



Big Sky Chamber Board Meeting Minutes Tuesday, July 10, 2018 | 8:30am

Present: Sarah Phelps, Britt Ide, Kevin Germain, Bill Simkins, Scott Johnson, Brandon Bang, Ken Lancey and Greg Lisk
Absent: David O'Connor
Staff: Candace Carr Strauss, Lori Wetzels, Caitlin Lundin, RJ Klotz
Public: None
Call to Order: 8:35am

Public Comment

- No public comment

Approval of Minutes

- A motion to approve the May meeting minutes was made by Scott and seconded by Britt. With all in favor the motion passed.

Finance Committee Report

- Circling back to the overpaid taxes on UBIT (OVG) on the past FY tax return, Anderson Zurmuehlen re-submitted with the appropriate allowance and as a result, the Chamber was refunded approximately \$6,000.
- The FY19 Chamber Amended Budget was distributed for approval with reductions due to the Resort Tax Board allocation being \$69,2000 less than requested. Programming expense was most effected by the cut.
- A motion to accept the FY19 Amended Budget was made by Britt and seconded by Kevin. A quick discussion followed about the apparent need for better corporate communication from the Chamber to the community around the value of the organization and its work on behalf of not only its business members but the Big Sky community at-large. With all in favor, the motion passed.

Old Business

2018 Black Diamond Awards Dinner & Annual Members' Meeting

- The feedback from the event has been overwhelmingly positive noting the valuable networking opportunity it provided along with the showcase that it provided the organization to spotlight its achievements. In an ideal world, the Chamber dinner would come between Resort Tax Q & A and Allocations, but that would be a very difficult task for the organization and staff with MOTBD/TAC Marketing Plan presentations for MT Lodging Facility Use Tax occurring in that week in between up in Helena.

Board Elections, Amended By-Laws, NEW Membership Levels & Benefits

- The amended by-laws now allow for an additional two seats on the board, but do not require them. The idea of opening one of those seats up to a Young Professional was brought up to add diversity to the board and help to bring up the next generation. This was countered with the idea that young

professional must show initiative and commitment to participation which has been an issue. The Chamber will be offering in partnership with Montana Non-Profit Association a Next-Gen Board Training to try to provide leadership development in this area.

- The board does not see a need to jump to 11 just because they have the option, but rather want to take their time finding the best candidates. The board is missing representation by a person with a finance background.
- Scott is now the liaison between the board and the Membership Committee.

New Business:

Advocacy: VOICE of Big Sky Business

- MT Chamber – Endorsement of Envision 2026
Webb Brown, from the MT Chamber of Commerce, has sent a formal invitation for us to support their Envision 2026 strategic plan. The board feels strongly that the MT Chamber should be recognizing the positive economic impact of the Tourism industry on the state's finances, comparable to the push around entrepreneurship that is part of the plan, with growth and geography impacted nowhere near that of Tourism. A vote to endorse this strategic plan will be discussed again at the next meeting following a dialogue with Webb Brown.
- The MT Chamber does officially endorse political candidates and the question was posed as to if the Big Sky Chamber should as well. There was concern expressed around that idea so it was proposed instead to look at inviting candidates to Big Sky for a Q&A/Meet & Greet with the community. The Government Affairs Committee could come up with questions that help drive the conversation around specific interests.
- Council of State Government West – Annual meeting: July 16-20, 2019 at Big Sky Resort
The Big Sky Chamber is assisting Representative Dudik and staff with the event's economic development tours which aim to highlight current policy issues, this year specifically around conservation, public lands and the outdoor recreation economy.

Creating a Positive Business Climate

- Big Sky Chamber Membership – Needs Assessment will be done in the months ahead.
- RJ has been following up with businesses that have dropped membership in the last 6 months and a common reason was that they don't know what we do. He has had success with a few rejoining by explaining our benefits and role in the community. Our new partnership with TheWorkSpotMT.com to help with the recruitment of qualified workforce has been well received.
- Custer-Gallatin Working Group Update – The Gallatin Forest Partnership has reached an agreement on the best, most moderate forest service plan that does not restrict recreation and still allows for limited logging.

Local Governance Facilitation

- Dan Clark with the MSU Local Government Center will present the findings to his research to the Resort Tax Board on Wednesday, July 11th. Reason being, his number one recommendation for the Big Sky community is for the Resort Tax Board to take a more strategic and visionary leadership role. As elected officials they represent the community. No change to their ordinance is required to facilitate this shift in role, but rather a change of mindset.
- Eggs & Issues/Joint County Commissioners' Meeting: Wednesday, Nov 5th @ Big Sky Chapel
Tourism would be a good topic of discussion for the Eggs & Issues with the upcoming Legislative Session gearing up and the possibility of raising the MT Lodging Tax. Further, it will help the conversation with the MT Chamber in our organization wanting their strategic plan to better reflect

the industry's importance. To accommodate the elections on Tuesday, November 4th, we will look to push the meeting back to Wednesday, November 14th. Three are up for re-election with one of them running unopposed.

