



FY21 Fall Application Review and Q&A Meeting Minutes

NOVEMBER 10th, 2020 | 5:30-8:30 PM

Big Sky Resort Area District
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I. Open Meeting

[\(00:02:46\)](#) Kevin Germain called meeting to order at 5:30pm.

In attendance: Staff: Daniel Bierschwale, Kristin Drain, Jenny Muscat, & Sara Huger

Board Members: Grace Young, Sarah Blechta, Ciara Wolfe, Steve Johnson, & Kevin Germain

Legal Counsel: Kim Beatty

A. Public Comment

[\(00:03:48\)](#) Jenny Muscat read a summary of public comment received prior to the meeting:

- ◆ Brian Stumpf and Will Littman shared support for the Art Council's Music in the Mountains project.
- ◆ Becky Brockie shared her support of the Big Sky Community Housing Trust's Future Property Development and Long-Term Rental projects. Tim Kent and Zack Landen also shared general support for the Housing Trust.
- ◆ Camie James, Kari Gras, and Shannon Sears shared their support for the Chamber of Commerce.
- ◆ David Kack shared collaboration efforts and support for the Center for Large Landscape Conservation project.
- ◆ Amalia Bellino, Brian Wheeler, Caroline Loewy Alton, Chris McQuery, Joe Miller, Kim White, Mike Arneson, Robert Taishoff, and Taylor Middleton and Troy Nedved on behalf of Big Sky Resort, shared support for Eagle Mount's Ski and Snowboard program.
- ◆ Bonnie Wolfe and Sally Moskol shared support for the Library.
- ◆ Catherine Laughner shared public comment related to the Library.
- ◆ Linda Nell shared support for Gallatin Invasive Species Alliance.
- ◆ Corey Lewellen, District Ranger of the Forest Service, shared support for Gallatin River Task Force's Watershed Protection & Enhancement project.
- ◆ Holly Hill of Gallatin Watershed Council shared her support of Gallatin River Task Force's Education & Outreach programming.
- ◆ JeNelle Johnson, Mike Scholz, Rich McEldowney, and Tori Pintar shared general support for the Gallatin River Task Force.
- ◆ Mark Davidson shared comment to use funds being requested by Visit Big Sky to fund other community needs during these uncertain times.

View complete public comments here: [📄 ?](#)

(00:07:41) Jenny Muscat read a list of organizations and their representatives in attendance:

- ◆ From the Big Sky Fire Department, Greg Megaard
- ◆ From the Big Sky Transportation District, David Kack
- ◆ From the Gallatin County Sheriff's Office, Mark Woodard and Daniel Haydon
- ◆ From the Arts Council of Big Sky, Brian Hurlbut
- ◆ From the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce, Candace Strauss
- ◆ From the Big Sky Community Food Bank, Sarah Gaither and Jill Holder
- ◆ From the Big Sky Community Housing Trust, Laura Seyfang
- ◆ From the Big Sky Community Organization, Adam Johnson, Leisha Foley, and Kate Ketschek
- ◆ From the Big Sky Discovery Academy, Nettie Breuner and Laura McPherson
- ◆ From Eagle Mount, Anna Smoot, Kevin Sylvester, and Sarah Wolf
- ◆ From the Big Sky Rotary Foundation, Blair Mohn
- ◆ From Big Sky Search and Rescue, Jeff Trulen
- ◆ From Big Sky Skating and Hockey Association, Ryan Blectha and Gary Hermann
- ◆ From the Center for Large Landscape Conservation, Liz Fairbanks, Abigail Breuner, and Tyler Creech
- ◆ From Friends of the Big Sky Community Library, Kathy House, Dani Kabish, and Teri Kendziorski
- ◆ From Gallatin Invasive Species Alliance, Jen Mohler
- ◆ From the Gallatin Valley Snowmobile Association, Bryan Capdeville
- ◆ From the Gallatin River Task Force, Kristin Gardner and Ryan Newcomb
- ◆ From Morningstar Learning Center, Kelsey Hash, Stephanie Kissel, and Maren Dunn
- ◆ From Montana Land Reliance, Jessie Weise
- ◆ From the Post Office LLC, Al Malinowski
- ◆ From Visit Big Sky, Candace Strauss
- ◆ From Warren Miller Performing Arts Center, John Zirkle
- ◆ From Women In Action, Jean Behr

B. Intros & Chairman Statement: *Discussion*

(00:10:30) Kevin Germain thanked all applicants for their work within the community. Kevin discussed responses to COVID-19 and reasons for adjusting Appropriations to two cycles.



C. Funds Available Estimate: *Discussion*



(00:13:40) Daniel Bierschwale thanked applicants and discussed funds available. After the Community Surveillance Testing program allocation of \$350,000, the total estimated funds available were \$3.5 million.

