

**BIG SKY RESORT AREA DISTRICT
11 LONE PEAK DRIVE NO. 204
BIG SKY, MONTANA**

**MINUTES OF THE NONPROFIT APPLICATION REVIEW WORK SESSION MEETING
JUNE 4, 2024, 9:00 A.M.**

MEMBERS:

Sarah Blechta	Chair
Grace Young	Secretary and Treasurer
Kevin Germain	Director
Ashley Wilson	Director
John Zirkle	Director

GUESTS:

Daniel Bierschwale	Executive Director
Jenny Muscat	Deputy Director
David O'Connor	Big Sky Community Housing Trust
Jennifer Boutsianis	Big Sky Community Housing Trust
Cryder Bancroft	Big Sky Community Housing Trust
Brad Niva	Big Sky Chamber of Commerce and Visit Big Sky
Michael Romney	Big Sky Chamber of Commerce
Abby Butler	Grow Wild
Jennifer Mohler	Grow Wild
John Bowersox	Big Sky Town Center
Jack Reaney	Explore Big Sky
Brian Hurlbut	Arts Council of Big Sky
Emily O'Connor	Gallatin River Task Force
Jess Olson	Gallatin River Task Force
Ruthi Solari	Big Sky SNO
Lizzie Peyton	Big Sky SNO
Shayna Blaser	Montana Women's Business Center
Stacie Mesuda	Big Sky Resort
Beth Marlington	Big Sky Discovery Academy
Scott Poloff	Big Sky Discovery Academy
David Cook	Mountain Journal
Sarah Gaither	Big Sky Food Bank
Erica Oglevie	Big Sky Community Library
Alanah Griffith	Board Member, Morningstar Learning Center
Mariel Butan	Morningstar Learning Center
Michael Pitcairn	Morningstar Learning Center
Steph Kissell	Morningstar Learning Center
Sydney Desmarais	Riley's Urgent Fund for Friends
Allison Bradac	Executive Director, Wellness in Action
Danielle Chenoweth	Counselor, Wellness in Action (via teleconference)
Kiernan McCarthy	Wellness in Action
Michelle Kendziorski	Wellness in Action
Katie Grice	Wellness in Action
Becky Brockie	Wellness in Action
Natalie Studt	Wellness in Action
Hope Finch	Wellness in Action
Betsy McFadden	Wellness in Action
Emma Lawler	Big Sky Owners Association

Suzan Scott	Big Sky Owners Association
Deb Davidson	Center for Large Landscape Conservation
Abigail Breuer	Center for Large Landscape Conservation
Whitney Montgomery	CEO, Big Sky Community Organization
Madeleine Feher	Big Sky Community Organization
Jeff MacPherson	Big Sky Community Organization
John McGuire	Big Sky Community Organization
Ewa Zirkle	Big Sky Community Organization
Tallie Lancey	Big Sky Community Member
Chelsea McDonough	Big Sky Community Member
Dan Taft	Community Member
Judy Katany	Community Member
Sawyer Wolfe	Community Member

Minutes prepared from a recording by Lori Goshert of Minutes Solutions Inc.

1. ROLL CALL

There being a quorum present, and adequate and proper notice having been given, the meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m., with Sarah Blechta acting as Chair.

Daniel Bierschwale described the organization’s resolution, of which each attendee had a copy, with a focus on the process the organization follows to review and approve grants.

2. REGULAR AGENDA

2.1 New Business

2.1.1 Impact Area: Arts and Culture FY25 Applications

There was \$511,097 available to be allocated in the arts and culture impact area.

- **Warren Miller Performing Arts Center: 2024 to 2025 Cultural Programming**

On a motion made by Kevin Germain, seconded by Grace Young, it was resolved to fully fund the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center for their 2024 to 2025 cultural programming, at a cost of \$227,500. Motion carried.

Declaring a conflict of interest, John Zirkle recused himself from all conversation and votes regarding the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center.

- **Arts Council of Big Sky: Music in the Mountains**

On a motion made by Grace Young, seconded by Kevin Germain, it was resolved to fully fund the Arts Council of Big Sky for their 2025 Music in the Mountains free summer community concert, at a cost of \$245,000. Motion carried.

ACTION – Brian Hurlbut will send Ashley Wilson a copy of the economic impact study.

- **Summary**

It was noted that \$472,500 was spent in the arts and culture impact area, with a surplus of \$38,597 remaining.

2.1.2 Impact Area: Conservation FY25 Applications

There was \$1,297,400 available to be allocated in the conservation impact area.

