

VISIT BIG SKY

November 15, 2018 Visit Big Sky Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Lone Mountain Land Company Conference Room | Big Sky, MT 59716

Present: Ryan Hamilton, Tim Drain, Dan Martin, Mike Parker, Steven Rager, Krista Traxler, Ennion Williams, Julie Grimm-Lisk
Absent: Ryan Kunz, Justin Bain, Annie Pinkert
Staff Present: Candace Carr Strauss, Lori Wetzel, RJ Klotz
Public: Carla Rey and Amber Brask, new General Manager of 320 Ranch, Jolene Palmer with Lone Peak Lookout
Call to Order: 8:32 am

ACTION ITEMS

Approval of Minutes

- Motion to approve the minutes for September made by Tim and Seconded by Mike. With no further discussion and a unanimous vote, the motion passed.

Approval of Financials

- Motion to approve the September Financials made by Tim and seconded by Dan. With no further discussion and a unanimous vote, the motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS

VBS Committee Update

The following VBS Board committees have been formed to assist Visit Big Sky as it executes on *Imagine Big Sky 2023*, its Tourism Master Plan and the three Strategic Priorities that resulted. They are to Develop the Destination, to Promote the Destination and to be the Leader of the Tourism Collective. Each committee will have a Charter Document to clearly define its reason for being and scope for prospective committee members both on and off the board.

- Marketing Committee – Krista Traxler, Chair
- Events Committee – Ryan Kunz, Chair (Charter and meeting Agendas distributed)
- Destination Development Committee – Julie Grimm-Lisk, Chair
- Funding Committee – Mike Parker, Chair
- Sustainability – FUTURE Committee based on Big Sky DNA Study

Big Sky Gateway Foundation

- Candace met with an attorney that specializes in the Nonprofit sector. Due to way the 501(c)(3)'s Articles of Incorporation and Mission Statement are very narrowly defined for the sole purpose of building an entryway monument, it will be necessary to dissolve the Big Sky Gateway Foundation in light of the new ownership and their desire to enhance the entryway themselves.
- With the VBS Board having no issue with moving forward, next steps are to convene the Big Sky Gateway Foundation to execute the necessary protocols to seek its dissolution.

HR House Keeping

- The Big Sky Chamber Employee Manual, all Job Descriptions, and Employee Annual Review documentation is currently being updated. Once everything is finalized in working with Kari Gras, our HR consultant, it will be shared with the Board for its ratification.

VISIT BIG SKY

Destimetrics – FY19 Contract Renewal

- The VBS 3-year contract with Destimetrics expired in October 2018. Renewal of the contract is being delayed due to Boyne (Corporate) has disallowed Big Sky Resort's participating and as a result no data or reporting has been provided since May 2018. In an effort to address some of Boyne's concerns around the percentage of inventory under their management compared to that of the destination, Candace went out and recruited the following NEW Destimetrics Lodging Partners to dilute Big Sky Resort's percentage: The Wilson – Residence Inn Big Sky by Marriott (129), Stay MT (34), Yellowstone Club rentals (100+), and Spanish Peaks, Vicassa who purchased RMR, Beehive Property Management and Two Pines are all considering participating. This is the only tool on a destination level that VBS has monitor "how the market is doing" in real time. MT Lodging Tax and Resort Tax are "historical" indicators and therefore it is critical for stewardship of marketing dollars to do whatever necessary to execute a new contract. A discussion among the board members as to the value of the contract was had with the majority agreeing Destimetrics is worth continuing, and so if Boyne continues to deny Big Sky Resort's participation consideration of moving forward without them will be had. What was heard loud and clear is that we need data upon which to base our decisions. Candace shared that the Big Sky Chamber will be hiring a consultant to develop a Big Sky Economic Profile for the destination because the Chamber feels it needs better and more relevant data based on the Big Sky Resort Area District boundary.

NEW BUSINESS

DEVELOP the Destination

Tourism Sentiment Index (TSI) / Destination Think

- The TSI Report will be shared with the full board, however it would be best to have Mike with Destination Think present the findings first. Tuesday, November 27th was selected for a potential date to have him present the findings to the Board via GoTo Meeting. Candace and Emilie have already seen the presentation and feel strongly the results fully reinforce what came out of the Big Sky DNA Study and Tourism Master Planning.

PROMOTE the Destination

Volume 9 (V9) – NEW Contract

- V9 was such an amazing partner in helping VBS to ensure the successful launch of visitbigsky.com that it was decided to continue that relationship via an expanded scope of work to include some social media marketing assistance, development of updated content and an email marketing strategy. This was discussed with Krista and Annie, the VBS Marketing Committee at present. The website and social media channels have been performing exceptionally well, and a new dashboard to be able to share that performance with you is being developed. As an aside, a new vendor was also selected to create a new Official Visitor's Guide (OVG) to be available this spring. Stay tuned, more to come.

