

VISIT BIG SKY

September 19, 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, Kirsten King, Josh Treasure

Call-In:

Absent: Dan Martin, Annie Pinkert, Julie Grimm-Lisk, Justin Bain, Andy Wirth

Staff Present: Candace Carr Strauss, Paige Desatoff, Lori Wetzel, Emilie McGee

Public: Blaire Mohn, Danny Bierschwale and Jenny Muscat

Call to Order: 8:35 am

PUBLIC COMMENT

Blair Mohn, Big Sky resident and Chair, Big Sky Rotary Club. Danny Bierschwale and Jenny Muscat, Big Sky Resort Tax Area District

ACTION ITEMS

Approval of Minutes

- A motion to approve the September minutes was made by Ryan Hamilton, with a second by Kirsten King. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Financials

- A motion to approve the September financials was made by Ryan Hamilton, with a second by Kirsten King. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

Approval of 990

- A motion to approve the VBS FY19 990 was made by Ryan Kunz, with a second by Krista Traxler. Lori Wetzel, Compliance Manager was commended for her due diligence in getting this prepared so in advance of the November 15th deadline. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

VBS Board Operations & Administration

Board Orientation Packet & Welcome Josh Treasure

- The VBS Board orientation packet which provides an overview of the Big Sky Destination DNA Study, Tourism Master Planning Process and resulting Strategic Priorities was provided to all for those who were unable to attend either of the two scheduled meetings. It from this that VBS is building its annual operating plan.
- Tim officially welcomed Josh Treasure, General Manager of Roxy's as the newest VBS Board member. Josh was appointed to the board via a unanimous vote taken electronically following the recommendation of the Nominating Committee following a meeting with Tim, Candace and Josh in which Board Roles & Responsibilities were shared. In addition, Josh will serve as chair of the newly constituted VBS Sustainability Committee.

NEW STEWARD the Destination

Sustainability Committee

- In light of the increasing importance on "sustainability," and Sustainable Tourism, VBS has separated out the work related to this from one of its existing pillars to create a 4th pillar: "STEWARD the Destination" which includes social, cultural, economic and environmental sustainability encompasses managing the balance between consumption and preservation, increased visitation

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and quality of life for Big Sky residents. The newly convened VBS Sustainability Committee, again Chaired by Josh Treasure will begin our work in this arena. The Committee Charter and list of current committee members was presented to the board.

Sustainability Lunch & Learn

- In effort to begin to lead the conversation around sustainable tourism, VBS hosted a Sustainability Lunch & Learn with Dr. Kim Langmaid Founder of the Walking Mountains Science Center out of Vail, Colorado. The event was well received with 35 attendees representing multiple businesses and the community at-large. The Lunch & Learn followed a two-day training held at Bridger Bowl that Tim, Josh and Candace attended. The goal is to bring the more extensive two-day training with Dr. Langmaid to Big Sky in spring of 2020.

DEVELOP the Destination

Destination Analysts Summer '19 Research

- Destination Analysts completed their in-market research related to the summer visitor having conducted intercept surveys at BZN, the West Yellowstone Visitor Information Center and various locations throughout Big Sky. Follow-up surveys will be sent to those visitors who opted to receive them in late October to inquire as to the Big Sky experience with final reports to be provided in early December.

Truly360 – Update

- The Truly360 project to get the majority of the Big Sky market represented via video on Streetview took place in early August. This included a first of its kind shoot of the Moonlight and Spanish Peaks golf courses paid for by the private clubs. Completion is slated for month-end of September.

PROMOTE the Destination

VBS Marketing Committee - Update

- Krista Traxler shared how this was essentially the first meeting of the Marketing Committee with all of the board transition and it being the first opportunity to capitalize on all of the organization's planning and forthcoming research. The conversation focused on identifying future KPI's based on the *Imagine2023* plan, and how the committee can best serve/assist the staff. Emilie McGee gave a brief presentation on what KPI's VBS is currently using and tracking.

RECAP: Summer '19 Hiking / Fall '19 Shoulder Season Hunting Campaigns

- Hoffman York provided the Summer '19 Hiking campaign report late Wednesday so the team is still reviewing results but they look very positive. The Fall '19 Hunting campaign is still underway through month-end October. Both post campaign reports will be shared fully with the board at the November meeting. Ryan Kunz asked if VBS was currently tracking lodging promotions and it was decided that at the next VBS DestiMetrics Partner meeting, lodging partners would be asked to start tracking redeemed promotions to coincide with an annual lodging promotion calendar that can be repeated every year.

