

Business and Citizens Subgroup Meeting of Governor-elect Gianforte's COVID-19 Task Force

Written Minutes

December 2, 2020

Meeting called to order by Kristin Hansen, Executive Director of Governor-Elect Gianforte's Task Force

Roll call:

- Brian Rigby, *President of Iron Works Local No. 732*
- Daniel Bierschwale, *Executive Director of Big Sky Resort Area District*
- Dax Cetraro, *Owner of Rialto Bar, Village Inn Pizza, Grand Plaza*
- Liz Moore, *Executive Director of the Montana Nonprofit Association*
- Father Patrick Beretta, Parish priest at St. Patrick and Immaculate Conception church
- Bridger Mahlum, *Montana Chamber of Commerce (standing in for Todd O'Hair)*
- Wayne Leiker, Vice President of Refining Operations at Calumet

Invocation by Father Beretta

Introduction by Kris Hansen

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OF MEETING PLEASE REFER

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Discussion on business access:

- **Brian Rigby:** Reluctant to have other entities reach out for protective supplies; haven't had trouble getting PPE supplies.
- **Liz Moore:** In the beginning supplies hard to get because of cost and time restraints and budget.
- **Dan Bierschwale:** Was expecting reimbursement from CARES Act. Should there be an allocation for spending of PPE?

- **Liz Moore:** Relief grant exists. Not open to nonprofit.
- **Dan Bierschwale:** Local government reimbursement
- **Father Beretta:** College Campus Life, Carroll College. Expenses high. More funding needed even after the vaccine. Both campuses are fully functional.
- **Dax Cetraro:** Rapid testing.
- **Father Beretta:** Company out of Denver for testing in 36 hours
- **Dan Bierschwale:** Cheaper and quick results. Contract tracing
- **Wayne Leiker:** Quick test 20 % failure rate. Using quarantine. State testing appreciated. Employee makes decision to get tested. Hospital 2-4 days for results. Medical hotline for employees. At the plant employees take temperature 2 times a day. Sign a statement. Watch for other symptoms. Rooms big enough to social distance. In groups they wear masks.

Discussion on coping with safety measures:

- **Father Beretta:** Pleased with how disciplined the students were while confined. Communication and keeping students motivated. Behavior was remarkable.
- **Wayne Leiker:** Supervisors and office split into different groups...working from home. Two groups working one week on week off.

Discussion on Teleworking:

- **Wayne Leiker:** Not as efficient. People work around it at home. Distractions at home. Brought staff back but when cases spiked had to go back to one week on and one week off. Would like to bring staff back.
- **Liz Moore:** Workers who are exposed. Front line jobs can't work from home. Everyone trying to figure it out on their own. Frustration. HR concerns.
- **Dan Bierschwale:** Strain on personal life. Mental health. Remote work.
- **Father Beretta:** Most people feel positive. Good experience. Remote learning. Some families have problems. Children falling back.
- **Dax Cetraro:** Hospitality business is impossible to work remotely. Lack of testing and the time it takes. Out of work for a week. Testing is a huge thing.
- **Dan Bierschwale:** Asymptomatic problems. Lack of access.

- **Bridger Mahlum:** Access to broadband. Continuing communication. Rural areas have limited access. Remote access.
- **Liz Moore:** Work comp issues. Gray area. Equity—compensation or accommodations? Working from home compensation
- **Brian Rigby:** Reach out for software. We see with hands on learning vs. remote learning.
- **Wayne Leiker:** Families with children. Not as efficient.
- **Liz Moore:** Broadband. Additional funding. Learning. Long term.
- **Dan Bierschwale:** Support and long term

Discussion on Restrictions:

- **Dax Cetraro:** Restrictions in the hospitality business are very difficult. When reopened we implemented a lot of cleaning procedures. Lower cases. We have a controlled environment. Need to have a solution that is safe. Control. Less constrictions. Hours of operation. If people could stay, cycle longer. Controlled environment vs. unregulated parties – part of the problem.
- **Father Beretta:** Churches. Strictly compliant. Respect for restrictions. As a diner—has never felt unsafe. Experience has been good. Reason not going out. People are afraid not because of restrictions. People are not going to enjoy if afraid.
- **Bridger Mahlum:** Business owners are taking things seriously. People okay with distancing. Businesses don't want people to get sick.
- **Dax Cetraro:** Masking is good. Sees benefits.
- **Bridger Mahlum:** Masking is its own controversy.
- **Liz Moore:** Limited hours of operation was lowest on list, face mask was best restrictions in a survey. Takes us back to testing.
- **Father Beretta:** Strong supporter of mask mandate. Most effective tool. Cultural thing. Small sacrifice to be safe.
- **Wayne Leiker:** How is it decided to open or close? Limiting hours doesn't make sense. Grocery stores. More people going through in a shorter period of time. Logically doesn't make sense. Turn arounds—time frame. Where are people going to eat?
- **Brian Rigby:** Contractors are keeping workers doing work. Orders being cancelled. Slower pace with contractors. Slow rate of progression.

