

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

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
HELD AT THE BIG SKY CHAPEL COMMUNITY ROOM  
AT 510 LITTLE COYOTE ROAD, BIG SKY, MONTANA  
JANUARY 9, 2025, 9:00 A.M.**

**MEMBERS:**

Kevin Germain	Chair
Sarah Blechta	Vice Chair
Grace Young	Secretary and Treasurer
John Zirkle	Director
Michelle Kendziorski	Director

**STAFF:**

Daniel Bierschwale	Executive Director
Jackie Haines	Director of Economic and Strategic Development
Kristin Drain	Finance and Compliance Manager
Tammy Estensen	Communications and Community Engagement Manager
Jenny Christensen	Deputy Director
Kim Beatty	Legal Counsel

Minutes taken by Bethany Young of Minutes Solutions Inc. from a recording.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

There being a quorum present, and adequate and proper notice of the meeting having been given, the meeting was called to order at 9:01 a.m.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Two written public comments were submitted prior to the meeting and are included in the Board packet.

Jenny Christensen provided comment on behalf of Meg O'Leary, President of the M2O group, regarding the status of the Big Sky governance study. WGM has created scenario development tools for workshops to be held at the Big Sky Medical Center Community Room on January 14, 2025, at 5:30 p.m., January 15, 2025, at 8:00 a.m., 12:00 p.m., and 5:30 p.m., and January 16, 2025, at 8:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. The community is encouraged to attend. The existing conditions report is expected to be distributed prior to the next public meeting on January 28, 2025. Meg O'Leary has hosted over 23 virtual office hours sessions, with a key age group of 50 to 69, and a mix of local year-round residents and some part-time residents who are very involved in the community.

Daniel Bierschwale thanked the Chamber for arranging a contingency from Big Sky to meet with legislators in Helena, Montana, on behalf of the key issues in Big Sky on January 8, 2025. He noted that a Wellness District hearing is scheduled for January 13, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. related to services and taxes in Big Sky. He encouraged the community to be aware of and stay engaged in the ongoing governmental issues.

### 3. **CONSENT AGENDA**

**On a motion made by Sarah Blechta, seconded by Michelle Kendziorski, it was resolved to approve the consent agenda as presented. Motion carried.**

The Finance Committee reviewed highlights of their mid-fiscal year update. Compared to 2023 figures, October 2024 collections were up 6% and November 2024 collections were up 16%. Year-to-date for FY 2025 is up 10% from FY 2024. Business registration renewals were due December 31, 2024. As of January 7, 2025, 860 businesses had registered and 300 businesses still needed to renew.

Daniel Bierschwale announced that the earliest the Board could go to market to bond the 3% projects would be mid-August 2025. The earliest that the Board could go to market to bond the 1% projects is based on existing commitments. He explained that there is a balance of \$14 million for the WRRF project and \$8 million has been saved of the \$12 million committed for the Canyon Pipeline project. He recommended paying off the WRRF debt by spring 2026 once sufficient funds have been collected. At that point, the Board could go to market to bond the 1% projects.

### 4. **OLD BUSINESS**

#### 4.1 **Grow Wild Update**

Jen Mohler, Executive Director of Grow Wild, was unable to attend the meeting. This agenda item was tabled until the next Board meeting.

#### 4.2 **Change to the Meeting Agenda**

**On a motion made by John Zirkle, seconded by Michelle Kendziorski, it was resolved to change the Resolution 2025-01 and Resolution 2025-02 agenda items from action to discussion. Motion carried.**

Kim Beatty recommended using this meeting as a working session to make any adjustments to the resolutions and obtain additional input. She noted that the Bond Council's comments need to be reviewed and the County will need to review the content as well. The resolutions will be finalized at the February 2025 meeting and submitted to the County.

