



**BIG \* SKY**  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

*MEETING MINUTES*  
**Chamber Board**  
**55 Lone Mountain Trail | Big Sky, Montana 59716**  
**406-995-3000**  
**February 11th, 2013**  
[www.bigskychamber.com](http://www.bigskychamber.com)

**Present:** Dave O'Connor, Sarah Griffiths, Kevin Germain, Victor DeLeo, Bill Simpkins, John Richardson, Shawna Winter, Pat Straub

**Staff:** Kitty Clemens, Andrew Peterson, Danielle Miller

**Public Order:** Ryan Hamilton

**Call to Order:** 8:39 a.m.

**Visit Big Sky Liaison Report:**

John Richardson, Treasurer

- The marketing planning meeting will take place the after the board meeting in order to prepare for the town hall meeting on Thursday, March 13<sup>th</sup>.
- The summer plan is in place. This is the first year we have a summer season advertising campaign.
- There is an appropriations subcommittee for the VBS Resort Tax Strategy. We have several strategies. One of the big asks is to change our advertising into a year round campaign.
- VBS is in a transitional spot, the private match is still important. The board realizes that many entities in addition to the lodging partners want to contribute. It is a challenge to make a comparable private match in the summer campaign.
- In order to gain funding from resort tax we needed to prove there was buy in potential for the participating partners. The struggle is that if we want to go beyond lodging we need to have more benefits for participating partners. However, in summer there is no corresponding product. VBS needs to figure out what the summer value added would be and how it fits in to our current winter campaign. An example of such a product would be advertising pieces in the Official Visitor Guide.

- A discussion on how to expand the buy in potential of interested partners outside of lodging partners took place among the board. A central reservations system would be a great solution to the issue.
- John said it is challenging to invite new partners into VBS. It is also extremely important not to devalue Chamber membership. John suggested that the board needs to bring Resort Tax into the conversation in order to figure this out.
- The bottom line is VBS and the Chamber are the only organizations that truly represent the tax collectors. Investing in the Chamber and VBS is an investment in our community's success. Unlike VBS and the Chamber, most of the other organizations have private funding as a revenue source.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

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- **Approval of Minutes**
  - Motion to approve minutes was made by Victor DeLeo and seconded by Shawna Winters.
- **Financial Report**  
John Richardson, Treasurer
  - The Chamber budget has been amended. Membership has been balanced. The Business Expo and idea exchange were scaled back. Our revenue is in a good spot.
  - The Official Visitor Guide is an excellent revenue stream for the Chamber and we will continue to make money on the Official Visitor Guide this year as well.
  - Some line items were adjusted including administrative fees, staff wages and visitor center wages.
  - Danielle gave a presentation about the difference between memberships from 2010-2011.
- **Approval of the amended budget**
  - Motion to approve amended budget was made by Shawna Winter and seconded by Bill Simpkins.
- **Vice Chair Vacancy**
  - The vice chair vacancy position was discussed by the board
  - Motion to nominate Sarah Griffiths as the Chamber Board of Director's new Vice Chair was made by Kevin Germain and seconded by Pat Straub.
- **Light Pole Replacement Insurance Shortfall**
  - The insurance company involved with the dispute has offered to pay \$10,000 as settlement despite the \$18,000 cost needed to replace the light pole. The insurance company suggested that we seek restitution for the remaining \$8,000 from the individual. However, with the board's approval, the Chamber does not wish to seek restitution from the individual who is a member of the Big Sky community.

- Motion to not seek restitution in the light pole replacement insurance shortfall was made by the board. The board passed this unanimously.

## **INFORMATION ITEMS**

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- **Resort Tax Preliminary Recommendations**
  - Ryan Hamilton's suggestion is to bury the power lines and reduce our ask for wayfinding and lights by half. Burying the power lines will serve to improve the aesthetics of the entrance to Big Sky and will begin to create a more prominent sense of arrival.
  - The board agrees that the Chamber should include gateway amenities in the Resort Tax ask. Montana Electric can bury the aforementioned power lines for a little under \$100,000.

## **STANDING AGENDA ITEMS**

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- **VIC Report**  
Marci Lewandowski, Visitor Services Manager
  - Visitor Center numbers are up this month with 990 visitors entering the center in January 2014. This is a 25% increase from last month and an 8% from January 2013.
  - The top information visitors asked about in January 2014 were maps/directions, general information, lodging, dining, ski trail maps and Yellowstone National Park
  - Marci is working to complete a Visitor Economic Impact of Big Sky for Resort Tax appropriations in order to put a dollar value on the number
- **Website Statistics**  
Andrew Peterson, Marketing Coordinator
  - We have been doing a lot of photo sharing from Facebook and a lot of people are sharing VisitBigSkyMT's photos as well.
  - The state of Montana's new "Welcome to Montana" signs are all user generated content and user generated content will go on all the future advertising campaigns
  - In regards to website statistics, traffic is funneling to the bigskychamber.com and visitbigsky.com. Our statistics are higher on average than last year's for average traffic numbers.
  - People from 23 countries visited our site and every state is interacting with our site. Return visitors spend nearly 3 minutes on the site.
  - Big Sky and Bozeman are the most popular site traffic for bigskychamber.com.
  - We will be adding 11 ad spaces on bigskychamber.com.

- **Ambassador Activity**  
Danielle Miller, Membership & Sales Manager
  - The ambassadors' program continues to do well. There will not be a ribbon cutting for a while, so the ambassadors will be working on other projects.
  
- **Housing Funding Workshop**  
Kitty Clemens, Executive Director
  - The Housing Funding Workshop will be February 21<sup>st</sup> at Buck's T-4.
  - Anyone who is a member and wants to attend can rsvp with Kitty.
  - We invited the resort tax board, county commissioners, and several key players in the policy department to come to the housing workshop.
  - This workshop will help make an impact on the town hall meeting on March 13th.
  
- **Non Dues/Non Tax Revenue**  
Danielle Miller, Membership & Sales Manager
  - We had a dropped member over the past month. Mike Ray at Ray advertising dropped his membership with the Chamber.
  - Danielle encouraged the board to ask businesses owners in the Big Sky community if they are Chamber members and to briefly discuss the benefits of Chamber membership with any who are not yet members.
  - She would also like to see members use other members for referrals and services as opposed to non-members.
  
- **Adjourn**
  - Motion to adjourn was made by Kevin Germain and it was seconded by Sarah Griffiths. With no other business the meeting was adjourned at 10:38 a.m.