

Big Sky Resort Area District
(406) 995-3234
PO Box 160661, Big Sky, MT 59716
www.ResortTax.org
info@resorttax.org



BigSkyRelief.org

Operational Partners Coordination Meeting, No. 18 – 8/11/20

On Tuesday, August 11, the 18th BigSkyRelief.org Operational Partners Coordination Meeting kicked off at 12 p.m. and lasted approximately 34 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.

Updates in order of presentation:

Kevin Germain, Chairman of Big Sky Resort Area District Board of Directors (BSRAD):

- Kevin and Daniel have been working to get SMART testing brought to Big Sky and are not giving up on the effort. May ask for support of the group to keep moving forward with this effort.
- Due to national shortage on testing kits and reagents, will use contacts for congressional delegation to get more testing capability for the state which will trickle down to communities like Big Sky
- Working with both the congressional delegation and private testing companies to get testing to Big Sky.
 - Plan A would be BSMC implement the testing program with the state providing the test kits and reimbursement from the \$1.25 billion in CARES act funding to Bozeman Health/BSMC for their efforts.
 - Plan B would be using private companies for the testing.
- Resort Tax collections for June are on par with last year, which is a great sign. Resort Tax is working hard to find ways to ensure Big Sky stays safe and can keep the economy going into the busy winter season.
- CrossHarbor has been doing private testing and have been finding asymptomatic cases and are seeing numbers decrease. Testing will be a key part of a successful ski season.

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

- Bozeman Health will continue to try to expand testing capacity. Slowly clawing way into more COVID testing and support the testing efforts in any way possible.
- **Entrance screening and mandatory masking policy** continues at the hospital.
- **Viral Triage Clinic** is allocated for treating viral patients. The hours will be changing starting this weekend. It used to be open 7 days a week and now the new hours are:
 - Mon – Fri 9 to 5

- Sat -- 9 to noon
- Sun – VTC is closed
- Patients can still be seen when the VTC is closed, however, they will be seen in the ER.
- Utilization of the VTC during the weekend hours was very low. These new hours mimic the hours of the Pharmacy and other support services. This reduces the burden of staffing and it reduces the need for staff on the weekend, as staffing is one of the top concerns right now.
- **Traffic:** We are seeing a lot of cut through traffic in front of the hospital. We already have increased volumes of vehicles in front of our building due Pharmacy pick up, Viral Triage flow and parking, etc. This cut through traffic is posing a safety issue for our patients. We have a heavy flow of patients, some in wheelchairs and some needing other assistance, crossing the street to access our building from the parking lot. Please let people know not to use the hospital as a cut through for the safety of our patients.
- **Ventilators:** We currently have a large ventilator that is having some preventive maintenance performed on it. Once this is completed, it will be sent to us in Big Sky. The smaller travel ventilators that have previously been discussed are still on back order. Dr. Bertany discussed during our last meeting that there are some ventilators that are more readily available to us and we are working on obtaining those. More to come on this.

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

- Incident management team is focusing on school and universities going back in session.
- Traffic has been bad on Lone Mountain Trail, tell everyone to slow down and drive safe. Bridge by the Conoco is almost done

Sergeant Brandon Kelly, Gallatin County Sheriff's Office (GCSO):

- No updates or needs currently

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

- Service numbers and July numbers were back up to normal and predict fall will be the same.
- Keeping an eye on households that have working parents while kids go back to school.
- In last 2 weeks have seen an influx of transient/homeless coming through the town and are helping how they can get them to their next destination.
- Food donations have been going well

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

- No updates

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

- Dealing with traffic due to construction like everyone else.
- Rider numbers were up in July, but still overall numbers are down, expect them to go down as summer comes to an end
- Working on the winter schedule and how to make sure riders are staying safe with full buses.
- Working with MDT to have a bus barn before the snow starts in December.

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

Big Sky Chamber

- President Trump signed an executive order expanding the federal Unemployment Insurance benefit to \$400/week. The former \$600/week pandemic assistance expired on July 31.
- HEALS Act vs. HERO Act is still being debated on the hill in WDC.
- We have PPE for you and your business. The Big Sky Chamber/VBS in working with Resort Tax purchased 100,000 masks to make them available to any business along with signage related to the mask mandate and #MontanaAware campaign coming from the Montana Office of Tourism and Visit Big Sky. For the most part, folks are wearing masks, but we have had an incident or two. Trying to provide some de-escalation strategies for frontline staff.
- Weekly Infrastructure email from the Big Sky Chamber – MDT projects, NorthWestern Energy updates, etc.
- With the three school districts – Big Sky, Bozeman, and Belgrade – all on different schedules of blended and fully back to school, month-end August with back-to-school is going to be very problematic for our working parents. In addition, Morning Star, Big Sky's only daycare is struggling with staff. There are currently four open positions and compensation at \$14-\$18/hour is not competitive although more than in Bozeman that is \$14-\$16/hour.

Visit Big Sky

- Executing on the Montana Tourism Safety Grant program. Watch for new messaging early next week.
- Big Sky is busy from a tourism destination perspective – lodging, restaurants, and retailers. We are so grateful for the summer season that we have had to this point and will hopefully continue to have moving through early October into our Shoulder Season in prep for Winter 20/21.

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

- No volunteer updates, no new requests
- A lot of concern from parents and predicts workforce will decrease with kids being home a couple days a week for school. Youth programmers met to try and figure out how to help parents out once school starts, but everyone is short on staff and have no updates or plans to share with parents yet.

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

- Board voted on a blended learning option to start the school year.
- 6 employees short to start the school year
 - Reached out to Big Sky Youth Corp and college students taking the year off to see if they could help and work at the school.
- Sports will be starting later this week
- Working on ways to keep pods of kids together as they work through going back to school.
 - Once student pods are assigned there may be more coordinated efforts among parents, hoping to have the assignments by Thursday. Siblings being in the same pod is one of the highest priorities.
- Troy Nedved noted the need for supervision during the school day to make sure students are learning and participating in class when needed. Working to find a way to help coordinate the right solution for families on the virtual days.

Troy Nedved, General Manager of Operations of Big Sky Resort:

- Letter from Big Sky Resort went out last week, working on more communication. Key messages from the letter:
 - Intend to open on Thanksgiving
 - Looking at sales options for lift access moving forward
- Strong summer from a business standpoint, outdoor activities, biking, and golf are exceeding expectations while lodging is down.

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*