

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

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
AUGUST 14, 2024, 9:00 A.M.**

**BOARD MEMBERS AND STAFF:**

Sarah Blechta	Chair
Kevin Germain	Director
Grace Young	Secretary and Treasurer
John Zirkle	Director
Ashley Wilson	Director (via teleconference)
Daniel Bierschwale	Executive Director
Jenny Muscat	Deputy Director
Jackie Haines	Director of Economic and Strategic Development
Kristin Drain	Finance and Compliance Manager
Tammy Estensen	Communications and Community Engagement Manager
Kim Beatty	BSRAD Attorney

Minutes prepared by Jolene de Jager of Minutes Solutions Inc. from a recording

**1. ROLL CALL**

There being a quorum present, and adequate and proper notice having been given, the open meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mariel Butan from Morningstar Learning Center introduced herself. She announced a CCBS convening event scheduled for Monday, August 19, 2024, from 3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at BASE, which is intended for individuals working with or serving on the board of strategy area organizations. The event will include representatives from various organizations such as Morningstar, Discovery, the Arts Council, and the library, among others. The aim is to gather feedback on strategy area canvases to share with the Board.

**3. CONSENT AGENDA**

**On a motion made by Kevin Germain, seconded by Grace Young, it was resolved to approve the consent agenda as amended. Motion carried.**

**4. REGULAR AGENDA**

**4.1 Old Business**

**4.1.1 Subcommittee Appointments**

**On a motion made by Kevin Germain, seconded by Grace Young, it was resolved to approve the subcommittee appointments as presented. Motion carried.**

The Board packet included a list of previous committees, and the Board proposed new subcommittees aligned with the roadmap and upcoming work plan. The Roadmap Coordination Team will guide the interconnectivity and prioritization of roadmap initiatives, with

both Board and staff members involved. This subcommittee will focus on the ongoing implementation of the Big Sky Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) through project vetting and financial tools. Other subcommittees include Elevate Big Sky, Grants, Incorporation Exploration, Legislative Action, Properties and Facilities, Wellness District, the 191/64 Optimization Plan, and Elections and Ballot Issues, each with specific responsibilities and Board and staff representation. The Board emphasized the importance of coordination and project management to optimize the efforts of the various subcommittees.

It was noted that Jenny Muscat will manage action items, milestones, and tasks and incorporate them into the operating plan within 24 hours after receiving meeting briefs. These updates will be reviewed weekly and Jenny Muscat will send a report to the Board detailing the initiatives for the next one to four weeks. The Board will have access to a read-only copy of the operating plan, ensuring a single source of truth for the operating plan and structured committee reports. The Board agenda will now include only those committees that require action or have substantive updates, as opposed to listing all committees regardless of activity. This change aims to streamline the agenda by excluding inactive committees, such as those related to the 1% or 3% ballot initiatives, which will not be reported until later in the year. The Board highlighted that Jenny Muscat has been awarded the title "Spirit of Big Sky" by the Chamber of Commerce.

#### **4.1.2 Officer Elections**

**On a motion made by Sarah Blechta, seconded by John Zirkle, it was resolved to appoint Kevin Germain as Chair of the Board and Grace Young as the Secretary and Treasurer. Motion carried.**

**On a motion made by John Zirkle, seconded by Kevin Germain, it was resolved to appoint Sarah Blechta as Vice Chair of the Board. Motion carried.**

The roles and duties of officers were discussed, emphasizing the importance of succession planning and utilizing everyone's skill sets effectively. It was suggested that the vice chair should act more like a chief operating officer, working closely with staff and being groomed to become the chair eventually. The group discussed updating bylaws, including term limits, responsibilities, and incapacitation clauses, with a commitment to revisit these issues in a future meeting.

#### **4.1.3 Subcommittee Reports**

**On a motion made by Sarah Blechta, seconded by Grace Young, it was resolved to approve the CIP Project Vetting Timeline as proposed. Motion carried.**

The CIP Committee has been actively engaged over the past two years, mainly since the TischlerBise group conducted an environmental scan for the capital improvement plan in Big Sky, updating an earlier plan initiated by the Gallatin Canyon zoning group. The community has faced significant challenges due to a 54% growth over the last decade, reflected in lodging tax, resort tax, and property taxes. The TischlerBise group conducted interviews over a year, culminating in a plan adopted by the BSRAD Board and county commissions last fall. The plan, initially estimated at \$750 million, is being refined to focus on actionable projects. Efforts are underway to refine the capital improvement plan, with many projects initially slated for this year being reassessed for feasibility. The CIP Committee is working to create a meaningful and actionable plan with a focus on shovel-ready projects. The questionnaire sent to entities aims to gather information about potential projects within the next three years.

