

Homestead Landowners' Association, Inc.

Policies and Procedures, August 2025

Introduction: A policies and procedures document undertakes to describe association business that is not covered, or is covered only in a general way, by existing documents: by-laws, article of incorporation, and/or covenants. The policies and procedures here-in are the day-to-day workings of the Homestead Landowners' Association, Inc., known throughout as either *HLA*, or the *association*.

As such, they do not necessarily reflect the policies and procedures of the past, nor of the distant future. They are a reflection of how the association operates *now*. They may be modified by the HLA's board of directors at any time, and should be reviewed on an annual basis by both board and membership. Also, they reflect a *minimum* involvement by association members to keep HLA operating smoothly as a non-profit entity with basic land management and financial responsibilities.

A key point to remember is that everyone involved with the management, business, and upkeep of Homestead Landowners' Association, Inc., with the exception of the water operator and the bookkeeper, is a *volunteer*.

Board and Board Officers:

HLA currently has a board with seven (7) volunteer members, but organizational documents provide for three(3) to seven (7) board members. A quorum for decision making is always the simple majority of board members. When annual meeting elections fail to fill all seven director vacancies, the board may appoint to fill the vacancies, although in practice is not required to.

A quorum of board members may never meet to conduct business without advance public notice or agenda. It is the current policy to meet at 2 p.m. on the second Sunday of each month at the community center. The board may change that time and place whenever the need arises.

Officers

President: conducts properly moderated meetings, assures that a proper agenda is prepared in a timely manner, and assures that proper hard-copy minutes are prepared after the meeting for approval by the board at the next board meeting, and for review by association members.

Although a meeting may be recorded, an audio tape of the meeting without written transcription is not considered adequate as official minutes. Although the board president does not generally take or prepare agenda or minutes, the president is responsible to see that the documents are produced, distributed, and stored in a proper manner.

Vice President: conducts meetings in the absence of the president, with the same duties as listed above.

Treasurer/bookkeeper: HLA contracts the part-time services of a paid, off-site bookkeeper working under the supervision of the HLA Treasurer. The bookkeeper accepts and deposits payments, writes checks for expenditures, and maintains the bank checking account. She organizes tax documents and delivers them to the tax preparer. The bookkeeper also provides a current HLA accounts statement at each board meeting, as well as providing aging lists and other needed documentation applying to individual account problems.

The treasurer collects mail, delivers incoming checks to the bookkeeper, is a cosigner of checks along with another board member (2 signatures required), and acts as a liaison between the board and the bookkeeper. The treasurer, by action through the board, decides financial policy for HLA, and conducts, again through board action, negotiations with account holders. The bookkeeper is not responsible for board policy, nor for negotiations with account holders.

The bookkeeper is paid on an hourly basis, pay to be reviewed from time to time by the HLA board. Currently pay is \$20 per hour. The board may also choose to authorize the off-site bookkeeper to collect mail on behalf of the HLA.

Secretary: The HLA secretary produces agendas with input from the board, minutes for review, handles most correspondence, and is responsible for maintaining an accurate, up-to-date mailing and label list, cross-referenced to the county list that is mailed to HLA in January of each year. Because of privacy issues, the complete member list, including mailing addresses, is not provided to members. At this time, there is no complete directory of residents.

The secretary also provides, on request, copies of up-dated HLA paperwork (Covenants, Articles of Incorporation, By-Laws, and Policies and Procedures) to prospective buyers or realtors. Originals of all paperwork remain on file in the HLA office, and electronic copies of those documents are also stored on the HLA computer.

Board Directors not holding office: At-large directors take responsibility on a volunteer basis for work of the board not covered above, including but not limited to election organization and operations, land management, road maintenance, and special events.

Record Keeping

All records of HLA business are kept on file in the HLA office, usually both as hard copy and as electronic files. Organization of records is an on-going struggle, and requires the efforts of dedicated volunteers.

Decisions about what materials to be archived, and for how long, are made (or should be made) by the board working as committee-as-a-whole, or by an appointed volunteer committee.

Permanent records do not leave the HLA office.