D. Executive/Staff Recommendations: *Discussion*

(00:16:02) Daniel Bierschwale discussed communication and collaboration with award recipients. Daniel reviewed historical investments.

[\(00:18:57\)](#) Daniel reviewed the Coordinating Council of Big Sky's annual report card and how Big Sky's Community Vision & Strategy initiatives and community needs are being addressed.

[\(00:21:24\)](#) Daniel Bierschwale reviewed an outline of the application and award process. View:  



[\(00:25:07\)](#) Daniel shared and reviewed a draft of potential scoring system; it will not be utilized this cycle but in the next award cycle beginning FY22. View:  

[\(00:25:28\)](#) Daniel explained the Board will be reviewing applications by projects and requested public comments be specific for projects. Additionally, Gallatin River Task Force reduced 'Education and Outreach' request by \$7,500, Women In Action reduced 'Indirect Behavioral Healthcare Services' by \$5,500, Big Sky Chamber of Commerce pulled their request for 'Local Governance Facilitation - Eggs&Issues/Gallatin-Madison Joint County Commission Meeting | Coordinating Council of Big Sky' for \$5,500, Big Sky Chamber of Commerce pulled their request for 'Advocating for Our Community | Creating a Positive Business Climate - MT Chamber Days and BBER Economic Outlook Seminar' for \$11,000, Visit Big Sky reduced their request for 'Promote the Big Sky Destination' by \$41,968, and Big Sky Community Housing Trust pulled their request for the 'Long-Term Rental Program' for \$9,000 .

E. Application Review and Q&A: Discussion

[\(00:27:36\)](#) Grace Young thanked the Board and Staff and explained her recommendations and concerns regarding Big Sky's winter season and future collections.

[\(00:28:29\)](#) Kevin Germain explained that most applications were reviewed, and questions asked and answered, during the Spring cycle (at meetings in June 2020) with a few minor adjustments and additional project applications for this Fall cycle.

Board questions were sent to applicants in advance; all questions and answers can be viewed here:  

Government Entities

Big Sky Fire Department | Big Sky Transportation Department | Gallatin County Sheriff's Office

[\(00:30:34\)](#) **Motion:** to fund Government Entities based on staff recommendations (fully fund): Sarah Blechta

Seconded: Ciara Wolfe

[\(00:31:09\)](#) Daniel Bierschwale explained the Sheriff's Office received CARES Act Funding which helped to reallocate funding award. Daniel asked the Fire Department about CARES Act Funding.

[\(00:32:08\)](#) Chief Megaard explained that the Fire Department's CARES Act application for salary reimbursement has not been decided yet and they will be open to discussing reallocation when they know.

[\(00:33:50\)](#) Sarah Blechta discussed concerns with award funding being shifted into reserve and how CARES Act funding will be allocated.

[\(00:35:24\)](#) Kevin Germain asked and Chief Megaard answered questions related to wildland fire engines which were funded in the Spring.

[\(00:37:36\)](#) **Vote: Motion Passed Unanimously**

Community Organizations

[\(00:38:42\)](#) Daniel Bierschwale clarified genuine conflicts of interest and perceived optics of a conflict of interest. Kevin Germain explained that Lone Mountain Land is partnering with the Big Sky Community Housing Trust on the Future Property Development project and therefore Kevin will recuse himself during discussion and vote for that project.

Projects over \$100,000

Project: Operations & Maintenance | Applicant: Big Sky Community Organization (BSCO)

[\(00:41:05\)](#) **Motion:** to fund Operations & Maintenance project: Sarah Blechta

Seconded: Ciara Wolfe (Ciara clarified that she is no longer employed by Big Sky Community Organization and had no financial conflict of interest)

[\(00:42:14\)](#) Sarah Blechta discussed the increase in trail usership over the summer and thanked BSCO for their work and finding alternate funding sources.

[\(00:43:25\)](#) **Vote: Motion Passed Unanimously**

Project: Leadership, Staffing and Operations of the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce |

Applicant: Big Sky Chamber of Commerce (Chamber)

[\(00:43:39\)](#) **Motion:** to fund Leadership, Staffing and Operations of the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce project: Ciara Wolfe

Seconded: Sarah Blechta

[\(00:44:31\)](#) Ciara Wolfe discussed efforts the Chamber made to address COVID-19.

[\(00:45:10\)](#) **Vote: Motion Passed Unanimously**

Project: Operations | Applicant: Gallatin River Task Force (GRTF)

[\(00:45:36\)](#) **Motion:** fund Gallatin River Task Force's Operations project in the amount of \$116,544: Grace Young

Seconded: Sarah Blechta

[\(00:46:00\)](#) Ryan Newcomb asked about the difference in the recommended amount versus requested amount. Daniel Bierschwale explained that with the original Fall request being \$116,544, and the new amount requested included what was not awarded in the Spring cycle, which other organization did not request, the recommendation was for the original amount to maintain equitability and fairness among organizations.

