

Mayor: Ethan J. Barnes

Recorder-Treasurer: Willow R. Sharp

Council Members: Tony Berry, Amy Clay-Thomas, Natalie Quintana-DuBois, Ginni Kauffman, Sue Taylor, Laura Smith

City Attorney: M. Joseph Grider

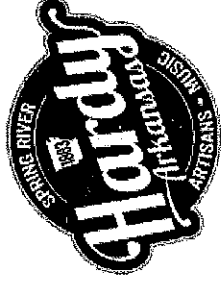
City of Hardy, Arkansas

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**Hardy City Council Meeting
Regular Business Meeting Minutes
June 9, 2025 – Old Hardy Gym 203 School Street, Hardy, Arkansas**

The meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m. by Mayor Barnes. The Pledge of Allegiance was conducted, and an invocation was offered by Councilmember Berry. R-T Sharp called the councilmember roll: Berry, Quintana-DuBois, Clay-Thomas, Kauffman, Taylor, Smith. City Attorney Grider, Mayor Barnes, and R-T Sharp were also present. All councilmembers were present; Quorum was established.

Minutes from the March 10, 2025, regular business meeting were presented for approval. The April 30, 2025, special meeting minutes were distributed at the meeting. Discussion regarding if there was citizen commentary missing from the March 10, 2025, minutes arose; it was agreed the minutes submitted were correct and there was not any citizen commentary during the March 10, 2025, meeting. A motion was made by Councilmember Smith and seconded by Councilmember Berry to approve the minutes from the March 10, 2025, regular business meeting. Mayor Barnes called for a voice vote. The motion to approve the minutes passed.

Councilmember Taylor made a motion to amend the agenda to move Nancy Evans' Citizen Speaker Request to an earlier position on the agenda, due to the potential need for Ms. Evans to leave the meeting early. Councilmember Quintana-DuBois seconded the motion to amend the agenda. Mayor called for a voice vote and the motion to amend the agenda passed.

Councilmember Kauffman made an inquiry regarding Resolution 2025-08. There was discussion regarding the bidding of the State Street Aid project. Mayor reported that the Atlas Asphalt bid came in under budget and that there was additional funding available to the City of Hardy. Resolution 2025-08 dedicated the available funds to street work on Loberg Drive. Mayor reported that FEMA could reimburse the city up-to 75% of the cost to repair Loberg Drive's base, leaving the city with approximately \$7,000 of expense.

A motion was made to approve the amended agenda by Councilmember Berry. Councilmember Smith seconded the motion to approve the agenda. Mayor called for a voice vote and the motion to approve the agenda passed.

City Reports:

City Financials: R-T Sharp apologized for the delay in the submission of the minutes due to relocating City Hall to the Johnson Center after the flooding in April. R-T Sharp reported on the current city financials and noted that the revenues from the Hardy Campground and RV Park were down due to the needed repairs. Eight sites at the campground have been restored with electrical services available for occupancy. Rates at the campground had been reduced by 25% to reflect the bathhouse and dump station not being currently available for use. FEMA may reimburse up to 75% of the cost to repair the damaged property. It was noted the city has a \$500,000 deductible regarding flood insurance. FEMA may pay the deductible due to the approval of the disaster declaration by the President. There was a question from Councilmember Clay-Thomas regarding the overage in the budget regarding publications and subscriptions. Mayor provided the overage was due to publication of ordinances (and financial statements) as required by law. Councilmember Kauffman requested that the council have a meeting to review the budget(s). Discussion arose as to when the council could all meet to review the budget(s). It was agreed that the R-T and Mayor would review their schedules and later propose a date to review the budget(s) by June 20, 2025. Mayor Barnes added that he believed the current sales tax revenues appeared respectable for the city.

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Fire Department: Chief Moore reported that the Hardy Fire Department had 29 calls in the month of May 2025, mostly emergency medical service calls. A fundraiser was held over Memorial Day weekend, raising approximately \$7,000.00. The replacement tanker truck is at a state prison for painting. The rescue boat damaged during the April flooding was not insured, and FEMA could cover up to 75% of the reimbursement of the replacement cost of a new rescue boat.

Police Department: Interim Police Chief Michael Himschoot offered assurance to the council that the department's commitment to public safety continues. IPC Himschoot asked the public to avoid spreading negative information on social media and to allow investigators to do their work. IPC Himschoot could not take any questions at this time to protect the investigation.

Public Works Department: Superintendent Morris reported that the Public Works Department had a lot of work orders started and to complete.

