

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:

City of Hardy, Arkansas

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**Hardy City Council
Regular Business Meeting Minutes
September 8, 2025**

Hardy Civic Center – 301 W. Main Street Hardy, Arkansas 72542

The meeting was called to order at 6:12 p.m. by Mayor Ethan J. Barnes. Mayor Barnes led all in the Pledge of Allegiance. The invocation was offered by Councilmember Dr. Tony Berry. Recorder-Treasurer Willow R. Sharp called the council roll: Berry, Clay-Thomas, Taylor, Kauffman, Smith and Quintana-DuBois. Mayor Barnes and R-T Sharp were also present. All six council members were present and quorum was established.

Minutes from the August 11, 2025 Regular Business Meeting were presented for approval. A motion was made by Councilmember Taylor and seconded by Councilmember Smith to approve the minutes from the August 11, 2025 Regular Business Meeting. Mayor Barnes called for a voice vote—the ayes were in favor and the motion to approve the minutes passed.

Mayor Barnes presented the agenda for the evening's meeting. Councilmember Kauffman made a motion to amend the agenda by adding topic Pocket Park MOU, adding topic A & Commissioner Re-Appointment, and reordering the new business agenda items to move Rob Smith: Dr. Thompson Park Funding to the first position under New Business. Councilmember Taylor seconded the motion to amend the agenda. Mayor called for a voice vote; the ayes were in favor and the motion to amend the agenda passed. Councilmember Clay-Thomas made a motion to approve the amended agenda; the motion was seconded by Councilmember Quintana-Dubois. Mayor Barnes called for a voice vote; the ayes were in favor and the motion to approve the amended agenda passed.

Reports:

City Financials: Mayor Barnes offered a review of revenues and expenditures for the General Fund, Street Fund, and Hardy Water Works Fund. Mayor noted the recently approved amended budget revisions had been applied to the current presented budget. Councilmember Kauffman had inquiries regarding various expenditure and revenue lines within a few departments of the budget(s). Mayor Barnes offered feedback to Councilmember Kauffman's inquiry.

Fire Department: Chief Josh Moore reported that the Hardy Volunteer Fire Department had four (4) fire calls, 22 medical emergencies, and seven (7) other calls for service in the month of August 2025. Chief Moore reported his department had a total year-to-date call for service request number of 303. Chief Moore reported that the department held a fundraiser over the Labor Day Holiday and raised approximately \$4,500.

Police Department: Interim Police Chief Michael Himschoot reported the Police Department had a really good August with not a lot of problems. He also reported there had been the Republican Party's Lincoln Day Dinner at the Civic Center and that there were no issues with the protesters across the road at the event.

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Public Works Department: Superintendent Steve Morris reported that the Public Works Department had repaired four (4) water leaks and that a recent wastewater issue was resolved. Supt. Morris reported that the street work on Slayton Road had been completed and that the next street repair project will be Robinhood Lane through this current week of September. Councilmember Smith thanked Superintendent Morris for he and his team's hard work.

Planning and Zoning Commission: Mayor reported there had been one (1) building permit application approved for William Johns prior to the start of the regular business meeting and that the most recent approved version of the Strategic Plan was discussed with a public forum discussion. Mayor had asked the Commissioners to take the strategic plan with them, review, and return to the next PZ meeting with ideas and proposed revisions for considerations.

Sharp County Regional Airport Commission: Mayor reported the group met on September 3, 2025 and that the airport's mower was repaired, fuel ordered, and some fencing had been repaired. Mayor reported that the airport will be awarded grant funding for a taxiway project.

Tri-County Solid Waste Disposal Authority: Mayor reported that the authority met on August 20, 2025 and that a load of cardboard was sent out for about 45,000 pounds. Mayor reported that the authority was working with Casey's General Stores to establish a cardboard contract for all three (3) locations. Mayor also reported that the search continues for a replacement box truck and more storage containers for recyclables. The next meeting is September 17, 2025, at 9:30 a.m.

Hardy Advertising and Promotion Commission (HAPC): Commissioner Jason Jackson reported that the commission had voted to allocate \$1,000 for fall flowers at Dr. Thompson Park. He reported that there was a MOU to be discussed later this evening and that Lowe's Home Improvement Store would be donating materials for proposed projects. He reported that work continues at the Civic Center and that new flowerpot poles would be placed in the sidewalks on Main Street. He also reported that the HAPC voted to renew John Treat's position on the HAPC. Commissioner Jackson reported that there would be a Special HAPC Meeting on September 16 at 5:30 p.m. for discussion regarding a mural. Mayor Barnes inquired regarding the proposed flowerpot placement in the sidewalks on Main Street and who would be responsible for repairs and maintenance of the poles/sidewalks. Mayor asked for a pause on the Main Street flowerpot project until there was clarity on the project.

