

# **Hoback Ranches Service & Improvement District**

P.O. Box 33, Bondurant, Wyoming 82922

## **July 20, 2013 Annual Meeting**

### **Meeting Minutes**

A public meeting was conducted by the Board of Directors of Hoback Ranches Service Improvement District on Saturday, July 20, 2013 at St. Hubert's Church, Bondurant Wyoming 82922 at 1:00 PM.

Directors In Attendance:

Richard Thomas

Chairman

James Ramage

Treasurer

Bill Conley

Secretary

Chairman Richard Thomas called the meeting to order at 1:07 PM. Richard welcomed summer residents back to the Ranches and everyone to the annual meeting.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Minutes for Early Meeting, June 16, 2012

Minutes for Annual Meeting, July 21, 2012

Minutes for Early Meeting, June 15, 2013

Director Ramage moved to approve the above minutes. Director Conley seconded. Motion Approved.

### **ELECTION 2013:**

Board Director and Secretary Conley updated homeowners on May 7, 2013 election results. The number of Ballots: 254 were sent out; 21 Ballots were returned for inadequate or unable to forward address.

Ballots Returned: 80

80 votes for Richard Thomas

Richard Thomas unanimously re-elected, and chosen by Board to remain as Chairman.

### **GUEST SPEAKER: Adam Hymas, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Big Piney**

#### **John Lund, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Pinedale**

Game Warden Hymas and Supervisor John Lund shared with the attendees the role of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, and specifically their duties in Big Piney and Pinedale, who oversee the Hoback Ranches area. Both gentlemen applauded the cooperation that they have received in the past from the Hoback Ranches property owners in reporting hunting

violations in the ranches and vigilance in protecting animals that live in the western parts of Sublette County. Agent Hymas recapped the poaching violations from the fall of 2012 for all in attendance. All the violators were prosecuted by WGFD and the Sublette County Attorney. The penalties had a wide range of financial penalties, license suspensions, confiscation of property and public letters of apology.

Hoback Ranchers were encouraged to keep up the diligence as the 2013 hunting season approaches, including posting of proper "No Trespassing, No Hunting" signs, and to notify authorities immediately of any known or suspected violations, including

details of the individual, vehicles, time of day, etc,etc. The most critical times are the first weeks of the hunting season, and the last week of the season.

**GUEST SPEAKER: Aaron Seehafer, Rio Verde Engineering**

Mr. Seehafer, who is employed by Rio Verde, is the project engineer over most of the Class II Road projects for Sublette County. Aaron reviewed the progress being made to begin the Class II road project, and some of the stumbling blocks along the way that he has had to work through to the satisfaction of all parties. He has had great cooperation from USFS, and the new district ranger, Robert Hoelscher. He is in the process of finalizing a wetlands notification in compliance with the Army Corp of Engineers, and hopes to get the work put out to bid in August 2013. His goal is to begin initial culvert, tree removal and slope work in the Fall before the first snows, and finish the project during the spring and early summer 2014. He reminded the Hoback Ranch property owners that during construction, there would be some disruption of traffic and short term road closures that needed to be worked around. They will work closely with the board to ensure that adequate access is available for emergency vehicles and fire equipment.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

See report by guest speaker, Aaron Seehafer, regarding Class II Road.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Winter Committee Update**

Chairman Thomas reported that the Winter 2012-13 was for the most part uneventful, with normal snow fall and no significant issues in the plowing of the designated roads, and parking areas for the winter residents. There was one plowing challenge where the district plowing standards were not adhered to, and the issue will hopefully be corrected for the upcoming season. He reminded the audience that the winter road plowing activity and contribution to the winter committee fund is voluntary. The fund is currently low of dollars as some residents who used the roads in the winter did not contribute to the fund, and the cost of providing the service for labor and fuel is slightly higher than in the past years.

Contributions are to be sent to Van Driessen, Winter Committee Treasurer, PO Box 344, Bondurant, WY 82922. A reminder will be sent to all residents with the Fall Newsletter.

