



**Big Sky EDA/EDC
Executive Committee Agenda**

December 3, 2025

7:30 AM to 9:00 AM

Zoot Training & Event Space (BSED Building/2nd Level)

BIG SKY ED Mission Statement: - Focused on sustaining and growing our region's vibrant economy and outstanding quality of life, **Big Sky Economic Development** provides leadership and resources for business creation, expansion, retention, new business recruitment and community development.

Committee Members

EDC –Nick Pancheau, Jennifer Kobza, Jennifer Weaver Kondracki, Andy Gott, Stefani Hicswa

EDA –Debbie Desjarlais, Lucy Aspinwall, Bryan Wood, Riley Bennett, Kate Vogel

7:30 A.M.— Call to Order – Nick Pancheau, EDC Chair

Public Comment/Board Member and Staff Announcements & Introductions

- Public Comment/Introductions

Agenda Changes

REGULAR AGENDA

A. Approval of EDA/EDC Minutes

- November 5, 2025 - Executive Committee Meeting (Attachment A) (Action)

B. Approval of EDA/EDC Financials and other matters—Tami

- FY'26 September Financial Statements (Handout) (Action)
- FY'26 October Financial Statements (Handout) (Action)

C. Executive Director Report—Brandon

- Approval of Search Committee Members/Scope of Work (Handout) (Action)
- Beartooth RC&D Board Meeting update (Info)
- Nominating Committee update (Handout) (Action)
- Board Member Engagement (Handout) (Info)
- BSED Committee review (Attachment B) (Info)
- Jail Expansion (Info)
- Community Meeting with Strategy Partners (Info)

D. Program Updates

- Business Development & Communications—Marcell (Info)
 - Annual Gathering of Membership December 9th 3:00-5:00 (Info)

Consideration of Executive Session (as needed)

Adjourn

Next Executive Committee Meeting – January 7, 2026 (7:30 A.M. to 9:00 A.M.) Location-Zoot Training & Event Space, BSED Building, 2nd Floor.
Big Sky Economic Development Board of Directors will make reasonable accommodations for known disabilities that may interfere with an individual's ability to participate. Persons requiring such accommodations should make their requests to Big Sky Economic Development as soon as possible before the meeting day. Please email Reann Keller, reann@bigskyeda.org, or call Big Sky Economic Development at 406-256-6871.

ATTACHMENT A

Big Sky EDA/EDC Joint Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
November 5, 2025 – 7:30AM to 9:00AM
Zoot Training and Event Space (BSED Building/2nd Level)

BIG SKY ED Mission Statement: - Focused on sustaining and growing our region's vibrant economy and outstanding quality of life, **Big Sky Economic Development** provides leadership and resources for business creation, expansion, retention, new business recruitment and community development.

Committee Members Present: EDA – Debbie Desjarlais, Lucy Aspinwall, Riley Bennett, Kate Vogel
EDC – Nick Pancheau, Jennifer Kobza, Jennifer Weaver Kondracki, Andy Gott

Committee Members Absent: EDA – Bryan Wood
EDC – Stefani Hicswa

Staff and Others Present: Ashley Kavanagh, Reann Keller, Tami Fleetwood, Marcell Bruski, Brandon Berger, Dianne Lehm

Call to Order:
Debbie Desjarlais, EDA Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:32 A.M.

Public Comment/Introductions

Agenda Changes for Today's Meeting:
None

REGULAR AGENDA

Approval of Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

- **October 1, 2025 - Executive Committee Meeting**
- **October 7, 2025 - Special Executive Committee Meeting**
- **October 14, 2025 - Special Executive Committee Meeting**

Motion: **Riley Bennett** to approve the October 1, 2025, Executive Committee meeting minutes and the October 7, 2025 and October 14, 2025 Special Executive Committee meeting minutes as presented to the Executive Committee.

Second: **Andy Gott**

Discussion: None

Motion: Carried

Executive Director Report

- **Nominating Committee** – Brandon provided an overview of the recommendations for Executive Committee for 2026. Nichole Mehling confirmed that she would be interested in the position as Secretary/Treasurer for the EDC. Brandon is still waiting to hear back from both EDA Member at Large positions but is hoping to receive confirmation in the next couple of days so that it can be presented to full Board for consideration. Shared that we have two EDA vacancies and have received two applications so far and will start interviews shortly. The Nominating Committee finalized their recommendation for the EDC Board vacancies.

Motion: **Nick Pancheau** to approve Nominating Committee recommendation for Executive Committee members and forward to the Board for approval contingent on acceptance of these positions from individuals being added.

