






Meeting Minutes

June 3rd, 2020

Big Sky Resort Area District
11 Lone Peak Drive #204
PO Box 160661
Big Sky, MT 59716
www.Resorttax.org
info@resorttax.org
406.995.3234

*Board members asked questions ahead of the meeting. All questions and answers can be viewed in the following documents:

- ❖ Government Entities:  [↩](#)
- ❖ Requests less than \$200,000:  [↩](#)
- ❖ Requests more than \$200,000:  [↩](#)


I. Open Meeting

[\(00:00:05\)](#) Daniel Bierschwale began the meeting with staff and board introductions.

All present: Kevin Germain, Sarah Blechta, Steve Johnson, Ciara Wolfe, and Grace Young

[\(00:03:20\)](#) Jenny Muscat explained how the meeting would be conducted and details for public comment and applicant participation through zoom.

A. Public Comment

[\(00:05:17\)](#) Daniel Bierschwale gave an overview of public comments received prior to the meeting; all public comment and letters of support were included in the board packet. (They are available to be viewed here:  [↩](#))

B. Intros & Chairman Statement: Discussion

[\(00:08:48\)](#) Kevin Germain began by thanking staff, board, and all applicants. Kevin discussed and explained how Resort Tax is adapting due to COVID-19 and adding a Fall Funding Cycle to better prepare for possible scenarios.

C. Funds Available Estimate: Discussion

[\(00:15:20\)](#) Daniel Bierschwale gave an overview of funds and estimated collections, while stressing that COVID-19 impacts are unknown and likely to last 2-3 years.

D. Scenario Forecasting: Discussion

[\(00:18:02\)](#) Daniel Bierschwale discussed collections forecasting and future impacts.

[\(00:19:17\)](#) Recommendations from scenario planning include: Establish ongoing reserve; Develop Crisis Management Policy; Host biannual allocation cycles for FY21 and FY22; Create trigger points in collections that moderate release of funds; Collaborate with philanthropy community to meet needs of Big



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Sky; Establish Big Sky testing methodology in coordination with County; Prioritize Emergency and Health Services; Keep Relief Fund available for future possible surges

E. Executive Recommendations: Discussion

[\(00:20:39\)](#) Daniel Bierschwale reviewed and discussed staff recommendations. These included Board level support with matching funds including Mill Levies, Philanthropy, and Madison and Gallatin County support.

[\(00:24:15\)](#) Ciara Wolfe and Steve Johnson volunteered to join staff in approaching Counties for matching funds. Sarah Blechta and Grace Young volunteered for the reserve committee to develop a recommendation for June 10th meeting.

F. Applicant Q&A: Discussion

[\(00:26:16\)](#) Kevin Germain explained that due to the 1% for Infrastructure being passed by the voters the Water & Sewer District has pulled their application and no longer is requesting funding.

a. Government Entities

Big Sky Fire Department – Chief Greg Megaard & Dustin Teatrault

[\(00:26:28\)](#) Chief Megaard answered questions and clarified COVID-19 related changes in operations .

[\(00:32:05\)](#) Ciara Wolfe asked questions related to surplus/reserve funds.

[\(00:33:03\)](#) Kevin Germain asked for clarification on the possible ‘Community Risk Reduction Coordinator’ position and wage increases.

Transportation District – David Kack

[\(00:36:20\)](#) David Kack answered questions related to expanding services and clarified seasonal demands and need for consistency.

[\(00:40:27\)](#) Kevin Germain asked about possible Mill Levy and District Boundaries.

[\(00:44:24\)](#) David Kack discussed requests for Federal and CARES Act funds.

[\(00:48:03\)](#) Steve Johnson asked about charging fares and subsidies from employers and businesses.

Gallatin County Board of Health

[\(00:52:18\)](#) Kevin Germain explained that the Board of Health’s request was funded through the Big Sky Relief Fund and the application has been pulled.



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Gallatin County Sheriff's Department – Brandon Kelly

[\(00:52:51\)](#) Sargent Kelly answered Sarah Blechta's questions regarding increases in calls; increase in theft/property crimes and alcohol related crimes, but no increase in domestic violence calls currently.

