Gallatin Valley Back Country Horsemen

CONSTITUTION

Proposed by the Constitution Committee, November 19, 2026

ARTICLE I: PURPOSE

Section 1

The Gallatin Valley Back Country Horsemen Club (GVBCH) is a non-profit organization. The purpose of this organization shall be to perpetuate the common sense use and enjoyment of horses in the back country and assist the various government agencies in their maintenance and management of the resource and to educate, encourage and solicit active participation by various members of the general public in the wise and sustaining use of horses, commensurate with our heritage and the back country resource.

ARTICLE II: MEMBERSHIP AND VOTING

Section 1: Membership

Membership shall be open to any interested individuals, businesses or organizations supporting the purpose as stated in Article I. The Board of Directors reserves the right to refuse membership to any applicant(s) and/or member(s).

Section 2: Dues

Membership dues for each category shall be an amount determined by the Board of Directors and a majority vote at a regularly scheduled general meeting. These dues shall be due January 1 each year. Annual dues purchase a membership for the current year. Dues for a member still delinquent as of May 1 of the current membership year shall be cause to drop the member from the mailing list and there shall be no exceptions made. Dues paid by members paying after October 1 of the current membership year will be carried through for membership into the following year.

Section 3: Membership Categories

Membership categories shall be:

Individual- entitled to one (1) vote at any regular or special meeting.

Family- entitled to two (2) votes, one vote per family member in attendance at a meeting, with a maximum of two (2).

Associate- entitled to one (1) vote; a business or organization may acquire a membership and designate a person as the representative entitled to vote.

Honorary- entitled to no vote, but all other rights. This may be bestowed at the discretion of the Board of Directors through majority vote, upon an individual or business whose exceptional support of this organization's activities warrants this recognition.

Junior- persons 15 years or younger, not otherwise qualifying for membership with a family group, and interested in promoting the purpose as stated in Article I may be accorded a junior membership with no voting rights.

Section 4: Voting and Quorum

A voting membership is considered in 'good standing' providing membership dues are paid in full to date. Twelve (12) voting members in good standing shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any regular or special meeting of this organization. A simple majority of members in good standing, voting when the organization is in session at a regular or special meeting, shall be required to conduct that business requiring group action, providing a quorum is present, and except for removal of Officers and/or Directors which is provided herein.

ARTICLE III: MEETINGS

Section 1: Meeting Notifications

Notice shall be given of all meetings or meeting cancellations. Written notice including publications and/or e-mail shall be sent to the entire membership at least three (3) days prior to any special meetings. The President, or the Vice President in the President's absence, may cancel or postpone any meeting because of weather or other emergency.

Section 2: Regular Meetings

Regular monthly meetings shall be established and held at a time decided upon by a majority vote of the members present at a regular meeting.

Section 3: Special Meetings

Special meetings may be called by the President, or upon written request signed by any three (3) Officers and/or Directors, or upon written request signed by ten (10) voting members in good standing.

Section 4: Board Meetings

Board meetings shall be held at the convenience of a majority of the Directors, and the Board shall meet at least once a month, unless the meeting is canceled under Section 1. Regular members are welcome at Board meetings but shall have no vote. When a member desires to attend a Board meeting, they may contact any Board member for the next meeting date and place.

Section 5: Board Quorum

A majority of the voting members of the Board of Directors then in office shall constitute a quorum for a meeting of the Board of Directors. The voting members of the Board are the Officers, the Directors, and the immediate Past President as provided in Article IV, Section 2. A State Board Director shall not be counted unless that Director also holds an office or a directorship. No person shall be counted more than once toward a quorum, regardless of the number of positions held or proxies carried.

Section 6: Proxy Voting

Voting Board members may appoint any members in good standing to serve as proxy representation for the purpose of voting at Board meetings. It is the responsibility of the Board member to obtain proxy representation. If the Board member fails to attend or obtain proxy representation, then the Board member shall be considered absent from the meeting. No member shall hold more than one (1) proxy at any Board meeting. For the purpose of determining a quorum under Section 5, each person physically present shall be counted once, regardless of the number of votes that person is entitled to cast.

