

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

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
JULY 9, 2025, 8:00 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 Director
Tammy Estensen	Communications and Community Engagement Director
Jenny Christensen	Deputy Director
Kim Beatty	Legal Counsel (via teleconference)

Minutes prepared 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 8:00 a.m.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

A note was included in the Board packet from Vanessa Zamora, Executive Director of Bienvenidos, expressing her appreciation for the grant funding they received.

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.

4. OLD BUSINESS

4.1 Subcommittee Updates

4.1.1 Grants Subcommittee

Jenny Christensen reviewed the government interlocal, nonprofit, capital, and microgrant funding opportunities currently open for FY26. She encouraged organizations to submit their grant applications.

4.1.2 Properties and Facilities Subcommittee

Kristin Drain provided property updates and stated that engineering for a preliminary corner parcel site plan has begun. An open house will be held in the summer to request input from the public. The subcommittee is awaiting the Montana Department of Transportation's intersection design selection in order to plan for uses of the site.

4.2 Grow Wild Update

Jennifer Mohler, Executive Director of Grow Wild, provided an update on funding, educational activities, and development of their strategic plan. She explained that the organization is interested in creating a forester position to work with the fire department on wildfire mitigation. Cathy Gunther, Grow Wild Board Co-chair, and Steve Karl, Grow Wild Board member, explained the benefits a forester could bring to small lot owners.

The floor was opened for public comment.

Dustin Tetrault, Fire Chief, Big Sky Fire Department, expressed support for a Grow Wild forestry position. He explained that fire professionals know some forestry principles but have relied on Jeff Cadry, a retired forester, for specific knowledge. He indicated a willingness to help fund a forester position.

5. NEW BUSINESS

5.1 Officer Elections

On a motion made by Kevin Germain, seconded by Michelle Kendziorski, it was resolved to appoint Sarah Blechta as Chair, John Zirkle as Vice Chair, and Grace Young as Treasurer and Secretary of the Big Sky Resort Area District Board for FY26. Motion carried.

Kevin Germain requested to step down as Chair for FY26 but requested to be considered for the FY27 Chair position for a legislation-heavy agenda. The new officer positions went into effect immediately after the vote.

5.2 Microgrant – Lone Peak Film Festival

On a motion made by Kevin Germain, seconded by John Zirkle, it was resolved to approve the microgrant request by the Lone Peak Film Institute for \$24,550 to fund travel costs for up to 17 filmmakers and provide filmmaking grants to Montana-based Indigenous filmmakers. Grace Young abstained. Motion carried.

Layne Jones, Lone Peak Film Festival Board of Directors, and Daniel Glick, film festival director, provided details of the film festival to be held from September 19 to 21, 2025. They highlighted the mentorship program for students, support for independent filmmakers, and sponsorships including that by A&E. Evaluation plans were discussed.

Brian Hurlbut, Executive Director of the Arts Council of Big Sky, shared that the Arts Council has made space available and has a staff member involved in the planning of the festival.

5.3 Microgrant – Community of Conservation

On a motion made by Kevin Germain, seconded by Grace Young, it was resolved to approve the microgrant request by the Jack Creek Preserve Foundation for \$5,073 to support a lifelong learning series of seven conservation workshops. Motion carried.

Abigail King, Executive Director of the Jack Creek Preserve Foundation, provided an overview of their conservation workshops for adults. She explained that the grant funding will supplement the registration fees that cover 35% of the costs. The added support would keep the adult workshops affordable and accessible. She outlined how they are connecting with the Big Sky community and anticipate more Big Sky participation as a result of visibility from the grant process.

The Board verified the Jack Creek Preserve location within the Big Sky tax district. They encouraged the organization to promote itself in Big Sky and track attendance by Big Sky attendees.

5.4 Microgrant – Firelight District Launch

On a motion made by Kevin Germain, seconded by Michelle Kendziorski, it was resolved to approve the microgrant request by the Firelight Meadows County Water and Sewer District for \$25,000 to fund initial accounting, legal, engineering, and infrastructure planning services. Motion carried.

Becky Brockie, Vice Chair of the Firelight Meadows County Water and Sewer District, explained the need to secure professional expertise and technical support as the new district is launched and navigates regulatory requirements. The microgrant would enable them to determine specific requirements to annex with the Big Sky Water and Sewer District (BSWSD).

The Board supported the request, since the district's plans contribute to river health, but expressed concern for the amount of BSRAD funds going towards water and sewer rate subsidies. The Board indicated the need to ensure BSRAD funding is targeted towards helping the workforce and is equitable to those not part of the water and sewer districts. The Board encouraged further conversation and cooperation of the Canyon, Firelight, and Big Sky water and sewer districts as they prepare future funding requests.

The floor was opened for public comment.

David O'Connor, Executive Director of the Big Sky Community Housing Trust, encouraged the Board to be cognizant of the significant public investments already made in wastewater treatment facilities as they consider water district issues, to avoid the public paying twice.

5.5 Visit Big Sky (VBS) FY26 Special Request

On a motion made by Grace Young, seconded by Kevin Germain, it was resolved to approve the special circumstance request by Visit Big Sky for \$400,000 for marketing funds for FY26 plus the period between July 1, 2026, and November 1, 2026. Motion carried.

Brad Niva, CEO of the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce, provided an overview of their annual request for marketing funds and presented highlights of their marketing plan. The extra four months will allow marketing efforts for the winter season to begin now and cover the gap created by the transition of the BSRAD grant cycle to the fall.

The Board encouraged Brad Niva to present pre-winter and pre-summer tourism outlooks at future meetings to provide information on expected seasonal activity.

The floor was opened for public comment. Thad Beatty, Emily Wagner, Brian Hurlbut, Lindsey Foote, Michael Jacquard, Cassie Buckley, Peter Christian, Chris Dunkerson, Liv Grubaugh, and Stacie Harris all provided comment supporting the request.

6. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Layne Jones, 338 Rainbow Trout, stated that she had noticed invasive weeds on the open-space trail near her home. She expressed appreciation for the efforts of the Lone Mountain Land Company, Jennifer Mohler, Ken Lancey, Big Sky Landscape, and all participants for tackling the invasive weeds that need to be eradicated in Big Sky.

7. **NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next Board of Directors meeting is August 14, 2025.

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion duly made and carried, it was agreed that there was no further business to transact; the meeting closed at 9:33 a.m.

9. **WORK SESSION**

The Board discussed the FY26 impact area budgets in a work session following the Board meeting.

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 (Aug 18, 2025 14:32:54 MDT)

Grace Young, Secretary and Treasurer







2025.07.09 Minutes

Final Audit Report

2025-08-18

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