



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

**February 4, 2026**

**7:30 AM to 9:00 AM**

**Venture Conference Room (BSED Building/Lower 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 – Jennifer Kobza, Jennifer Weaver Kondracki, Nichole Mehling, Nick Pancheau, Debbie Desjarlais  
EDA – Lucy Aspinwall, Bryan Wood, Kate Vogel, Aaron Redland, Vince Mistretta

**7:30 A.M. — Call to Order** – Jen Kobza, EDC Chair

**Public Comment/Board Member and Staff Announcements & Introductions**

- Public Comment/Introductions

**Agenda Changes**

**REGULAR AGENDA**

**A. Approval of EDA/EDC Minutes**

- December 3, 2025 - Executive Committee Meeting (Attachment A) (Action)

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

- FY'26 November Financial Statements (Handout) (Action)
- FY'26 December Financial Statements (Handout) (Action)

**C. Executive Director Report—Brandon**

- Approval of Board Resolution – Signer Update (Attachment B) (Action)
- Org Calendar 2026 (Attachment C) (Info)
- BSED Staffing update (Info)
- Member Investor Update (Info)
- 2026 Committees (Attachment D) (Info)
- Insurance (Info)
- EDC Vacancy (Info)
- Jail Expansion (Info)
- Search Committee Update (Info)

**Consideration of Executive Session (as needed)**

**Adjourn**

**Next Executive Committee Meeting – March 4, 2026 (7:30 A.M. to 9:00 A.M.) Location-Zoot Training & Event Space, BSED Building, 2<sup>nd</sup> 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](mailto:reann@bigskyeda.org), or call Big Sky Economic Development at 406-256-6871.*



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# ATTACHMENT A

## **Big Sky EDA/EDC Joint Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**

**December 3, 2025 – 7:30AM to 9:00AM**

**Zoot Training and Event Space (BSED Building/2<sup>nd</sup> 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:** Reann Keller, Brandon Berger, Tami Fleetwood, Marcell Bruski, Rick Brown, Dianne Lehm

**Call to Order:**

Nick Pancheau, EDC Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:32 A.M.

**Public Comment/Introductions**

None

**Agenda Changes for Today's Meeting:**

None

**REGULAR AGENDA**

**Approval of November 5, 2025, Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**

Motion: **Jennifer Weaver Kondracki** to approve the November 5, 2025, Executive Committee meeting minutes as presented to the Executive Committee.

Second: **Andy Gott**

Discussion: None

Motion: Carried

**Approval of FY'26 September and October EDA/EDC Financials**

Tami reviewed the EDA and EDC financial statements for FY'26 September and October. EDA Net Operating Income was budgeted to be in a deficit for this fiscal year, but BSED is ahead of budget due to vacancy savings and expenses that haven't occurred yet this year. Additionally, there were expenses budgeted for Annual Meeting that were recouped, and Brownfields expenses were down this reporting period as well. County funds look a little different on the financials since moving from Mill Levy to MOU. BSED draws down quarterly instead of monthly as was done previously. Dues and subscriptions are prepaid and spread throughout the whole year. BSED still has an account with Yellowstone County with a balance of \$191,000 and expenses due to the County such as monthly health insurance, are pulled from this account. Tami will work with the county to discuss best practices for this

account and whether a balance should be maintained. EDA is in a good cash position. Tami still needs to run the due to due from for this period. Receivables collected better than last year, although little behind with VBOC and APEX receivables due to the government shutdown but nothing concerning. EDC is ahead of budget by approximately \$82,000. Tami noted that Member Investor revenue is spread over all four quarters, but we could adjust this by looking at historical data to determine when members are being billed as it is based on their start date. This would give us more accurate information. The EDC is currently underspent in the majority of the expense categories compared to budget. It was noted that Professional fees are considerably higher than was budgeted due to unforeseen legal fees. Discussion regarding float income consistently coming in well over budget but that this may be reduced in upcoming years based on what Brandon learned at recent NADCO meeting. Audit is currently ongoing but should be wrapping up soon. Typically, the audit is presented to the Board in December, but it will be a little later this year.

Motion: **Andy Gott** to approve both the FY'26 September and October EDA/EDC Financials as presented to the Executive Committee and forward to the Board for approval.

Second: **Jen Kobza**

Discussion: None

Motion: Carried

### **Executive Director Report**

#### **Approval of Search Committee and Scope of Work**

Brandon reviewed the recommended search committee members as well as the scope of work, noting a slight change with members since it was last presented to the Board.

