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BigSkyRelief.org

Operational Partners Coordination Meeting, No. 11 – 5/5/20

On Tuesday, May 5, the 11th BigSkyRelief.org Operational Partners Coordination Meeting kicked off at 12 p.m. and lasted approximately 25 minutes.

The purpose of the virtual bi-monthly meeting is to consolidate regular updates for the Big Sky Community as well as to identify and coordinate needs.

Big Sky Resort Area District board Chairperson Kevin Germain coordinated the meeting. Effective immediately, meetings will operate on a bi-monthly basis, versus a once-weekly meeting.

Updates in order of presentation:

Taylor Rose, Director of Clinical Services & Operations at Bozeman Health Big Sky Medical Center (BHBSMC):

- On May 6, BHBSMC will initiate a “punch-list walk through” on the additional four inpatient rooms; progress and construction has been remarkably expedient, taking just six weeks; beds for said rooms will arrive on May 18; three additional ventilators are expected to arrive May 15
- BHBSMC is training staff on how to use the facility’s new COVID-19 analyzer, beginning with flu and strep testing; the analyzer’s manufacturer requires validated training before COVID-19 testing media can be distributed to the facility; on-site testing abilities remain TBD until further notice, likely the next Operational Partners Coordination Meeting; once this testing is functional, the turnaround time on a test is around 45 minutes

Chief Greg Megaard, Big Sky Fire Department (BSFD):

- On April 22, Greg Megaard was appointed Chief by the Big Sky Fire Department Board of Trustees
- BSFD continues to encourage vigilance and diligence in preventing the spread of COVID-19; continue to wear masks, practice social distancing, etc.
- BSFD continues to work in close harmony with Gallatin County’s Incident Management team
- BSFD is in conversation with the Hebgen Basin Fire District regarding the tentative reopening of Yellowstone National Park and the implications for gateway communities

Sergeant Brandon Kelley, Gallatin County Sheriff’s Office (GCSO):

- GCSO has no updates at this time

Sarah Gaither, Program Coordinator of Big Sky Community Food Bank (BSCFB):

- BSCFB would like to acknowledge generous aid provided by all of Big Sky's grocery stores; each has been able to contribute to BSCFB operations in unique ways, including the voucher program and order processing; BSCFB is confident in its ability to provide for clients thanks, in part, to these partnerships
- BSCFB notes collaboration between Big Sky Relief Operational Partners has allowed for a food bank client, struggling to pay for prescriptions, to get in contact with representatives from the Bozeman Health COVID-19 Compassion Fund; struggling to make prescription payments is one of the most common needs amongst BSCFB clients
- BSCFB is preparing an additional push to help clients enroll in Medicaid
- BSCFB will continue to alert clients and community members of Big Sky Relief and the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce's EMPLOYER | EMPLOYEE Assistance Hotline
- BSCFB reports a slowdown in needs, with 30 food boxes planned for the next week

Jean Behr, Executive Director of Women In Action (WIA):

- WIA and the Big Sky Behavioral Health Coalition are continuing to offer counseling and social programming
- In collaboration with WIA, Bozeman Health's System Director of Behavioral Health Maureen Womack is working with Outlaw Partners to produce a series of upcoming PSAs spanning a number of targeted community demographics, including the teen population; messaging will include how to address friends, family or community members struggling with mental health strains placed by COVID-19
- WIA, the Big Sky Community Organization, Arts Council of Big Sky, Big Sky School District and Big Sky Discovery Academy are sponsoring the Big Sky "Chalk your Gratitude" day, held on May 9; chalk stations will be set up across Big Sky, and community members are encouraged to leave messages of gratitude for food service workers, first responders, healthcare staff and nonprofits; community members are also encouraged to bring chalk home, where they can decorate neighborhoods and write messages of encouragement to family, friends and neighbors, celebrating their efforts throughout this challenging period

David Kack, Coordinator of Big Sky Transportation District (BSTD):