[\(00:54:38\)](#) Kevin Germain asked if 6 deputies is adequate coverage; Sargent Kelly indicated the need for 3 additional, total of 9, would cover a night shift, and discussed how Big Sky compares to other Gallatin Valley areas.

[\(00:58:44\)](#) Board members and Sargent Kelly discussed how tourism effects the need for increased staff and the Sheriff's office has had the same staffing since 2013.

[\(00:59:28\)](#) Daniel Bierschwale explained how the District is able to enter interlocal agreements with government entities and the goal of collaboration with the counties.

b. Applications under \$200,000

Arts Council of Big Sky (amended request under \$200,000) – Ryan Hurlbut

[\(01:05:32\)](#) Grace Young asked if they were able to postpone application decision until the Fall cycle; Ryan discussed when funding is needed.

[\(01:12:44\)](#) Kevin Germain clarified that the Arts Council's FY21 request can be postponed until Fall, and an amount of \$30,000 from FY20 contract can be amended instead of a roll over for summer funding.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Big Sky Co – Lander Bachert

[\(01:15:14\)](#) Kevin Germain asked what percentage of request is for 'Teen Mental Health First-aid' and Lander Bachert explained options. Ciara Wolfe and Lander discussed possible funding from other partners/organizations.

[\(01:18:59\)](#) Lander explained how the Teen Mental Health First-aid is implemented and what is being taught and supported. Lander and Ciara Wolfe discussed additional Mental Health partners.

Big Sky Community Food Bank – Sarah Gaither & Jill Holder

[\(01:22:47\)](#) Sarah Blechta and Sarah Gaither discussed increase year over year.

[\(01:24:32\)](#) Ciara Wolfe asked for clarification related to increased operation costs due to COVID-19. Board members discussed possibly funding additional, COVID related costs through the Big Sky Relief Fund.

[\(01:29:32\)](#) Jill discussed how the Food Bank has been understaffed and they hope to continue to offer current level of service after COVID needs.



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[\(01:32:02\)](#) Ciara Wolfe asked for clarification on Gallatin County funding. Jill discussed additional funding sources.

Big Sky Discovery Academy – Nettie Breuner

[\(01:36:04\)](#) Ciara Wolfe asked follow-up questions related to cost per day and cost per kid on average.

Big Sky Rotary Foundation – Marne Hayes, Matt Pellman, & Blair Mohn

[\(01:39:18\)](#) Sarah Blechta asked for clarification on year over year request; a separate organization will be formed and will handle future funding requests for this project.

Big Sky Search & Rescue – Heather Walker & Jeff Trulen

[\(01:41:45\)](#) Kevin Germain asked questions related to county partnerships and funding.

Big Sky Skating & Hockey Association – Gary Hermann & Ryan Blechta

[\(01:44:56\)](#) Grace Young asked if request can be postponed until Fall cycle; the season begins December 1st and BSSHA can handle initial costs.

[\(01:45:55\)](#) Steve Johnson asked questions related to BSSHA merging with BSCO. Gary explained process and challenges.

Warren Miller Performing Arts Center – John Zirkle

[\(01:51:35\)](#) Ciara Wolfe asked questions related to reserve funds. WMPAC board is willing to use 30%. John Zirkle discussed changes in operations and programming.

Friends of the Big Sky Community Library – Kathy House

[\(01:54:07\)](#) Sarah Blechta asked questions related to COVID-19 effects and related costs.

[\(01:55:15\)](#) Ciara Wolfe asked questions about forming a Library District; Friends of Library decided not to pursue the formation of a District 20 years ago.

[\(01:56:19\)](#) Ciara Wolfe asked for clarification on additional staffing.

Gallatin Invasive Species Alliance – Jennifer Mohler

[\(01:58:20\)](#) Sarah Blechta asked for clarification on matching funds.

[\(01:59:38\)](#) Kevin Germain and Jen discussed county involvement.

Gallatin Valley Snowmobile Association – Daniel Kristensen & Bryan Capdeville

[\(02:03:09\)](#) Grace Young asked if GVSA can be postponed until Fall cycle. It can be.

[\(02:04:03\)](#) Ciara Wolfe and Brian discussed calculated costs per grooming.



