



Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
March 20, 2026
145 Center Lane, Unit J Big Sky, MT 59716
Zoom

Board Member Attendance:

Michelle Horning, Chair
Ernie Chappell
Les Hopper
Barabara Rowley
Joe Swiatek
Vanessa McGuire
Kenny Holtz
Sarah Turner

Guests in Attendance:

Steve Karl
Jen Mueller, Director
Heather Morris

Attending For:

Forrester Position, Grow Wild
Forrester Position, Grow Wild
Livable Big Sky

Guests Joining Virtually:

Senator, Greg Hertz
Tammy Estensen, BIZRAD
Jeff Alger, Member
Property Tax Lawsuit
RID Update
RID Update

Staff:

Sam Luedkte
Kyle Pomeranke
Lisa Chase

I. Call to Order -

Michelle Horning, Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:03 am. Mrs. Horning announced the resignation of Maggie Good as Chair. Michelle Horning, Vice-Chair will assume the Chair position and Ernie Chappell, Vice-Chair.

I. Membership Forum - None

II. Current Business

a. Property Tax Lawsuit, Senator, Greg Hertz

Senator Greg Hertz attended the meeting virtually to provide an update on ongoing lawsuits challenging Montana's property tax legislation. Senator Hertz explained two active lawsuits: one regarding property tax process, and

valuations, and another planned lawsuit against Senate Bill 542 regarding multiple tax rates within property classes.

Senator Hertz filed the lawsuit based on process at the end of January declaring it unconstitutional. The legislature did not follow the Montana Constitution on process, particularly Article 5, Section 11, which states that you can't have multiple subjects, multiple appropriations within a single bill.

The State of Montana was to respond to the lawsuit on March 17th; however, the State filed with the Montana Supreme Court asking the Supreme Court to take over jurisdiction. Both parties agreed to delay the state's response until April 7th.

A separate class action lawsuit challenges the Department of Revenue's methods, specifically the use of property valuations outside the required one-year window in violation of state statute and DOR rules.

Additionally, pending Filing on SB 542, a Salt Lake City law firm representing Rocky Mountain taxpayers reviewed SB 542 and concluded the bill unconstitutionally creates multiple tax rates within a single property class (Class 4 residential). This lawsuit is expected to be filed within a few weeks.

Senator Hertz highlighted the fact that taxes were not reduced overall – they were shifted to higher-value properties and businesses. Examples from Red Lodge included Ace Hardware (+14%), Beartooth Market (+50%), Town Pump (+50%), and Cenex (+56%).

The two lawsuits are estimated to cost \$50,000–\$75,000 combined. Approximately \$35,000 has been raised. Contributions of any amount are welcome.

b. Forester Position, Grow Wild, *Steve Karl*

Steve Karl, Grow Wild MT Board Member, and Jen Mohler, Executive Director of Grow Wild MT, attended the meeting in person to propose the creation of Community Forestry and Healthcare Initiatives for a community forester position for Big Sky.

The community forester position will be housed within Grow Wild, in partnership with the Big Sky Fire Department. Key points included:

- Background: Big Sky lacks a community forester. Lone Mountain Land and the Forest Service each have foresters, but no dedicated position serves the community at large. The Fire Department had pledged \$50,000 but later withdrew the pledge due to internal financial issues.

- Tax Board Match: The Tax Board offered \$20,000 if Grow Wild could raise the remaining \$50,000. Three Grow Wild board members have pledged \$10,000/year for 3 years (\$30,000/year). Two insurance agents contributed \$5,000 each.
- Ask: Grow Wild is requesting \$10,000/year for 3 years from BSOA to help reach the \$50,000 match threshold.
- Use of Funds: Rather than immediately hiring a forester, the initial funding will be used to hire professional forestry groups to update the 2011 forestry plan, define the forester role, and develop a work plan.
- Scope: The forester would address individual tree care (arborist function), budworm and noxious weeds, wildfire prevention planning, and give the community a voice in fire line planning by Lone Mountain Land, Fire Department, and Forest Service.
- Urgency: Grow Wild must report to the Tax Board on April 15th. A 3-year commitment from BSOA would strengthen their case.
- Other Funders: BSRAD, other HOAs, realtors, individuals, and potentially the Winter Adler Foundation and Big Sky Real Estate have been approached.
- The BSOA jurisdiction encompasses over 8,000 acres in Big Sky.
- Board requested that this be communicated to our Membership.