Planning and Zoning Commission: Mayor reported that the P & Z Commission met earlier in the evening and approved five (5) applications for building permits.

Sharp County Regional Airport Commission: Mayor reported the commission met on May 7, 2025, and is working on repairing lighting at the airport, creating a new EAA chapter, and that a new taxiway extension project was awarded to R.L. Persons of Poplar Bluff, Missouri that will be 100% funded by grant monies.

Tri-County Solid Waste Disposal Authority: Mayor reported the authority met on May 21, 2025. Mayor reported that the authority had expenses exceeding income, that the authority was working to obtain a new 40-foot container for plastic storage, that the authority was inquiring to add Cave City to the program, and that they are looking to replace a box truck for recycle pick-ups.

Hardy Advertising and Promotion Commission (HAPC): Commissioner Kauffman reported that Rebecca Quintana had been approved as a commissioner, that Commissioner Sue Taylor was approved as the Vice-Chair and that Commissioner Kauffman was approved as the Chair. Commissioner Kauffman also reported that proposals were approved for advertising and video work, and their committees had been simplified down to four: budget, events, advertising, and civic center. It was also reported that the HAPC is paying \$125 per musician for Music on Main.

Mayor's Report: The Mayor reported that there were now eight (8) sites up and running with electrical services at the Hardy Campground and RV Park. It was also reported that there was a 25% reduction in the occupancy rates due to the bathhouse and dump stations not currently being available for use. Mayor reported there was a remodel project underway at Dr. Thompson Park for interior painting, ceiling repairs, and toilet replacement. Mayor also reported that baby changing stations and mirrors would also be installed at Dr. Thompson Park in both restrooms.

Regarding Spring River cleanup, the Mayor reported he was working on a Public Assistance application with the Arkansas Division of Emergency Management, and that there was a meeting scheduled with FEMA to address the hazardous materials in the waterway with various local, state, and federal stakeholders.

Regarding the LED stop signs to be placed on both ends of the Truck Route, Mayor reported the incorrect items were shipped to Hardy and that the City is working with the supplier to have the correct items shipped. The correct stop signs will be solar-powered once they arrive and are able to be installed. Mayor reported that ARDOT had installed signage and fixes some rumble strips in the Truck Route area.

Mayor reported that the additional lighting on the Truck Route that was approved by ARDOT and Entergy of Arkansas has been installed. The Mayor is working with Entergy to explore the possibility of installing additional transformers to add additional lighting to areas that were not initially approved for lighting.

Regarding SBA and FEMA resources, the Mayor noted that both entities were at the Hardy Fire Station on Church Street to help the community with assistance applications. The Mayor reported the organizations were extending their time of operation to ensure all survivors that qualified for and needed assistance received support.

Regarding the Sharp County Community Inmate Work Program, the Mayor thanked Mr. Brian Watson, Judge Mark Johnson, and Judge Mark Counts for their support in allowing the inmates to do work at the Hardy Campground and RV Park, as well as in Loberg Park, removing downed trees and debris removal.

New Business:

Implementation of Park Hours of Operation: The proposed ordinance was submitted to council for review of the rules to be potentially implemented. Mayor Barnes asked for the council to review the proposed ordinance and provide constituent feedback at the next month's meeting. City Attorney Grider recommended the addition of limiting the amount of overnight occupancy to no more than 10 consecutive days within a 30-day period, with a 7-day gap in between stays, as well as allowing the council the ability to set rental rates by resolution for flexibility. Councilmember Berry made a motion to table the proposed ordinance to the next regular meeting; Councilmember Smith seconded the motion. Mayor Barnes called for a voice vote to table the proposed ordinance; all were in favor and the motion to table passed.

U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA): Public Information Officer Gary Anderson had requested to be on the agenda to discuss the SBA's program but was unable to attend the meeting. Mayor Barnes provided the following information regarding SBA's programs: there was a Presidential Declaration approved with a date of May 21, 2025; the incident referenced was from severe storms, tornados, and flooding from April 2-22, 2025; the physical damage loan application deadline is July 21, 2025; the Economic Injury (EDIDL) loan application deadline is February 23, 2026; the affected counties on the declaration included both Sharp and Fulton, as well as others in Arkansas; the Disaster Loan Outreach Center is housed at the Hardy Fire Station on Church Street. The Mayor also provided that the SBA could help small businesses, non-profits, and residents with economic losses and physical damage. The Mayor also offered that according to the SBA's information provided, qualified businesses and non-profits could seek up to \$2 million for physical disaster loans. The Mayor also offered that according to the SBA's information provided, qualified homeowners and renters could seek up to \$100,000 for personal property and up to \$500,000 for residence repairs in the form of loans. The Mayor provided the interest rates SBA was offering: 4% for small business; 3.62% for non-profits; 2.75% for homeowners and renters. According to the SBA's information provided, the Mayor offered that the deadline for physical damage loans was July 21, 2025 and the deadline for Economic Injury loan applications was February 23, 2026.

