

VISIT BIG SKY

July 11, 2019 *Visit Big Sky Board of Directors Meeting Minutes*

VBS Offices | Big Sky & Greater Yellowstone Visitor Information Center

Present: Ryan Hamilton, Tim Drain, Krista Traxler, Ryan Kunz, Julie Grimm-Lisk, Annie Pinkert, Justin Bain, Andy Wirth
Call-In: Emilie McGee
Absent: Dan Martin
Staff Present: Candace Carr Strauss, Emily Lessard, Paige Desatoff, Lori Wetzel
Public: Kirsten King, Danny Bierschwale
Call to Order: 8:38 am

PUBLIC COMMENT

Danny Bierschwale, Big Sky Resort Tax and Kirsten King, Big Sky Vacation Rentals both announced their presence as public attendees. There were no other comments following.

ACTION ITEMS

Approval of Minutes

- Motion to approve the April and May minutes was made by Ryan and seconded by Justin. With no further discussion and a unanimous vote, the motion passed.

Approval of Financials

- Motion to approve the June financials was made by Krista and seconded by Justin. With no further discussion and an unanimous vote, the motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS

VBS Board Operations & Administration

FY20 VBS Board Officers, Appointments, and Elections; NEW Staff

- There are currently three seats on the Visit Big Sky board of directors to fill. One is an appointment of Andy Wirth, Lone Mountain Land Co. to fill Mike Parker's seat with his departure from BSRE Co. The second is an open seat due to Steven Rager's resignation with the sale of RPM/River Rock which is being sought by Kirsten King, owner of Big Sky Vacation Rentals who was present and seeking election following the protocol of board recruitment. Ryan Hamilton made a motion to elect Kirsten King go the board, with a second by Ryan Kunz. With no discussion and a unanimous vote, the motion passed. The third seat is a newly created position per the FY19 by-law amendment. Josh Treasure, General Manager of Roxy's Market and Deli, has expressed interest in filling the board seat and the Nominating Committee again is in process of reviewing his application to serve and will bring forth a recommendation to the full board for their action.

NEW Fiscal Year – REVISED FY20 Budget for Board Approval

- The FY20 budget was reviewed with the board noting the Resort Tax FY20 allocation of \$500,000 to VBS, a reduction of \$278,065 from the \$778,065 requested. TEAM Big Sky: People and Place, took a reduction of \$65 however the major cut was to the PROMOTE the Destination which was reduced by \$226,000. DEVELOP the Destination also removed the \$50,000 Google program and LEAD the Tourism Industry/Destination cut \$2,000 to balance the budget.
- Over the last two years, Resort Tax collections have risen consistently, but the money allocated to VBS remained constant at \$640,000 for two years with a significant decrease this year. Many hours

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were spent structuring the budget to place the core needs of VBS to function as a DMMO in the CVB allocation from MOTBD. Due to almost complete dependency on public funding, currently VBS has no monies in reserves and as a 501(c)(6) entity, philanthropy is not an tool at present for the organization. VBS will continue to expand its private revenue stream. There was a discussion about a future TBID for Big Sky, however at present, lodging partners who are bearing the burden of state lodging tax and local resort tax are hesitant to take on more costs to their product offerings.

VBS – Operations & Administration

Grand Re-Opening of the Big Sky & Greater Yellowstone VIC

- The Big Sky & Greater Yellowstone VIC continues to operate Monday through Friday and employees are enjoying the remodeled space. According to the landlord, he will be re-roofing the building later this summer/fall and re-configuring the parking lot. He is currently taking any suggestions for types of businesses to occupy the western parcel which is zoned commercial.
- New summer banners were hung along Lone Mountain Trail and the current blue #visitbigsky exterior window clings will be replaced shortly with similar creative. In addition, new building signage is being developed with Beartooth Signs.

Big Sky Chamber – SEEKING Director of Membership Sales

- RJ Klotz resigned from the Big Sky Chamber as the Director of Membership Sales effective as of the July 4th holiday. The position is posted on bigskychamber.com, theworkspotmt.com, WACE, and mountaincareers.com. There is potential for the new staffer to dedicate 0.25 to VBS to fulfill some sales needs, however that will be decided based on individual candidates and their experience level.