Section 7: Action Without a Meeting

Between regular Board meetings, the Board of Directors may act by mail, e-mail, or other electronic communication, provided that:

a. The proposal is initiated by the President or by any three (3) Officers and/or Directors.
b. Notice stating the exact proposal to be acted upon is sent to every voting Board member at his or her last known e-mail address, mailing address, or phone number.
c. Voting Board members are given not less than three (3) days from the sending of notice in which to respond.
d. The proposal passes only upon the affirmative vote of a majority of all voting Board members then in office, whether or not all respond.
e. The Secretary records the proposal, the vote of each Board member, and the result in the minutes of the next regular Board meeting.

Proxy representation shall not apply to action taken under this Section; each voting Board member votes directly. This Section shall not be used to remove an Officer or Director, to expel a member, or to amend this constitution.

ARTICLE IV: OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

Section 1: Officers

Officers of this organization shall be a President, a Vice President, a Secretary, a Treasurer and such other Officers as the voting membership may from time to time create.

Section 2: Directors

There shall be six (6) Directors in addition to the Officers and the immediate Past President who will also serve as an ex officio, voting member of the Board.

Section 3: Vacancies

Any vacancy or vacancies in any office or in the Board of Directors shall be filled by the Board of Directors for the balance of such term, with the exception of President, which will automatically be filled by the Vice President. Provided, that where fewer than six (6) months remain in the term, the Board may by majority vote leave the seat vacant until the next regular election.

Section 4: State Board Directors

There shall be two (2) State Board Directors with alternating two (2) year terms. There shall also be one "Alternate" State Board Director whose term shall be one (1) year, whose function is to provide a substitute for a State Board Director shall the need arise. The Alternate will automatically move into a State Board Director position in the event of a vacancy, and a new Alternate Director shall be elected by the GVBCH Board of Directors. State Directors shall not have a vote at a GVBCH Board of Directors meeting unless said Director is a current member of the GVBCH Board of Directors.

ARTICLE V: DUTIES OF OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

Section 1: *Governance*

The supreme authority of Gallatin Valley Back Country Horsemen shall be in its assembled voting members. The Board of Directors shall execute this authority when the voting membership is not assembled, but shall follow the direction given to them by the membership and shall be responsible to them.

Section 2: President

It shall be the duty of the President to preside at all meetings of the organization and of the Board of Directors and to exercise general executive control over the affairs of said organization and to call special meetings of the organization or its Board of Directors, and to perform all other duties pertaining to such office. He/She shall be an ex officio member of all committees. He/She may co-sign checks for disbursement of funds.

Section 3: Vice President

The Vice President shall assist the President when called upon to do so, and in his/her absence shall be vested with all the powers and duties of the President. He/She may co-sign checks for disbursement of funds.

Section 4: Secretary

The Secretary shall record and keep the minutes of all regular, special and Board meetings; shall register the names of the members; issue notices and perform such other duties as pertains to such office.

Section 5: Treasurer

The Treasurer shall collect dues, keep and disburse all funds of the organization and shall keep a written account which shall be open for inspection by any member in good standing, and shall furnish a written report of the state of the finances monthly, and shall be one of the three check signers of record, any two of which may validate a check. All funds shall be kept in reputable financial institution account(s), with the exception of petty cash

and other specified small cash funds as provided for in Article XI, Section 2.

Section 6: Directors and Immediate Past President

Directors shall attend meetings of the Board and of the organization, shall represent the interests of the membership, shall serve on committees as appointed, and shall perform such other duties as the Board may assign.

The immediate Past President shall serve as an ex officio voting member of the Board and shall advise the President and the Board on the practices and prior actions of the organization.