Second: **Riley Bennett**

Discussion: None

Motion carried

Motion: **Riley Bennett** to approve Nominating Committee recommendation for EDC positions as presented to the Executive Committee and forward to the Board for approval.

Second: **Kate Vogel**

Discussion: None

Motion carried

- **Beartooth RC&D MOU** – Joint resolution between BSED, City of Billings, City of Laurel and Yellowstone County. The other three organizations already signed the MOU for 2025. Earlier this year Paul made the decision to decline the MOU and since Paul's resignation BSED has been contacted by Beartooth RC&D to inquire whether we would be willing to reconsider this decision. Our contribution is around \$13,000 and is based on population. Brandon feels like this is a good relationship to maintain, he participates on their Loan Committee and Lorene sits on the Board. They provide a few services that we need that BSED does not offer, such as CEDs. Tami shared that this contribution was included in the FY'26 budget so the funds have been set aside for this initiative. Discussion regarding whether it was possible for BSED to offer these services in the future so we could potentially save money from a budget standpoint. This will be a long-term discussion, Executive Committee agrees that it is important to sign the agreement for this year but determine whether this is a partnership that we would continue in future years.

Motion: **Andy Gott** to approve executing the 2025 Beartooth RC&D MOU and forward to the Board for approval.

Second: **Jen Kobza**

Discussion: None

Motion carried

- **APEX program update** – Tereza Brownell has officially been promoted to Statewide Program Director. She is currently working on Notice of Federal Opportunity, due mid-November. Lynnette, remote advisor, resigned effective Friday 11/7. Going forward we would like to replace this position in Billings instead of hiring another remote employee. APEX budget is limited by DOD which impacts staffing. The current plan is to look for two advisor positions. Tereza has been working closely with the subrecipients to strengthen relationships. Subrecipients have been paid for August, and we recently received the invoices for September. We will continue making payments to subrecipients prior to receiving DOD reimbursement so we maintain these relationships, especially through the government shutdown.

- **Staffing Update** – Brandon provided an overview of current staffing needs. BSED will focus on hiring APEX Advisor and Community Development roles first as these positions are a priority. Leadership will review roles and responsibilities and make adjustments as needed as well as potentially update job descriptions. There is still the need to hire an additional Loan Officer for Big Sky Finance, but this is not a priority as we are hoping to contract with an external company to provide 3rd party underwriting support pending Board and SBA approval. Brandon discussed compensation for employees who have taken on additional duties and responsibilities as a result of the June 2025 layoffs as well as recent staff resignations. Executive Committee suggested that this topic be brought to the Salary Committee for review to discuss options for salary increases or one-time merit awards.

Approval of EDA/EDC Financials and other matters—Tami

Tami reviewed the proposed resolution to remove Paul Green as signer on all bank accounts and to add Brandon Berger instead. All other current signers would remain.

Motion: **Andy Gott** to approve the Resolution to update signers on bank accounts and forward to the Board for approval contingent on updating the resolution to include the list of current signers to remain on the accounts.

Second: **Jen Kobza**

Discussion: None

Motion: Carried

Program Updates

- **Business Development & Communications**—Marcell shared an overview of recent events attended or hosted including MEDA Fall conference where BSED received three impact awards for ThinkBillings and Local intel on that website, World Trade & Investment Day/MT Ambassadors/Select USA SpinOff event hosted by BSED, and the Holiday Gift Guide. Marcell attended Montana Chamber Economic Summit, the Montana World Affairs Council EconoQuest, and University of Montana-Billings Leaders discussion hosted by Stockman Bank. BSED partnered with Montana Energy Business Alliance (MEBA) to host an event at the Paper Mill with over 60 attendees. Upcoming events include Behind the Build this evening at Weave Industries, Defense Innovation Unit meeting to be held on November 13th and R&D Tax Credit meeting on December 2nd. Marcell shared the current focus for the Member Investor program is revamping the membership tiers to provide added benefit to members. With Katelyn's recent resignation, Marcell has stepped in to fill Marketing Manager duties until the position is filled. Rock 31 program highlights were shared which include Mark Nitz securing a long-term consulting contract with McGough Construction, Spencer Bowers securing a contract with T Mobile Direct, Lune Marketing Studio launching their Bamboo Method podcast, and an addition of seven new Rock 31 members. BillingsWorks steering committee has been dissolved and Marcell is looking at other organizations to see if this program could be absorbed. The Montana Ambassadors committee has also been dissolved. Information on an Annual Gathering of Membership to follow shortly, this will replace the Annual Meeting that was postponed in October.
- **Community Development & Recruitment**—Ashley shared an overview of her plan for transitioning her duties and responsibilities to other staff members. Completed Economic Pulse through the first quarter of 2026.