Water System

Water Manager/operator: HLA contracts for a state-certified water manager, with a detailed contract itemizing responsibilities. State certification, at minimum level 2

to include provision for chlorine testing, is required by the State of New Mexico to operate a public water system. HLA pays for initial training to provide Level 1 certification, after which the water operator is responsible for his own continuing certification.

The water system is budgeted separately from the HLA budget. The water operator and bookkeeper work together to produce the monthly billing, with the water operator providing water-use readings from each meter in the system. The bookkeeper then uses the HLA-owned computer and *Intuit Quickbooks* to generate billing.

The water manager is currently paid a flat fee of \$880.00 per month, with an additional \$16.00 per hour for extra “shovel” work.

HLA works closely with the New Mexico Rural Water Association for back-up certification coverage, and is required to work closely with the New Mexico Environmental Department-Drinking Water Bureau to maintain water quality standards through a rigorous, state-approved water testing regimen.

Some HLA residents remember a time years ago when water was distributed from a single source free of charge. That is no longer the case. The state requires that all water that is distributed from HLA wells be metered and tested on a regular basis.

HLA Water System: HLA currently uses three (3) wells and a distribution system that includes chlorine treatment to provide potable water to subscribing residents.

The HLA board has approved a 10¢/gallon fee for non-potable water, sold at the frost-free near the HLA office. The water from the frost-free is potable, but because HLA cannot guarantee the customer’s transfer equipment or storage procedures, the water is sold as non-potable only. Residents currently contact the treasurer or water manager to arrange for water sales.

The board has followed a case-by-case policy of not charging for *one half* of the gallons lost through a residential water leak on private property during the first incident. Residents are encouraged to be *aware* of the workings of their own water systems, and to install and maintain appropriate valve systems to protect themselves and the HLA water system from leaks.

When property with water service is left vacant for long periods of time, the property owner’s water supply should always be shut off at the customer’s valve(s) by the property owner.

HLA offers turn off/turn on service to properties for \$25.00 for each visit. Residents may not use the HLA corporate stop, or the meter shutoff valve, as their means of controlling water delivery to their property. Residents who damage an HLA valve will be charged for its replacement, both parts and labor.

HLA does not offer plumbing services or excavation services on private property.

HLA no longer provides water to new accounts located off HLA property or on out-parcel property.

HLA provides water to commercial accounts on HLA property on an individual basis, after board negotiation with the commercial property owner.

Residential water meters are read and billed monthly. Water bills that are delinquent for more than three (3) months may result in water shut-off, with liens filed. The water operator closely monitors all water deliveries in an effort to catch leaks before they become catastrophic.

Water Provision to Commercial Ventures

Homestead Landowners' Association, Inc. (HLA) covenants (section 5-e) allow for limited commercial activities on residential lots. However, because of limited ground water resources, the decision to supply water to a commercial venture shall be decided on a case-by-case basis. In no instance shall water be supplied to a commercial venture that uses more water than that expected of a single family, residential lot.

For example: a commercial tax preparer might establish his/her business in a Homestead residence, with that business not expected to increase traffic flow, as per 5-e. Water service would be provided, since the consumption of excess water is not expected from such a business.

On the other hand: a resident may decide to grow a large commercial crop that requires a significant use of residential water for crop irrigation. That use would be denied, since HLA's water rights are limited for residential use.

Residents are encouraged to look to other sources for commercial watering ventures, such as roof run-off collection.

Insurance

HLA currently carries general liability insurance with Jackson Brown agency in Albuquerque, and by law, Workman's Comp Insurance with Mountain States Agency, working through Jackson Brown.

Internet

HLA has no telephone or internet service. Therefore, all water or dues billing, and all accounts (such as insurance, above) are handled by USPS, with hard copies provided for record keeping. Before attempting such internet services, HLA needs to carefully explore recurring costs—installation of phone service (at commercial rates) to carry internet, monthly internet charges, computer cost including upgrades and updates, and provision for an internet manager, either volunteer or paid.

Communications

HLA should provide periodic updates and communications with members. Absent a website, this is done by USPS on an irregular basis, as recommended in the By-Laws. It would be the HLA Board's responsibility to communicate with members on a regular basis, either by finding a willing volunteer or acting as a committee-as-a-whole.

In addition, the board will include in the July mailing to all members the updated and board-approved copy of the Policies and Procedures document.