Motion made by Kenny Holtz to commit \$10,000/year for 3 years to the Grow Wild Community Forester initiative; seconded by Barbara Rowley. Motion carried unanimously.

c. Livable Big Sky, *Heather Morris*

Heather Morris, Big Sky Resident, presented on behalf of the proposed Big Sky Hospital and Wellness District, a Livable Big Sky initiative.

Voters in both Madison and Gallatin counties will have an opportunity on **May 5, 2026**, to create new districts that would allow local control over healthcare funding and services.

- Background: Building on passage of SB 260 (sponsored by Sen. Hertz), which created a legal pathway for hospital district formation and an 8-year step-down funding transition from Madison Valley Medical Center.
- Madison County: Ballot will ask voters to divide the Madison Valley Hospital District, creating a new Big Sky Hospital District for the Big Sky portion of Madison County. This would redirect tax dollars – currently paying into a hospital in Ennis – to stay in Big Sky.
- Gallatin County: Separate ballot will ask voters to create a new Hospital and Wellness District, with candidates currently running for three board positions.

- Funding Timeline (Madison side): Madison Valley Medical Center receives 70% this year, decreasing to 60% for 3 years, 40% for 2 years, and 20% for the final 2 years. Funds can only transfer to Big Sky if a local hospital district is formed.
- What This Vote Does: Creates a community-led district; establishes a framework for shared funding; creates elected local representation.
- What This Vote Does Not Do: Does not build a hospital, replace existing providers, or implement new taxes on the Gallatin side immediately.
- Voting Details: Regular registration deadline is April 6th. Ballots mail out after April 15th; must be received by May 5th. Madison County voters receive two separate ballots. Gallatin County voters may drop off at BSOA or mail by April 27th.
- Ballots & Brews event to answer community questions is scheduled for the following Tuesday at the Waypoint, followed by a free screening of Paradise Paradox.
- Tammy Estensen (BSRAD, joining virtually) clarified ballot logistics for Madison County voters receiving dual ballots.

d. RID Updates, *Sam Luedtke*

Little Coyote / Two Moons Bridge RID

- March 18, 1st of 2 Q&As on Bridge RIDs. A Zoom meeting was held on March 18th with approximately 7 members and representatives from engineer Morrison & Marley.
- Note: A Zoom link was not sent to members on the promised date (March 16th) due to staff circumstances; the recorded presentation will be shared in the next communication.
- Costs: Approximately \$210,000 needed over the next 2-3 years for road structure, guardrail, and other improvements; \$1.2 million for full bridge replacement over 15-20 years.
- Dues: Starting at \$110/year, increasing approximately 3% annually.
- 51% of the 835 affected property owners must vote in favor to proceed. Out of 86 mail-in ballots received thus far, the informal tally is 2-to-1 in favor.
- Only property owners within the district may vote (not renters or non-owners).
- A second, more detailed Q&A meeting is planned. The electronic vote outreach was delayed but will go out soon.

Madison County – Global RID

- Commissioner Bill Todd agreed to waive the wet signature petition requirement and the full petition period, replacing it

with two protest periods: a 30-day Notice of Resolution period and a 10-day Notice of Levy period.

- The county informally requires two communications to members explaining the RID.
- Outstanding question: whether Beehive Basin members (represented by attorney Alana Griffith) will be included. This may require a Board decision.
- Staff meets with Commissioner Todd and Gaston every two weeks. Goal is to complete the process by September and no later than December 31st (ahead of Todd's potential re-election uncertainty).
- Current existing RIDs in Madison County must be formally dissolved as part of this process. Staff are working to ensure funds do not flow into the county's general fund.

Pinewood Hills RID – Failed

An email from J.R. Rager dated February 3, 2026, indicated this RID did not pass. Staff are drafting documentation to formally identify BSOA as the road services provider or to request the 9 properties sign a formal agreement. A non-member derailed the process after most properties were committed.

e. Compliance Resolutions Update, *Lisa Chase*

- Staff received formal Legal approval to move forward with Compliance Resolutions. Board has approval to move forward in creating Resolutions to govern our jurisdiction.
- Need for clarity and unambiguity with all 4 key compliance issues.
- Board Chair (Michelle Horning) questioned if BSOA needs to weigh in on Resolutions vs. the larger BSOA Board.
- Kenny Holtz raised the issue that BSOA should make decisions around operational issues and BSAC should make decisions around design regulations.
- Lisa Chase (Staff) used this time to gauge Board thoughts on the following:
 - Patio Lighting rules around Dark Sky Compliance Resolution
- Staff stated that we want consistency. We need to have rules so that we have consistency across entire jurisdiction.