- BSTD is running its Shoulder Season schedule, and will likely initiate the Summer Season schedule on May 26; BSTD is awaiting reopening information from Big Sky's larger employers, such as Big Sky Resort and the Yellowstone Club, with the possibility of delaying the start of the Summer Season schedule depending on their employment needs

Candace Carr Strauss, CEO of Big Sky Chamber of Commerce (BSCC) & Visit Big Sky (VBS):

- BSCC is standing by for updates from Gov. Bullock's Economic Relief Task Force, created to oversee the distribution of the \$1.25 billion appropriated to Montana from the Department of the Treasury via the CARES Act, specifically updates related to how the tourism industry and small businesses might be a beneficiary
- BSCC reminds community members ballots for the Big Sky School District upgrades bond and Special District Elections are due today, May 5; ballots can be delivered in-person to the Gallatin

County Elections Office in Bozeman, with the ability to carry up to six other ballots pending signature on a yellow consent form included with each ballot

- BSCC and VBS, in partnership with Big Sky Resort Area District, launched the \$210,000 Big Sky Save Small Business Relief Fund on April 30; the fund provides an opportunity for for-profit businesses with 1-20 employees (as of March 1) to apply for a microgrant of between \$2,500-5,000 to alleviate COVID-19-related strains; to qualify, companies must be registered with the BSRAD, be physically located within the BSRAD or a tax-collecting business operating within the BSRAD, current on tax payments through February 28, and demonstrate a clear need; to date, 35 companies have applied; BSCC, VBS and BSRAD hope to announce grant awards on May 7 at 1:30 p.m.
- Resources continue to be updated and made available at bigskychamber.com/communityupdates and bigskychamber.com/lovelocalrestaurants
- VBS is joining a small group of Montana tourism leaders in Helena in celebration of National Travel and Tourism Week, the “Spirit of Travel” and the economic engine that tourism is for communities across the nation
- VBS will host its 3rd annual Marketing Outlook Meeting virtually on May 7 at 11:30 a.m.; special guests include Yellowstone National Park Superintendent Cam Sholly and Big Sky Resort COO Taylor Middleton; register online at visitbigsky.com/marketingoutlook2020

Ciara Wolfe, CEO of Big Sky Community Organization (BSCO):

- To date, there are 63 local volunteers registered to help, as needed, across five weekly shifts; BSCO has been able to make six matches in the BSCO “Senior Buddy” and at-risk program, which is designed to connect young, healthy individuals with at-risk senior citizens in need of assistance in safely retrieving mail, groceries and other errands; there have been no new requests for matches, and volunteer sign-ups have slowed significantly
- BSCO plans to communicate with registered volunteers through the end of May, at which point they’ll be asked if they would like to remain on the BSCO volunteer list for future needs as they arise; to date, BSCO has logged over 300 volunteer hours through volunteer curation efforts

Dustin Shipman, Superintendent of Big Sky School District (BSSD):

- BSSD has no updates at this time

At the close of the meeting, Operational and Funding Partners also discussed the steady and significant financial requests made by local families - particularly as they relate to rent, mortgage and food needs - and will be working in the coming weeks to collect and advertise available jobs within the community. A number of seasonal jobs may be rendered unavailable should COVID-19 continue to strain local business and destination entities, while a number of jobs, occupied by J-1 Visa workers under typical economic conditions, will be available.

A cohort of Resource Partners was also invited to the virtual meeting. Those names and organizations included:

Daniel Bierschwale, *Big Sky Resort Area District*

Taylor Middleton & Troy Nedved, *Big Sky Resort*

Matt Kidd, *CrossHarbor Capital Partners*

Kevin Hinkle, *Lone Mountain Land Company*

Hans Williamson, *Yellowstone Club*

Heather Morris, *Moonlight Community Foundation*

Ania Bulis, *Moonlight Community Foundation, Women in Action*

Loren Bough, *Yellowstone Club Community Foundation*

John Haas, *Spanish Peaks Community Foundation*