



Application Review #1 Meeting Minutes

June 5th, 2023 | 5:30 PM

Big Sky Resort Area District
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FY24 Application Review meetings were held on Monday, June 5th, Tuesday, June 6th, and Thursday, June 8th, at 5:30 pm at BASE Community Center (285 Simkins Dr) and through Zoom.

I. Open Meeting

[00:02:08](#) Sarah Blechta began the meeting with a chair statement. Sarah discussed intention for strategic investments and commitment to reserves. Sarah explained how collections have decreased over the last few months and application requests are outpacing revenue.

[00:04:43](#) Sarah explained how resort tax provides tax relief and matches needs in the community.

[00:05:39](#) Sarah thanked everyone in the community who dedicate time and energy to Big Sky.

[00:07:35](#) Sarah explained that Arts & Education, Economic Development, Housing, and Public Works will be reviewed tonight, and preliminary motions will be made but decisions will not be finalized until Thursday, June 8.

A. Roll Call

All Board Members present.

B. Public Comment

[00:08:39](#) Jenny Muskat reviewed how to make public comment.

[00:09:56](#) Jenny reviewed public comments received prior to the meeting. (comments can be read here:  [↔](#))

C. Regular Agenda

~~a. Intro & Chair Statement: Action (moved to beginning of meeting)~~

D. Application Review: Action

[00:11:25](#) Kevin Germain discussed his philosophy and future capital needs. Kevin thanked all the applicants and for all the do for our community.

[00:12:47](#) Ciara Wolfe thanked all nonprofits and the hard work their teams are doing. Ciara explained her approach to assessing a successful project through growth over time and suggested a 7.5% growth increase over last year as a starting point. Ciara also encouraged 1:1 match for every project.



[00:16:08](#) Steve Johnson shared appreciation for previous BSRAD Board Members. Steve shared his philosophy for strategic planning and investments in infrastructure. Steve encouraged matching funds for maintenance and operating requests to demonstrate community support and the value of services.

[00:19:16](#) Grace Young explained her philosophy was making Big Sky a place everyone can call home.

[00:22:04](#) Sarah Blechta explained her philosophy and encouraged matching funds.

[00:23:23](#) Daniel Bierschwale discussed prevalent operations reliance and suggested matching funds, project annuity impacts, and matching funds for capital requests.

[00:25:24](#) Daniel reviewed application process and decision-making tools to help guide a comprehensive community strategy.

[00:27:06](#) Daniel explained Prioritize tool and ranking system. (prioritize ranking can be viewed here:  )

[00:28:09](#) Daniel reviewed available funds and the budget, including committed government services funding.

[00:32:12](#) *Public Comment:* Al Malinowski gave an update on the Post Office; the contract has been extended to May 2024 while the US Postal Service finds a location.

a. Arts & Education

[00:34:11](#) Daniel Bierschwale reviewed the projects, Prioritize rankings, and suggested contingencies for Arts & Education.

[00:36:17](#) **Motion:** fund Arts Council of Big Sky's '2024 Music in the Mountains' for \$235,000 and Warren Miller Performing Arts Center's 'Annual Cultural Programming at WMPAC' for \$250,000: Kevin Germain

Second: Steve Johnson

[00:36:30](#) Kevin Germain explained reasoning for funding and discussed minor increases year over year.

[00:37:14](#) Ciara Wolfe calculated a 7.5% increase for Annual Cultural Programming at WMPAC would be \$242,875.

[00:37:30](#) Steve Johnson discussed track record of Arts Council and WMPA. Grace Young agreed.

[00:38:20](#) **Vote: Motion Passed**

[00:38:44](#) **Motion:** fund Morningstar Learning Center's 'Early Childhood Education & Tuition Assistance' for \$425,000: Kevin Germain

Second: Ciara Wolfe

[00:38:59](#) Board members discussed the need for childcare and affordability.

[00:39:37](#) **Vote: Motion Passed** Unanimously

[00:40:11](#) **Motion:** fund Morningstar Campus Expansion for \$750,000 with contingency of final plan being presented and approved by Board: Ciara Wolfe

Second: Grace Young

[00:40:28](#) Daniel Bierschwale explained contingency.

[00:40:51](#) Kevin Germain shared concerns about the project being ready to move forward and the future costs. Kevin suggested \$200,000 for initial planning, architecture, and bids.

[00:41:54](#) Ciara Wolfe asked, and Mariel Butan from Morningstar Learning Center discussed timeline, options, costs, and funding.

[00:44:16](#) Ciara Wolfe was supportive of project and discussed contingencies. Steve Johnson discussed location and safety concerns but was supportive of the project to meet community needs. Grace Young discussed the need for childcare.

[00:48:35](#) Kevin Germain asked, and Mariel Butan discussed preferred option that would serve the most children. Kevin discussed reserves for funding capital projects when a plan is complete.