TBEX and FAM Trips – Update

- Candace and Emilie attended the TBEX – Travel Bloggers Exchange conference in Billings, MT from September 11-13 with more than 500 bloggers, travel journalists and influencers. VBS co-sponsored

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the evening event on the second night with Yellowstone Country, showcasing our region and the Big Sky destination. A BIG thanks to Stacie Mesuda and Big Sky Resort for helping share winter / *The Biggest Skiing in America* with attendees. The avalanched dogs stole the show. In addition, VBS hosted four travel journalists for two separate post-FAM's, in partnership with Covered Wagon Ranch, Jake's Horses, Gallatin River Guides, and many other local Big Sky businesses to share Big Sky's summer offerings. VBS worked with Lone Mountain Ranch as well on a separate but related FAM. Coverage generated from the conference and post-FAMS will be shared with the board and respective partners. Visit Billings was an amazing host and did a stellar job making this event happen. It was truly an opportunity to showcase all that Montana has to offer and work collectively as the Tourism industry to do so.

#FLYBZN Air Development Marketing Committee

- Annie Pinkert was absent so unable as newly appointed #Fly BZN Marketing Committee Chair to report out. Candace shared that Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport for a second year hosted the Montana Airline Rendezvous earlier in September at Big Sky Resort, noting that American Airlines has already announced expanded service for summer 2020 before the event concluded. Increased service will include direct flights from Bozeman to Los Angeles, Philadelphia and Laguardia starting June 1, 2020. More businesses and expanded service is expected to be announced in the coming months so stay tuned.

LEAD the Destination Funding Committee

- No updates at this time. The committee has not met with Justin Bain, Chair on "paternity leave" so to speak with the new baby. A discussion was had related to VBS establishing a new, more broadly focused foundation, especially with the addition of sustainability-related work, however tabled until the committee can meet.

Resort Tax

- Danny Bierschwale, Big Sky Resort Tax District gave an update on multiple ongoing projects. The first, the Logan Simpson directed *Our Big Sky Community Strategic Visioning* which is still underway. There has been significant participation from the community via surveys, at public events, one-on-one and small group meetings. The Resort Tax Board is slated to adopt the official community plan at its November 13th Resort Tax Board meeting. The second is that Resort Tax is currently going through a formal review of its ordinance to provide clarity to businesses and more accountability in administering the tax. Any changes to the ordinance will be alerted to the public.
- The Big Sky Water & Sewer District has approached Resort Tax about utilizing the 1% for Infrastructure mechanism to fund the needed \$22 million wastewater treatment plant. They will be making a formal presentation at the November 13th Resort Tax Board meeting.
- Ciara Wolfe, Executive Director of the Big Sky Community Organization was appointed to fill the seat previously held by Mike Sholz. That term runs through June 30th. Board elections will take place in May 2020.

Interim between 66th-67th Montana Legislative Session

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- Tourism Matters to Montana, which VBS participates in, is monitoring two interim committees and their work. One is HJ 35 which is studying state and local tax policy being that Montana is one of only four states without a sales tax with a small resident population and more than 12.4 million non-resident visitors annually. The other is SJ 24 which is reviewing MOTBD/TAC oversight of Tourism Region/CVB funding from the 4% Facility Use Lodging Tax.

OLD BUSINESS

- No old business was discussed.

STAFF REPORTS

CEO Report

- Candace shared information from MOTBD related to the validity of placing ad dollars in *Ski* and *Powder* magazines following a conversation questioning the credibility of both publications at the last VBS Marketing Committee meeting. VBS participates in a co-op with Yellowstone Country which places a regional ad in these publications.

EXECUTIVE SESSION/ADJOURN

- A motion to go into Executive Session at 10:40 am was made by Ryan Hamilton and seconded by Krista Traxle.
- A motion to come out of Executive Session at 11:05 am was made by Ryan Hamilton and seconded by Ryan Kunz. With all in favor, the motion passed
- A motion to Adjourn at 11:05 am was made by Ryan Hamilton and seconded by Ryan Kunz. With all in favor, the motion passed.