HLA Restroom/Groundskeeping/Firewising

The HLA restroom in the storage/office building is opened for use after the last threat of frost has passed. It is closed for the winter season in October. Maintenance of the restroom is on a volunteer basis. If no volunteers offer to maintain the facility, it remains closed.

General grounds keeping throughout Homestead is done on a volunteer basis, including any lawn mowing or trash pick-up.

Residents are encouraged to be active Firewise participants, clearing over-crowded stands and dead timber (with the exception of occasional wildlife trees) to reduce wildfire threat, remembering that HLA has virtually no fire-fighting protection.

Members may deposit slash (tree trimmings only—no trash) at the 'Borrow Pit' slash pile, around the pit's perimeter. The slash pile is managed by volunteers. It is the HLA Board's responsibility to maintain, modify, or cancel slash deposition policies.

HLA property is posted against hunting and trespassing. Maintenance of the signage is accomplished by volunteers.

Mapping

HLA is a square mile of properties, with 175 separate lots and more than 130 landowners. An up-to-date ownership map is a board responsibility, using the annually provided county landowner lists and board knowledge of recent land transfers. That process is, like all others, accomplished by volunteer effort.

HLA roadways

Roadwork including grading and graveling is accomplished through hired contractors, with the work organized by volunteers. The volunteer road committee works within budget restrictions to receive bids for work. The committee works with the HLA board to determine which sections of road are a priority.

Absent a road committee, the HLA board will act as a committee-as-a-whole to authorize work.

It has been the HLA policy to provide free of charge one (1) culvert for driveway easement to residential properties, should a culvert be needed. Culverts are only installed on roadway right-of-way, and become HLA property, whether originally purchased by the landowner or not.

Culverts are installed either by hired contractor, or by volunteers.

Maintenance of existing culverts is accomplished by hired contractors, or by volunteers. HLA expects that landowners will tend to the maintenance of their own culverts and to private driveway repair.

New Construction

Residents are asked to inform the HLA board of any new construction planned, including information on set-backs, water and electric lines conforming to the HLA covenants. Detailed procedures are outlined in the HLA Covenants.

General Obligations

Obligations that must be addressed in a timely manner as they are received include:

- payment of four (4) electric bills each month;
- Ad Valorem taxes: because HLA enjoys non-profit status, the organization pays no property tax on HLA property, although individual land owners in HLA do pay property taxes to the county. Tax records are archived, however.
- renewal fee for Articles of Incorporation with Secretary of State each July;
- gross receipts taxes on water sales due each December and June;
- Water Conservation Fee due to state engineer each December and June;
- Visa bill each month that includes expenditures by bookkeeper, water manager, and whomever else is authorized by the board to use the Visa card;
- Insurance payment (usually billed in January) to both Jackson-Brown and Mountain States;
- HLA membership fee to New Mexico Rural Water Association;
- Individual HLA membership dues at \$74 per lot due in July.

Liens

The sole *reasonable* means of attempting to collect past-due accounts for dues and water bills is the filing of a lien against the property in question with Catron County, a process accomplished by volunteer effort.

The county keeps the lien on file until HLA notifies the county that the lien has been satisfied. The county takes no action to collect the lien, or to notify the delinquent landowner of the lien's existence. HLA generally notifies the landowner when the lien is filed.

Filing liens is problematic, primarily because of the filing cost involved. The current fee to file a single lien is \$25.00, plus either the postage to mail it in, or mileage to deliver it to the Reserve office in person, all requiring considerable volunteer time. When the lien is lifted, that requires yet more time and expenditure.

Some realtors and/or title companies are diligent about inquiring about liens and resident indebtedness at the time of sale, and may arrange for the lien to be paid off at closing. If not, the property may be sold and the lien remains in place.

If property is sold by the state for delinquent taxes (commonly called 'sheriff's sales'), HLA does not recoup the funds, and the lien remains against the property. Without expensive and time-consuming litigation, HLA has no way to force the property owner to pay the lien.

In some cases, negotiating for payment of past-due accounts with the delinquent property owner is productive, and in those cases, liens are almost never filed.