The following steps included reviewing the questionnaire results at the September 11, 2024, Board meeting and taking Board action at the October 9, 2024, Joint County Commission BSRAD Board meeting. The goal is to develop a financing stack and path forward for selected projects, with final recommendations expected at the November 13, 2024, Board meeting. The process aims to balance grant-making with financing more significant infrastructure investments. The community faces challenges related to infrastructure, including traffic, water, wastewater, housing, and childcare. The CIP and Elections Committee will work together to address these issues, with the CIP vetting process concluding around the same time as the Elections Committee's timeline. The proposed process seeks feedback from the Board to refine and move forward with these initiatives.

The funding sources for various projects, including the fire station in Spanish Peaks, financed through an RID, were highlighted as crucial components that should be included in the CIP. The necessity of a clear communication strategy for the financing stack was stressed, as well as the significant impact of transportation projects funded predominantly by federal funds and the need to avoid overly ambitious projections that could undermine existing grants. Approval was sought from the Board to proceed with the proposed process for the CIP project vetting timeline. The discussion indicated that the first phase projects are summarized in the Board packet, and once approved, the following steps would involve a detailed review of these projects.

Whitney Montgomery expressed gratitude to the vice chair for her dedication. He noted that he is pleased with the CIP timeline, including changes in funding mechanisms and philanthropic landscapes. Despite challenges, the organization has secured \$5 million and anticipates another \$1 million for its projects.

A subcommittee report was presented regarding traffic issues on highways 191 and 64, following a tour and meetings with the Montana Department of Transportation. A press release is forthcoming to provide further details. The Grants Committee has been surveying organizations funded through resort tax to understand the potential impacts of changing the grant cycle timing. This adjustment aims to align the budget setting with the actual fiscal year data. A dashboard is being developed to provide visibility into the activities of various subcommittees. This initiative aims to enhance transparency and accessibility of information. Progress has been made in the governance study led by the WGM group, with active engagement from homeowners' associations. More updates are expected in the following week.

#### **4.1.4 Headwaters Alliance – Water Supply Resiliency Request**

**On a motion made by Sarah Blechta, seconded by John Zirkle, it was resolved to approve the Headwater Alliance Water Supply Resiliency request in the amount of \$96,322.50. Ashley Wilson abstained. Motion carried.**

The Headwater Alliance Water Supply Resiliency request involved funding for the installation of purple pipe infrastructure to transport treated wastewater. The project, initially funded in FY 22, has faced multiple delays due to changes in development plans and prolonged approval processes with MDT, causing it to extend over three years. The project now has all necessary permits and approvals, including the MDT encroachment permit and town center written approval, and a contractor is prepared to commence work by the end of September or October 2024. The Board discussed the unusual length of the project extension and emphasized that such exceptions should not become standard practice.

#### **4.1.5 2024 CIP Update**

The 2024 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) update was discussed, with an invitation sent to fill out a questionnaire for detailed project information. The aim is to gather comprehensive details for projects planned between now and the fiscal year. The Arts Council has a project anticipated before June 2027 involving a community arts center. Other community projects include affordable housing by Big Sky Community Housing Trust, a new park, and wilderness trails. The Big Sky Water and Sewer District plans a mid-mountain reuse boost pump station, while the Gallatin Canyon Water and Sewer District has a canyon sewer project. These projects are part of a detailed capital improvement plan.

The Big Sky Fire Department is planning a public safety center headquarters, although it is not expected to be ready before 2027. The Morningstar Learning Center is expanding its campus, and the local hospital is planning several initiatives, including clinic space build-out, equipment replacement, and workforce housing investment. Attendance at meetings was emphasized for entities seeking funding. The need for clear communication and feedback was highlighted to ensure project readiness and prioritization.

Confusion was noted about the total project costs of MDT, noting the lack of clarity when comparing the \$20 million figure with various ranges mentioned in the project details. There was a request for greater clarity and a larger font size in the documentation, as some projects are straightforward. In contrast, others remain vague, making it difficult to determine the total number. Subsequent phases of questions will be increasingly detailed to build a financing structure, requiring an understanding of project organization, ownership, and operations. The engagement of Dorsey Whitney as bond counsel was highlighted, with Courtney Ellis providing support for public finance, aiming to leverage existing collections for infrastructure deficiencies.

#### **4.2 New Business**

##### **4.2.1 Board Seat Transition**

Eric from the Elections Office needed to clarify the county's interpretation of the statute regarding the requirement of going on the ballot in the next election. The Board seeks to understand whether this entails a full election within the current term.