- Trash

- Resolution was changed from 5am-8pm day of to 6pm (night before) to 6pm day of.
 - Sam Luedtke (Compliance Manager) has concerns over this extended window
 - Barbara Rowley proposed having the trash companies pick up midday.
 - Sam raised issue that we are not seeing “enclosed” trash cans and per this resolution, we are going to start enforcing this out.
 - Education is important. We need to do door tags or stickers or newspaper visibility around this.
 - Next Steps: Lisa or Holly to call garbage companies to change their pick up time of day: midday.
- RV Parking
 - Will add RV parking regulations to our existing Parking resolution, which will give Compliance Team authority to give a Warning 1, Warning 2, and then a \$100 fine.
 - Discussion around the Hill Condo overflow parking lot.
- f. Snow Removal RFPs to be sent out early April, *Sam Luedtke*
- Larger contract is being revised and will be sent to our Legal Counsel.
 - Contract has been refined by Holly and Sam to be a lot more specific around insurance coverage.
 - Michelle Horning expressed trust in Holly and Sam to work on this together.
 - Sam emphasized the importance of the 1.1 miles of Lone Mountain Trail leading to Moonlight Basin.
 - Madison County reimburses around \$80,000/year for us to plow the Mad-County-owned roads.
 - Sam and Holly have prioritized roads: primary vs. secondary roads with a 1 inch and 2 inch trigger.
 - 5-6 contractors have been selected for each county that the RFP will be sent to.
 - It is OK to have 2 different contractors for each county.
- g. Strategic Planning April Board meeting April 17, 8:30-11:30am
- Auditors will be there at 8:30am.

III. Committee Reports

- Executive, Nominating, *Michelle Horning, Chair*
 - Maggie Good has stepped down as Board Chair.
- Nominating Committee meeting met to discuss the following

- Maggie Good will not be replaced on the Finance, Transportation, and Legal Committees.
- Michelle Horning to be Chair.
- Ernie Chappell to be Vice Chair.
- Legal Committee will be dissolved because we will use Boone Karlberg for any legal issues.
- Vanessa McGuire to be added to Executive Committee.
- Keep Board at 8 people rather than appointing an additional 9th seat to replace Maggie's seat.
 - a. Ernie Chappell encouraged us to appoint a 9th person to be a tie breaker on the Board. Ernie is in support of George Mueller to be appointed.

Motion made by Ernie Chappell to appoint a 9th seat and have that be George Mueller. Kenny Holtz seconded motion for a discussion.

- Kenny feels that appointed Board members is not a good tool to use to seat Board members. Any further Board appointment should be brought to the larger membership for a vote.

Ernie Chappell voted in favor of appointing George Mueller to a 9th Board seat. The remaining Board members did not vote to appoint a 9th seat to the Board for the remainder of our fiscal year. Therefore, the motion was not approved.

Ernie Chappell motioned to eliminate Legal Committee. Kenny Holtz seconded the motion. Board voted unanimously to pass.

Barbara Rowley motioned to support the rest of the Nominating Committee recommendations. Joe Swiatek seconded the motion. Board voted unanimously to pass.

- b. Finance, *Kenny Holtz*
Motion to accept financials. Financials accepted unanimously.
- c. BSAC, *Ernie Chappell*
- d. BBS, *Michelle Horning, Chair*
 - Will close the pond until May 15.
- e. Transportation, *Les Hopper*
 - Les to send Transportation Committee meeting notes to Michelle.
 - Mountain Bike Trail Access: Ongoing discussions regarding trail rerouting around the Olson property (Autumn Trail / Beaver Slide area) and coordination with Antler Ridge, Low Mountain Ranch, and others. The Olsons are requesting a right-of-way adjustment. A meeting with the Olson family (represented by the daughter) is expected in May. Jeremy Mitchell is leading these conversation with Olson daughter.

- Traffic Counter – Nordic & Anderson: A gray car counter recently strapped to a tree at the corner of Nordic and Anderson was noted. Its origin is unknown; staff will follow up.
- Speed Monitor Relocation: Staff discussed moving the portable speed/traffic monitor from Little Coyote Road to Silverado Trail near Cone Terrace to measure cut-through traffic volumes heading toward the resort. The move is planned for around Memorial Day to capture the summer season data

IV. Important Dates

Next Board Meeting: April 17, 8:30-11:30am

V. Adjourn

11:00am

Michelle Horning, Chair

DRAFT