- **Gallatin River Task Force: Water Planning, Coordination, and Outreach**

On a motion made by John Zirkle, seconded by Kevin Germain, it was resolved to fully fund the Gallatin River Task Force for water planning, coordination, and outreach, at a cost of \$190,000. Motion carried.

On a motion made by Grace Young, it was resolved to fund the Gallatin River Task Force the balance of their conservation tasks, at a cost of \$493,922. The motion did not carry.

Declaring a conflict of interest, Ashley Wilson recused herself from all conversation and votes regarding the Gallatin River Task Force.

The Board noted that it is required to vote on projects individually in order of project score.

- **Big Sky SNO: Community Energy Efficiency and Conservation Engagement**

On a motion made by Grace Young, seconded by Ashley Wilson, it was resolved to fully fund Big Sky Sustainability Network Organization for community energy efficiency and conservation engagement, at a cost of \$55,000. Motion carried.

- **Grow Wild: Wildlife Habitat Conservation**

On a motion made by Kevin Germain, seconded by John Zirkle, it was resolved to fully fund Grow Wild for wildlife habitat conservation, at a cost of \$76,204. Motion carried.

Jennifer Mohler was asked whether the previous year's request represented a combination of wildlife habitat, the Crail Gardens, and HOA projects. She responded that the HOA programs fell under landowner assistance the previous year, and that the homeowner assistance took the form of education.

The Board expressed a desire to move away from funding gardens in the future and noted a need to plan for that outcome in order to focus on other land-related issues such as invasive species and education.

- **Gallatin River Task Force: West Fork Restoration**

On a motion made by Grace Young, seconded by Kevin Germain, it was resolved to fully fund the Gallatin River Task Force for West Fork restoration, at a cost of \$165,000. Motion carried.

- **Gallatin River Task Force: Gallatin River Access Restoration**

On a motion made by John Zirkle, seconded by Kevin Germain, it was resolved to fully fund the Gallatin River Task Force for Gallatin River access restoration, at a cost of \$195,778. Motion carried.

- **Big Sky SNO: Climate Action Plan Implementation**

On a motion made by Grace Young, seconded by Ashley Wilson, it was resolved to fully fund the Big Sky Sustainability Network Organization for their climate action plan implementation, at a cost of \$65,000. Motion carried.

- **Big Sky SNO: Commuter Incentive – One Less Car**

On a motion made by Ashley Wilson, seconded by Grace Young, it was resolved to fully fund the Big Sky Sustainability Network Organization for their commuter incentive program, One Less Car, at a cost of \$45,000. Motion carried.

In order to ensure the program continues to move forward, the Board emphasized the importance of communication with the transportation district. Along with the Skyline program, this will mitigate traffic and congestion.

- **Gallatin River Task Force: Water Conservation**

On a motion made by Kevin Germain, seconded by Grace Young, it was resolved to fully fund the Gallatin River Task Force for water conservation, at a cost of \$75,909. Motion carried.

- **Grow Wild: Land Stewardship**

On a motion made by Grace Young, seconded by Kevin Germain, it was resolved to fully fund Grow Wild for land stewardship, at a cost of \$98,739. Motion carried.

Jennifer Mohler was asked for an update on the Madison County presentation. She responded that it was made in early May, 2024, and the Madison County commissioners expressed satisfaction and invited her to bring it to other events. Jennifer Mohler hopes to have an event with them in August, 2024. Grow Wild asked them for \$15,000 in the hopes of receiving \$10,000; Grow Wild is waiting for a response.

- **Big Sky SNO: Recycling and Composting Education and Outreach**

On a motion made by Grace Young, seconded by John Zirkle, it was resolved to fully fund Big Sky Sustainability Network Organization for their recycling and composting education and outreach program, at a cost of \$35,000. Motion carried.

It was noted that SNO received an opportunity grant in Fiscal Year 2024 for summer only. Lizzie Peyton responded that changes have been made to the program: it now functions year-round and focuses on smaller-scale events. SNO has been working with the Big Sky Food Bank to recover unused food from vacation rentals, contributing to a circular economy. SNO has hired a summer intern to investigate what other communities are doing and assess how similar programs can be initiated in Big Sky.

- **Gallatin River Task Force: Water Monitoring**

On a motion made by Kevin Germain, seconded by John Zirkle, it was resolved to fully fund the Gallatin River Task Force for water monitoring, at a cost of \$57,235. Motion carried.

It was noted that a number of water contracts are stacking up, representing a significant resource limitation for the community.

- **Summary**

The Board noted that \$1,058,865 in total (approximately \$1.1 million) was granted to conservation efforts. A \$238,535 surplus remains in the fund.

