

# **CITY OF THREE FORKS, MONTANA**

## **RESOLUTION NO. 440 -2025**

### **CALLING FOR THE 2025 GENERAL ELECTION, AND NOTIFYING THE GALLATIN COUNTY ELECTION ADMINISTRATOR OF THE CITY'S DESIRE TO CONDUCT THE ELECTION BY MAIL BALLOT**

**WHEREAS**, the City of Three Forks will hold a General Election for five expiring City Council seats (two of which are for unexpired terms for Council seats) and one Mayor seat on November 4, 2025, as required by §13-1-104(3)(a) MCA.

**WHEREAS**, voter turnout in Three Forks municipal elections has historically been low. §13-19-202, MCA, provides a method for conducting mail ballot elections for local elections. Statistically, mail ballot elections increase voter turnout. A polling place election still has 80% of voters getting absentee ballots mailed to them.

**WHEREAS**, the Gallatin County Election Administrator has informed the City that the costs of conducting a mail ballot are significantly less than the costs of conducting polling place elections due to not having extra judges and related necessary supplies. The Election Administrator also states that mail ballot elections increase voter participation, remove barriers that keep people from getting to the polls, give people more time to study candidates or other issues, and has built-in safeguards that increase the integrity of the election process.

**WHEREAS**, under §13-19-104 through Part 3, MCA, elections can be conducted by a mail ballot election; and the Election Administrator says mail ballot elections are in the best interests of the electors.

**WHEREAS**, following §13-19-205, MCA, the Election Administrator shall prepare a written plan, including a timetable, and shall submit it to the Secretary of State at least 60 days prior to the date set for the election.

**WHEREAS**, an official ballot will be mailed to every qualified elector of the City of Three Forks with the goal of increasing voter participation in the municipal elections for 2025.

**WHEREAS**, the Gallatin County Election Administrator may also have a drop-off site located at City Hall, 206 S. Main Street, for electors who do not wish to mail their ballot.

**WHEREAS**, for any election conducted by mail ballot, the ballots must be mailed to the voters no sooner than the 20<sup>th</sup> day and no later than the 15<sup>th</sup> day prior to Election Day and all ballots must be mailed the same day in accordance with §13-19-207, MCA.

**WHEREAS**, §13-1-403, MCA, says the governing body may cancel the election if the number of candidates filing for the elected positions is less than or equal to the number of position to be filled.

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**WHEREAS**, per §7-1-4127, MCA, the City Clerk noticed this public hearing in the Bozeman Daily Chronicle on 5/31 & 6/3/2025, in the Three Forks Voice on 6/4/2025 and in the Belgrade News on 6/5/2025.

### **NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:**

1. The Three Forks City Council hereby notifies the Gallatin County Election Administrator of its intent to conduct the General Election on November 4, 2025, via mail.
2. The City Council requests ballots be mailed 20 days before the election per §13-19-207, MCA.
3. Except as provided in §13-19-204, MCA, the decision to conduct an election under the provision of §13-19-202, MCA, is within the sole discretion of the Election Administrator. If at the Election Administrator's discretion, he chooses not to hold a mail ballot election he will alert the City immediately so that it can prepare a space for a polling place election.
4. The City Clerk is hereby directed to forward a certified copy of this resolution to the Gallatin County Election Administrator.
5. The City Council hereby requests that the Gallatin County Election Administrator have a place to deposit ballots located at City Hall (206 Main Street, Three Forks, Montana) which will be available to the public during regular businesses hours prior to Election Day, and will remain open for extended hours of 7AM to 8PM on Election Day, November 4, 2025.
6. Within five (5) days of receiving this request, the Election Administrator shall respond to the Three Forks City Clerk in writing, stating that this request is either granted or denied for reasons specified. If granted, the Election Administrator shall prepare a plan for the election
7. If the number of candidates filing for the open seats is less than or equal to the same number of open seats, the City Council hereby requests the Election Administrator to appoint the candidates to the seats for which they have filed by acclamation.

**PASSED AND ADOPTED** this 10<sup>th</sup> day of June 2025.

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Randy Johnston, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Crystal Turner, City Clerk