[00:52:44](#) **Vote: Motion Passed**

[00:53:26](#) **Motion:** fund Big Sky Discovery Academy's 'Early Childhood Program & Tuition Assistance' for \$170,000:
Kevin Germain

Second: Grace Young

[00:54:06](#) Ciara Wolfe discussed costs per hour for childcare, Morningstar is under \$8/hour and Discovery Academy is almost \$15/hour. Ciara did not believe funding was equitable and suggested funding the same costs for each. Sarah Blechta discussed the budget for the project and made suggestions for equity.

[01:00:35](#) Steve Johnson was supportive of childcare but shared concerns with location's safety. Steve was interested in a childcare study.

[01:01:18](#) Sarah Blechta discussed equity. Sarah and Ciara suggested funding \$50,000 for tuition assistance. Ciara pointed out this project was ranked low in priority by the public.

[01:03:46](#) Scott Poloff from Discovery Academy explained costs and early childhood education.

[01:06:25](#) Seth made public comments regarding childcare and in support of funding childcare projects.

[01:09:52](#) **Vote:** Motion does not pass.

[01:10:36](#) **Motion:** fund Big Sky Discovery Academy's 'Early Childhood Program & Tuition Assistance' for \$100,000:
Sarah Blechta

Second: Kevin Germain

[01:11:08](#) Sarah Blechta shared appreciation for Discovery Academy and Morningstar and explained her motion for \$100,000 without restrictions.

[01:13:03](#) Ciara Wolfe shared concerns with spending public funds for twice the price of other options. Ciara and Sarah discussed no longer having wait lists at the Big Sky School District.

[01:15:02](#) Sarah suggested amending motion to include scholarship available for only those ineligible for the 4k program at the Big Sky School District. Board members discussed but did not amend the motion.

[01:16:30](#) Kara Edgar made public comments regarding education cost.

[01:17:34](#) Liz McFadden made public comments in support of Discovery Academy.

[01:18:49](#) Payton Huler made public comments in support of Discovery Academy.

[01:20:01](#) **Vote: Motion Passed 3-2**

b. Economic Development

[01:21:17](#) Daniel Bierschwale reviewed projects in Economic Development and noted Visit Big Sky's (VBS) 'Destination Research & Stewardship Plan' was not forecasted last year and would build a future annuity. Contingency suggested for VBS's 'Visitor Marketing & Events' to include support from businesses.

[01:22:39](#) **Motion:** fund VBS's 'Visitor Marketing & Events' for \$275,000, 'VBS Operations' for \$240,000, VBS's 'Destination Research & Stewardship Plan' for \$230,000, Big Sky Chamber of Commerce's (BSCOC) 'BSCOC Operations' for \$126,000, BSCOC's 'Development of Business Skills Programming' for \$79,000, and BSCOC's 'Workforce Sustainability Research' for \$26,000: Kevin Germain

Second: Sarah Blechta

[01:22:55](#) Kevin Germain discussed marketing, summer projections and supported economic development and businesses collecting resort tax.

[01:24:11](#) Ciara Wolfe discussed growth and using 7.5% increase year over year for projects which included VBS Operations at \$197,262 and BSCOC's 'Development of Business Skills Programming' at \$75,250.

[01:25:47](#) Steve Johnson discussed tourism promotion and proposed a balanced funding approach with 1/3 from State lodging tax, 1/3 from businesses, and 1/3 from resort tax.

[01:26:57](#) Brad Niva from Visit Big Sky and the Chamber of Commerce discussed \$825,000 state funding and rules.

[01:27:49](#) Sarah Blechta asked about managing shoulder seasons and business needs. Brad Niva explained their focus was on extending seasons not necessarily shoulder seasons.

[01:29:45](#) Sarah Blechta shared support for marketing and agreed with a 7.5% increase from last year.

[01:30:54](#) **Amended Motion:** 'VBS Operations' for \$240,000, VBS's 'Destination Research & Stewardship Plan' for \$230,000, Big Sky Chamber of Commerce's (BSCOC) 'BSCOC Operations' for \$126,075, BSCOC's 'Development of Business Skills Programming' for \$79,000, and BSCOC's 'Workforce Sustainability Research' for \$26,000 (*VBS's 'Visitor Marketing & Events' not included in motion*)

[01:31:23](#) Ciara Wolfe proposed VBS Operations at \$197,262 and BSCOC's 'Development of Business Skills Programming' at \$75,250. Board members discussed.

[01:35:21](#) Brad Niva clarified cost of Visitor Center being open 6 days a week verses 5 or 4.5 days a week.

[01:35:46](#) **Vote:** Motion does not pass.