The Board stated that a large surplus facilitated the conservation allocations for Fiscal Year 2025 but warned that the decisions may be more difficult in Fiscal Year 2026. The three organizations represented have a large reliance, 50% to 70%, on resort tax.

It was noted that the resolution created by the Board serves as an excellent guiding document, especially for the two newest Board members, though it was also acknowledged that the document could be changed after the next election if the newer members wish.

At 9:39 a.m., Sarah Blechta announced a break until 10:30 a.m.

2.1.3 Impact Area: Economic Development FY25 Applications

The meeting was reconvened at 10:30 a.m.

There was \$825,618 available to be allocated in the economic development impact area.

- **Visit Big Sky: Visitor Marketing**

On a motion made by Kevin Germain, seconded by John Zirkle, it was resolved to fund Visit Big Sky for visitor marketing, at a cost of \$253,618. Motion carried.

The original amount requested by Visit Big Sky was \$235,000, reduced from \$315,000.

Brad Niva stated that Visit Big Sky is underfunded compared to similar organizations. Visit Big Sky's new intern, Michael Romney, is exploring the possibility of establishing a tourism business improvement district in Big Sky. There are currently 18 tourism business improvement districts in Montana, and they raise money based on an assessment of a hotel room night. Hoteliers place money into a pool; if \$2 per room per night were added at the current rate of tourism in Big Sky, then around \$500,000 per year could accumulate in the pool. One challenge is that state statute only allows districts to be formed by utilizing commercial zone properties, such as traditional hotel rooms; this excludes short-term rentals. Three of the nine short-term rental property managers in the area have said they would voluntarily collect funds for the district if rentals were included.

Brad Niva noted that none of the 18 tourism districts in Montana are collecting funds from the short-term rental industry, leaving approximately \$1.1 million on the table. Visit Big Sky is working to change the statute to allow short-term rentals to participate in a tourism district.

- **Visit Big Sky: Destination Research and Stewardship Plan**

On a motion made by Kevin Germain, seconded by Ashley Wilson, it was resolved to fund Visit Big Sky for their destination research and stewardship plan, at a cost of \$130,000. Motion carried.

The original request was \$150,000; Visit Big Sky reduced it to \$130,000 before the meeting.

It was noted that \$383,618 had been awarded in the economic development impact area, with \$442,000 remaining.

- **Visit Big Sky: Operations**

On a motion made by Grace Young, seconded by John Zirkle, it was resolved to fully fund Visit Big Sky for operations, at a cost of \$215,000. Motion carried.

- **Big Sky Chamber of Commerce: Development of Business Skills Programming**

On a motion made by Grace Young, seconded by Kevin Germain, it was resolved to fully fund the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce for development of business skills programming, at a cost of \$87,000. Motion carried.

- **Big Sky Chamber of Commerce: Chamber Operation Programming**

On a motion made by John Zirkle, seconded by Ashley Wilson, it was resolved to fully fund the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce for Chamber operation programming, at a cost of \$140,000. Motion carried.

The Board noted that the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce has been accumulating alternative revenue streams and is on a trajectory to minimize its reliance on resort tax. The Board asked for the percentage of events open to community members versus events for Chamber of Commerce members. Brad Niva responded that some programs, such as business skill building programs, are always open to the public; however, there is a membership structure and a public structure under which a non-member will pay more for a paid event.

- **Summary**

It was noted that \$825,618 was spent in the economic development impact area, with no additional funds remaining.

At 10:45 a.m., Sarah Blechta announced a break until 11:15 a.m.

2.1.4 Impact Area: Education and Childcare FY25 Applications

The meeting was reconvened at 11:15 a.m.

There was \$1,454,661 available to be allocated in the education and childcare impact area.

- **Big Sky Discovery Academy: Early Childhood Student Tuition Assistance Program**

On a motion made by Kevin Germain, seconded by John Zirkle, it was resolved to fully fund the Big Sky Discovery Academy for their early childhood student tuition assistance program, at a cost of \$150,000. Motion carried.

In response to a query from the Board, Scott Poloff stated that there were 32 students enrolled at the time of preparing the grant, and 29 at the time of the meeting. There are three or four students on the waitlist, and a family moving to the area has expressed interest in enrolling their children. The two classrooms, when fully staffed, have a capacity of 35 students.

The Board presented some calculations: According to the Big Sky Discovery Academy, the per-child cost is \$15,062. The curriculum runs for nine months, but if the amount is broken down over 12 months to compare with Morningstar Learning Center, the per-child cost per month would be \$1,673. The \$150,000 request indicates that approximately 15 children benefit, which means the subsidy is \$1,111 per month according to a 12-month schedule. This means a family would pay \$5,062 for childcare for nine months. A Board member stated that

they would feel comfortable subsidizing by roughly 50% so that a family would pay \$7,500, or \$836 per month per child. Another Board member stated that they instead see the amount as a general subsidy for the Academy to use as they wish.