- **Dan Bierschwale:** would've had multiple shutdowns. Been able to keep things open.
- **Brian Rigby:** Work force in area.
- **Liz Moore:** Central group. What's making it all work?
- **Dan Bierschwale:** Partner groups. identify a need, financial needs
- **Liz Moore:** Access to testing. How did community make that happen?
- **Dan Bierschwale:** Identify the needs, operational. Big Sky relief. Chamber, large and small employers. Funding group.
- **Liz Moore:** what degree is this happening in other communities? Community participation.
- **Dan Bierschwale:** Recovery groups. Bring state resources to the table.
- **Kris Hansen:** Missoula group. Coordination between state and local involvement. Broader guidance at local level.
- **Liz Moore:** Having funding available will be very powerful. Community would be able to decide together. Disaster structure.
- **Dan Bierschwale:** coordination with local health department.
- **Kris Hansen:** Expectation? What has prevented local coordination?
- **Father Beretta:** Local health department solutions. Very comprehensive.

Discussion on Data:

More data on Friday, Tuesday—Local Gov. Schools.

Data is confusing. Is it accurate and complete?

- **Dan Bierschwale:** Multiple surges.
- **Kris Hansen:** Local overwhelmed.
- **Dax Cetraro:** Local health departments making decisions have been rushed. Creates fear if hospitals report they are filling up. How many patients are from other counties, states? Has anyone considered using other facilities. Surgi- centers. Fear of running out of hospital beds.
- **Father Beretta:** Local community to be more supportive. Data on risk factors. Helpful to know contagion. Scapegoating going on. Scapegoating process. Lashing out at others.

- **Kris Hansen:** What is risk? Everyone is at risk is creating fear. Any public gathering is a risk. Disease is dangerous. Becoming clearer that particular groups are at more risk. Everything includes a degree of risk. Risk is based on decisions.
- **Wayne Leiker:** Family members going out giving to family members. Some people get it and some don't.
- **Liz Moore:** What research to trust. What are the sources. Data to provide guidance. Solid consistent source.
- **Kris Hansen:** Create accurate data matrix. Reliable data is the goal of this process.
- **Liz Moore:** Decision making process combination data and value.
- **Kris Hansen:** How do we talk to people? Shamed, complacent, brow beat.
- **Father Beretta:** Risk. Risk of getting sick, Risk of overwhelming our hospitals. Healthcare collapse.
- **Kris Hansen:** Other components of risk.
- **Wayne Leiker:** Risk of being employed, being at home, Team of experts that look at data. Need to trust team to lead and guide. What is good data and what's not.
- **Bridger Mahlum:** Data. Daily positive tests. Grain of salt for people. How many false positives. Are people hospitalized because of COVID itself? Preexisting conditions being triggered. Advise without discriminating condition help advise.
- **Dan Bierschwale:** Travel. Using data with travel data.
- **Dax Cetraro:** Reporting on data and hospitalizations. Recovery rate without being in hospital. Positive message to let public know.
- **Kris Hansen:** Fear of contagion.
- **Brian Rigby:** Info is pointing to negative side. Need to show the better side.
- **Wayne Leiker:** Montana COVID website. More info on page. Most info is negative. Put more positive info on website. How many deaths are really COVID deaths?
- **Kris Hansen:** Bad messaging.
- **Wayne Leiker:** More positive
- **Liz Moore:** Health data related to COVID. Administration to prioritize other things like health awareness.
- **Dan Bierschwale:** Vaccine data will be positive data for public. Kindness, grace, treating each other in a kinder way. Reflected in the message.

- **Bridger Mahlum:** Decisions. Overlay the visual with decisions made by the government. To see if restrictions are working
- **Father Beretta:** Tendency for mistruth. Panic and complacent. Don't want to paint the too positive. Risk of panic or compliancy.
- **Kris Hansen:** Message coming from govt. messaging that is business and economic. What is enlightening of the fact that we have an economic crisis. What is the message to encourage people to support local small businesses?
- **Dax Cetraro:** How businesses are keeping things clean. Message has to go out about the best practices of businesses.
- **Kris Hansen:** what does the new administration need to do to encourage people to trust?
- **Dax Cetraro:** solved problem but message hasn't gotten out.
- **Father Beretta:** Power of messaging good examples. Behave good. Partnering with local chamber and local businesses. Local voices will. Has to come on a local level. Come from within.
- **Kris Hansen:** More powerful from local and state. A constant message. Media. If a second funding.