Should both the President and the Vice President be absent from a meeting of the organization or of the Board, the Secretary shall call the meeting to order and shall immediately conduct an election of a President Pro Tem from among the members present and eligible to vote at that meeting. The President Pro Tem shall preside through adjournment and shall hold no authority of the office beyond that meeting. Should the Secretary also be absent, any member present and eligible to vote may call the meeting to order for that purpose, and the body shall then elect a Secretary Pro Tem to record the minutes.

Proxy representation confers the right to vote only. A proxy holder shall not preside.

Section 7: State Directors

The duties of the State Directors shall be to represent the GVBCH and be responsible to them. They shall serve as liaison between the club and the State Board of Directors and shall inform both on actions taken or requested. He/She shall provide club input to the State Board of Directors and provide information from the State Board of Directors to his/her club.

ARTICLE VI: ELECTIONS

Section 1: Nominations & Voting

All Officers and Directors shall be elected by a majority vote (including absentee ballots) at the regularly scheduled December general meeting following these steps:

October: A Nominating Committee shall be appointed for the purpose of nominating at least one (1) suitable candidate for each of the organization's offices, and additional candidates where available.

November: election slate shall be presented at the Board meeting. Additional nominations shall be made from the floor at the general meeting for Officers, Directors and State Board Directors.

December: The final slate of candidates and absentee ballots shall be distributed in the newsletter three weeks before the general meeting. Ballots and hand votes shall be counted at the general meeting.

Section 2: Absentee Election Ballots

Posted election ballots sent to the post office box address must be received the day before the day of the December general meeting and bear the name, signature and address of the voting member(s) in order to be included in the count.

Electronic absentee election ballots must be received the day before the December general meeting in order to be included in the count.

Election ballots hand-delivered to the December meeting must bear the name, signature and address of the voting member(s) in order to be included in the count.

Proxy votes shall not be counted for the general election.

ARTICLE VII: TERMS IN OFFICE

Section 1: Officer Terms

All Officers and Directors shall serve a term of office for the next calendar year, following the date of such election.

Section 2: Director Terms

Director vacancies will be filled by two (2) year terms with three (3) vacancies occurring each year.

Section 3: State Board Director Terms

State Board Directors shall begin a term of office at the State Board meeting immediately following the State Convention.

Section 4: Term Limits

No President or Vice President shall hold the same office for more than three (3) consecutive terms. There shall be no limit for service by the Secretary, the Treasurer or Directors.

Section 5

The purpose of the nominating committee shall be to provide a list of suitable candidates for this organization's Officers. Directors may be provided by the membership from the floor during the election process.

ARTICLE VIII: REMOVAL OF OFFICERS

Section 1

Any Officer or Director may be relieved of their duties by an action instituted by (1) a two-thirds vote of the Board of Directors or (2) by a majority vote of voting members present at a regular or special meeting, provided there is a quorum present.

Section 2

The Board at the next Board meeting will replace any Board of Directors member missing three (3) Board meetings within a twelve (12) month period. (Refer to Article III, Section 6, for Board member responsibility to obtain a proxy in case of absence.)

Section 3

Any Officer missing four (4) meetings of the twenty-four (24) regular and Board meetings within a twelve (12) month period shall be replaced by the Board at the next Board meeting following the fourth (4) occurrence.

Section 4

Any State Board Director who twice (2) fails to attend a State Board of Directors meeting or fails to obtain representation by the Alternate in a timely manner within twelve (12) months and/or report (written/oral) on state meetings shall be removed from office and replaced by the Alternate State Board Director.

Section 5

An Alternate who twice (2) fails to attend or report when requested by a State Board Director in a timely manner, shall be replaced as the Alternate by an appointment of the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE IX: COMMITTEES

Section 1

The committees necessary for the function of this organization shall be designated by the organization's President with the approval of the Board of Directors.

Section 2

The committee chairmen will be appointed by the President with the approval of the organization's Board of Directors, and will in turn select their committee members as necessary to accomplish their committees' functions.

Section 3

Notifications shall be given to the President by the committee chairman of the time, place and agenda content for an upcoming committee meeting.