Mayor's Report: Mayor reported that the Labor Day holiday weekend was safe and successful with nice weather bringing visitors to Hardy. Mayor reported that Hardy Homesteaders Day is scheduled for September 27 at Loberg Park; anyone interested in the event should contact Crystal Gray or the Hardy History Association for more information. Mayor reported that the city's FEMA site inspections are occurring this week and forward. Mayor reported the Arkansas Parks, Heritage, and Tourism FUN Park Grant Application clean-up day was held August 20 in Loberg Park with about 30 volunteers for the grant application requirement. Mayor thanked those for volunteering their time at the clean-up day. Mayor reported that the Hardy Water Department will be repairing a water leak at the corner of N. Spring and Main this week. Mayor continued that the Planning and Zoning Commission met earlier tonight and discussed the Strategic Plan and will review it again in October. Mayor reported that the development of the Code Enforcement position continues with an individual meeting the Mayor regarding the job responsibilities and duties around October 1. Mayor concluded with the announcement of the next Hardy

City Council meeting date will be on the third Monday of October (October 20) at 6:00 p.m. due to the Columbus Day holiday.

Old Business:

Mayor Barnes revisited *Resolution 2025-14 Financial Statements*. Councilmember Quintana-DuBois made a motion to withdraw *Resolution 2025-14*. Councilmember Smith seconded the motion. Mayor Barnes called for a voice vote; the ayes were in favor and the motion to withdraw the resolution passed.

Mayor Barnes revisited *Resolution 2025-15 Financial Summaries*. Councilmember Quintana-DuBois made a motion to withdraw *Resolution 2025-15*. Councilmember Smith seconded the motion. Mayor Barnes called for a voice vote; the ayes were in favor and the motion to withdraw the resolution passed.

New Business:

Mayor Barnes introduced Rob Smith for the topic of *Dr. Thompson Park Funding*. Mr. Smith presented a financial estimate for an average yearly budget of \$9,000 for Dr. Thompson Park costs. Mr. Smith wishes to plan for future projects, projected costs, park improvements, and more group involvement. He shared that the park has become a popular destination for photographs, and his plan is to create more photograph opportunities to attract more visitors to Hardy. Mr. Smith noted repair needs to the gazebo, plans for a mural on the blank wall, additional low voltage lighting to deter overnight visitors, needed storage space for holiday decorations, the addition of cameras, and possibly a tulip festival to coincide with Cherokee Village's Pie Festival. Mr. Smith requested to be considered for an expense line in the city and HAPC budgets for 2026. Mayor Barnes thanked Mr. Smith and his team for all of their hard work in the park.

Mayor Barnes introduced the topic of *ACT 605: Civil Engineering Associates, LLC-Rate Study*. Mr. Trey Foster of Civil Engineering Associates addressed council with the results of the ACT 605 state mandated water and sewer services rate study. Mr. Foster provided a formal rate study presentation summarizing ACT 605 of the Arkansas Legislature that mandated municipal owned water/sewer systems to ensure that the adequate amount of revenues be collected to operate the system. Mr. Foster reported the system must collect enough revenues from the customer base for operations. Mr. Foster conducted a financial analysis that was included in the council packet for review. This analysis report included any known capital improvement projects, the forecast of the proposed rate structure implementation time-line, a review of the required rate compliance with the state mandate, potential grant opportunities with proper rates in place, a sewer and water system cost analysis, a population census forecast, the system's debt service coverage ratio, the mandated asset management plan, a copy of the legislative bill mandating the rate study requirement on the city's system, infrastructure lifespan/replacement, and the consequences of non-compliance in accordance with the city's U.S. NPDES Permit. Discussion continued regarding the proposed new water/sewer rates and when the rates for billing will take effect.

Mayor Barnes presented *Ordinance No. 2025-07 An Ordinance Establishing Rates for Services Rendered by the Water and Sewer System of the City of Hardy, Arkansas; Declaring an Emergency, and Prescribing Other Matters Relating Thereto*. Councilmember Smith made a motion to read *Ordinance No. 2025-07* by title only and waive the first, second, and third readings. Councilmember Berry seconded the motion. Mayor Barnes called for a vote to read *Ordinance 2025-07* by title only. R-T Sharp called the roll and the results were 5:1 in favor to read by title only. Mayor Barnes declared the motion to read passed. Mayor

Barnes read by title only Ordinance 2025-07. Councilmember Berry made a motion to approve Ordinance 2025-07. Councilmember Smith seconded the motion to approve. Mr. Greg Bess asked to be recognized and he spoke of the ordinance and the emergency clause. Discussion included why the rate study implementation was required and crucial to the city's operation and compliance with the state. The Mayor called for a voice vote; the ayes were in favor and the motion to approve Ordinance 2025-07 passed. Mayor Barnes addressed the Emergency Clause to be enacted. Councilmember Smith made a motion to enact the Emergency Clause for Ordinance 2025-07. Councilmember Berry seconded the motion to enact. Mayor Barnes called for a roll call vote: Berry-yes, Kauffman-no, Smith-yes, Taylor-abstain, Quintana-Dubois-no, Clay-Thomas-yes. The results were: 3-ayes, 2-nays, and 1-abstain. Mayor declared the motion to enact the Emergency Clause passed.