Scott Poloff responded that parents are allowed to apply to an assistance program via a portal open until the end of May. The application is based on their 2022 to 2023 tax returns and 2023 to 2024 W-2s. A bottom threshold of payment is set, and parents who qualify for assistance perform volunteer hours. Approximately half of families pay the full cost. Currently, the Academy needs \$141,000 to help the parents who have applied. Big Sky Discovery Academy is working with an organization to extend their aftercare program, and the extra money would allow qualifying families to subsidize some of the aftercare costs.

The Board emphasized the importance of accurate forecasting, and of promptly notifying the Board when forecasts change.

- **Big Sky Community Library: Friends of the Big Sky Community Library**

On a motion made by Kevin Germain, seconded by Grace Young, it was resolved to fully fund the Big Sky Community Library for the Friends of the Big Sky Community Library program, at a cost of \$119,809, with a caveat that the library provides a one-page summary of how counties fund libraries in the next quarter. Motion carried.

The Board emphasized the importance of supporting their local library but expressed a wish that the library decrease their reliance on resort tax over time. Kevin Germain asked the Madison County treasurer for more information on how library funding is distributed and is waiting for a response. The Board inquired why the library was not receiving funding from the city government and asked about the search for an executive director.

Assistant Librarian Erica Oglevie stated that she is the acting executive director but does not wish to fill that role in the long term. The library staff is seeking stability, as well as more volunteers and board members. Four people have volunteered to sit on the board. The library hopes to hire an executive director by June 30, 2025. One individual applied in 2022 or 2023 but withdrew. There is high competition because other libraries with more funding are also seeking executive directors.

The Big Sky Community Library reached out to Gallatin in 2022; they received a \$20,000 check and were told that they do not receive county funding because they are not a “real library.” Erica Oglevie believes it would take a vote by Gallatin County residents on a ballot for them to become a “real library” which would merit county funding. There is also a possibility that the library would fall into the Bozeman or West Yellowstone district instead.

The Board agreed that property tax should be funding the Big Sky Community Library and expressed hope that the library’s new board could facilitate that scenario.

- **Morningstar Learning Center: Early Childhood Education and Tuition Assistance**

On a motion made by Kevin Germain, seconded by John Zirkle, it was resolved to fully fund Morningstar Learning Center for early childhood education and tuition assistance, at a cost of \$750,000, with a caveat that the Morningstar Learning Center Director and Treasurer attend a meeting with the Board in the next quarter to discuss finances and projections. Three in favor, one opposed. Motion carried.

The Board considered an alternate scenario in which Morningstar Learning Center would receive \$425,000 for scholarship and financial assistance, with the remaining \$325,000 to be determined after a focused meeting to discuss the Center’s finances.

The Board acknowledged that Morningstar Learning Center performs a critical service in the community but noted that their tuition assistance model has changed and asked why their request of \$750,000 was higher than their projected need of \$455,000. Daniel Bierschwale noted that the Board and the grant seekers had participated in an extensive question and answer session that is publicly available, but the two newest Board members were not able to participate since it took place before their appointment.

Mariel Butan responded that Morningstar Learning Center has always asked for a combination of tuition and resort tax. Morningstar Learning Center charges 40% of actual costs as tuition, but they plan to eventually charge 70% of their costs as tuition; they anticipate the tuition assistance need will increase accordingly. The cost to Morningstar Learning Center per child is \$35,000 per year, on average. In Fiscal Year 2024, Morningstar Learning Center presented two requests: one for tuition and operations, similar to the current request, and one for a building project that is currently in progress. Morningstar Learning Center has been operating on a stark deficit, and the costs are above what families can afford. They are working with long-term partners, including resort tax, to find a long-term solution to the deficit. In Fiscal Year 2025 they are hoping to cover some of the deficit so that the reserves can be used on the building project.

There are 27 children on the waitlist, all age three and under and not toilet trained. These children are not eligible for other funding such as 4K programming or Big Sky Discovery Academy. Each of these children has at least one parent working full-time in Big Sky.

In response to a Board query regarding state and federal funders, Mariel Butan stated that federal dollars are unavailable and state funding is based on family income. None of the families have qualified. Perhaps five families are able to pay more in tuition than they are currently paying. Two-thirds of families are receiving tuition assistance, and this number is expected to increase as the tuition increases.