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Habitat for Humanity of Gallatin Valley – David Magistrelli

[\(02:07:07\)](#) Sarah Blechta asked what percentage of request was due to COVID-19 and the inability of volunteers to travel, and board members discussed possible Relief Fund request.

Morningstar Learning Center – Grace Winsell

[\(02:11:27\)](#) Sarah Blechta asked for clarification on additional per child funding. Grace explained staff turn over concerns and competition with local wages.

[\(02:13:03\)](#) Ciara Wolfe asked questions related to State funding options. Kevin Germain asked why Morningstar does not offer scholarships based on need.

[\(02:16:17\)](#) Kevin Germain discussed obligations for receiving tax dollars and encouraged Morningstar to consider offering scholarships based on needs.

Parkview West Homeowners Association – Denise Wade

[\(02:20:03\)](#) Sarah Blechta asked if cars can cross the bridge; Denise Wade clarified cars can cross, but fire engines cannot cross when full. Sarah asked how public access is affected.

[\(02:22:28\)](#) Sarah Blechta asked how many nonresidents cross the bridge and explained that typically resort tax funds are for the 'greater good.'

The Montana Land Reliance – Jessie Wiese

[\(02:28:13\)](#) Ciara Wolfe asked questions related to reserves and Jessie Wiese discussed.

[\(02:31:16\)](#) Kevin Germain asked and Jessie answered questions about Gallatin Open Space Bond.

The Post Office LLC – Al Malinowski

[\(02:32:35\)](#) Sarah Blechta asked about USPS package numbers and increases. Al Malinowski explained that the information is not available to the Big Sky Post Office, but he is trying approaches to calculate the number of packages.

Wildlife Conservation Society – Kris Inman

[\(02:36:13\)](#) Kevin Germain asked questions about Ordinance revision regarding bear proof containers. Steve Johnson discussed challenges with enforcement.

[\(02:43:42\)](#) Kevin Germain asked if trash containers can be purchased to reach the goal of 100% compliance.

[\(02:46:06\)](#) Targets for the coming year include increased messaging with recreationists.

[\(02:48:21\)](#) Steve Johnson and Kris Inman discussed increased grizzly activity and expansion.



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[\(02:50:15\)](#) Public comment from Ben H. in support of WCS.

Women In Action – Jean Behr

[\(02:52:00\)](#) Ciara Wolfe asked questions regarding reserves.

c. Applications over \$200,000

Big Sky Chamber of Commerce – Candace Strauss

[\(02:54:38\)](#) Ciara Wolfe asked questions and Candace discussed changes in tourism climate due to COVID-19 and preparing for the unknown.

Big Sky Community Housing Trust – Laura Seyfang

[\(02:58:38\)](#) Sarah Blechta made clarifications regarding questions.

[\(02:59:31\)](#) Board members asked questions about the Down Payment Assistance program.

Big Sky Community Organization – Leisha Folley, Al Malinowski, & Adam Johnson

[\(03:07:50\)](#) Ciara Wolfe is recusing herself for conflict of interest but was available to answer questions.

[\(03:08:56\)](#) BSCO pulled their capital request for Master Trail Buildout project.

[\(03:09:38\)](#) Kevin Germain asked questions regarding expanding the tax authority of the Parks District and possible mill levy authority.

[\(03:13:29\)](#) Kevin Germain asked about reoccurring future requests.

Gallatin River Task Force – Kristin Gardner & Ryan Newcomb

[\(03:15:40\)](#) Ciara Wolfe asked questions regarding request for District Formation in the Canyon. Board members discussed the 1% designated for the canyon and formation of a district.

[\(03:22:48\)](#) Ciara Wolfe asked questions regarding GRTF reserves.

[\(03:24:40\)](#) Daniel Bierschwale clarified questions related to request growth.

Visit Big Sky – Candace Strauss

[\(03:27:28\)](#) Kevin Germain asked questions and Candace discussed marketing plans.

[\(03:32:30\)](#) Sarah Blechta asked for clarification on local and national promotions.

[\(03:34:02\)](#) **Motion to Adjourn:** *Sarah Blechta*

Respectfully Submitted,

Steve Johnson, Secretary & Treasurer