

# VISIT BIG SKY

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## March 21, 2019 *Visit Big Sky Board of Directors Meeting Minutes* Big Sky Medical Center Conference Room

**Present:** Ryan Hamilton, Krista Traxler, Julie Grimm-Lisk, Tim Drain, Ennion Williams, Annie Pinkert  
**Call-In:** Ryan Kunz  
**Absent:** Dan Martin, Justin Bain  
**Staff Present:** Candace Carr Strauss, Emilie McGee, Lori Wetzell  
**Public:** Megan Paulson, Ersin Ozer, Joe O'Connor, Alex Iskendarian, Scott Johnson, Mandy Hotovy, Erik Morrison, Taylor Middleton, and Eric Anderson (Call-In)

**Call to Order:** 8:41 am

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

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Representatives from Outlaw Partners spoke to their two upcoming events; Big Sky PBR and Peak to Sky, a new music festival that will be held on July 6<sup>th</sup>. Questions were asked about the number of tickets available for each event and how Outlaw handles ticket distribution to the private clubs and event sponsors. No other public comment was given regarding this topic.

### **ACTION ITEMS**

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#### **Approval of Minutes**

- Tim Drain asked to correct the language used in the Develop the Destination portion of the minutes. Drain made a motion to approve the minutes as amended and Traxler seconded. With no further discussion and a unanimous vote, the motion passed.

#### **Approval of Financials**

- Motion to approve the March financials made by Tim and seconded by Julie. With no further discussion and a unanimous vote, the motion passed.

### **MOVED NEW BUSINESS AGENDA ITEM: EBS Guest Editorial from Taylor Middleton**

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Based on public attendance, agenda item C2 "EBS Guest Editorial from Taylor Middleton" was moved up to begin the meeting. Candace gave a short presentation speaking to the mission of Visit Big Sky and its role in the community after having undergone Tourism Master Planning last year sharing that essentially, there can be no destination branding without locals embracing tourism, just as there can be no destination without visitors. A conversation ensued between the board of directors and the public attendees related to the controversy around Big Sky Resort having joined the Ikon pass for winter 18/19. Comments were given by Annie Pinkert, Ennion Williams, Tim Drain, Krista Traxler, Ersin Ozer, Megan Paulson, Scott Johnson, Joe O'Connor, and Alex Iskendarian. The board directed Candace to draft and submit a Letter to the Editor to speak to the community in response to all of the negative conversation being had online in an effort to dispel some of the misperceptions around growth and to ask for patience with the growing pains.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

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#### **SB241 | Our Big Sky Community Visioning Process**

- Senate Bill 241, which has made its way out of the house and will move to Senate Taxation Committee next.
- The Our Big Sky Community Strategic Visioning project is going as planned and is on schedule. Logan Simpson was in Big Sky in late February. Numerous community events were held and the one on one

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stakeholder meetings were oversubscribed so they will return in April to continue meetings. This show of engagement has never occurred during their time conducting these studies for communities.

## **VBS Board Operations and Admin**

- There was no update from Krista on the Marketing Committee.
- Ryan K shared that the Events Committee meets bi-monthly and that it has been instrumental in connecting all of the community's event leaders, all of whom have been great resources to one another. Candace spoke to an event sponsorship opportunity that was presented to VBS by Outlaw Partners. The ask was for \$50,000 – \$10,000 for Big Sky PBR Street Dance and \$40,000 to the new Peak to Sky concert to be held on July 6th. Following discussion by the board and Outlaw Partners representatives on this particular request, as well as future ones, the board directed the Events Committee to draft a policy for review at the either the May or June board meeting. The one overarching theme that emerged was that VBS, in following its Events Committee Charter will focus on the shoulder seasons and times of lower visitation. All lodging partners shared that they are full over the July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend and that bringing an additional 4,500 people with the Peak to Sky Concert proports will add pressure to the system. Following the discussion about the pressure increased visitation this winter has put on the system reinforced what the Charter states.
- Julie Grimm had no update for the Development of the Destiantion Committee. Emilie McGee commented that she and the committee are working once again in partnership with West Yellowstone and taking feedback from last year's program to redevelop this year's host week book/program to better serve both front line workers and our local businesses.
- Justin Bain was not present but he has agreed to take over the Funding Committee in place of Mark Parker who resigned from the board. He and Candace are meeting on Friday.
- Sustainability – Marnie Hayes has been hired as a consultant to meeting with various stakeholders on the topic of sustainability over the next three months. Further, it is the hope that through the Our Big Sky Community Strategic Visioning that sustainability will bubble to top as a core value as heard in our Big Sky Place DNA Study last year.

## **Destimetrics – FY19 Contract Renewal (3 Year)**

- Big Sky Resort voiced officially that Boyne will not allow them to participate in Destimetrics. Candace is still recruiting other lodging companies to join the platform due to the fact that legally, the partners represent the organization's membership for 501(c)(6) nonprofit, membership status along with the Board of Directors. She alerted the board that if we choose not to renew the Destimetrics contract, a bylaw amendment will be required. Drain commented that the program is very valuable to Natural Retreats, especially for the transportation portion of his business. He argued that the data is still valuable and useful even without Big Sky Resort's participation and to continue should the program.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

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### **LEAD the Destination**

#### **Tourism Matters to Montana – Bill Tracking**

- There are currently three bills being tracked, two impact the Montana Lodging Facility Use Tax and its distribution and the other is an airline gas tax bill currently in motion. TM opposes all of them.

## **STAFF REPORTS**

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### **CEO Report**

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- An update was given on the continuing remodel of The Corner Property which began prior to Thanksgiving. It has been a very difficult process. As a result, the Visitor Information Center remains closed. | The Resort Tax FY20 Application was discussed and a brief detail given of the various revenue streams that fund the organization, meaning bed tax and local Resort Tax, both public sources. This shed light on the critical need for the Funding Committee to identify additional revenue sources for the future.

## **OTHER NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

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- The Nominating Committee (Ryan Hamilton, Tim Drain, Dan Martin) reviewed drafted policy documents related to the nomination process and recruiting new board members, and submitted them for the board's acceptance. Drain motioned to adopt the new documents and Traxler seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- Hamilton suggested that we put together a letter writing campaign in support of this year's Resort Tax FY20 application, as well as line up different individuals to speak to the Resort Tax board on the importance of The Power of Travel and the role of VBS.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS COMPENSATION**

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- A motion to enter into Executive Session at 12:44 pm was made by Tim and seconded by Krista.
- A motion was made by Krista and seconded by Annie to come out of Executive Session at 12:54 pm.

## **ADJOURN**

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- A motion to adjourn was made by Krista and seconded by Ryan. With no further discussion and a unanimous vote, the motion was passed.
- Meeting adjourned at 12:44 pm.