Motion: **Andy Gott** to approve the Search Committee members and Scope of Work as presented to the Executive Committee and forward to the Board for approval.

Second: **Jen Kobza**

Discussion: Concerns with verbiage in scope of work section, item number three that indicates "with stakeholder input." Suggestions made to either add "as needed" or remove the "with stakeholder input" verbiage altogether.

Amended Motion: **Andy Gott** to approve the Search Committee members and Scope of Work and forward to the Board for approval contingent on the removal of the "with stakeholder input" verbiage.

Second: **Jen Kobza**

Discussion: none

Motion: Carried

#### **Beartooth RC&D Board Meeting**

Brandon attended monthly Board meeting along with Lorene in November and he plans to continue attending these meetings as his schedule allows so that he can provide updates to the Executive Committee and Board as needed. He presented the signed contract and ensured payment to follow. Brandon asked Beartooth RC&D to present at an upcoming Board meeting and share updates on the services they provide.

#### **Nominating Committee**

Six applicants for the EDA Board, all of whom were interviewed. Two finalists were selected to recommend to the Yellowstone County Commissioners: Tom Rupsis (Granite Peak IT Consulting) and Austin Stacey (MarshMclellan). Judi Powers has resigned effective 12/31/2025 so there will be an EDC vacancy to fill. Suggested that EDA Board members are finalized before filling this vacancy.

Motion: **Kate Vogel** to approve the Nominating Committee recommendation as presented to the Executive Committee and forward to the EDA Board via electronic vote.

Second: **Debbie Desjarlais**

Discussion: Executive Committee discussed recommendations and would like to move forward.

Requested that the dates of the Commissioner Discussion and Board meeting are shared once we determine when this topic will be on the agenda.

Motion: Carried

### **Board Member Engagement**

Reviewed the Board member attendance for each of the EDA/EDC Board meetings in 2025. Discussion regarding whether this document should be presented to the Board at an upcoming meeting or if Board Chairs should reach out to people individually. One concern is having enough lenders present at Board meetings where there are loan approvals. Plan to review attendance in May 2026 near the end of the fiscal year and reach out to those who are not consistently attending. Consideration of whether there should be a limit set for number of meetings that can be attended virtually. Additionally, the Executive Committee would like to review the number of Board members on both EDA and EDC and see if it is best to downsize going forward.

### **BSED Committee Review**

Brandon has reviewed the current committees with each program leader to determine whether it is a requirement of their program and whether they find benefit in these meetings in hopes we can trim down the number of committees and/or the frequency of meetings. It was determined that both the VBOC and APEX committees could be discontinued. The SBDC Committee could potentially have less members so that these individuals could serve on other committees or participate with the organization in other ways. The Executive Committee wants to make sure that the Board still receives updates from each program to maintain that engagement. The question of whether Board approval was needed to dissolve these committees. Further research is needed regarding the composition of each committee and whether you need equal involvement of EDA and EDC members on each committee.

### **Jail Expansion**

Two jails tours have been setup per the request of the Yellowstone County Commissioners. Additionally, they would like BSED to join an upcoming Board meeting and share information regarding how the jail expansion impacts economic development and public safety in Yellowstone County. The Billings Chamber will be doing more for this initiative in 2026.

### **Community Meeting with Strategy Partners**

BSED, Downtown Billings, the City of Billings, the Billings Chamber, and Yellowstone County have held community meetings in prior years, and a few strategy partners would like to have another meeting at the beginning of the year where each organization would have the opportunity to share their goals and strategic priorities. Brandon shared that he would like to hold off on having this meeting until later in the year after a permanent Executive Director is in place. The Executive Committee agrees that this meeting should be held later in 2026.

### **Program Updates**

#### **Business Development and Communication**

Youth Market on Friday 12/5 during the Christmas Stroll hosted by BSED and Valley Federal Credit Union with participants from SD2 and Lockwood schools. Annual gathering of membership to be held on Tuesday December 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Consideration of Executive Session:**

None

**Adjourn:**

Motion: **Jen Kobza** to adjourn the meeting.