#### 4.3 **Resolution 2025-01**

Resolution 2025-01 was proposed to allocate bond funds for the capital improvement and infrastructure projects put forth by the Board. The Board identified changes to be made to Resolution 2025-01 before it is finalized. Lines 1.a and 2.a should include the phrase "or funding shall not exceed \$58 million" to allow for the potential allocation changes depending on the resolution of HB 162 to allow the 1% funding to cover workplace housing. In Lines 1.i and 2.i, the mention of unit appraisals should be changed to land appraisals. Line 3.a should include the phrase "funding should not exceed \$6 million", since the \$6.8 million will only be requested if the pending 1% funding legislation is passed. Sections four through seven will be kept in the resolution in accordance with past practice used in grant cycles and as a signal to sponsors that the project is not permanently rejected, just denied at this time.

Lines 2.e, 2.f, 3.e, and 3.f will be changed from "for 3 years from the date of the 2025 election" to "until July 1, 2028". The change clarifies the three-year period and allows sponsors to apply for the 2028 funding cycle. The Board debated the need to include a dollar amount threshold stipulation to allow for requests due to potential emergencies. The Board decided that a

stipulation is not required, since the applicants would be eligible to apply for assistance from the emergency reserve fund.

The floor was opened for public comments and questions.

**David O'Connor**, Executive Director of the Big Sky Housing Trust, requested clarification of what constituted a capital project.

#### **4.4 Resolution 2025-02**

Kim Beatty explained that two separate resolutions were needed to reduce confusion for the applicants, County, and voters. The purpose of the second resolution is to determine the ballot language to obtain voter approval to extend the Resort Tax until 2065, to affirm the appointment of Michelle Kendziorski to the Board, to authorize a new 1% tax for infrastructure projects, and to authorize bonding for capital improvement projects against the 3% resort tax. The Board learned that the 1% and 3% resolution items cannot be combined on the ballot due to the way the bond underwriting occurs based on revenue source.

The Board debated separating resolution item four to allow voters to approve authorization for bonds separately for the Cold Smoke housing project and the Big Sky Community Organization's (BCSO) community park renovation project. Concern was expressed that voters would vote no to a combined ballot item based on strong emotions against one project, even if they supported the other. The Board decided to leave the bundling of projects in one ballot item after hearing the opinions of the project sponsors and public comment.

Kim Beatty further explained that BSRAD could serve as a facilitator of voter education meetings to provide facts on the ballot items. Their advocacy is limited to supporting the extension of the Resort Tax term, affirming Michelle Kendziorski's Board appointment, and encouraging residents to vote. It is the project sponsor's responsibility to advocate for voters' approval of their projects.

The floor was opened for public comments and questions.

**David O'Connor** expressed his preference for bundling the two projects in one ballot item to reduce complications in voter education and communication plans. He stated that separation may be perceived as project funding being an either-or situation. Combining the project better represents a collective approach as a common project. In response to a question from the Board regarding advocacy for votes, David O'Connor indicated that bundling would provide a more efficient communication plan and allow for single events, hosted by BSRAD, at which both project sponsors could outline their projects, educate, and answer questions. This would send the message that this path forward provides the best opportunity to help the community with the resources available and why.

**Whitney Montgomery**, Chief Executive Officer of BCSO, expressed his hope that voters will look at this bond as a step forward to the community becoming accessible to more people, not just an exclusive resort area. He supported bundling the two projects as a better opportunity to accomplish that goal. In response to a question from the Board regarding advocacy for votes, Whitney Montgomery agreed with David O'Connor's plan for community meetings. He also offered that sessions by the Coordinating Council could provide a safe space for residents to have discussions that are not recorded. He indicated that there is more at stake than just the two projects; there is a need to retain and attract families.

**Mariei Butan** stated that there was no right answer to the bundling question. Not bundling would provide voters more choice to express their opinion. Bundling the projects would simplify communications.

**Jonathan Gans** stated that the community is supportive of the Cold Smoke project with more parties interested in future purchase and rental than the number of units to be developed. He expressed his support for separating the two projects based on the community's desire for simplicity. He indicated that including the BCSO project with the Cold Smoke project would add unnecessary complications.

