

Mayor: Ethan J. Barnes
Recorder-Treasurer: Mitchell Sparks
Council Members: Penny Allen, Tony Berry
Mark Gordon, Laura Smith
Sue Taylor, Herbert Wise
City Attorney: Joe Grider

City of Hardy, Arkansas

PO Box 5 · 124 Woodland Hills Road
Hardy, Arkansas 72542
870-856-3811
www.cityofhardy.org
www.facebook.com/cityofhardy



**Minutes of Regular Business Meeting
Hardy City Council
December 11, 2023 · 6:00 p.m.
Hardy City Hall**

Mayor Ethan J. Barnes called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. on Monday, December 11, 2023 at Hardy City Hall, 124 Woodland Hills Road, Hardy, Arkansas. Councilman Gordon led all in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of our county. Councilman Berry gave the invocation. Recorder-Treasurer Mitchell Sparks called the Roll. The following members answered to their names: Penny Allen, Tony Berry, Laura Smith, Sue Taylor, and Junior Wise. Mark Gordon was absent. With five of the six council members, there was a quorum. Attorney Joe Grider was present.

Councilwoman Smith made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 13, 2023 meeting of the regular business meeting. Councilwoman Taylor seconded the motion. All in favor; motion passed.

Councilwoman Smith made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 30, 2023 meeting of the regular business meeting. Councilman Berry seconded the motion. All in favor; motion passed.

Councilwoman Smith made a motion to approve the agenda of the December 11, 2023 meeting of the regular business meeting. Councilwoman Taylor seconded the motion. All in favor; motion passed.

REPORTS

Mayor Barnes called for committee reports. Chief Scott Rose and Chief Josh Moore were absent during the beginning of the meeting because of an emergency. They did arrive later in the meeting to present their reports.

City Financial. Sparks explained that, according to Megan Cargill, Deputy Clerk, the city has not been charging a late fee for water bills. It was a decision made during the Covid period. Sparks looked for meeting minute notes about it, an ordinance, or a resolution and could not find anything about it. He asked if the current council, or anyone around at the time, had any information. None was offered. Sparks stated the city would be reinstating the late fee as of the first billing in 2024. Sparks then asked for any questions about the current financials. Barnes stated the city is currently finishing up paying bills for 2023 to make sure they reflect on the 2023 budget.

Public Works. Superintendent Morris said they only had two leaks in the last month. He said there were some breakdowns at the sewer plant they were working through with the help of the engineer to find a solution. He said they did get a pump going but didn't know how long it would last. Councilwoman asked about the centrifuge. She said that it was about a year ago the city needed to replace the centrifuges. She wondered how they were holding up, and she remarked that she knew the catwalks were still in disrepair. Morris said they don't have a lot of catwalks, but there are some around the clarifier. He didn't know about the centrifuges, but remembered a transformer went out 6 or 8 months ago that needed to be replaced. She asked if everything was decent. He said he wouldn't call it decent, but it's working. They need to get repairs done or could fall under guidelines. Barnes explained the city is in the middle of a grant to move a Woodland Hills water line. The moment that grant project is done, the city and White River Planning and Development district will be pursuing grant money to replace and repair the waste treatment facility. Morris said the RV Park bathrooms have been winterized. Councilwoman Taylor asked if the RV Park was closed for the winter. Barnes explained it's not closed, but the city is not providing water utilities during the cold weather season.

Planning & Zoning Commission. There are no active zoning permit applications, so a meeting was not held to review.

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Recorder-Treasurer Office

Solar Eclipse Preparedness Committee. The group met right before the current meeting. Barnes reported that Chief Moore provided a quote for AED machines. Barnes asked Councilwoman Smith to read the figures. She said each cost \$1,570.80 and the Pedi-pads are \$98.69 each. He's listed the need for seven AEDs to be in each city owned building. Barnes told the council that was not accounted for in the 2024 budget, but there is money available to purchase them. He suggested purchasing two a year for the next few years. No action taken.

Sharp County Regional Airport Commission. Barnes stated they met December 6 at the airport terminal. Under old business, there is a required FAA audit, because of amount of money the airport has received from the federal government. They awarded a bid to King-Rhodes and Associates to manage the rentals of the two new properties the airport owns on the highway. They discussed hiring a new Airport Manager as the current Manager will be vacating his office as of December 31, 2023. Under new business, they voted to add a new signer to the bank account, because the current Manager would no longer be employed there. The current Manager's debit card will be cancelled at the end of the year.

Tri-County Solid Waste Disposal Authority. Barnes read notes from their last meeting. There was income from the prior month of \$913.27. There were expenses of \$10,708.45. This left the October ending balance of \$6,974.82. He reported the City of Highland Mayor Kyle Crawford is the new chair for the board. Current Interim-Manager Brian Watson reported at their meeting that he was working nights and weekends to keep the facility operational until a new Manager can be hired. Barnes said Caleb Martin was hired to work for the facility for 40 hours a week at minimum wage. Part of his job will be to pick up the recycling from each location and deliver it to the facility. Barnes said Watson had attended a meeting and stated that the recycling market was increasing and should be maintained through the winter. Barnes said that Sharp County sent workers to the facility to fix equipment at the county's expense. The facility still needs insulation and heat installed. Barnes stated the three County Judges Counts, Crow, and Smith agreed to work together with the recycling center to keep an active board that will work together to make the center a better place. Peggy Long has agreed to withdraw her resignation and will remain on the board.

Hardy Advertising & Promotion Commission. Commissioner Moore said that as of November 28, the general account balance is \$105,926.12. The reserve balance is \$51,909.49. They approved \$500 to Hardy Merchants for December Friday Night advertising. Approved \$250 for Safe Night Ministries advertising for the Christmas Breakfast and Craft Market fundraiser. Approved \$150 for children's activity booklets for children visiting Santa on Hardy Parade Day. Approved purchasing 20 strands of Christmas Lights for Dr. Thompson Park. They approved their 2024 budget. She said the Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony was well attended and well received.