- **Search Committee Update**— Committee members have been selected and have agreed to serve. The roster will be presented to the full Board and Nichole Mehling will chair the committee. The Search Committee is in the process of reviewing the Executive Director job description. Future updates from the committee will be provided by Brandon or the Board Chairs.

Adjourn:

Motion: **Nick Pancheau** to adjourn the meeting.

Debbie Desjarlais adjourned the meeting at 9:17 A.M.

Next Meeting –December 3, 2025

Respectfully submitted,

Bryan Wood, EDA Secretary/Treasurer

Jennifer Weaver Kondracki, EDC Secretary/Treasurer

ATTACHMENT B

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEES**EDA/EDC Joint Executive Committee**

The Executive Committee provides the initial governance and guidance for EDA/EDC policies, strategic priorities, and budget. It also functions as the Planning Committee for purposes of setting expectations for the Boards' Strategic Planning processes. Membership is set by a vote of a board.

EDA

Lucy Aspinwall
 Brian Wood
 Kate Vogel
 Aaron Redland
 Darin Uselman

EDC

Jennifer Kobza
 Jennifer Weaver-Kondracki
 Nichole Mehling
 Nick Pancheau
 Debbie Desjarlais

MEETING SCHEDULE: First Wednesday of each Month.

Staff Contact: Brandon Berger – brandon@bigskyeda.org

EDA/EDC Joint Nominating Committee

The Joint Nominating Committee provides recommendations for the appointment or election of the EDA and EDC Board Members and recommendations for the nomination and election of officers. During the EDA board member selection process, this Committee will screen applicants and make recommendations concerning the appointment of EDA Board members. That process includes Community Representatives as prescribed by Yellowstone County resolution. EDA and EDC Boards must annually confirm the Nominating Committee Membership.

**Community Representatives are only needed for the EDA process.*

EDA**OPEN**

Kate Vogel
 Zack Dunn

EDC

Stefani Hicswa
 Kim Jakub
 Jen Kobza
 Spencer Frederick

Community Representatives

Yellowstone County-Mark Morse
 City of Laurel- Kurt Markegard
 City of Billings- Mike Boyett

MEETING SCHEDULE: The committee convenes in late Summer and meets periodically throughout the remainder of the year to run the nomination process. The committee will convene as needed if a seat becomes open outside of this nomination process.

Staff Contact: Brandon Berger – brandon@bigskyeda.org

Ad Hoc Legislative Committee

The Ad Hoc Legislative Committee develops the legislative agenda for Board consideration and then provides guidance during the state legislative session.

<u>EDA</u>	<u>EDC</u>	<u>Member Investors/Community</u>
Lucy Aspinwall	Dave Ballard	Daniel Brooks, Billings Chamber
Bryan Wood	Open	John Ostlund
Turk Stovall	Mike Phillips	Katy Schreiner
George Warmer	Tyler Wiltgen	

MEETING SCHEDULE: As needed

Staff Contact: Marcell Bruski - marcell@bigskyeda.org

Opportunity Fund Committee

The Opportunity Fund Committee Serves to make strategy and funding recommendations on the development of the Opportunity Fund. They also serve as the Committee that evaluates and recommends projects that are intended to benefit from the Opportunity Fund.

<u>EDA</u>	<u>EDC</u>
*Riley Bennett	Matt Robertson
Darin Uselman	Tyler Wiltgen
George Warmer	Jennifer Weaver Kondracki
Open	Nicole Mehling
Open	DJ Clark

*Committee Chair

MEETING SCHEDULE: As needed

Staff Contact: Keith Hart - keith@bigskyeda.org

PROGRAM/REPRESENTATIVE COMMITTEES

APEX Accelerator Advisory Council

The PTAC Advisory Council works to provide guidance, experience, and industry insight to enhance the MT PTAC Program. Committee members also support outreach and education efforts to stakeholders across Montana.

<u>EDA</u>	<u>EDC</u>	<u>Community Partners</u>
Riley Bennett	OPEN	OPEN
Bryan Wood	OPEN	OPEN

MEETING SCHEDULE: TBD

Staff Contact: Tereza Brownell – Tereza@bigskyeda.org

Big Sky Finance Loan Committee

The Loan Committee reviews and approves or disapproves SBA 504 and Revolving Loan requests.