ARTICLE X: AMENDMENTS

Section 1

This constitution and bylaws may be amended at any regular or special meeting of the organization by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote, provided a quorum is present and also provided that notice of such proposed amendment or amendments is presented to the organization at the regular meeting, and written notice made to the membership, preceding the action on such amendments.

ARTICLE XI: ORGANIZATIONAL EXPENDITURES

Section 1

The GVBCH is an educational organization, without partisan activity or intent and will therefore make no political donations, nor engage in sponsorship (in any form) of any partisan political campaign.

Section 2

The Treasurer may establish one or more petty cash funds as is deemed acceptable by the Board of Directors. The Treasurer will report on the amount in each petty cash fund with the normally presented report at each meeting. In no case shall a petty cash fund contain more than $50.00.

Section 3

A committee of three (3) Board members appointed by the President and confirmed by the Board will perform an annual financial audit. The audit will occur following the elections of Officers and prior to the installation of the newly elected Officers.

ARTICLE XII: LIABILITY

At organization rides, clinics or events involving livestock, guests attending such events shall sign a waiver of liability prior to their participation in the event. The chairman of the event is responsible for providing said waivers and for submittal of signed waivers to the organization Secretary promptly following the event.

ARTICLE XIII: STATE ORGANIZATION ASSOCIATION

The Gallatin Valley Back Country Horsemen is a member of the Back Country Horsemen of Montana and through this membership is associated also with the Back Country Horsemen of America organization.

ARTICLE XIV: ORGANIZATIONAL CONDUCT REGULATIONS

Section 1

The GVBCH will conduct all meetings within the meeting framework given in *Robert's Rules of Order*, which will be used as the final authority in resolving points in meeting conduct and parliamentary procedure.

Section 2

No member of GVBCH shall be considered a 'spokesman' for the GVBCH organization, without the explicit appointment by the President for a specific occasion.

Section 3

In the event that familial or domestic relationship exists between two or more Officers or Directors of the club, the Board will identify three Officers or Directors to co-sign checks for disbursement of funds so that no conflict of interest occurs.

Section 4

Chapter members may be expelled for conduct which is intimidating, threatening, pugnacious, belligerent or otherwise

harmful to members of the chapter or which impairs the functioning or damages the reputation of the chapter if such conduct shall be brought to the Board's attention and the majority of the Board determines that expulsion of the member should be considered by the following procedures: the Board shall appoint a committee of three regular members who are not on the Board. The committee shall investigate and submit a written report to the Board stating the results of its investigation and its recommendation. If expulsion or other disciplinary action shall be recommended, the Board shall consider such recommendation at a hearing at the next regular or special meeting and give the accused member at least ten (10) days' notice of such hearing. The Board shall consider the committee's report, shall give the defending member the opportunity to be heard, and may consider the statements of other persons present to the extent that they are relevant. Only Board members present at the hearing may vote, and no member shall be expelled except by the vote of two-thirds (2/3) of a quorum; lesser discipline may be imposed by a majority vote. The Board shall advise the member at least 15 days prior to the effective date of the action taken. A member whom the Board has voted to expel or discipline may appeal the Board's decision by giving written notice of appeal to the Secretary prior to the effective date of the Board action. Within five (5) days after receiving such notice, the Secretary shall notify the Board of the appeal and shall furnish to the appealing member and the Board a list of Past Presidents and Members of the Year who are then regular members of the chapter and are not currently on the Board. Within five (5) days thereafter the appealing member shall choose one person from the list and notify the Secretary of his or her choice. The Secretary shall notify the Board of the member's choice, and within five (5) days the Board shall choose one person from the list and notify the Secretary of its choice. The Secretary shall notify the two from the list who have been chosen, and the two shall select a third member from the list. The three shall comprise the Appellate Tribunal which shall promptly schedule a hearing, give notice of the hearing, determine whether or not the appealing member should be expelled or disciplined, and notify the appealing member and the Board of its determination. A decision of the Appellate Tribunal shall be final.