Police Department. Chief Rose said the parade was a success while one of the department's biggest concerns was safety. He wanted to thank Entergy and Justin Parrish. His crew worked in Hardy the last two weeks prior to the parade replacing, fixing, and adding lights along the parade route. Rose said lights and cameras are the biggest tools for crime prevention. It also benefited the city with all the kids along the parade route. He said there were no accidents and no injuries. Barnes added a thank you to Lieutenant Michael Himschoot for his help during the parade. Rose agreed and said all the officers were available to help. He said citizens stepped up to help, and they had Highland School District student volunteers that earned credits by helping. Rose said although crime is low, they are investigating some vandalism on the back parking lot of the Clearwater Cornershop. Also, some in Loberg Park. He said thanks to the cameras he's confident they will have a successful investigation.

Fire Department. Chief Moore stated he had to miss the beginning of the meeting because of a chimney fire. Councilwoman Smith asked if there was a local chimney sweep. A person in the crowd said there was, and contact information would be exchanged. Moore said the month of November was a little busy with 28 total calls. They haven't had structure fires, but the concern with winter weather people will soon be firing up wood burners and burning leaves. Moore presented a study he did on calls for the fire department. In 2016, there were 128 calls, 2017 had 237, 2018 had 240, 2019 had 301, 2020 had 320, 2021 had 310, 2022 had 355, and as of Friday night

2023 there have been 378 calls. Barnes mentioned that Chief Moore would be graduating from Black River Technical College with his Associate's Degree on Thursday.

Mayor's Office. Barnes said that on November 29, ARDOT held a ribbon cutting ceremony for the new bridge. Many state, county and local officials were present. The Highland Band played during the dedication. The city received a box of new maps from ARDOT. On December 7, the American Legion and VFW Post held a Pearl Harbor Day Ceremony on the Spring Street Bridge. He said there was a daughter of a soldier lost that day in attendance. Barnes and the woman tossed the reef into the river together. On December 9, the city hosted the Christmas Parade. There were 100s of folks in attendance for the nighttime parade. It was well received by the community. The city was thrilled by the turnout of entries for the parade. The theme was "Polar Express". Barnes announced the winners. The first-place prize of \$300 from FNBC Bank was from Mrs. Krystal's Preschool. Second place of \$200 from First Community Bank went to Rodney Williams & family. Scott Hamby from Next powered by North Arkansas Electric Cooperative (NARC) won \$100 from Evolve Bank & Trust. Next said they would find a family in need and donate their winnings to them. Barnes thanked Judge Mark Johnson for helping coordinate the line up for the parade. Thanks to the Street Department for blowing off the leaves on the sidewalks prior to the parade, and to the Police Department for coordinating the detour traffic routes.

OLD BUSINESS

NONE

NEW BUSINESS

Barnes presented the Legislative Joint Audit Committee Report. No action is required since there were no findings. The council simply needed to review it and note the review in the minutes of the meeting. He had everyone go to page one of the audit and he read the final paragraph, which stated there were no findings. Sparks thanked previous R-T Darlene Wilson for assisting the auditor with locating needed documents.

Councilwoman Smith made a motion to read Ordinance 2023-9 Fixing the Salary for the Mayor and Recorder-Treasurer for 2024. Councilwoman Taylor seconded the motion. All in favor; motion passed. Attorney Joe Grider read Ordinance 2023-9.

Councilwoman Smith made a motion waive the second and third reading, but to read by title only of Ordinance 2023-9. Councilwoman Taylor seconded the motion. All in favor; motion passed. Grider read the title only.

Councilman Wise made a motion to accept Ordinance 2023-9 Fixing the Salary for the Mayor and Recorder-Treasurer for 2024. Councilwoman Smith seconded the motion. Mayor Barnes called for a roll call vote. Wise - yes. Smith - yes. Allen - yes. Berry - yes. Taylor - yes. Five of five voted yes; motion passed.

Councilwoman Smith made a motion to pass the Emergency Clause for Ordinance 2023-9. Councilwoman Taylor seconded the motion. Mayor Barnes called for a roll call vote. Smith - yes. Taylor - yes. Wise - yes. Berry - yes. Allen - yes. Grider mentioned that this clause needs to pass by a two-thirds vote of the council. Gordon was absent and if another person had been absent, the Emergency Clause itself couldn't have been passed.

Councilman Berry asked for time to speak about meeting protocols concerning public ability to address the council. He stated he'd had citizens suggest to him that the public be allowed to address the council at the end of the meeting. He said that he would like to see it happen, but not mad if it doesn't. Barnes said it can be addressed in January by resolution when the council sets the agenda formatting process.

ADJOURN

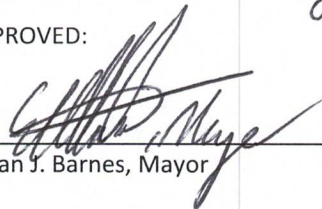
Councilman Berry made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilwoman Smith seconded the motion. All in favor; motion passed. Barnes declared the meeting adjourned at 6:45 pm.

The next regular meeting of the Hardy City Council is scheduled for Monday, January 8, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. at Hardy City Hall, 124 Woodland Hills Road in Hardy, Arkansas.

Respectfully submitted,
Mitchell Sparks, Recorder-Treasurer

PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 8th DAY OF January, 2023

APPROVED:



Ethan J. Barnes, Mayor

ATTEST:



Mitchell Sparks, Recorder-Treasurer



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Recorder-Treasurer Office