Mayor Barnes continued regarding *FEMA Disaster Assistance*. The Mayor reported that survivors should file claims with their insurance companies first, if they had insurance, and that FEMA could not duplicate benefits covered by insurance. The Mayor reviewed applicant information needed for a complete application and provided a telephone number to call if a survivor had a question: 1-800-621-3362. The Mayor also referenced DR-4865 that related to storms/tornados on March 14 and 15 that affected the Hardy area. Mayor Barnes encouraged those who needed help to apply sooner rather than later, and to visit one-on-one at the Hardy Fire Station to find out more information.

Police Chief Termination: The Mayor reported that the City had issued a press release on June 3, 2025 regarding the termination of Scott Rose. The Mayor asked the Council if anyone wanted to make a motion to overturn the Mayor's decision to terminate Mr. Rose. No motion was made. The Mayor asked the Council if anyone wanted to make a motion to overturn the Mayor's decision to appoint Michael Himschoot as the Interim Chief of Police. Councilmember Smith entered a motion and then recalled her motion due to misunderstanding the Mayor's question.

Citizen Speaker Request: Nancy Evans –State Street Aid: Ms. Evans approached Council and thanked the Council for her time to speak. Ms. Evans presented to the council a timeline of events regarding the City's selection process of which roads would be considered for State Street Aid funding improvements. Ms. Evans also referenced a letter that the Mayor sent requesting assistance to improve city streets in April of 2023, the approval letter from State Street Aid referencing which streets were approved for improvements, the cost of the roads being considered for improvements, a letter requesting a swap of streets in October 2024, a letter approving the swap of streets in December of 2024, and Resolution 2025-03 approving the addition of Loberg Drive for State Street Aid funding. Ms. Evans inquired why James Road was removed from the list of approved streets and provided that she wanted James Road to be paved. Mayor Barnes asked for Street Superintendent Morris to remind council how the process came together. Mr. Morris offered that they asked for Jonathan and Giles to be added to the request list, and that the request started in 2023 and took until June of 2025 to be completed. The Mayor offered that in about six months the City could request State Street Aid again and that James Road should be at the top of the list for consideration of improvements. Discussion arose regarding the process of selecting the roads, ARDOT surveying the roads, the map of the roads to be paved, excess funding allocated to Loberg Drive, and steps moving forward to request James Road be requested for improvements in the next round of State Street Aid for Hardy. Councilmember Berry made a motion to end discussion; Councilmember Clay-Thomas seconded the motion to end discussion. The Mayor called for a voice vote and the motion to end discussion passed.

Citizen Speaker Request: Terri Hightower –Police Department: Ms. Hightower approached the Council and thanked the Council for her time to speak. Ms. Hightower had questions regarding if former Chief Rose and other officers had completed their annual state education. She provided she had submitted a FOIA request to the state and learned a letter had been sent to the Hardy Police Department regarding an audit that identified items absent from the officer files and that none of the officers were up to date on continuing education. It was confirmed that Sgt. Gallagher was up to date on his continuing education. ICP Himschoot confirmed that initially three officers did not have the completed amount of training, and that one officer is no longer with the department, one chose not to continue service, and the third officer is in compliance and has until July 3 to complete the remaining training. Ms. Hightower inquired about how many officers (full-time, part-time, auxiliary, non-paid) drive vehicles to their normal jobs. Ms. Hightower offered that she had seen Officer MacDonald in a department vehicle at the high school. ICP Himschoot could not answer the question at this time; however, it was proposed that former Police Chief Rose had given permission to Officer MacDonald to do so. Ms. Hightower continued discussion regarding a FOIA request she submitted for reports and the body camera footage from the night of the water rescue, discussion regarding statements from park members, and discussion regarding former Police Chief Rose's abuse of authority by threatening, harassing, and intimidating people in the park. Ms. Hightower continued that she was curious why this was not being looked into. Ms. Hightower referenced Arkansas Code 12-18-402 regarding mandated reporters and provided that nothing happened until Councilmember Quintana-DuBois reached out to the FBI.