Recorder-Treasurer Sharp noted at 8:23 p.m. Dr. Berry was excused from the meeting.

Mayor Barnes presented *Resolution 2025-16* that amends *Resolution 2025-01*. Details of the proposed amendments state that the council meeting packet is to be placed in the council member's mailbox by 12:00 p.m. on the Friday before the meeting and be electronically delivered by 1:00 p.m. on the Friday before the meeting. Mayor noted that the set location of city meetings was also updated to reflect the Civic Center. Discussion ensued with adjustments to be made for the upcoming year when setting the resolution that addresses procedural rules for conducting city business. Councilmember Quintana-DuBois made a motion to read *Resolution 2025-16*. Councilmember Taylor seconded the motion. Mayor Barnes called for a voice vote; the ayes were in favor and the motion to read passed.

Mayor Barnes read *Resolution 2025-16*. Councilmember Quintana-DuBois made a motion to approve *Resolution 2025-16*. Councilmember Smith seconded the motion. Mayor Barnes called for a voice vote; the ayes were in favor and the resolution passed.

Councilmember Kauffman presented the next topic of Pocket Park MOU. Councilmember Kauffman presented a Memorandum of Understanding at this time for the HAPC and the City of Hardy. Discussion addressed that the "Pocket Park" is located between Miller's Leather Shop and the Crosseyed Catfish Cafe on Main Street. Councilmember Kauffman addressed the key points in the proposed MOU: 1) the City of Hardy retains possession of the property 2) the HAPC is responsible for the construction, design, grant writing/funding 3) the City of Hardy will provide \$10,000 from an old grant project from Entergy and 4) the City of Hardy must maintain the park after completion. Mayor Barnes requested time to review the proposed MOU and have later discussion regarding the proposed project details.

Mayor Barnes addressed the HAPC Commissioner reappointment of John Treat. Mayor Barnes requested information regarding the term details and position. Councilmember/Chair Kauffman did not have record of the specifics of the term and position available at this time. Mayor Barnes requested updated term and position information regarding the reappointment for clarification before action was to take place. Councilmember Quintana-DuBois made a motion to table the topic of Reappointment of John Treat as A & P Commissioner until the October City Council Meeting. Councilmember Smith seconded the motion. Mayor Barnes called for a voice vote; the ayes were in favor and the motion to table passed.

Citizen Commentary:

Matt Wedig addressed the council about Robin Hood Lane Maintenance. He commented specifically about overgrown grass in the ditches and low hanging branches in the roadway.

Jason Jackson of the Woodland Hills P.O.A. addressed the council regarding Code Enforcement due to an upcoming P.O.A. meeting set on September 13. Mr. Jackson expressed his concern about the lack of representation of P.O.A. members and Hardy residents. Mr. Jackson expressed his concerns about water and sewer rates increasing and the residents who will be financially impacted.

Nimmi Desai: Ms. Desai addressed the council and shared that she had spoken with the City Administrator earlier in the week regarding the city's audit, specifically the HAPC's portion.

Jeff Munroe: Mr. Munroe addressed the council and commented that the R-T answered his questions regarding the budget earlier in the evening. Mr. Munroe asked for the city's website to be updated with the recent minutes and other documentation.

Mayor Barnes announced the next regular meeting will be October 20, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. at the Hardy Civic Center and that City Hall Offices will be closed October 13, 2025 in observation of Columbus Day.

Adjournment:

Councilmember Quintana-DuBois made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilmember Clay-Thomas seconded the motion to adjourn. Mayor called for a voice vote; the ayes were in favor and the motion to adjourn passed. The meeting was declared adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

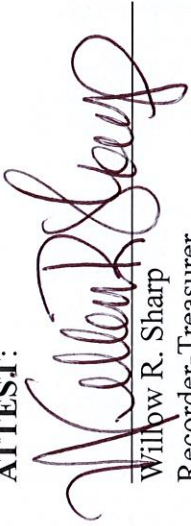
Willow R. Sharp
Recorder-Treasurer

PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 20th DAY OF Oct., 2025.

APPROVED:


Ethan J. Barnes, Mayor

ATTEST:


Willow R. Sharp
Recorder-Treasurer



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