

Mayor: Ethan J. Barnes

Recorder-Treasurer: Willow R. Birdsell

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

City Attorney:

City of Hardy, Arkansas

P.O. Box 5
Hardy, Arkansas 72542
870-856-3811
www.cityofhardy.org



Hardy City Council Regular Business Meeting Minutes March 16, 2026

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

The meeting was called to order at 6:08 p.m. by Mayor Ethan J. Barnes. Mayor Barnes asked everyone to join in the Pledge of Allegiance; the invocation was offered by Councilmember Dr. Tony Berry. R-T Willow Birdsell called the council roll: Berry, Clay-Thomas, Kauffman, Smith and Taylor. Five council members were present. Quorum was established. Mayor Barnes and R/T Birdsell were present as well.

Minutes from the February 23, 2026 Regular Business Meeting were presented for approval. A motion was made by Councilmember Smith and seconded by Councilmember Taylor to approve the minutes from the February 23, 2026 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 to add Nimmi Desai with the topic of A & P Financials at the end of 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 Berry made a motion to approve the amended agenda. Councilmember Smith seconded the motion to approve the amended agenda. Mayor called for a voice vote—the ayes were in favor and the motion to approve the amended agenda passed.

Reports:

City Financials: R-T Birdsell provided a report of the budget. R-T Birdsell offered that the city's regular bills have been paid, and the Financial and Compliance Report for 2023 and 2024 was to be discussed later in the meeting. Mayor Barnes discussed the addition in the financial report for the grant fund pertaining to the Public Assistance that is being received through the Arkansas Division of Emergency Management.

Fire Department: Chief Josh Moore presented a run report for February 2026 referencing 34 calls for service: 8 fire, 2 hazardous situation, 14 medical, 7 public service, 2 no emergency, and 1 law enforcement support. The Chief reported that the firehouse was doing well, and that the HVFD had successfully cleared some down trees in the city after high windstorms last month.

Police Department: Interim Police Chief Michael Himschoot reported that the Hardy Police Department was doing well. With the early tourism season approaching, the department had

Filed 4/21/2026 10:15
City of Hardy, Arkansas
Recorder-Treasurer Office

noticed an increase in speeding and civilian activity with foot traffic on Main Street. IPC Himschoot advised that the pedestrian crossings are marked and need to be used properly for public safety.

Public Works Department: Superintendent Steve Morris reported that the Public Works Department had been busy repairing water line leaks and addressing some sewer issues. Supt. Morris provided that there would be a no-cost plumbing school at the Civic Center this coming Thursday for continuing education. Supt. Morris and Mayor Barnes confirmed that the Public Works Department will be looking to add an additional team member into the Spring.

Planning and Zoning Commission: Mayor Barnes reported two (2) permits were approved at the P & Z meeting earlier in the evening. One request was to relocate an existing metal storage container for the First Baptist Church of Hardy to Church Street, and the other request was for an accessory structure on Mr. Strange's property in Rio Vista.

Sharp County Regional Airport Commission: Mayor reported the commission met March 4, 2026 at the airport in Cherokee Village. Mayor provided the airport is due for an economic impact study, and that the taxiway project and grass runway project are both still underway. The next meeting was set for April 1, 2026 at 3:00 p.m.

Tri-County Solid Waste Disposal Authority: Mayor reported the authority met February 18, 2026. The team at TCSWDA had processed over 36,000 pounds of cardboard, nearly 2,600 pounds of number one plastics, 640 pounds of number two plastics, 2,600 pounds of paper, and nearly 1,300 pounds of tin. Mayor reported that there was a hydraulic line on a forklift that was replaced, and a spare tire for a trailer was purchased. The authority also approved the acquisition of two storage containers to hold materials in process and would be researching if some additional community service workers could help with the needs of the center. The next meeting was scheduled for March 18, 2026 at 9:30 a.m. at the Ash Flat City Hall.

Hardy Advertising and Promotion Commission (HAPC): Chairman Treat reported the commission was preparing advertising for the upcoming spring and summer tourism seasons. Chairman Treat provided that there had been 749,000 visitors to the Visit Hardy Arkansas Facebook page in the last 30 days, as well as 75,000 Instagram views on social media. Chairman Treat asked all involved to like, share, and comment on the social media pages to build engagement and help drive visitors to Hardy. Chairman Treat provided that the visithardyarkansas.com website was undergoing some maintenance and would have new content published in the near future for area shopping and outdoor recreation. Chairman Treat provided that there were several improvements being made at the Civic Center with new paint, curtains, and stage lighting. Chairman Treat also reported that there were new partnerships with various media outlets to advertise Hardy, including a digital billboard campaign in Jonesboro, Paragould, and Pocahontas, as well as a television advertisement segment in Little Rock and Springdale in partnership with Ozark Gateway Tourist Council. Chairman Treat reported that Arkansas Tourism would be running a promotional video called Adventure Begins in Hardy. Chairman Treat provided that improvements are planned for the bathrooms and kitchen area in the Civic Center and

that he, Commissioner Desai, and Mayor Barnes were working to finalize the approved 80%(A&P)/20%(City) partnership on the land by the Civic Center from 2017. Chairman Treat reported that Commissioner Desai has intentions to host a A & P tax collecting/reporting workshop for applicable hotels, motels, short-term rentals, and restaurants in the near future to assist in accurately reporting the local taxes to the commission.

