

## **Ranch Association, Inc.**

PO Box 11

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**May 10, 2024**

### **Hello Ranch HOA Members!**

First, just a couple announcements:

**Spring Cleanup Day: Saturday, May 18th 9AM** Gather at Mark's house, 652 Pommel at 9AM. There really isn't too much to do this year since we did so much last year! But there's a few trees and trash that needs to be collected. We will pile and possibly burn the burn piles as well.

**HOA Annual Meeting (and Water District Board Elections)** will be held **Sunday, June 23rd at 2PM** at the High School Lobby. Please email (address above) or contact Jerry Southwood ([jwsmont@gmail.com](mailto:jwsmont@gmail.com)) by June 1<sup>st</sup> if you would like to run or seek re-election to either board. More board info is online. Please check the website if you ever are curious about meeting dates or anything else.

We have multiple positions up for election/re-election this year. We have one open slot (David Davis is retiring, thank you David for being on the board). Jerry Southwood has agreed to run again as Sec/Treasurer (thank you Jerry). Please consider running for the board if you haven't in the past. I am planning to run again as Board President, but I would be happy to step aside if anyone would like to take over—so if you're willing, please let us know. I will continue if no one steps forward, but do not assume that I am not willing to allow some fresh faces take over!

We will have more construction this summer, so please watch out for construction vehicles. I want to thank all the owners who are building for following the rules and working with the HOA. We will be paving two areas of Ranch Rd this summer, so watch for signs and check your email. I'll be letting everyone know ahead of time.

Due to high demand, we installed one more mailbox. We have boxes available if you didn't yet get one (there is no obligation to do so). They are \$125 (one time and the box is yours forever).

Thank you to everyone who paid their dues. With the cost of paving going up, we're spending every nickel we have on that, but I think you'll all agree it's needed and worth it.

We now have more kids than ever living up here. I'd like to remind everyone (again) to watch your speed. We also have more people living up here than ever before—overall, this adds to the traffic level and if we all take our time and drive courteously, it really helps everyone's overall attitude.

We have two new lots in the HOA as a result of Quarter Circle selling them. Both are/will be part of the HOA and Water District. We will likely be annexing them and holding a vote on annexation at the annual meeting this summer. There is no downside to this, it helps us in many ways.

**Comments from the President:** Last year I gave you a "rant" of sorts venting my frustrations and stress tied to this volunteer position. Thank you to all who called and commented—it is appreciated. Also, thank you to everyone who took it to heart and pitched in, paid attention to the rules, etc... Again, knowing/following the rules, and working with the HOA is the biggest thanks I can get. And again, I'm willing to step aside if anyone would be willing to take the reins.

**Ranch Water District Annual Board Meeting will be Monday, July 22 at Chrysler & Gordon (120 Village Ln, Bigfork), 1PM** Members are welcome to attend. Elections will be held at the HOA Meeting

Many of you have given us your mobile phone contact info to be used for neighborhood announcements and emergency notifications. If you are not getting my text messages and want to, just email me or fill out the form on the [Water District page](#) of our website. If you don't have a mobile phone, we can use email or a phone call. If you would all email me your preferred contact number/method, I would be most appreciative. Please email these to [waterops@ranchhoa.org](mailto:waterops@ranchhoa.org)

**Summer Water Usage** As summer is upon us, many of us have or will be turning on sprinklers. The Water District goes from using just over 100,000 gallons per month to over a million gallons (yes, a million!) during the hottest summer months (with 40 homes). This obviously places stress on our system and your pocketbook. Watering with a standard hose and sprinkler is usually very inefficient and wasteful a 5/8" hose can use over 1,000 gallons in one hour. Sprinkler heads spread the load more evenly and efficiently in shorter periods of time (they still use a lot of water!). We're telling you this hoping that you will carefully consider your sprinkling needs. Our two wells are usually pumping at maximum for many hours every day and every little bit of help from you lessens the load on the system.

You were sent or given a link to our annual Water Quality Report earlier this year (link on the bill for those of you that get email bills); but you can always see it on our website's Water District Page any time—the best part is that we have some of the best water in the state. Mark Smolen is our operator and another member of the Ranch is planning to take the test and be a backup operator for the district if/when Mark is out of town—more on that later.