Discussion on Media:

- **Bridger Mahlum:** More media attention. Chamber partner up with local.
- **Brian Rigby:** Standardized.
- **Liz Moore:** How do we know that all business are doing all the same thing? Safe practices.
- **Dax Cetaro:** Local trade and chambers can create compliance checks. Work with local health departments. All safe standards. Post signs
- **Dan Bierschwale:** Build on being an influence. Montana providing reasonable level.
- **Kris Hansen:** We need a second message.
- **Liz Moore:** Safe for Montana's future. Self-motivation for safety.
- **Dax Cetraro:** some restrictions needed to be lifted.
- **Kris Hansen:** If funding was available. Message/marketing funded.
- **Dan Bierschwale:** State should have that responsibility for funding.

- **Liz Moore:** Message. Vulnerable group-tribal nations, Important to keep disparity integrated into the message. Don't let the message be so buoyant that there are consequences. Severity exists.
- **Father Beretta:** Human suffering has to be part of the message. Responsibilities to human compassion. Message of kindness.
- **Bridger Mahlum:** We are in this together. Business has to take responsibility as well. Everyone has a role to play. It is all inclusive.

Vaccination Plan:

- **Kris Hansen:** what should be included in the plan? Health workers first, what needs to be prioritized?
- **Wayne Leiker:** Educators, childcare, first responders.
- **Kris Hansen:** Utility infrastructure
- **Wayne Leiker:** prisons?
- **Brian Rigby:** Essential employees, who is more essential? Gray area.
- **Kris Hansen:** Every employee is essential. Scarce supply and high demand
- **Bridger Mahlum:** Wise to drop essential. Everyone is essential. Who needs first access to vaccination? Who is in most contact with others? More likely to those who are in more contact.
- **Kris Hansen:** Risk factor.
- **Dax Cetraro:** no staff member contracted.
- **Wayne Leiker:** Contact with larger groups. Other issues
- **Dan Bierschwale:** Leverage vaccination.
- **Liz Moore:** We have to have a plan. Some type of structure. Needs to guidance. Proactivity.
- **Kris Hansen:** Will have to have a plan.

Planning for the future:

- **Kris Hansen:** Where are first round of funds directed? Planning for what's coming next.

- **Dan Bierschwale:** Used funding. Should've sent to Hospitals. Funding for retirement homes and nursing home. State funding helped a lot.
- **Kris Hansen:** Future funding. Not sure there will be another federal relief bill.
- **Liz Moore:** Unemployment, childcare subsidies
- **Dan Bierschwale:** Earmarked for tutors for kids. Tutoring programs.
- **Liz Moore:** Special needs children. Limited funding.
- **Father Beretta:** Help for rent
- **Liz Moore:** Support for that and unemployment. Funding has to be spent by 12/31. Specific amount for rent relief.
- **Kris Hansen:** What is impact to small businesses If no additional fund?
- **Dax Cetraro:** Reopen economy.
- **Dan Bierschwale:** Have to find seasonal workers
- **Father Beretta:** Will see more closures
- **Bridger Mahlum:** Another PPE loan
- **Kris Hansen:** Monthly cost of being closed: cost of reopening?
- **Dan Bierschwale:** restock, vendors. Chain reaction. Relax restrictions
- **Bridger Mahlum:** more testing.
- **Liz Moore:** Housing, eviction, unemployment. Huge financial impact. Native CDFI. 67-70 employers. CDDI only 4% got funds. Tribal businesses.
- **Kris Hansen:** anything to be aware on employee side?
- **Dan Bierschwale:** Concern. People got 600.00 more. Concern: work force exit hospitality. Looking for other jobs. Not sure if money will help.

Open Discussion:

- **Bridger Mahlum:** Prioritize. Proactive practices to school, medical exposure, product liability, Lawsuits starting to take place. Covered for liability.
- **Father Beretta:** Community resiliency. Collective feeling. Look back. Learning to become a better community. Work to re-invent themselves. Learn from this.
- **Dan Bierschwale:** open dialogue with national parks

Action Items:

1. Vaccine plan
2. Data
3. Restrictions to be lifted. Curfews, mask, sanitation, sensible outline. What the business community would accept.
4. Businesses police themselves
5. Make a plan
6. Structure plan
7. Messaging—all the avenues of messaging. Govt, business prospective, citizen angle. How do we message a reopening of Montana?
8. Community based
9. PPE planning

Meeting Adjourned

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