Morningstar Learning Center has four administrators. The Board noted that this number may need to be decreased in order to reduce costs, and some tasks can be taken on by Morningstar Learning Center's board. The Board expressed concern that Morningstar Learning Center's business practices are unsustainable and noted that difficult decisions must be made.

- **Summary**

It was noted that \$1,019,809 was spent in the education and childcare impact area, with a surplus of \$384,852 remaining. An amount of \$50,000 was previously paid in government awards.

2.1.5 Public Comment

Mariel Butan clarified two points regarding Morningstar Learning Center and related programs: Morningstar Learning Center combined tuition and operations into one request to avoid discrepancies as enrollment fluctuates, and comparisons can be challenging due to the differences in tuition costs to families per hour of care vs. costs to provider per hour of care.

Whitney Montgomery expressed support for increased funding of Visit Big Sky. He stated that resort tax collection has been low in 2024, and not just due to weather, and that it is necessary to increase resort tax collection.

Alanah Griffith emphasized that Morningstar Learning Center is a school, not a business, and while they are looking for ways to be more sustainable, they and similar organizations will

always need resort tax. She stated that Big Sky does not fund early childhood education and that the Morningstar Learning Center board is pursuing legislation to change that.

The Board expressed their support for Alanah Griffith's pursuit of new legislation and confirmed their willingness to work with her on that issue.

Michael Romney encouraged the Board to work with Visit Big Sky on the tourism business improvement district project to increase tourism in the area.

Michael Pitcairn thanked the Board for supporting Morningstar Learning Center. Two of his children are enrolled. He stated that without tuition assistance for the children to attend, his family would have to leave Big Sky, and the situation is the same for many other working families.

A reminder was issued that the funding decisions made at the meeting are not final and will be ratified during the work session scheduled for June 6, 2024.

At 12:17 p.m., the meeting was adjourned for lunch.

2.1.6 Impact Area: Health and Safety FY25 Applications

The meeting was reconvened at 1:32 p.m.

Daniel Bierschwale clarified that everything done by the Big Sky Resort Area District is either a collection or allocation of public funding. He outlined three processes for allocating funds: support of government services, support of nonprofits, and safeguarding of reserves in the event of an emergency.

A total of \$2,162,333 was allocated to the health and safety impact area, but \$1,853,750 was already awarded to the fire district and sheriff during the Joint County Commission Meeting. It was noted that funding all of the submitted requests would result in a deficit of approximately \$106,000 in the health and safety impact area and that Board members should keep this in mind when forming their decisions.

- **Big Sky Community Food Bank: Big Sky Workforce and Community Food Security**

On a motion made by Kevin Germain, seconded by Grace Young, it was resolved to fully fund the Big Sky Community Food Bank for Big Sky workforce and community food security, at a cost of \$75,000. Motion carried.

- **Riley's Urgent Fund for Friends: Big Sky Animal Shelter**

On a motion made by Grace Young, seconded by John Zirkle, it was resolved to fund Riley's Urgent Fund for Friends for the Big Sky Animal Shelter, at a cost of \$143,583. Motion carried.

Declaring a conflict of interest, Sarah Blechta recused herself from all conversations and votes regarding Riley's Urgent Fund for Friends.

The request was for \$250,000, but the Board decided to reduce the amount in order to balance the budget and avoid a deficit. The Board asked whether Riley's Urgent Fund for Friends would be able to accomplish their goals with \$143,583.

Sydney Desmarais responded that any amount would help, and the lower amount would require them to gather more community support in donations. Riley's Urgent Fund for Friends has raised around \$500,000 in private donations and hopes to begin construction of the shelter

in August, 2024. The project will cost approximately \$1.2 million. In response to a Board query, Sydney Desmarais confirmed that the organization is pursuing a deed restriction program. They seek to construct a community-based building, with housing above the shelter. They hope to gather funding from Big Sky Housing Trust.

- **Wellness in Action: Affordable Counseling Program for Improved Mental Health**

On a motion made by Kevin Germain, seconded by Grace Young, it was resolved to fully fund Wellness in Action for their affordable counseling program for improved mental health, at a cost of \$90,000. Motion carried.

The Board asked why the projected request of \$50,000 was increased to \$90,000. Allison Bradac responded that the programming and budget were revised such that all of the organization's services would fall under the affordable counseling program.

- **Summary**

It was noted that all available funds in the health and safety impact area were allocated, with no funds remaining.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:51 p.m. for a break.

2.1.7 Impact Area: Housing FY25 Applications

The meeting was reconvened at 2:03 p.m.

It was noted that \$375,000 of the housing impact area funding had already been allocated to the teacher and school housing program. An amount of \$2,023,224 remained.