Citizen Speaker Request: Terri Hightower –A & P Commission Appointments: Ms. Hightower inquired that she would like to see the councilmember's contact information be listed on the city's website. Ms. Hightower provided that she reached out to Councilmember Berry regarding why he did not want to approve two nominees from the A & P Commission. Councilmember Berry provided that he did respond and provided that his decision

was confidential (executive session). Discussion continued regarding the intent and purpose of an executive session.

Citizen Speaker Request: Nimmi Desai –Council/Mayor: Ms. Desai provided that she had offered to the city the use of the Civic Center for the Council meeting. Ms. Desai provided a timeline for the council regarding the Street State Aid funds and addressed the three new councilmembers who were not involved in the prior decision-making. Ms. Desai provided that she had been in contact with the state several times over the past year and that she had concerns over school buses and the safety of the children. Ms. Desai provided in June of 2024 when former Councilmember Gordon made a motion to remove Loberg Drive from the list that passed. Ms. Desai provided that in September of 2024 former Councilmember Wise made a motion to assign the Street Supt. the task of creating a list of streets to present to the Mayor and then send that list to ARDOT for a survey, consideration, and cost estimates. Ms. Desai provided that in December of 2024 there was a breakdown of the streets that appeared to cost quite a bit. Ms. Desai provided that in January of 2025 a resolution was presented for the utilization of the \$300,000 Street State Aid funds and that James Road had been removed from the list. Ms. Desai provided that she believes the Mayor should have notified council about the removal of James Road from the job. Mayor Barnes offered that he thought James Road was on the list. Ms. Desai provided figures for the cost of the project and suggested that council should have used the excess funds on James Road. Ms. Desai suggested the Mayor violated protocol by not informing the council of the removal of James Road and asked council what actions would be taken against the Mayor. Ms. Desai advised the council to follow procedures and to not ignore motions made. Ms. Desai continued on the topic of the budget that was approved in December of 2024 with the former council. Ms. Desai inquired why the new council did not ask more questions about the budgets and loans. Ms. Desai also inquired to the Mayor about the difference between roll call votes and voice votes; Ms. Desai also inquired why a voice vote was taken to appoint Councilmember Smith. Ms. Desai additionally inquired about when executive sessions were appropriate, and that the council should have consistency in this process. Discussion continued regarding Councilmember Smith's appointment to Council and her qualifications, knowledge of city business, experience, and history, as well as Ms. Desai's reference to Councilmember Smith's comments relating to the former City Council. Ms. Desai inquired about what the Council's requirements were to qualify for approval on the A & P Commission. Councilmember Smith provided that she would like to see some younger people involved on the commission.

At this time in the meeting, Mayor Barnes was notified of an emergency situation requiring his attention at Buford Beach. A motion was made to table the A & P Commissioner agenda item to the next month's meeting.

Mayor Barnes moved to the Citizen Commentary portion of the meeting to ensure that those who had signed up to speak had the opportunity to during this meeting.

Citizen Commentary:

Jason Jackson: Mr. Jackson thanked everyone for their work on the Scott Rose situation and suggested that Mr. Grider needed to be looked at.

John Treat: Mr. Treat commented about Sharp County political history and the need for transparency and collaboration to improve the city.

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City of Hardy, Arkansas
Recorder-Treasurer Office

City of Hardy Regular Business Meeting of City Council Minutes
June 9, 2025

Adjournment:

Councilmember Berry made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilmember Quintana-DuBois seconded the motion to adjourn. The Mayor called for a voice vote and the motion to adjourn passed. The meeting was declared adjourned at 8:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Willow R. Sharp

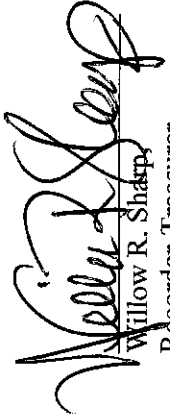
PASSED AND APPROVED THIS

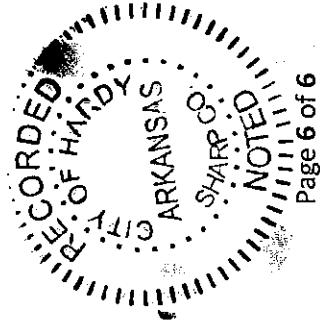
14th DAY OF August, 2025.

APPROVED:


Ethan J. Barnes, Mayor

ATTEST:


Willow R. Sharp
Recorder-Treasurer



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