**Road Maintenance**

Director Ramage reviewed last year's maintenance activities, which included road blading, routine cleaning of debris catchers, and limited gravelling. Road work was purposefully limited last year to avoid using unreserved funds as much as possible. He then updated the residents on the work scheduled to be done during 2013-14 season. Lower Valley Energy caused road damage in the process of replacing buried power lines along Fisherman Creek Road. We are in the process of fixing the road and will be reimbursed by LVE for the cost. This will require pulling the ditch, blading this material to other side, and re-gravelling. We had just pulled the ditch when the cloudburst hit, so now portions of it will need to be redone. While we are working there we intend to fix several culverts with smashed ends and extend a couple that are too short. The recent heavy rain highlighted a number of drainage problems, and there a few spots on Rim

where culvert and ditch work is definitely needed this year. We also intend to place quite a bit of gravel on the road this year, strategically concentrating where it is most needed. We would also like to install a number of straw wattles in steep ditch areas where erosion and sedimentation in culverts is common. Most of the roads will have to be re-bladed as result of the storm and a number of ditches and culverts need to be cleaned. We will continue to blade roads in the ranches as before with our busier roads taking the highest priority.

#### **Fencing Update:**

Director Conley reported that the boundary fencing along the western boundary and most of the northern boundary up to Deer Haven from the western boundary has been either repaired or replaced with volunteer labor. The fence posts and wiring are brittle due to age, and Hoback Ranches will begin a systematic upgrade of fence replacement in areas most prone to cattle incursions. Hoback Ranches will work with the USFS and the local cattlemen's associations to better understand grazing activity, and prepare fences prior to the cattle placement.

A significant part of the southern boundary along the Rolling Thunder Ranch has been repaired or replaced by Tim Delaney's son and crew. We will work with the BLM to repair the fence destroyed a couple years ago by their contractor during the fire mitigation activity on the southern boundary by Kismet and Signal mountains, and the Miller ranch.

#### **Fire Incident:**

Gloria Thomas, Bondurant VFD briefed the residents on the two fire incidents in Hoback Ranches on Tuesday, July 16, 2013. Both fires were caused by lightning strikes, and were quickly reported, and extinguished by the USFS Helo team and the Bondurant Fire Department. Gloria reminder attendees that the roads in the ranches are narrow, and emergency vehicles need clear paths to any emergency site, and encouraged "well meaning" folks on ATV's and vehicles not to block the roads so that emergency equipment can pass quickly.

There are now 140 homes recorded on the 274 parcels in Hoback Ranches. It is important that all residents keep their contact information up to date with their respective "Fire Tree"

Notification representative or send updated info to: [HRSID@yahoo.com](mailto:HRSID@yahoo.com).

#### **Budget Review:**

Director Ramage started by reviewing last year's budget. Property tax revenue was down again from the previous year to \$34359.25. Interest Income on our CDs dropped to \$962.06 for total revenue of \$35,330.85. We spent very little money on fence maintenance - \$1182.96. Bill and Richard donated tons of time and our fences deserve much more attention. Fixed cost were all very near budgeted amounts. Although \$30,000 was budgeted for road maintenance last year, we approached our expenses conservatively as our budget relied heavily on unreserved monies. We have also been reluctant to spend much time on the USFS section of Rim Road, expecting the Class II road project. In the end our conservative approach to road expenses meant that we came in under budget.

Director Ramage then went over the budget for the proposed fiscal year. Our assessed value is projected to increase a little this year, about 6% over last, but it is still down over 21% from a high in 2009. Interest Income will remain low and

is down from a high of \$8669 in 2007. Total Income is projected at \$35,650, which is down from high of \$50,700 in 2009. Over the last year we have been working with County Assessor, the County Clerk, along with our Attorney and have found that our annual levy is not subject to an 8 mil cap. Therefore, rather than a onetime large improvement project done in the hopes of reducing our maintenance costs, we are back to our preferred alternative which is to raise our annual mil levy. The Board believes that accomplishing our needed improvements gradually is a better approach and avoids the headaches, administration, and additional cost associated with a large project.

We have estimated our needed expenditures at anywhere from \$50,000 - \$60,000, depending on fence maintenance levels. Our fixed costs (no fence or road maintenance) generally run about \$7500 per year. We need to be budgeting for 1000 yards of gravel placement, which means our road maintenance budget should be between \$30000 and \$35,000 annually. Our District also needs to save money for gravel replacement in the amount of \$9000 annually to offset what we take out of our stockpile. Our fence budget should be at least \$5000 annually. When you add this all up it amounts to about \$55000. Our total revenue right now with 8 mils would be projected at only about \$37,000. At 12 mils it would increase to \$53,900. So it is clear that our expenses warrant a levy of 12 mils. This is exactly how the state statutes intended the annual budgeting and assessment process to work.