**Nick Pancheau** adjourned the meeting at 9:16 A.M.

Next Meeting – February 4, 2026

Respectfully submitted,

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Kate Vogel, EDA Secretary/Treasurer

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Nichole Mehling, EDC Secretary/Treasurer



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# ATTACHMENT B



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### Resolution of Board of Directors:

The Big Sky EDA/EDC Board of Directors hereby authorizes Brandon Berger (Interim Executive Director) and Tami Fleetwood (Senior Director of Finance) to manage all financial accounts. This authorization includes but is not limited to the removal of Nick Pancheau and Debbie Desjarlais and the addition of Nichole Mehling and Kate Vogel to the signature cards on file at First Interstate Bank where Big Sky EDA/EDC holds main operating checking accounts. With this change, signers on the three main operating accounts at First Interstate Bank will include Brandon Berger, Jen Kobza, Lucy Aspinwall, Bryan Wood, Jennifer Weaver Kondracki, Nichole Mehling, and Kate Vogel. Signers on the other twelve accounts at First Interstate Bank will include Brandon Berger, Jen Kobza, Lucy Aspinwall, Nichole Mehling and Kate Vogel. For all other financial institutions in which Big Sky EDA/EDC has checking/savings/CDs/money market accounts, Tami Fleetwood and Brandon Berger will remain listed as signers. All changes are authorized to become effective immediately.

Dated this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2026

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Lucy Aspinwall, EDA Chair

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Jen Kobza, EDC Chair

Attested By:

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Kate Vogel, EDA Secretary/Treasurer

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Nichole Mehling, EDC Secretary/Treasurer



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# ATTACHMENT C



## Board Calendar – 2026

A full calendar showing all BSED events is available on our website at [bigskyeconomicdevelopment.org](http://bigskyeconomicdevelopment.org)

### JANUARY

7<sup>th</sup> – Executive Committee Meeting  
8<sup>th</sup> – Board Meeting/Annual Board Member Roundtable

### FEBRUARY

4<sup>th</sup> – Executive Committee Meeting  
TBD – New Board Member Orientation  
12<sup>th</sup> – Board Meeting

- Mid-Year Budget Review
- Progress Report to the Board

  
13<sup>th</sup> – Big Sky Finance Lender Appreciation Breakfast  
18<sup>th</sup> – Behind the Build at Wood's Powr-Grip

### MARCH

4<sup>th</sup> – Executive Committee Meeting  
12<sup>th</sup> – Board Meeting

- Big Sky Finance Semi-Annual report on SBA 504 loan program

  
18<sup>th</sup> – National SBDC Day (FYI)  
  
**Board Strategic Planning postponed until later date TBD**

### APRIL

1<sup>st</sup> – Executive Committee Meeting

- Budget Workshop

  
9<sup>th</sup> – Board Meeting  
Staff Performance Evaluations Conducted (FYI)  
7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> MEDA Spring Conference (FYI)  
23<sup>rd</sup> – Annual Better Off in Billings Event

### MAY

6<sup>th</sup> – Executive Committee Meeting  
  
14<sup>th</sup> – Board Meeting

- Preliminary Budget Presentation

  
TBD – Economic Development Week  
TBD - Behind the Build

### JUNE

3<sup>rd</sup> – Executive Committee Meeting  
12<sup>th</sup> – Board Meeting

- Board Consideration of Preliminary Final Budget

  
TBD – EDA Budget Presentation to Commissioners (FYI)

### JULY

2<sup>nd</sup> – Executive Committee Meeting  
11<sup>th</sup> – Board Meeting

- End of Year Program Goals and Strategic Priorities Progress Report

  
  
**FY 2026 begins July 1<sup>st</sup>**

### AUGUST

5<sup>th</sup> – Executive Committee Meeting Breakfast/Dialogue with Executive Director  
TBD – Annual MI Impact Bus Tour

### No Board Meeting

Joint EDA/EDC Nominating Committee starts Board Member election process (FYI)

### SEPTEMBER

2<sup>nd</sup> – Executive Committee Meeting  
10<sup>th</sup> – Board Meeting

- Annual Report Issued (FYI)
- Finalize Preliminary FY '26 Budget
- Big Sky Finance Semi-Annual report on SBA 504 loan program
- EDC Board Elections

  
22-24 – MEDA Fall Conference (FYI)

### OCTOBER

1<sup>st</sup> – BSED Annual Meeting  
7<sup>th</sup> – Executive Committee Meeting  
8<sup>th</sup> – Board Meeting  
  