**Lizzie Peyton** stated that a different question to ask relates to the sense of community around the vote. She expressed her support to bundle the projects to provide a simpler action at the ballot and a simpler message to the voters.

**Tallie Lancey** noted that she originally thought unbundling would be overwhelming when seven projects were being considered. She indicated that, with only two projects, voters can parse out the differences between the projects. She expressed her support for unbundling the projects.

## **5. NEW BUSINESS**

### **5.1 Microgrant – Big Sky Early Childhood Alliance**

**On a motion made by Sarah Blechta, seconded by Michelle Kendziorski, it was resolved to fully fund the Big Sky Early Childhood Alliance microgrant in the amount of \$25,000. Motion carried.**

Kimberly Hall, President and CEO of the Greater Gallatin United Way (GGUW) outlined their request for funding assistance to create a cooperative childcare entity in Big Sky with the goal of affordable open access for childcare. The Alliance would continue services provided by Child Care Connections, which closed in December 2024, and advance early learning initiatives. Kimberly Hall indicated that they are working with multiple partners in the area to streamline processes, take the focus off a few specific entities, and make a true community collaboration.

The floor was opened for public comments and questions.

**Mariel Butan**, Executive Director of Morningstar Learning Center, indicated that the area childcare crisis has shifted from availability and affordability to solely affordability. Childcare spots are available, but the flawed business model makes it difficult to operate a facility with open seats without raising tuition and decreasing teacher pay or requesting additional financial support. While this issue is not unique to the area, Big Sky has the activism and collaborative mindset to find a way to make childcare sustainable for the community and find a long-term solution to the affordability crisis. She expressed support for the request.

**Whitney Montgomery** expressed support for the request to address the need for childcare in Big Sky and support good communication between providers.

### **5.2 Microgrant – Case Management Software**

**On a motion made by Sarah Blechta, seconded by John Zirkle, it was resolved to fully fund the Bienvenidos a Gallatin Valley microgrant in the amount of \$25,000. Motion carried.**

Vanessa Zamora, Executive Director, and Gladys Guerrero, Resource Coordinator, of Bienvenidos a Gallatin Valley, explained their need to purchase case management software to streamline their resource referral process, track outcomes, and measure program impact. The software will allow for data collection to improve their ability to provide connections between the Spanish-speaking community and the resources available in a growing variety of

needs, including legal, housing, and employment assistance. They clarified that the case manager serves only Big Sky residents and that the only overlap with Gallatin County is the workforce that serves Big Sky. The microgrant would fund a five-year subscription for the case management software at a cost of \$5,000 per year.

The Board indicated their desire for yearly reports on the number of people served each year and the types of services requested to help inform their future funding decisions in Big Sky.

The floor was opened for public comments and questions.

**Kimberly Hall** expressed support for the request. She noted that the request has a bigger impact than just case management and referral, as it will create efficiencies in their processes, open additional funding opportunities, and provide outcomes reporting.

**Sarah Gaither**, Programs Manager at the Big Sky Community Food Bank, reported that they serve over 300 Spanish-speaking individuals. While they have some data tracking, it is not enough to support Gladys Guerrero's need to provide other connections and follow-up. She expressed her full support for the request.

#### 6. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Ashley Wilson requested that the Board provide clarification on her understanding that, as part of the interlocal agreement between BSTRP and BSRAD, for BSRAD to match 50% of requests from BSTRP for BSCO, no operating money could be requested from BSCO for three years. Meaning that BSCO could not put forth any requests for three years whether operating funds or not.

#### 7. **NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next Board of Directors meeting is February 4, 2025, at 1:00 p.m.

#### 8. **ADJOURNMENT**

**On a motion duly made by Sarah Blechta and carried, it was agreed that there was no further business to transact; the meeting closed at 11:17 a.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 (Mar 14, 2025 10:19 MDT)

Grace Young, Secretary and Treasurer



# 2025.01.09 Board Meeting Minutes

Final Audit Report

2025-03-14

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