##### **4.2.2 LCR Safety Group Grant Sponsorship**

Jan Weber from the Little Coyote Traffic Safety Group presented a grant-related request detailing previous efforts and meetings with MDT and county commissioners. The group discussed various traffic control solutions, including improving traffic light timing and conducting an impact study. They also explored the use of adaptive signal control technology for traffic lights. However, it was noted that MDT has an ongoing project to install adaptive signal control technology (ASTPM) instead, which does not provide real-time adjustments. MDT's reluctance to adopt unproven AI technology was highlighted. The discussion also covered the feasibility of the grant application, with concerns about meeting the minimum expense requirement and the tight timeline. Suggestions were made to approach the transportation district for grant sponsorship and to consider updating previous traffic reports. The group planned to reassess their priorities and potentially return with revised proposals. An update was provided on the installation of speed tables and crosswalks, funded by the resort, aimed at improving traffic safety on Little Coyote Road.

#### **5. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Brad Niva discussed ongoing transportation issues, including road conditions and the need for a more comprehensive approach to transportation management. He suggested forming a

transportation committee to address these recurring problems, as current efforts are fragmented and lack coordination. There was also a mention of a group working on slowing down traffic on a specific road segment, highlighting the need for better communication and collaboration among different groups working on transportation issues.

A resident noted that two weeks ago, traffic on Little Coyote Road was worse than on Route 64 during the late afternoon. Despite no apparent construction, there was significant activity, including three or four trucks carrying oversized loads traveling down Little Coyote Road. The Board encouraged looking beyond their immediate community to understand the broader impact of construction activity, noting that other neighborhoods might also be contributing to the traffic on their roads. It was mentioned that three trucks were observed at 5:00 p.m., suggesting persistent traffic activity even outside typical construction hours.

Daniel Bierschwale expressed excitement over the community's new federally designated post office. He mentioned ongoing efforts to organize a celebration for this achievement, possibly involving a barbecue if official arrangements cannot be made. He highlighted an article on "Explore Big Sky" discussing a panel camera that has enhanced fire safety through collaboration with the fire department and resort tax funding. The camera recently detected another fire, showcasing the effectiveness of this technology. He then referenced Jackie Haines's economic impact report, which details the significant financial repercussions of a potential wildfire in Big Sky. The area contributes approximately 8% of Montana's taxable value, equating to \$2.3 billion in economic activity or 4.3% of the statewide GDP.

## 6. ADJOURNMENT

**On a motion duly made and carried, it was agreed that there was no further business to transact; the meeting closed at 10:25 a.m.**

### **GUESTS:**

Kristin Gardner	Gallatin River Task Force
Whitney Montgomery	Coordinating Council of Big Sky
Brad Niva	Big Sky Chamber of Commerce and Visit Big Sky
Jan Weber	Little Coyote Traffic Safety Group
Mariel Butan	Morningstar Learning Center
Jack Reney	Explore Big Sky
Tallie Lancey	Big Sky Community Member
Ashley Muckway	Big Sky Chamber of Commerce
Annie Mitzel	Community Member
Anna Johnson	Community Member
Emily Eckhoff	Community Member
Mey O'Leary	Community Member

### **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 D. Young*

Grace D. Young (Oct 2, 2024 16:14 MDT)

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Grace Young, Secretary & Treasurer







# 08.14.24 Minutes Unsigned Updated

Final Audit Report

2024-10-02

Created:	2024-10-02
By:	Jenny Muscat (jenny@resorttax.org)
Status:	Signed
Transaction ID:	CBJCHBCAABAA-IrUr8aNFMkLc3lq7XG0E5v vxjw52jnK

## "08.14.24 Minutes Unsigned Updated" History

-  Document created by Jenny Muscat (jenny@resorttax.org)  
2024-10-02 - 4:55:22 PM GMT
-  Document emailed to Grace Young (grace@resorttax.org) for signature  
2024-10-02 - 4:55:32 PM GMT
-  Email viewed by Grace Young (grace@resorttax.org)  
2024-10-02 - 10:14:01 PM GMT
-  Signer Grace Young (grace@resorttax.org) entered name at signing as Grace D. Young  
2024-10-02 - 10:14:44 PM GMT
-  Document e-signed by Grace D. Young (grace@resorttax.org)  
Signature Date: 2024-10-02 - 10:14:46 PM GMT - Time Source: server
-  Agreement completed.  
2024-10-02 - 10:14:46 PM GMT