EDA

Darin Uselman
Zack Dunn

OPEN

EDC

Dave Ballard
Jerry Simonson
Mike Phillips

Community Members

Anne DeBoo—RiverMountain LLC
Mary Dyre, Karrell Kimmet-Beddown PLP

OPEN

Dennen Gamradt—Eide Bailly LLP
Darrin Maas—Stockman

MEETING SCHEDULE: As needed

Staff Contact: Brandon Berger - brandon@bigskyeda.org

SBDC Advisory Council

The mission of the SBDC Advisory Council is to collaboratively offer guidance, market insight, and support for the enhancement of services that help small businesses start, grow, or expand their business. The vision is for our regional service center (supporting a 9-county area) to be a strong and dynamic community for the growth and success of small business.

EDA

Open

Zack Dunn
Lucy Aspinwall

EDC

Debbie Desjarlais
Cole Dirks
Jerry Simonson

Community Partners

Kyle Jordan	Michael Morrison
James Smith	Cathy Grider
Lane Gobbs	Mehmet Casey
Joel Bertolino	Madison Wilhite
Martin DeWitt	

MEETING SCHEDULE: Two times a year in January and July

Staff Contact: Lorene Hintz - lorene@bigskyeda.org

VBOC Board Liaisons

The VBOC Advisory Council works to provide guidance, experience, and insight to enhance the Program as it works to best serve transitioning service members, activity duty service members and spouses who are interested in business ownership.

EDA

Open

EDC

Spencer Frederick

MEETING SCHEDULE: Meeting at minimum 2 times per year, schedule TBD

Staff Contact: Richard Brown - rick@bigskyeda.org

Membership Committee

The Membership Committee works with the Member Investor Program Director to retain and build the number of EDC Member Investors.

EDA

George Warmer
Zack Dunn

Open

Open

EDC

Jen Kobza
Spencer Frederick
Mike Philips

Open

MEETING SCHEDULE: Quarterly meetings

Staff Contact: Marcell Bruski – marcell@bigskyeda.org

Tyler Wink – tylerw@bigskyeda.org

Recruitment Committee

The Recruitment Committee serves as a resource for the Director of Business Recruitment & Outreach.

EDA

George Warmer
Lucy Aspinwall
Vince Mistretta
Kate Vogel

EDC

Stefani Hicswa
Nick Pancheau
Molly Schwend

Community Partners

Mike Waters

Open

Open

MEETING SCHEDULE: Quarterly

Staff Contact: Ashley Kavanagh – ashley@bigskyeda.org

Brownfields Advisory Council

The Brownfields Advisory Committee reviews potential Brownfield projects regarding expansion, reuse, and development in our community.

EDA

Zack Dunn

OPEN

Vince Mistretta

EDC

DJ Clark

Jennifer Kondracki

George Warmer

Community Partners

Wyeth Friday

Michelle Harkins

Katy Schreiner

MEETING SCHEDULE: As needed, approximately 6 times per year, generally via email.

Staff Contact: Thom MacLean – thom@bigskyeda.org

Space2Place Micro Grants Committee

The Space2Place Micro Grants Committee serves as the selection committee who reviews Space2Place grant applications made available by the Community Development Team.

EDA

Open

Open

Aaron Redland

EDC

DJ Clark

Kim Jakub

Molly Schwend

Debbie Desjarlais

MEETING SCHEDULE: Generally, the first quarter of the year, approximately four, 2-hour meetings.

Staff Contact: Thom MacLean—thom@bigskyeda.org

2026

EDA/EDC Board of Directors' Committees

OTHER COMMITTEES

Search Committee

The Search Committee is responsible for the selection of Executive Director position.

EDA

Lucy Aspinwall
Riley Bennett
Vince Mistretta

EDC

*Nichole Mehling
Debbie Desjarlais
Jennifer Weaver Kondracki
Tyler Wiltgen

Community Partners

Ken Lutton
**Scott Chesarek

*Committee Chair

**Alternate

MEETING SCHEDULE: As needed

Staff Contact: N/A- EDA/EDC Board Chairs

Salary Review Committee

EDA

EDC

**Note, in 2025 we had EDA/EDC Chairs, Vice Chairs, and one Secretary/Treasurer that made up this committee.*

MEETING SCHEDULE: As needed

Staff Contact: Brandon Berger brandon@bigskyeda.org