Utility Building

The 60x64 Mueller utility/service building was donated to HLA as a work center for water and road crews and job-related activities. The facility will be used for fabrication, and for storage of parts and materials such as piping, plumbing supplies, culverts, and signage. Any other use that is not road/water system related is encouraged, but must be scheduled by the building manager.

- No smoking is allowed inside, or within 30 feet of the building.

- HLA residents must be 21 or older to use shop facilities with arrangements made with the building manager. Minors may use facilities if accompanied by a supervisor who is a full-time HLA resident.

- No person under the age of 25 shall operate any HLA motor vehicle, unless under the direct supervision of a full-time HLA resident.

- The 24x40 "community room" may be used for gatherings including HLA meetings, 4-H activities, youth projects, writing workshops, and similar educational meetings, provided those meetings are **scheduled in advance** and noted on the building calendar. All scheduled events will be approved by the HLA Board, through the Building Liaison. An HLA resident must be in attendance at all such meetings, and will be responsible for clean-up, supply replacement, lights on/off, and water use management.

- Should an activity be scheduled that requires the 40x60 garage area, arrangements must be made to move HLA vehicles out of the building during the duration of the event if they are in the way, and to return the machinery afterward.

- The ADA bathroom that opens only to the outside will remain unlocked at all times, unless neglect, misuse, or vandalism indicates otherwise. The remainder of the service building will be locked at all times when not in use.

- Entry keys for the service building may be obtained from the building liaison. Keys will not be general issue to HLA residents.

HLA Service Truck

The 2020 Ram 3500 water/road service truck is also a donation made to HLA.

- Safety is job-one with the HLA vehicle(s).

- The HLA truck is a 'logged' vehicle. The operations log kept in the truck will be completed after every use, including notation of maintenance needed. If needed maintenance is of a nature that would prevent usage of the vehicle, the vehicle manager will be notified.

- No smoking is allowed in the vehicle.

- The vehicle should always be stored in a 'ready' condition: gas tank full, auxiliary diesel tank full. Fuel can be purchased using the HLA credit card from the Eagle Guest.

- Operators will conduct a thorough inspection of the vehicle before each usage, as per the posted check list. Any maintenance issues will be promptly addressed.

-Because of insurance regulations, no one under the age of 25 may operate the vehicle. A valid driver's license is always required for operation.

-The vehicle may be operated by the water manager, who has priority usage, or by any full-time HLA resident 25 years old or older while engaged in HLA related service activities.

-Other than responding to emergencies, the HLA truck will be used for the sort of activities for which it is intended. It is not designed for hauling gravel or pulling stumps. The snow plow unit is reserved for pushing snow only, on HLA roads and property. It will not be used for plowing private driveways, other than the private road allowing access to Well #4.

-Anyone planning to use the HLA truck for the first time should schedule and complete a standard check ride before using the vehicle.

-If an operator cannot abide by the 20 mph HLA speed limit, he will not use the HLA truck.

-Any time the HLA truck is at a work site that requires that it be parked on an HLA roadway, all emergency equipment will be activated, and traffic cones placed fore and aft. If the work site requires water system or road repair crews to work in or near the roadway, the truck should be parked and coned in the road to most effectively block traffic, with emergency lighting activated.

-Any fuel donated for the HLA service truck (i.e., paid at the pump by a private party) should be noted in the log. All HLA Visa fuel receipts must be turned in at the end of the month to the HLA bookkeeper.

HLA Motor Grader

The HLA motor grader will be operated by designated operators 25 years old or older only, on HLA property, for HLA road and field maintenance only.

-Operators will invest whatever time and effort is necessary to become competent with the machinery. Lower Sweeten Drive, between the service building and the bottom of Murray Hill Road, is designated as a motor grader practice area.

-Motor graders are unforgiving of carelessness, incapacity, or neglect. They are heavy, ponderous and awkward. Operators should use the motor grader ONLY when prepared to give it 110% of their attention.

-Operators are encouraged to use the "3 holds" system when boarding the motor grader. Operators must be aware where they're putting their feet while boarding!

-Operators will properly use the seat belt at all times during operations.

-Operator will not allow passengers to ride on the motor grader while it is in operation.

-On HLA property, the motor grader is restricted to 10 miles per hour maximum.

