

**Madison and Gallatin Counties Joint Commission Meeting  
Big Sky Water and Sewer District Conference Room  
April 28, 2016 at 1:30 p.m.**

On Thursday, April 28, 2016, a meeting of Madison County Board of Commissioners David Schulz, Chairman, Jim Hart, and Ron Nye, and Gallatin County Board of Commissioners Joe Skinner, Chairman, Steve White, and Don Seifert came to order at 1:30 p.m. in the Conference Room at the Big Sky Water and Sewer District, 561 Little Coyote Road, Big Sky, Montana with those on the attached list present. Jani Flinn, Madison County Commissioners' Clerk, was present to take minutes.

**Welcome & Introductions:** David Schulz, Madison County Commission Chair, opened the meeting at 1:30 p.m. with a welcome and introduction of board members.

**Public Transportation:** David Kack, Skyline Bus, talked about planning for the coming year. Traffic is up 7% with over 1400 people per day commuting to work at Big Sky; 40% had a car, but chose to ride instead. This frees up traffic on Highway 191 and 64. This year they will be requesting \$200,000 from each county, whether those funds come from Resort Taxes, Federal transit, or via a taxing district. Gallatin County would be happy to sit down and work with him on evaluating transportation district vs. current costs. David thanked the Commissioners for their support.

**Big Sky Transportation Plan:** Kitty Clemens, Executive Director of the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce, presented a Big Sky Transportation Review prepared by David Kack for the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce. They have had three public sessions and are asking to consider a joint plan with Montana Department of Transportation and both counties. They are proposing a traffic study using possible TSEP grant money for an estimated \$50,000.00 to address the traffic on both US 191 and Hwy 64. Joe Skinner volunteered to set up a meeting with MDT and start the process. Letters of support were received from Big Sky Fire Department, Big Sky Chamber of Commerce, Big Sky Transportation District, Gallatin River Task Force, Visit Big Sky/Convention and Visitor Bureau, Gallatin-Big Sky Weeds Committee, Arts Council of Big Sky, Big Sky Community Corporation, Warren Miller Performing Arts Center Advisory Council, and Big Sky Gateway Foundation .

**Big Sky Sustainable Water Solutions:** Kristin Gardner, Executive Director, Gallatin River Task Force, presented a proposal for a community-based collaboration to identify sustainable solutions for water supply and wastewater treatment in the Big Sky area. Issues identified are: two watersheds, two counties, and an unincorporated town. The Big Sky Resort Tax boundary is the primary area. They are requesting approximately \$49,228 from each County plus Resort Tax funds to complete a study. Kristen will send budget information to Madison County, and get with Gallatin County staff to fill out a budget request form.

**Joint County Law Enforcement Contract:** Madison County and Gallatin County provide joint services for law enforcement to Big Sky. Phil Fortner, Madison County Undersheriff and Brandon Kelly, Gallatin County Sheriff's Office discussed coordination between the two counties. Six deputies currently cover Big Sky – Madison County, Gallatin County, and Resort Tax District finances 2 each of the six deputies. Coordination is working well. They are trying to have a resident deputy, have increased patrols due to construction, and have added speed limit signs to control faster driving on Big Sky area roads.

**Tax Increment Financing/Targeted Economic Development District Discussion:** Kevin Germain, Lone Mountain Land Company, gave an update on their progress of collecting data to support a TEDD. They are evaluating property tax numbers and model projections, but their previous consultant, Think Tank Consulting, has withdrawn and they are in the process of finding a new consultant. They were originally looking for a 15-year TEDD for \$70-80 million for infrastructure improvements. Kevin thanked the Commissioners for being there and encouraged them to brainstorm and think creatively to come up with alternative ideas. A percentage of property tax dollars could be used to get water/sewer and data/cable to Big Sky. Mike Ducuennis, Vice President of Development at Yellowstone Club, spoke to the Commissioners and thanked them for being there. Their request for funding represents serious issues at the table for Big Sky. Steve Johnson, Gallatin County Commissioner, commented that there are a lot of pieces of government at stake and that it is not about the money. Incorporation was brought up and discussed. Questions included how to address two counties; change of statute, and look at other counties that have done this. Both Madison and Gallatin counties would help and should start with meetings to discuss options. Incorporation would likely increase taxes and would have to be discussed and voted on. Another meeting should be held to address expectations of the groups involved. Letters were received from Patricia Bradley and the Madison Conservation District expressing objections to the TIF/TEDD plan. David Schulz noted that Northwestern Energy is doing their part to provide power to the area; spending \$6-8 million.

#### **INFORMATION SHARING:**

- **Bill Farhat**, Big Sky Fire Chief, updated the group on the current Master Plan and their goal of a minimum 15 minute response time. Staffing is the issue, the new hospital is great, but up to 25% of Emergency medical cases are still transported to Bozeman. He strongly encourages speed and safety studies by MDT due to increased traffic and speed issues. Hopefully the Transportation District will be able to get this done. They have addressed the need for a reserve fire truck and are requesting funds from the Resort Tax District, plus they are looking at a \$3 million remodel of their building.
- Jim Hart and Joe Skinner are currently serving on the Custer/Gallatin collaborative.
- Dave Schulz serves on a similar venue for Beaverhead/Deerlodge to improve forest health.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

**Next meeting:** There was discussion on coordinating another meeting this Fall to continue discussions on many of these issues. The Commissioners will coordinate on available dates and notify interested parties.

Minutes prepared by Jani Flinn, Madison County Commissioners' Clerk.