

Gallatin River Task Force Board of Directors Meeting
January 13th, 2020 at 3:00 pm
Big Sky Medical Center Community Room
MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Vice-Chair, Rich Chandler, called the meeting to order at 3:30 PM. Board members in attendance included Mike Richter, Heather Budd, Bill Collins, Ennion Williams, Jenelle Johnson, and Rich Chandler. Task Force staff in attendance included Kristin Gardner, Ryan Newcomb, Stefanee Lucksley, David Tucker, Olivia Regnier, and Emily O'Connor. Guests in attendance included Karen Filipovich, Sierra Harris, and Steve Johnson.

2. Welcome Olivia!

Olivia Regnier is GRTF's new watershed corps member that we are sharing with TNC. Olivia will be working with us for the next 10 months. She will be primarily based out of TNC's Bozeman office. Approximately 50% of Olivia's work will be on the water fund. 25 % of her work will be Task Force specific activities focused on the algae assessment, putting data together, the poop clean-up event, and non-point source pollution projects. The remaining 25% of her work will be on TNC specific activities.

3. Guest Presentation: Water Fund

Sierra Harris with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) presented on the progress of working with the Task Force to develop a water fund to support implementation of the Big Sky Sustainable Watershed Stewardship Plan. This is a partner led model, in which TNC would offer their expertise in water funds and fundraising; while the Task Force will continue to be the community leaders on water issues..

Sierra presented a map of water funds across the world. There are now 41 total water funds but none in this region. The Yampa River water fund in Colorado is a good example and resource for Big Sky. They are also a resort community looking at water security and maintaining the health and function of the river. The Yampa water fund currently has 20 partners on board and engaged Smart Wool as the lead sponsor to launch their program.

GRTF and TNC are close to finishing the start-up phase of the water fund which includes identifying priorities and initial pilot projects. The current priority areas build on what the Task Force and community have already identified as important including conserving fresh water and resilient water storage. The implementation phase includes implementing pilot projects and reporting on results. Long-term sustainability includes continuing to add projects and growing the fund. The target to launch is 2020.

The current target is \$400-700K per year to pay the full costs of everything. Water funds are designed to be sustainable for the long term. The startup funding is estimated to be \$300-400K. The Resort Tax boundary, which was the boundary for the BSSWSP plan, will be the boundary to start but could possibly grow to downstream communities in the future.

4. Staff Member Story

Ryan Newcomb grew up in Fort Worth Texas. He was an Eagle Scout and grew up loving the outdoors. Ryan spent many summers at the scout camp doing volunteer expeditions such as trail work. Ryan fell in

love with politics following high school and went to the University of North Texas. After college he worked for President Bush as a Whitehouse Political Appointee and Confidential Assistant to the Secretary of Homeland Security. He then worked in fundraising for the Boy Scouts in Texas and later went back to D.C. to work in nonprofit development. Ryan has two sisters. He has a large extended family. His mom is one of eight and dad is one of four. Ryan moved to Montana for a quieter life. He lives with his partner Dustin and two wiener dogs.

5. Consent Agenda**

a. Minutes: December 9, 2019

There were no comments on the minutes.

Motion made by JeNelle Johnson to approve the December 2019 minutes. Seconded by Bill Collins. Motion was unanimous.

b. Fundraising Report

Ennion reached out to the five sponsors (Ace Hardware, Lone Peak Physical Therapy, Grizzly Outfitters, Haas Builders, and Big Sky Vacation Rentals) who contributed \$1K last year. This year's request was \$2.5K and they all accepted. Ryan reported that another \$10K for memberships came in which means we raised 73% of the membership goal for the year. The end of year appeal has brought in \$12K+ already and we are currently at 85% of our event goal. Grant funding is starting to be tracked in the spreadsheet. Heather asked if there was success with Patagonia matching grant. Ryan reported that they filled the match in six days and that we need to get ahead of it for next year. A flyer was passed out for a rafting trip with Boundary Expedition. The trip is aimed at cultivating donors.

c. Finance and Operations Report

Stefanee is in the process of updating the employee handbook. Once complete it will be brought to the board for vote in the next couple of months. Heather asked what percentages of Stefanee's time is spent on her various responsibilities. Stefanee replied that finance and development are the two major categories and admin is a smaller piece. Stefanee provided an update on the license plate, it has been sent to the highway patrol department for approval, once approved they will mail a draft to GRTF for final approval.

d. Conservation Project Manager Report

Emily reported that she is starting to meet with stakeholders to gather feedback on the Porcupine/Beaver Creek River Access Site Improvement Project conceptual plan. The water conservation program was recently promoted via a Big Sky Water Sewer District bill insert. We also recently launched a showerhead swap program similar to the City of Bozeman's. Rich Chandler asked if there are additional rebate programs that can be taken advantage of and if there are opportunities to endorse folks who are doing better than others. Emily replied that we are looking at adding additional rebate opportunities in 2020 for things like smart meters and water softening systems. Once the water and sewer district are able to get their new metering software online we will be able to compare use. Steve Johnson noted the new rate structures are in effect and are designed to promote water conservation and reward users who use less water with lower rates.

e. Communications Report

David reported the annual report is nearly complete. He contacted some local photographers for imagery and received some great shots from Ryan Turner. He is also working on partnership communication for the canyon study and Resort Tax 1%.