-Operators should be prepared to perform whatever routine maintenance is required before each use, including but not limited to (1) tire inspection and pressure checks, (2) air filter service (3) hydraulic level inspection and topping (4) basic machine inspection for loose or unsafe parts.

-Adequate warm-up time at each starting must be allowed for building air system pressure and for the diesel engine to reach safe operating temperature. Although the grader is housed indoors, wintertime operations required care and planning to make sure proper operating temperatures are achieved before leaving the building.

-When the motor grader is started inside the building, the building exhaust fan must be operating. If conditions allow, at least one of the large service doors should be opened before operating the grader.

-Remembering that the motor grader is not a maneuverable snowmobile, extreme care must be taken during wintertime operations when roads are snow covered. Off-camber, improperly ditched roads are a particular hazard.

-The motor grader will be fueled outside of the service building, never inside.

-Care during the fueling operation will be taken to avoid spillage of diesel fuel on the grader, the service truck, or on the ground.

-The fuel tank on the grader will always be kept full after each use.

-Standard procedure is to fill the service truck's auxiliary tank at the Eagle Guest, paying with the HLA Credit card.

-Should the motor grader be needed during an emergency such as a forest/brush fire, it will be operated only under the direction of the Incident Commander.

Additions and Corrections

The policies and procedures document may be amended at any time by the HLA Board of Directors.

September, 2019: By unanimous board vote, the following was added to Policies and Procedures:

Before the board appoints an HLA resident to a board position, that person shall attend a minimum of five (5) HLA Board regular meetings, learning the workings of the board in the process.

The Board may amend the attendance requirement, depending on circumstances. For example, an HLA resident who has attending meetings off and on over the years, and is well-known to the board members, might be appointed to the board after interest is expressed. The policy is intended to apply to new residents—new to the subdivision, new to property ownership in the HLA.

Account Collections

A late fee of 10% will be charged on the monthly billed amount after 30 days.

After four months or a \$400 past due balance on your water bill or yearly association dues, you will be notified by certified letter that you have 30 days to reach out to accounting to arrange to bring your accounts current, or your water will be turned off and your meter will be locked on said date.

If you are not a water customer, after four months of past due yearly association dues, you will be notified by certified letter that a lien will be placed on your property on said date. All fees for placing and removing property liens will be charged to the property owner.

In the event that the above actions have not resulted in the past due amount being paid or a satisfactory payment agreement from the HLA member the board may utilize a collection agency to recover the past due amount.

Water Fee Schedule

The water rates are calculated to yield sufficient revenues to pay the operating expenses of the HLA water system, including the cost of pumping from the wells; chemicals to disinfect the water; to provide for the repair of water system infrastructure owned and operated by HLA; to pay labor, administrative, billing, accounting and legal expenses, and to establish a minimal financial reserve to allow HLA to eventually access grant funds for system improvements. A copy of the new Water Fee Schedule is included in this notice. It goes into effect on August billing of 2025

Homestead Landowners' Association, Inc. Water Fee Schedule

(effective August 2025)

Service	Fee
Meter Installation including shut-off valve	\$2000 plus labor, equipment, and extenuating circumstances
Meter Removal	\$250
Dormant Meter Annual Fee	\$100
Monthly Base Fee	\$35
Turn Meter Off (within 24 hours)	\$25
Turn Meter On (within 25 Hours)	\$25
Shutoff and lock for non-payment	\$50
Resume service after arrears	\$25
Emergency Meter Shutoff (ASAP)	\$70
Emergency Meter Turn On (ASAP)	\$70
Damage to HLA Equipment	Per incident, based on damage plus a \$200 fine
Returned Check Fee	Current Bank Rate
Late Fee	10%
Meter/meter box tampering fine	\$50 Per incident

Water Fees

Water Base Fee	\$35
1 to 1500 gallons	.012 per gallon
1501 to 2500 gallons	.020 per gallon
2501 to 4000 gallons	.024 per gallon
4001 gallons & above	.030 per gallon

If a customer's meter is turned dormant at all during a fiscal year, they are charged the dormant meter flat fee for that year. When a customer's meter is turned on, they are charged a monthly base fee plus usage.

A late fee of 10% is automatically incurred 30 days from the invoice date.

Emergency shut off/turn on is performed as soon as possible. Regular water shut off/turn on is done within 24 hours.