[\(00:47:54\)](#) *Public Comment:* Eric Ladd shared support for GRTF.

[\(00:48:47\)](#) Daniel Bierschwale clarified that the recommendation was not to cut funding from the original request but to not fund the additional amount to remain equitable and fair among organization.

[\(00:49:15\)](#) *Public Comment:* Erik Morrison shared support for GRTF.

[\(00:49:48\)](#) **Vote: Motion Passed Unanimously**

Project: 2021 Music in the Mountains Programming | Applicant: Arts Council of Big Sky

[\(00:50:11\)](#) **Motion:** fund 2021 Music in the Mountains Programming in the amount of \$185,800: Steve Johnson

Seconded: Grace Young

[\(00:50:29\)](#) Daniel Bierschwale explained the difference in the recommended amount was due to the increased request for one more concert and the additional 2021 Music in the Mountains Infrastructure project from the Spring and the recommendation was to fund the infrastructure project and not the additional concert.

[\(00:52:01\)](#) Ciara Wolfe explained her hesitance to fund additional requests from the Spring and the uncertainty of Winter collections.

[\(00:53:02\)](#) **Vote: Motion Passed Unanimously**

Project: Promote the Big Sky Destination | Applicant: Visit Big Sky

[\(00:53:30\)](#) **Motion:** fund Promote the Big Sky Destination project in the amount of \$353,432: Ciara Wolfe

Seconded: Sarah Blechta

[\(00:53:49\)](#) Daniel Bierschwale explained the recommended amount and combined increases compared to the returned Spring awards. Daniel discussed future commitments and requested a report in January or February related to any future requests.

[\(00:55:31\)](#) Ciara Wolfe asked for clarifications in increase and return amounts for all projects.

[\(00:56:09\)](#) Candace Strauss clarified returned amount and agency model for Visit Big Sky.

[\(00:57:19\)](#) **Vote: Motion Passed 3-1**

Project: Future Property Development | Applicant: Big Sky Community Housing Trust

[\(00:57:41\)](#) Kevin Germain recused himself and turned meeting over to Vice Chair, Sarah Blechta.

[\(00:58:06\)](#) **Motion:** fund staff recommendation of \$410,000 for Future Property Development: Ciara Wolfe

Seconded: Steve Johnson

[\(00:58:30\)](#) Daniel Bierschwale explained the recommendation; original request was for \$1,400,000 and after discussing with Laura Seyfang, the minimum amount required to move the project forward was \$410,000.

[\(00:59:02\)](#) Kim Beatty explained concerns with limited information and lack of specificity for funds or a budget.

[\(01:04:48\)](#) Laura Seyfang provided more information regarding project though details are not finalized.

[\(01:10:11\)](#) Steve Johnson discussed the need for Water & Sewer District annexation and use of SFEs for workforce housing; no decision has been made by the Water & Sewer District.

[\(01:11:25\)](#) *Public Comment:* Brian Hurlbut made comments in support of affordable housing.

[\(01:11:53\)](#) Kim Beatty discussed need for more specificity and suggested options including putting project in “pending” status and creating a working subcommittee to gather more information.

[\(01:13:53\)](#) Ciara Wolfe discussed project and options moving forward.

[\(01:15:07\)](#) Ciara Wolfe proposed amending motion to a pending status.

[\(01:16:28\)](#) Board members discussed details and options with Daniel Bierschwale and Kim Beatty.

[\(01:22:56\)](#) Kim Beatty described a motion to keep application pending, not rejected, and to form a working group to gather additional information and bring back to the board at another meeting.

[\(01:23:27\)](#) **Motion Withdrawn:** Ciara Wolfe

[\(01:23:36\)](#) **Motion:** move application to pending status and Steve Johnson, Grace Young, Daniel Bierschwale, and Kim Beatty will create a working group and bring a proposal to the board: Ciara Wolfe

Seconded: Steve Johnson

(01:24:53) **Vote: Motion Passed** with 1 abstaining

Projects under \$100,000

(01:25:27) **Motion:** consider and approve projects under \$100,000 as a group: Steve Johnson

No Second

(01:28:48) **Motion:** fund requested amount for all projects under \$100,000 with exception for the Arts Council's '2021 Music in the Mountains Infrastructure,' Morningstar Learning Center's 'Tuition Reduction,' Gallatin River Task Force's 'Stormwater Infrastructure Mapping, Modeling, Project Identification and Design,' and Eagle Mount's 'Big Sky Ski and Snowboard Program/EMBLEM Camps' projects: Grace Young

Seconded: Sarah Blechta

(01:29:52) *Public Comment:* Candace Strauss shared support for the Housing Trust.