As we discussed at the early meeting, we therefore intend for our annual assessment to be set at 12 mils this year and have advertised as such. In addition to allowing us to cover our needed expenses, this will help us to secure some additional gravel while we have a source with the Class II project. If we can get a good price we would like to purchase about \$20,000 worth of gravel. Even at 12 mils we will still be utilizing \$16500 of unreserved funds to make this happen, but hopefully we can take advantage of good gravel prices and extend the life of our stockpile another few years. In future years we may need to keep the mill levy at 12 to allow for placement of at least 1000 yards of gravel annually, in upping fence maintenance levels, and saving money for gravel replacement. However, we could reduce the levy back to 10 or even 8 mils if assessed values continue to rebound and/or interest income comes back. As the statutes intend, we will review the assessment each year based on projected income and needed expenses.

Director Ramage then explained what the increase to 12 mils will mean to residents. The estimated valuation of HRISD for the coming year is \$4,494,814 and there are 274 parcels in Hoback Ranches. At 8 mils the average tax levy for a Hoback Ranches parcel would be \$131 annually. At 12 mils this would increase by \$66 annually. He then explained the impact for a typical built parcel with a valuation of \$30,000. At 8 mils the HRSID tax levy would be \$240. At 12 mils it would increase by \$120 annually. He then explained how this compared to the overall property taxes. The total Sublette County tax levy is just under 67 mils. The HRSID increase would bump that to 71 mils, so the increase in your overall property taxes as result of our levy would be less than 6%.

Other than the gravel purchase and fence maintenance, expenditures in our budget are actually quite similar to last year. One important distinction is that the

increase in the mil levy allows us to save for replacing our gravel instead of relying on unreserved money. Total general fund expenditures area \$42,400, which is up marginally from last year. We will still need to budget approximately \$16,500 of unreserved funds for the gravel purchase. This would reduce that account down to \$13,680.64.

#### **RESOLUTION:**

On behalf of the Board, Director Conley Reviewed and Read the Resolution of The Hoback Ranches Improvement and Service District Regarding Mil Cap, modifying the 1986 Petition for formation to comply with current Wyoming statues to no longer impose a cap on the maximum amount of assessments that may be levied by the Board, provided that the Board advertises and formally adopts a budget at the annual meeting, and notifies the County Assessor in a timely manner. Motion to Approve: James Ramage. Second to Motion: Richard Thomas. Approved unanimously.

On behalf of the Board, Director Ramage Reviewed and Read the Resolution for 2013-2014 Budget. Motion to Approve: Richard Thomas. Second to Motion: William Conley. Approved unanimously.

Director Thomas reviewed and read Resolution Hoback Ranches Administrative Procedures and Budget, approving the use of Pinedale RoundUp as the official paper, and authorizing the board to spend the money in the 2013-2014 budget as proposed. Motion to Approve: James Ramage, Second: William Conley. Approved: unanimously.

#### **OTHER DISCUSSION:**

Pete Teller asked the board to again consider his suggestions that good road maintenance practices be deployed over the year to keep the Hoback Ranch roads in good condition.

1. Restrict heavy loads during the spring thaw and the wet season.
2. Keep all ditches clear of clutter so water can run off properly instead of running over the roads and washing off gravel.
3. Keep road crowns in good condition so that water runs off the road instead of down the road creating longitudinal ruts.
4. Blade all roads in the ranches at least yearly, or when necessary, and endure that speed limits are restricted to 20 mph to reduce waffling, and encouraged residents to use 4 wheel drive

As a follow up to the earlier discussions about hunting violations in the ranches, Jennifer Jensen asked that the board explore both putting up large banners at the East and West gates, and to consider posting a security guard at the beginning of the hunting season and at the end of the season, when hunters are desperate to fill their tag quotas. Board agreed to consider.

#### **ELECTION 2014**

Chairman Thomas noted that the 2014 Election scheduled for Tuesday, May 6, 2014 for the upcoming year will be a "MAIL BALLOT".

- Ballot must be signed to be valid

- Ballots cannot be forwarded, so all residents need to ensure the address of record by the Sublette County Tax Assessor is correct.
- Absentee ballot is not allowed on Special Elections that occur outside the General Election process.

**Next year's early summer meeting: June 21, 2014**

**Next year's annual meeting: July 19, 2014**

Both meetings will be at 1:00PM at St. Hubert's Church, Bondurant, WY 82922.

Motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. Chairman Thomas adjourned the meeting at 3:25 PM.