- **Big Sky Community Housing Trust: Community Housing Conversion and Preservation**

On a motion made by Kevin Germain, seconded by Ashley Wilson, it was resolved to fully fund the Big Sky Community Housing Trust for community housing conversion and preservation, at a cost of \$1,750,000. Motion carried.

Some Board members expressed an intention to revisit the scoring system in October or November, 2024, saying the score for this project should have been higher.

In response to Board queries, David O'Connor stated that the terms of the contract were adjusted to enable Big Sky Community Housing Trust to acquire cash up front and become a cash buyer for potential homes. The RiverView Apartments project initially received around 500 applicants, many of which were businesses and otherwise unqualified entities. The applicants were reduced to 45 to 49 applications; of those, 25 failed to qualify and the rest have qualified or are in the process of doing so. The building has one-bedroom, two-bedroom, and three-bedroom apartments; 70% of applicants asked for a one-bedroom apartment, and all of the one-bedroom and two-bedroom apartments are now occupied. There are four three-bedroom apartments with no qualified applicants. They are intended for families with children, but because affordability is still an issue for such families, many chose a two-bedroom apartment instead.

It was noted that many families who need assistance do not qualify for federal programs because of the income limit, which does not account for the high cost of living in Big Sky. The Montana Housing Coalition has higher income limits.

David O'Connor clarified that Rent Local is an incentive-based program for property owners where in exchange for a cash subsidy, they will convert their property's use from short-term rental to a minimum one-year lease. However, availability has been a challenge as well as affordability. Projects such as RiverView Apartments are mitigating the availability challenge. More information will become available by December, 2024. David O'Connor believes that Rent Local will always exist as a resource that can be utilized for immediate action, but the program may change over time.

- **Big Sky Community Housing Trust: Operations and Administration**

On a motion made by Ashley Wilson, seconded by Grace Young, it was resolved to fully fund the Big Sky Community Housing Trust for operations and administration, at a cost of \$250,000. Motion carried.

- **Summary**

It was noted that a surplus of \$23,224 remained in the housing impact area. A surplus of approximately \$1.5 million remained in Fiscal Year 2024.

At 2:22 p.m., the meeting was adjourned for a break.

2.1.8 Impact Area: Public Works FY25 Applications

The meeting was reconvened at 2:30 p.m.

There was \$552,184 available for this meeting; \$5,464,806 was available with \$4,912,622 being awarded in May to government entities. The funds requested exceed this amount by \$45,426, meaning not all requests can be fully funded.

- **Big Sky Community Organization: Additional Parking and Public Restrooms for Community Park**

On a motion made by Grace Young, seconded by Kevin Germain, it was resolved to fully fund the Big Sky Community Organization for additional parking and public restrooms for the community park, at a cost of \$101,250. Motion carried.

Declaring a conflict of interest, Ashley Wilson recused herself from all conversations and votes regarding the Big Sky Community Organization. It was noted that because the conversations and votes referred to capital requests, it was not necessary for John Zirkle to recuse himself.

- **Big Sky Owners Association: Big Sky Community Traffic Safety**

On a motion made by John Zirkle, seconded by Kevin Germain, it was resolved to fully fund the Big Sky Owners Organization for Little Coyote Road speed tables under Big Sky community traffic safety, at a cost of \$47,000. Three in favor, one opposed. Motion carried.

There was disagreement regarding whether there was precedent for resort tax being allocated toward traffic calming projects. The Board acknowledged that such projects are important but warned that approving this project could lead to a slew of similar requests. It was also acknowledged that Little Coyote Road is not merely a residential road, but one that affects many businesses and the greater public. The Board suggested evaluating traffic calming projects on a case-by-case basis.

A Board member noted that Big Sky Owners Association previously indicated they would assess 5% of their operating budget to the Big Sky Owners Association members, which is \$66,550, which means the total available for the project, if fully funded, would be \$113,550, but the projected budget was \$100,000.

Suzan Scott clarified that Big Sky Owners Association received several bids for the construction, and those bids were changed after the county regulations and requirements were taken into account. Big Sky Owners Association selected a bid for \$128,000. To gather further funding, Big Sky Owners Association is soliciting funds from community organizations who use Little Coyote Road. The traffic safety group has declined to contribute.

The Board asked how Big Sky Owners Association would move forward with the project if they were only given \$35,000 in resort tax. Suzan Scott responded that the Board of Big Sky Owners Association has not yet decided, and will do so after allocation.

The Board noted that there were only two projects that gathered more initial “no” votes than “yes” votes, and this was one of them. The Board asked whether it was possible to install two speed tables instead of three. Suzan Scott responded that Big Sky Owners Association was following the advice of an engineer based on a traffic calming study.