(01:31:55) Daniel Bierschwale clarified that Big Brothers Big Sisters withdrew their request.

(01:32:15) **Vote: Motion Passed Unanimously**

Project: Tuition Reduction | Applicant: Morningstar Learning Center

(01:32:55) **Motion:** to fund Tuition Reduction for request amount, with board discussion: Ciara Wolfe

Seconded: Sarah Blechta

(01:34:27) Ciara Wolfe discussed Morningstar's proposal and COVID impacts on childcare.

(01:37:31) Steve Johnson suggested a surveillance testing commitment from Morningstar to be included in award contract. Board members discussed.

(01:41:19) Kim Beatty did not believe testing could be required legally.

(01:42:38) Stephanie Kissel and Kelsey Hash of Morningstar discussed state guidelines and recommendations regarding COVID and staff testing.

(01:43:47) Board members discussed. Kevin Germain and Sarah Blechta did not support a testing requirement but highly encouraged their participation.

(01:45:12) **Vote: Motion Passed 4-0**

(01:45:38) Kevin Germain explained that all awards will be finalized at the next meeting on Thursday, November 12th.

Project: 2021 Music in the Mountains Infrastructure | Applicant: Arts Council of Big Sky

(01:45:51) **Motion:** fund 2021 Music in the Mountains Infrastructure project for requested amount: Grace Young

Seconded: Ciara Wolfe

(01:47:38) Sarah Blechta asked about alternative funding; Brian Hurlbut explained project budget and about 30% was being requested from Resort Tax. Board members discussed.

(01:51:21) **Vote: Motion Passed 3-1**

Project: Big Sky Ski and Snowboard Program/EMBLEM Camps | Applicant: Eagle Mount Bozeman

(01:52:30) **Motion:** not fund Eagle Mount's project: Sarah Blechta

Seconded: Ciara Wolfe

[\(01:53:07\)](#) Daniel Bierschwale explained the recommendation was based on the amount of impact within the District and the number of impacted individuals within the District. Daniel shared appreciation for Eagle Mount's work.

[\(01:53:33\)](#) Sarah Blechta explained her concerns with what could be legally funded as no individuals within the District attend.

[\(01:54:13\)](#) Ciara Wolfe shared her support of Eagle Mount but did not feel it was fitting for public tax dollars.

[\(01:55:31\)](#) Kevin Germain expressed his support of Eagle Mount and believed philanthropy funding was a better fit compared to public tax dollars.

[\(01:56:28\)](#) Kevin Sylvester and Anna Smoot of Eagle Mount thanked the board and explained revenue sources.

[\(02:02:10\)](#) **Vote: Motion Passed Unanimously**

Project: Stormwater Infrastructure Mapping, Modeling, Project Identification and Design

| Applicant: Gallatin River Task Force (GRTF)

[\(02:02:37\)](#) **Motion:** fund Stormwater Infrastructure Mapping, Modeling, Project Identification and Design project: Ciara Wolfe

Seconded: Grace Young

[\(02:03:19\)](#) Sarah Blechta explained her reservations in funding a project that may require large future requests for funding.

[\(02:04:06\)](#) Steve Johnson discussed need to know more details for this project.

[\(02:04:37\)](#) Kristin Gardner and Ryan Newcomb of GRTF discussed stormwater effect on the Gallatin River and answered board questions.

[\(02:09:59\)](#) Kevin Germain shared concerns with beginning new projects with uncertain winter collections and future funding needs and possible requests from Resort Tax.

[\(02:13:48\)](#) **Vote: Motion Passed 3-1**

[\(02:14:13\)](#) Daniel Bierschwale gave an overview of recommended funding and reserve balance. Total Fall Award was \$2,685,888.

[\(02:14:48\)](#) **Motion:** fund the Reserve \$831,868: Sarah Blechta

Seconded: Grace Young

[\(02:16:28\)](#) **Vote: Motion Passed**

Respectfully Submitted,

[\(02:17:08\)](#) **Motion to Adjourn**

Steven J Johnson

Steven J Johnson (Jan 27, 2021 12:36 MST)

Steve Johnson, Secretary & Treasurer

BSRAD BOARD & STAFF: Kevin Germain, Chair | Sarah Blechta, Vice Chair | Steve Johnson, Secretary & Treasurer | Ciara Wolfe, Director | Grace Young, Director | Daniel Bierschwale, Executive Director | Kristin Drain, Finance & Compliance Manager | Jenny Muscat, Operations Manager | Sara Huger, Administrative Assistant

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