6. Financial Report

a. November Financials Acceptance

b. December Financials Review

Kristin reported that we are in the negative because the Resort Tax reimbursement was not submitted until January. Will be able to invoice more often as Stefanee takes over. Heather Budd noted that in the meantime an account could be created to track the reimbursement so that the financials do not appear to be in the negative.

Motion made by Mike Richter to approve the November financials. Seconded by Heather Budd. Motion was unanimous.

7. New Business

a. Resort Tax 1% Projects

Steve Johnson, Big Sky Resort Area District (BSRAD) board member, reported that BSRAD will be moving forward with a vote for a 1% increase in Resort Tax collections for infrastructure projects. Voters will need to approve the specific list of projects with budget amounts and a timeframe for completion. The 1% tax can only be used for tangible facilities and assets (no operating costs) related to water, sewer, wastewater treatment, storm water, solid waste and utilities systems, fire protection, ambulance and law enforcement, roads, bridges, and other transportation needs. BSRAD requested applications for qualifying projects to be submitted by December 23rd. The Big Sky County Water & Sewer District submitted for plant upgrades and a pipeline to the canyon, the Fire Department submitted for equipment needs, the Transportation District submitted for a bus barn, and a subdivision in Karst submitted for replaced of a bridge. The BSRAD board voted to move forward with the request from the Water and Sewer District. The next step is to get ready for the election which will be managed by the Gallatin County Election Department. The goal of BSRAD is to present a package of projects to the community that have community benefit, one component of the water and sewer upgrades is that BSRAD has asked the Water & Sewer District board to pledge 500 SFE's to affordable housing. The second request is for expanding the district to the Canyon which would allow for improved river health by treating the sewer water to a higher degree than is currently being treated by individual septic systems. The 1% increase for infrastructure projects will be on the ballot May 5, 2020. If approved, resort tax would fund approximately 60% of the water and sewer project. Kristin Gardner noted that the plant upgrade and upgrading wastewater treatment in the Canyon are both projects recommended as part of the Big Sky Area Sustainable Watershed Stewardship Plan. The board discussed that they are in support of the projects as long as all proposed treatment and disposal options are done at high standards that wont impact the river.

8. Old Business

a. Wild and Scenic Update

Kristin reported she and David are continuing to work on communications around the proposed bill but have yet to know when the bill will be introduced.

9. Upcoming Events

- b. **January 21st, 1:00 to 2:30 pm:** Headwaters Alliance: Outreach meeting at the Big Sky Water and Sewer District.
- c. **January 24th, 7:00 pm:** [Dammed to Extinction](#) film as part of TEDexBig Sky at the Lone Peak Cinema.
- d. **February 5th, 12:00 to 1:00 pm:** MSU PhD Candidate Meryl Storb presents her nutrient research in Big Sky at the Big Sky Water and Sewer District
- e. **February 5th, 1:00 to 3:00 pm:** Headwaters Alliance: Healthy Headwaters meeting at the Big Sky Water and Sewer District.
- f. **March 18th, 5 & 8 pm:** Save the date for the F3T Fly Fishing Film tour at the Lone Peak Cinema.

10. Set February Board Meeting

The February board meeting date was set for February 12, 2020 from 3-5 PM.

11. Open Discussion – Board Leadership

Rich reported that Rick will be ending his term as Board Chair on June 30th, 2020. There has been significant growth of organization over the last 2 years and Rick has done a lot of work to get the organization to this point. Kristin provided handouts for the board to fill out with thoughts on what the board composition should look like going forward. Rich noted that the board will need to evaluate what is best for the group going forward. This is an opportunity to explore the long-term vision for the organization and what type of leadership is needed to get there. There was discussion on how it might be a challenge for someone to move directly into the chair role if that person is not already part of the Executive Committee but there is a possibility of considering co-chairs for a year or an acting chair if needed. Ryan noted there are currently 11 board seats according to the Bylaws and 1 available seat and that we could look into increasing the number of board seats to 13. Bill noted he would not be opposed to 13 board members. Ennion thought we should work on filling the open board seat first before expanding the board.

12. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:37 PM