- **Visit Big Sky: Wayfinding Signage Project**

On a motion made by John Zirkle, seconded by Kevin Germain, it was resolved to fund Visit Big Sky for their wayfinding signage project, at a cost of \$175,000. Motion carried.

The request was for \$200,000. The Board acknowledged the need to save money for other grants. It was noted that Visit Big Sky had amended their Fiscal Year 2024 request from \$200,000 to \$100,000 and that the Fiscal Year 2025 request was intended to fulfill that difference.

In response to Board queries, Brad Niva stated that approximately 65% of the Fiscal Year 2024 request had been spent on signage, and the remainder would soon be paid to the new contractor. The plan has been designed and the artwork approved, and Visit Big Sky is investigating hundreds of fabricators for the fabrication and installation phase. If Visit Big Sky receives less money than they requested, fewer signs will be installed and the project will progress as funds become available.

- **Center of Large Landscape Conservation: US-191/MT-64 Action Plan**

On a motion made by Kevin Germain, seconded by Ashley Wilson, it was resolved to fund Center of Large Landscape Conservation for US-191/MT-64 assessment – action plan implementation, at a cost of \$50,000. Motion carried.

The request was for \$65,000. The Board noted that the funding requests for the studies had increased even though it was assumed the project would be paid through federal funding. The Board noted that the Center of Large Landscape Conservation had submitted two requests and neither could be fully funded.

Abigail Breuer acknowledged that the study had taken much longer than expected and the costs had fluctuated. There was certain necessary information that the Department of Transportation did not make public. The Department of Transportation will submit an application in fall, 2024, to a federal program for funding. The Center of Large Landscape Conservation needs to ensure they meet the deadline so the project does not end up on the waitlist. Abigail Breuer confirmed that the wolf recently killed on US-191 had been close to the site of their proposed project, which is a wildlife crossing.

- **Center of Large Landscape Conservation: US-191/MT-64 Engineering Feasibility Study**

On a motion made by Grace Young, seconded by Kevin Germain, it was resolved to fund Center of Large Landscape Conservation for US-191/MT-64 assessment – engineering feasibility study, at a cost of \$179,000. Motion carried.

The request was for \$204,360. The Board noted that one of the two sites involved in the project was outside the resort tax district. Abigail Breuer clarified that the costs of the two sites were not equal, and combining them was less expensive than funding them separately.

The Board acknowledged that the Center of Large Landscape Conservation had also leveraged federal funds and other funds from outside the community for the project, and that the project was good for the community because it would attract federal funds.

- **Summary**

It was noted that a deficit of \$66 existed in the public works impact area. The Board agreed on the need to balance the budget but tabled the issue until the June 6, 2024, work session. The Board reminded all attendees that the decisions made at the current meeting were not final and would need to be ratified at the June 6, 2024, work session. Any allocation made at the current meeting will be subject to adjustment.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:14 p.m. for a break.

2.1.9 Impact Area: Recreation FY25 Applications

The meeting was reconvened at 3:30 p.m. with a summary of the decisions already made at the current meeting.

There was \$936,388 available to be allocated in the recreation impact area. This amount does not include the \$675,000 already awarded in the recreation impact area. The Board noted that the requests exceeded the amount of funding available.

- **Big Sky Community Organization: Big Sky Community Park Renovations**

On a motion made by John Zirkle, it was resolved to fund Big Sky Community Organization for renovation of the athletic fields and Riverside Pavilion recreation area at the Big Sky Community Park, at a cost of \$1.2 million. The motion did not carry.

On a motion made by Grace Young, seconded by Kevin Germain, it was resolved to fund Big Sky Community Organization for renovation of the athletic fields and Riverside Pavilion recreation area at the Big Sky Community Park, at a cost of \$906,388. Two in favor, one opposed. Motion carried.

The request was for \$1,606,909. The Board noted that the application was the only one to achieve a perfect score and had significant public support, philanthropy, and matching funds; however, there was insufficient funding in the recreation impact area to fully fund the project. There was discussion regarding the need to rethink funding allocations in the future.

In response to Board queries, Whitney Montgomery stated that the \$700,000 previously received from resort tax was spent on the playground and other projects unrelated to the current request. As to whether high schools should be involved in the process, Whitney Montgomery emphasized that many younger players play baseball and other sports at the

park, and the athletic field would thus benefit high schools in the future, as well as the rest of the community.

The Board emphasized that many of the questions they ask nonprofits are in the interest of transparency and public information and are thus voiced even if the Board members themselves understand the issues, as these are the types of questions the public asks the Board. The Board then asked about the rate of replacement, the materials to be used, and maintenance.