TBD – Nominating Committee Kickoff EDA Board Appointment Process

### NOVEMBER

4<sup>th</sup> – Executive Committee Meeting  
12<sup>th</sup> – Board Meeting  
28<sup>th</sup> – Small Business Saturday  
TBD – National Veterans Small Business Week (FYI)  
TBD – Nominating Committee Meeting to Consider Officers/EDA Applications  
TBD – Behind the Build

### DECEMBER

2<sup>nd</sup> – Executive Committee

- FY2025 Audit Presentation

  
10<sup>th</sup> – Board Meeting/Holiday Breakfast/

- Outgoing Board Member/Chair Recognition
- Elect EDA/EDC Officers

  
4<sup>th</sup> – Youth Market Day – Billings Holiday Stroll



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# ATTACHMENT D

**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  
Bryan Wood  
Kate Vogel  
Aaron Redland  
Vince Mistretta

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](mailto: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

Kate Vogel  
**OPEN**  
**OPEN**

EDC

Stefani Hicswa  
Kim Jakub  
Spencer Frederick  
**OPEN**

Community Representatives

Yellowstone County-Mark Morse  
City of Laurel- Kurt Markegard  
City of Billings- Denis Pittman

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](mailto: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>
Bryan Wood	Mike Phillips	Daniel Brooks, Billings Chamber
<b>OPEN</b>	<b>OPEN</b>	<b>John Ostlund OPEN</b>
<b>OPEN</b>	<b>OPEN</b>	Katy Schreiner
		Adam Schafer

MEETING SCHEDULE: As needed

Staff Contact: Brandon Berger - [brandon@bigskyeda.org](mailto:brandon@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
<b>OPEN</b>	Nicole Mehling
<b>OPEN</b>	DJ Clark

\*Committee Chair

MEETING SCHEDULE: As needed

Staff Contact: Keith Hart - [keith@bigskyeda.org](mailto:keith@bigskyeda.org)

## **Big Sky Finance Loan Committee**

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

<u>EDA</u>	<u>EDC</u>	<u>Community Members</u>
Darin Uselman	Dave Ballard	Anne DeBoo—RiverMountain LLC
Zack Dunn	Jerry Simonson	Darrin Maas—Stockman
<b>OPEN</b>	Mike Phillips	Dennen Gamradt—Eide Bailly LLP
		<b>OPEN</b>

MEETING SCHEDULE: As needed

Staff Contact: Brandon Berger - [brandon@bigskyeda.org](mailto: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  
Lucy Aspinwall  
Zack Dunn  
**OPEN**

EDC  
Jerry Simonson  
**OPEN**  
**OPEN**

Community Partners  
Kyle Jordan  
James Smith  
Lane Gobbs  
Joel Bertolino  
Martin DeWitt  
Tyson Kuntz

Michael Morrison  
Cathy Grider  
Mehmet Casey  
Madison Wilhite  
Andy Gott  
Brad Eli

MEETING SCHEDULE: Two times a year in January and July  
Staff Contact: Lorene Hintz - [lorene@bigskyeda.org](mailto:lorene@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  
**OPEN**  
**OPEN**  
**OPEN**

EDC  
**OPEN**  
**OPEN**  
**OPEN**

MEETING SCHEDULE: Quarterly meetings  
Staff Contact: Tyler Wink - [tylerw@bigskyeda.org](mailto:tylerw@bigskyeda.org)

## **Recruitment Committee**

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

EDA  
Kate Vogel  
Vince Mistretta  
**OPEN**

EDC  
Stefani Hicswa  
Nick Pancheau  
Molly Schwend

Community Partners  
Mike Waters  
**OPEN**  
**OPEN**

MEETING SCHEDULE: Quarterly  
Staff Contact: Keith Hart - [keith@bigskyeda.org](mailto:keith@bigskyeda.org)

## **Brownfields Advisory Council**

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

### EDA

Zack Dunn

Vince Mistretta

**OPEN**

### EDC

DJ Clark

George Warmer

**OPEN**

### Community Partners

Wyeth Friday

Katy Schreiner

**OPEN**

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

Staff Contact: Dianne Lehm – [dianne@bigskyeda.org](mailto:dianne@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

Aaron Redland

**OPEN**

**OPEN**

### EDC

DJ Clark

Kim Jakub

Molly Schwend

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

Staff Contact: Dianne Lehm – [dianne@bigskyeda.org](mailto:dianne@bigskyeda.org)