Encouraging Community Infrastructure Investment

- Air Route Development Update – Jet Blue will offer service between Long Beach, CA and Bozeman two days a week starting this winter. Fares are very affordable. The airline is trying to expand its leisure market and this is a test of our destination for potential future service expansion.
- Energy – Midmountain Substation Update –NorthWestern Energy (NWE), Heather Bellamy and Mike Cashell along with Dr. Eric Austin and others, spend significant time and resources to listen to the Big Sky community's concerns around the location and aesthetic of the mid-mountain substation. The community meetings have now concluded and NWE will announce their decision in the next two months in order to seek a CUP in the fall. Recent revelation that the Rainham site is currently zoned for a high density dwelling has helped sway public opinion regarding the validity of that location.
- Telecommunications Task Force – Meetings with both Three Rivers and the Bozeman Fiber Initiative were had in an effort to determine the deficiencies in fiber and cell communications in Big Sky and ways that we might go about addressing them. The next meeting will be in August to continue the gap identification.
- TCP – VBS/ VIC Toilets and Electrical – VBS was granted approved to rent a three stall portable toilet trailer to help meet the needs of the increased number of summer visitors. Total project cost is roughly \$12,000 out of CVB funds. Having to rent these toilets and pay for the extra electricity, water and waste disposal is one of the clear indications that the current facilities are not adequate for us. Development plans for TCP were approved by Gallatin County (100,000 sq ft of commercial space). We continue to try to work with the new landlord to plan for our future in this development.
- Transportation
 - TIGER Grant Update – A kick-off conference call with our federal representative in charge of the TIGER Grant. The discussion focused on big picture and has not yet reached details of timeline, but the general consensus is that if we don't have a person on our side closely managing this project, then some of our needs might fall through the cracks. Since we are paying a percentage of the \$10.3 M in funds awarded to Gallatin County as administrative fees, it was brought up that we should ask for help managing this project from the county.
 - SW MT Regional Applications/\$10k for the FTA Low/No Emission Bus Program
The Chamber as well as many other local businesses have sent letters of support for the FTA Low/No Emission Bus Program to be administered by Skyline to the Montana Department of Transportation. It includes a \$10,000 funding commitment from the Chamber as this program aligns with our priority to encourage community infrastructure investment and sustainability.
 - NADO Virtual Peer Exchange
Candace will present the case related to the success of the Big Sky Transportation Study and resulting TIGER Grant award in a virtual conference of rural transportation leaders from across the country. The theme of the talk is engaging business stakeholders in infrastructure investment.

How YOU as a Big Sky Chamber Board Member Can Help

- Membership Recruitment Efforts – We are trying to lock down dates to host a Big Sky Community Building Forum in Bozeman and Big Sky. This is an effort to demonstrate the interconnectedness of both communities, and the linkage of their growth. The Bozeman Chronicle was suggested as a potential partner for the Bozeman event.

- 5/5/30 Report – As a board member, spend 5 minutes a week thinking of 5 people you interacted with in the last 30 days that the Chamber should know.
- Big Sky Chamber “Fore-o-6 Golf Tournament” – Friday, September 14, 2018
We are working on nailing down golf tournament specifics so that we can finalize the sponsorship packet and send it out to last year’s hole sponsors/participants and begin to look for new ones.

Staff Report

- VBS is proud to announce the hire of Emilie McGee as Marketing Manager. She is a recent MSU graduate in marketing and a Bozeman native. Funding for VBS was allocated at less than requested, but at the same level as FY18.
- RJ has put together a report from the fiscal year end that breaks out what our membership is and what levels they fall under. This report will also have details on dropped membership. In the past two months, 17 new members joined and 6 dropped – one as a result of a merger.

Executive Session*

A motion to move to Executive Session at 10:11 am was made by XXX and seconded by XXX. With all in favor, the motion passed, and the board went into Executive Session. At 10:13 am XXX made a motion to come out of Executive Session which was seconded by XXX. With all in favor, the motion passed. *to be updated prior to meeting

Board Update

- Sarah Phelps is stepping down from the Chamber Board. She has been given a once in a lifetime work opportunity to go work for Jeff Bezos’ Blue Origenes company based in Seattle. Everyone wishes her the best of luck in this endeavor.
- The Board now needs a new Chair, and Candace will reach out to Hans Williamson at YC to see if they will seek appointment of a new YC representative for the Board to finish out Sarah’s term. The Nominating (Executive) Committee will be tasked with vetting this and will bring recommendations back to the full board at next month’s meeting,

Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by Kevin and seconded by Sarah. With all in favor, the motion passed, and the board adjourned at 10:22 am.

Respectfully Submitted,
Caitlin Lundin