mike Scholz comments on impact fees.

29. Rollover: Gallatin County 911 Jim Anderson & Marjean Penny

[05:12:33 PM \(04:05:11\)](#) Steve Johnson: How are these funds dependent upon the resolution of several ongoing disputes between Gallatin county 911 and all kinds of municipal jurisdictions in the valley?

[05:13:10 PM \(04:05:48\)](#) Steve Johnson: With the rapid change in technology do you have concrete plans for what you want to do or is that still fluid as well?

[05:13:50 PM \(04:06:28\)](#) Sarah Blechta: Where are you at with Gallatin and Madison counties on funding this?

[05:15:11 PM \(04:07:49\)](#) Kevin Germain asks about legal issues.

[05:15:56 PM \(04:08:34\)](#) Kevin Germain: If you go lower does that diminish your coverage on Madison county, Yellowstone Club, and Moonlight?

[05:16:52 PM \(04:09:30\)](#) Kevin Germain: With the radio and paging from Andesite, will that still cover Moonlight and YC?

[05:17:44 PM \(04:10:22\)](#) Sarah Blechta asks questions to the police and fire departments.


[05:18:14 PM \(04:10:52\)](#) Sarah Blechta: Does that mean this probably won't be finished until May 2020?

[05:19:48 PM \(04:12:26\)](#) Motion to adjourn. Kevin Germain

[05:19:50 PM \(04:12:28\)](#) Seconded: Sarah Blechta

*For more information please contact Sara Huger at info@resorttax.org or 406-995-3234
Big Sky Resort Area District Board meetings are open to all members of the public.*

Respectfully Submitted,



Buz Davis, Secretary