[01:36:05](#) **Motion:** fund 'VBS Operations' for \$200,000, VBS's 'Destination Research & Stewardship Plan' for \$230,000, Big Sky Chamber of Commerce's (BSCOC) 'BSCOC Operations' for \$126,075, BSCOC's 'Development of Business Skills Programming' for \$75,000, and BSCOC's 'Workforce Sustainability Research' for \$26,000: Ciara Wolfe

Second: Grace Young

[01:37:54](#) **Vote: Motion Passed** 4-1

[01:39:01](#) **Motion:** fund Visitor Marketing & Events for \$150,000: Sarah Blechta

Second: Kevin Germain

[01:39:28](#) Sarah Blechta shared support for marketing and did not support funding events. Board members discussed the needs of businesses and seasonality and requested a survey of businesses.

[01:46:25](#) Seth Griggs Ryan shared public comment related to seasonality.

[01:48:48](#) Brad Niva shared economic data including 14% less visitors this winter and discussed budgets.

[01:52:10](#) Anna Johnson with the Big Sky Chamber discussed the needs of businesses.

[01:53:07](#) Mike Scholtz shared public comments related to tourism development and marketing.

[01:54:44](#) **Vote: Motion Passed** 4-1

c. Housing

[01:55:24](#) Daniel Bierschwale reviewed recommendations for housing projects.

[01:56:17](#) **Motion:** fund Big Sky Community Housing Trust's (BSCHT) 'Good Deeds' for \$800,000, 'BSCHT Operations' for \$225,000, and 'Rent Local' for \$150,000: Ciara Wolfe

Second: Kevin Germain

[01:56:37](#) Ciara Wolfe discussed housing needs in the community and BSCHT's operations. Board members discussed the importance of housing projects and fully supported funding.

[01:58:49](#) **Vote: Motion Passed** Unanimously

d. Public Works

[01:59:10](#) Daniel Bierschwale reviewed public works projects and contingency recommendations.

[02:02:14](#) Ron from the Big Sky County Water & Sewer District explained costs related to Water Tank Land Acquisition.

[02:02:49](#) **Motion:** fund Big Sky County Water & Sewer District's 'Centrifuge Sludge Press' for \$780,000 at 60% of request and 'Water Tank Land Acquisition' for 60% of costs up to \$60,000: Sarah Blechta

Second: Ciara Wolfe

[02:03:19](#) Sarah Blechta explained the basis of 60% and board members discussed.

[02:05:46](#) Ciara Wolfe asked, and Ron explained other funding sources.

[02:07:10](#) Board Members discussed water and sewer district projects and needs.

[02:14:01](#) **Vote: Motion Passed** Unanimously

[02:14:15](#) **Motion:** fund Friends of the Big Sky Community Library projects at 7.5% increase from last year for 'Big Sky Community Library Operations' at \$71,500 and 'Library Programming & Services' at \$67,000, and fund 'Library District Preparation & Ballot' for \$45,000: Ciara Wolfe

Second: Kevin Germain

[02:15:40](#) Board members discussed creation of a Library District. Steve Johnson suggested a contingency regarding Library operations and leadership.

[02:18:03](#) **Vote: Motion Passed** Unanimously

[02:18:29](#) **Motion:** fund Visit Big Sky's (VBS) 'Wayfinding Signage Project' for \$200,000 with a contingency not to include LED light board: Sarah Blechta

Second: Ciara Wolfe

[02:19:10](#) Sarah Blechta shared support and concerns for Wayfinding Signage Project.

[02:21:27](#) Brad Nive from VBS explained LED lights, signage location, and messaging.

[02:24:39](#) **Vote: Motion Passed** 4-1

[02:25:08](#) **Motion:** fund VBS's 'Town Center Public Bathrooms' for \$370,000: Grace Young

Second: Kevin Germain

[02:25:18](#) Grace Young explained reasoning for motion and supported public bathrooms. Ciara Wolfe suggested a 50/50 match as this project has no matching funds. Steve Johnson requested support from the Town Center Owners Association.

[02:26:42](#) John Bowersocks from Town Center Owners Association clarified they will be responsible for maintenance of the bathrooms.

[02:27:31](#) Brad Nive of VBS discussed public support for bathrooms.

[02:28:11](#) Whitney Montgomery shared support for public bathrooms.

[02:28:40](#) **Vote: Motion Passed 3-2**

E. Public Comment

[02:28:58](#) Motion to Adjourn

Respectfully Submitted,

Steven Johnson

Steven Johnson (Jul 12, 2023 13:19 MDT)

Steve Johnson, Secretary & Treasurer

BSRAD BOARD & STAFF: Sarah Blechta, Chair | Ciara Wolfe, Vice Chair | Steve Johnson, Secretary & Treasurer | Kevin Germain, Director | Grace Young, Director | Daniel Bierschwale, Executive Director | Kristin Drain, Finance & Compliance Manager | Jenny Muscat, Deputy Director | Tammy Estensen, Communications & Community Engagement Manager | Sara Huger, Office Manager

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