If you haven't already, please consider using automatic bank draft for your water bill. It truly helps us and you never get behind or miss a payment. Just send us a voided check and the form which is on our website. The district will be cracking down on unpaid bills and turning off the water according to the rules sooner. Using auto-bank draft is the sure fire way to avoid penalties, and late/reconnection fees.

Lane'e Earhart took over as Sec/Treasurer for the Water District. She and Tracy Gordon (and staff) keep things flowing financially. Thank you all!

Please check the website prior to our annual meeting to make sure our location hasn't changed...We hope to see you all there. And finally, a proposed outline agenda is included on the following pages.

Thanks again,

Mark Smolen, President, Ranch HOA; Operator, RWD

**Your Current HOA Board: (Bolded positions are up for election)**

**President: Mark Smolen (Term Expires: June/2024)**

Vice President: Bill Thomas (Term Expires: June/2025)

**Treasurer / Secretary: Jerry Southwood (Term Expires: June/2024)**

Board Members:

Richalle Close (Term Expires: June/2025)

**David Davis (Term Expires: June/2024) (vacating)**

**Thaddeus Crouch (Term Expires: June/2024)**

**Architectural Committee:**

Mark Smolen (advisor)

Jerry Southwood

Gus Martel

Karla Smolen

Bill Thomas

**Ranch Water and Sewer District Board:**

Patty McNulty-Peck - President Term Expires: June/2025

Lane'e Earhart - Secretary/Treasurer Term Expires: June/2027

Bill Thomas - Board Member Term Expires: June/2027

Stacy Crouch Board Member Term Expires: June/2025

Gus Martel -Board Member Term Expires: June/2025

Mark Smolen - Operator (Montana Law prohibits the Operator from being on the board)

## **Ranch HOA Annual Meeting Proposed Agenda**

### **Agenda:**

1. Call to order - 2:05PM
2. Review of Last Meeting Minutes (approved by Board) - Jerry Southwood Secretary.
3. 2022-2023 Budget Review - Jerry Southwood Treasurer
4. Road Repair Update
  - a. Current Repair Budget - Asphalt is expensive, budget is limited.
  - b. Discuss future plans and additional paving.
  - c. Mowing (road sides, costs, thank yous to neighbors)
  - d. Seeking input at meeting on needed repairs.
5. Snow Removal Contract - Renewing with SnowBound Enterprises, LLC
  - a. Contract withholds one third on low snow years - used this amendment last year (2023), this year was a full payment. Planning to continue with Snowbound.
6. Mailbox Availability. Added one additional cluster box. Boxes are available at \$125 per box (one time charge). First two are full.
7. Construction Update:
  - a. 555 Ranch (new address), nearing completion
  - b. 560 Ranch started
8. Quarter Circle Re-zoning and plans for land below 155 Ranch Rd. is ongoing.
9. Water Board Update (outage notification, pump house needs, etc.)
  - a. Watering levels (please be efficient)
  - b. Insurance update
10. Water Board Election
11. HOA Board Election
12. Other business, comments, questions, etc.
13. Adjourn

## Ranch Water District Proposed Agenda

1. Call to Order
2. Review and Approval of Minutes from last year's meeting.
3. Operator Report - Mark Smolen
  - a. All Tests are up to date and current. No issues.
  - b. Water Quality Report was completed in March, sent with bills and posted online.
  - c. CECs complete until 5-31-2024. Starting new CEC period (two years to complete)
  - d. Have not replaced flow meters, but am working on plans to replace this summer/fall. Have issued RFQ. New flow meters are now available and we're looking at those as well. Cost estimate to be reviewed.
  - e. Upgraded our Chlorine pump equipment to be ready if we should ever need it.
  - f. Located all gate valves and will be installing risers to get them to grade (cost estimate submitted).
  - g. Digitally mapped the entire system so that I have gps located maps in my phone to help the operator located needed valves, etc should we have an emergency.
  - h. New neighbor has been working on getting certified as a backup operator for the district.
4. Insurance Update. We are insured. Following Gus M's leadership. Desire coverage from one vendor.
5. Accounting / Budget Review and approval.
6. Legal Update
  - a. Lawsuit update.
  - b. Working with County to delist the two lots at the hairpin as part of our district so that Bigfork Water can annex them and supply water to them if needed.
  - c. MOU with Bigfork Water (little progress—waiting on BWD)
7. New Business.
8. Adjourn.