DEVELOP the Destination

Truly360 – Google Program

- In August, Truly360 a Google Partner will be in Big Sky shooting street view of the destination. The current contract is signed to film 65 road miles, five aerial drone tours which will be of specific hiking trails and provide for a partner Google training. This program will allow Big Sky to populate more efficiently to Google maps and be a big resource to our visitors.

PROMOTE the Destination

Summer '19 Summary (OVG, Website, Maps, Digital Campaigns, Print, Email)

- The summer hiking campaign is underway and will run through mid-September. HY will be providing a mid-campaign report. The hunting campaign will target HH \$200,000+ and is set to launch the second week of August and will run through mid-October. A conversation followed regarding the choice to run a hunting campaign and future shoulder season events to help build business for the smaller businesses following the closure of Big Sky Resort. The VBS Marketing Committee will take a deeper dive into shoulder efforts at its next meeting.

#FLYBZN Air Development Marketing Committee Update – Annie Pinkert

- Annie Pinkert is taking the reigns of the air development marketing committee from Daryl Schliem at the Bozeman Chamber/CVB/TBID. Mammoth marketing, the committee's agency has dissolved and is no longer in business. Currently all marketing funds have been spent so the committee needs to regroup. Expanded service to Boston, MA is highly desired. The second annual Montana Airlines Rendezvous (speed dating) will take place at Big Sky Resort, September 9-11, 2019.

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LEAD the Destination

Resort Tax – Community Strategic Visioning, Ordinance Overhaul, SB241, Board Member Appointment/Elections (May 2020)

- Bi-monthly meetings between the Chamber/VBS and Resort Tax staff have been scheduled to work better together and inform the various projects underway. In May of 2020, there is potential for three open board seats on the Resort Tax board. In addition, the Ordinance revision process is underway with the hope to have it completed in time for December implementation. Finally, the entire Resort Tax allocation processes is under review with the intent to roll out for FY21.

Interim between 66th-67th Montana Legislative Session

- There are two bills that we are tracking closely during interim legislative session. The first is HJ35 – Study of State and Local Tax Policy, specifically looking at if we need a statewide and local option sales tax. With this in mind there is discussion around forming a statewide resort tax association to ensure a collective voice from these communities if there is a new tax system proposed. The second is SJ24 – Study of 22.5% of MT Lodging Facility Use Tax dispersed to Regions/CVBs and how it is currently being allocated from the TAC. The board will be updated periodically on their progress.

OLD BUSINESS

Destimetrics – 1st Reports following FY20 Contract Renewal – Retail Report

- The Destimetrics contract has been officially renewed and the first reports were released in June. There are currently 10 partners that are involved in the program. A community-wide benefit for Big Sky businesses is the 60-day Retail Report which will be shared with all VBS tourism stakeholders who register as a VBS partner. At present, there are approximately 150 local businesses represented in the Official Visitor Guide who comprise what we are referring to as our stakeholders.

Destination Analysts Summer '19 Research – Visitor Intercept Surveys

- Destination Analysts will be in Big Sky for the first wave of Visitor Intercept Surveys this week. They will return again in August for a second round. The data will be shared once the research is completed. The overall cost for the project is approximately \$50,000.

STAFF REPORTS

CEO Report

- Ryan Kunz was thanked for hosting the 2nd Annual VBS Marketing Outlook Luncheon at Lone Mountain Ranch. He opens the restaurant specifically for this event. TEAM Big Sky is already working on next year. The Rad Smith-designed maps are underway with the overall destination map completed and focus now on the individual community maps.

OTHER

- Strauss received a formal review from Ryan Hamilton before he stepped down as Board Chair.
- The Big Sky Chamber is currently revising its Employee Handbook to include items such as paying out accrued paid time off and tweaking a few other administrative edits.

ADJOURN

- A motion to adjourn was made by Krista and seconded by Ryan Hamilton. With no further discussion and a unanimous vote, the motion was passed.
 - Meeting adjourned at 10:26 am.
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