VBS Skyline Wrapped Bus

- The newly purchased Skyline bus has been wrapped and is on a normal route between Bozeman and Big Sky so watch for it. The intent was to show a vibrant community to our nearby drive market. To promote Big Sky and the ability to ride Skyline inexpensively, a promotion around the Big Sky Christmas Stroll to come and stay was developed. Board members were told they should have received the email and asked to share with their networks.

LEAD the Destination

- Resort Tax Board is starting the Big Sky Strategic Visioning process thanks to strong encouragement from the Big Sky Chamber's suggestion following the research done by Dan Clark of the MSU Local

VISIT BIG SKY

Government Center. An RFP was sent to five vendors with three responses received. In addition to the Resort Tax subcommittee of Steve Johnson, Buz Davis and Whitney Bruner, both Candace and Ciara Wolfe of the Big Sky Community Organization were asked to participate in the telephone interviews. In parallel to this, the Resort Tax Board has decided they need additional staffing to include a District Manager, part-time Administrative Assistant and outsourced book-keeping, in addition to new role definition for existing staff with all that is transpiring. This is an exciting time for the Big Sky Community and everyone is encouraged to see the role Resort Tax is taking in it.

Government Affairs

- **Tourism Matters to Montana** – With the upcoming 66th Legislative Session getting ready to begin in January, Candace sought \$2,000 in private support for lobbying efforts by Tourism Matters on behalf of VBS in partnership with the tourism industry in the state. The Big Sky Chamber also contributes to this effort. Most likely there will be attempts once again to raise the Montana Lodging Sales Tax which goes directly to the General Fund. This will allow us to contribute our voice to that discussion. Ryan Kunz sits on the Montana Lodging and Hospitality Association's (MLHA) board, and they too have a lobbyist, Stuart Doggett, Executive Director of MLHA who will also be working to preserve this economic engine for tourism promotion. The December 5th Big Sky Chamber *Eggs & Issues* leading into the Gallatin-Madison Joint County Commission meeting will feature Dax Schieffer, Director of Voices of Montana Tourism our advocacy organization, and focus on the Economic Impact of Tourism on our community and the state's economy. Plan to be in attendance to show your support. A motion was made by Tim and seconded by Krista to contribute \$2,000 from private funds to participate in the Tourism Matters contract. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.
- **MT Chamber Business Days at The Capitol** – The Big Sky Chamber and VBS are looking to sponsor the Montana Chamber Business Days at The Capitol leading into the 66th Legislative Session. Webb Brown, CEO/President of the Montana Chamber has resigned after 20 years of service so there is much change a foot in Helena with this and the changes at Department of Commerce with Jenny Pelaj's interim appointment as Bureau Chief at Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development (MOTBD)

The Corner Property

- With the remodel of the Big Sky Chamber offices and VBS / Visitor Information Center there is a need to purchase new furniture in the amount of \$6,000-\$8,000 to match that being put forth by the Big Sky Chamber. A motion was made by Dan, second by Mike. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously. New outside signage and window wraps are a future goal to beautify the exterior of the building as well.

Staff Reports

- The new website is performing well as are the VBS social media channels – Facebook and Instagram. This will be shared in the Summer Niche Hiking Campaign analytics next meeting. We are working with V-9 to develop a new “dashboard” to better update the board on key performance indicators moving forward.
- The VBS Marketing Committee is looking into two opportunities that have been shared with VBS. One being the **Travel Blogger Exchange (TBEX)** conference to be held in Billings in September 2019 with scheduled FAM trips around the state to follow. VBS has been asked to sponsor dinner on the second night at \$30,000. The second opportunity is to host **The Bachelorette**. Proposals are due December 14th. Based on timing (March) and expectations of the destination's lodging partners, this is not an option for Big Sky at this time.
- VBS is honored to be able to host a “Conversation with Superintendent Cam Sholly of Yellowstone National Park” in the Lone Mountain Land Company lobby at 10:30 am. Thanks to Karst Stage and Big Sky Real Estate Co. for their sponsorship that made this event possible.

VISIT BIG SKY

VBS Holiday Reception

Wednesday, December 14th at 4 pm | The Rocks located in Town Center.

Other Non-Agenda Items

- Big Sky Transportation District is looking to expand its district boundary to parallel that of the BSRAD. A petition is needed with 500 signatures to be able to expand. There is a new app in development that would show the Skyline bus schedule and where buses are in route to better serve riders. Stay tuned for its deployment.
- **Wayfinding signs** – With all the new hotels and other businesses opening in Big Sky perhaps a review of the wayfinding signage is needed to reflect the growth. The originally designed and approved signage system provides for 32 signs of which only 27 are being utilized.
- **Mountain Report Ski Show** - Tim Drain has a colleague looking to shoot a 30-minute episode of the Mountain Report in Big Sky. He will be at the ski show in Denver and has been put in contact with Annie to discuss the viability.

Executive Session

10:10 am A motion was made to enter Executive Session by Dan, seconded by Julie. With all in favor the motion passed.

10:18 am A motion was made to come out of Executive Session by Dan and seconded by Tim. With all in favor the motion passed.

Adjourn

10:19 am A motion was made to Adjourn by Dan and seconded by Tim. With all in favor the motion passed.