Whitney Montgomery responded that the athletic fields need to be replaced every 12 years, on average. Coconut infill material, which does not negatively impact rivers, will be used; Gallatin River Task Force uses a similar material in restoration projects. Turf maintenance will remain in the domain of Big Sky trails, recreation, and parks district. Synthetic turf does not need mowing, irrigation, or reseeding, but its maintenance costs are otherwise similar to those of grass.

- **Gallatin Valley Snowmobile Association: Buck Ridge Snowmobile Trail**

On a motion made by Grace Young, seconded by Kevin Germain, it was resolved to fully fund the Gallatin Valley Snowmobile Association for additional groomings of the Buck Ridge Snowmobile Trail, at a cost of \$30,000. Three in favor, one opposed. Motion carried.

The Board noted that the project received a low score because the application was not accurately filled in, adding that multiple training sessions were available for those filling in the applications and nonprofits should use them.

It was noted that this project could have qualified for a microgrant; it was also acknowledged that the project might not have been eligible for the microgrant in Fiscal Year 2025 because Gallatin Valley Snowmobile Association received resort tax in Fiscal Year 2024.

- **Summary**

It was noted that all available funds in the recreation impact area were allocated, with no funds remaining.

The Board reminded the community that the resort tax district recently committed \$10 million to purchase a corner parcel, which needed to be paid off, and funding for a large capital improvement plan needed to be considered.

The meeting adjourned at 3:48 p.m. for a break.

2.1.10 Public Comment

The meeting was reconvened at 4:00 p.m. with a summary of the day's allocations.

Danielle Chenoweth noted that access to counseling services can prevent the need for crisis intervention later. She noted that some clients, including teenagers, struggle with suicidal tendencies, and she is thankful that Wellness in Action is available for them.

Whitney Montgomery thanked the Board for funding traffic safety issues, adding that Big Sky Community Organization has previously dealt with traffic calming, including on Little Coyote Road.

Becky Brockie is involved with both Wellness in Action and Big Sky Community Housing Trust and stated that access to safe, stable housing contributes to mental health. She thanked the Board for funding both projects. She added that Sydney Desmarais, in addition to her veterinary practice and work with Riley's Urgent Fund for Friends, helps the sheriff's department by taking in the pets of incarcerated individuals.

Sawyer Wolfe voiced opposition to the funding and installation of the turf field in the Big Sky Community Park, noting that turf fields are associated with increased injury rates in children. He emphasized that the Big Sky Community Park already uses recycled water, which is a good step for sustainability, in contrast with turf fields which contain forever chemicals. He encouraged the Board to fully fund the Gallatin River Task Force, noting that the Gallatin River is already impaired and could be further impaired by forever chemicals.

David O'Connor thanked the Board for their hard work and stated that the review meeting was the best he had seen in over 20 years of attendance.

2.1.11 Remaining Business

There was no remaining business.

3. NEXT MEETING

The Board will continue to review nonprofit applications during the work session scheduled for June 6, 2024, at 4:00 p.m.

4. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion duly made and carried, it was agreed that there was no further business to transact; the meeting closed at 4:14 p.m.

DISCLAIMER

The above minutes should be used as a summary of the motions passed and issues discussed at the meeting. This document shall not be considered a verbatim copy of every word spoken at the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Grace Young

Grace Young (Aug 1, 2024 10:37 MDT)

Grace Young, Secretary & Treasurer








June 4 2024 Minutes

Final Audit Report

2024-08-01

Created:	2024-07-10
By:	Jenny Muscat (jenny@resorttax.org)
Status:	Signed
Transaction ID:	CBJCHBCAABAAKaKe4wWV-4kUPekXSXnfSk2erSa064TO

"June 4 2024 Minutes" History

-  Document created by Jenny Muscat (jenny@resorttax.org)
2024-07-10 - 6:16:52 PM GMT
-  Document emailed to Grace Young (grace@resorttax.org) for signature
2024-07-10 - 6:16:58 PM GMT
-  Email viewed by Grace Young (grace@resorttax.org)
2024-07-24 - 7:22:16 PM GMT
-  Email viewed by Grace Young (grace@resorttax.org)
2024-07-28 - 12:40:52 PM GMT
-  Email viewed by Grace Young (grace@resorttax.org)
2024-08-01 - 3:54:12 AM GMT
-  Document e-signed by Grace Young (grace@resorttax.org)
Signature Date: 2024-08-01 - 4:37:34 PM GMT - Time Source: server
-  Agreement completed.
2024-08-01 - 4:37:34 PM GMT