Mayor's Report: Mayor Barnes reported that the city is preparing for the upcoming tourism season which is early this year and encouraged everyone to welcome all visitors into the community with open arms. Mayor thanked the volunteers on the HAPC for all of their hard work they have been putting in to make Hardy a great place to visit and invest in. Mayor provided that he would be evaluating the public assistance projects with ADEM and researching the guidelines for the next steps in the process to ensure the city complies with local and state procurement processes with some of the projects likely needing to go out for bid. Mayor Barnes thanked ADEM for their unwavering assistance to the City of Hardy during this difficult time. Mayor Barnes expressed some of the short-term goals for the city would be to repair the Hardy Campground and RV Park back to pre-disaster conditions, as well as to restore the damaged roadways back to pre-disaster conditions. Mayor Barnes asked for the public's understanding and patience to ensure that the processes are being done correctly as the city takes some very exciting steps towards making Hardy great once again. Mayor also reported that with the Department of Homeland Security being shut down, the city and ADEM are at a standstill on Hardy's pending projects until Congress agrees on legislation to reopen federal public assistance. Mayor Barnes provided that the City of Hardy Spring Clean-up is set for May 4 - 8, 2026 on your normal trash service collection day. Customers must be current on their trash service collection fees, and cannot dispose of non-eligible items such as electronics, yard waste, tires, car batteries, paint, construction debris, hazardous materials, etc. Items must be placed by the curbside for pickup and bagged if possible. Lastly, with the help of the White River Planning and Development District, Mayor Barnes reported that the City of Hardy was selected to be a recipient of the FUN Park Grant Program from Arkansas Parks, Heritage, and Tourism in an amount of \$100,000 to assist in the improvement needs of the playground area at Loberg Park. Mayor Barnes thanked the local and state leadership for selecting Hardy to be a recipient. Mayor Barnes and Council held discussion on the project status of Loberg Park, the walking trail, the bathhouse, the campground, and potential improvements to the bathhouse after the project is completed.

Old Business: None

New Business:

Mayor Barnes presented the first item of new business, Resignation/Declare Vacancy: City Council—Ward 2 Position 1. Mayor read aloud the letter of resignation submitted by Jason Creasey. Mayor Barnes asked council how they would like to proceed with addressing the vacancy for the position, such as requesting a letter of interest in the vacant position, the optional questionnaire, and advertising in the newspaper for the vacant position. Councilmember Berry made a motion to accept the resignation of Mr. Jason Creasey Ward 2, Position 1. Councilmember Kuffman seconded the motion.

Mayor Barnes called for a voice vote—the ayes were in favor and the motion to accept the resignation from Mr. Jason Creasey passed.

Councilmember Kauffman then made a motion to declare a vacancy in Ward 2 for Position 1. Councilmember Taylor seconded the motion to declare the vacancy in Ward 2 for Position 1. Mayor called for a voice vote—the ayes were in favor and the motion to declare the vacancy in Ward 2 for Position 1 passed. Mayor declared that the council had declared the position vacant. Mayor asked the council again how they would like to proceed with the handling of the vacant position. Discussion followed involving setting a deadline for submitting a letter of interest and an optional questionnaire. Councilmember Berry made a motion for interested individuals to submit a letter of interest to the city by 4:00 p.m. the Thursday before the meeting, April 9, 2026 and for the city to send a notice to the newspaper and radio, as well as providing that the questionnaire was optional to submit. Councilmember Smith seconded the motion. Mayor called for a voice vote—the ayes were in favor and the motion on how to handle the criteria for filling the vacant position passed.

Mayor Barnes and R-T Birdsell presented the report from Arkansas Legislative Audit for the Review of 2023 and 2024. Mayor Barnes and R-T Sharp reviewed the financial and compliance report in the packet, the finding results regarding the reconciliation of bank accounts, and receipt/disbursement journals for the General, Street, and Advertising and Promotion Funds, as well as the recommendations to keep back-up copies on computer files and ensure that receipts and disbursement journals are posted properly. Mayor Barnes and R-T Birdsell discussed the plan of action for the city was to work to correct the issues and strengthen practices to ensure compliance moving forward. Councilmember Kauffman inquired about the unclassified funds in 2024 for the A & P and the unclassified General Funds in 2024. It was determined during the meeting with the assistance of Commissioner Desai that the unclassified receipts for the A & P were from June 2024 to December 2024 consisting of A & P taxes collected and Civic Center rental income and requested for the city to determine what those unclassified funds were in the General Fund for 2024 and to report back next month.

A & P Commissioner Nimmi Desai addressed the council regarding the finances of the A & P Commission. Commissioner Desai inquired regarding what documents were and were not submitted during the Legislative Audit review period. Discussion ensued that some documents for the A & P were not submitted by the city due to the flooding impacts inside the old City Hall building. Commissioner Desai referenced that she had obtained information from Legislative Audit and that she had identified that the unclassified funds for the A & P were from June 2024 to December 2024. Discussion continued that Commissioner Desai provides all packets to the city each month that reports the A & P financials and outlines what is included in the packets. Mayor Barnes thanked Commissioner Desai for her work on the A & P financials and clarified with Councilmember Kauffman that this research answered her inquiry on the unclassified funds for the A & P in 2024.

Citizen Commentary:

Jason Jackson spoke regarding the Woodland Hills Property Owners Association, code enforcement, representation, permitting, and trespassing concerns. Discussion ensued regarding that the city cannot enforce bylaws or current membership of the WHPOA and that this was a civil matter between the WHPOA and the potential trespassers. Discussion continued that if there were potential code violations to please continue to use the citizen request form and that the city would work to address those requests.

Adjournment:

Councilmember Smith made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilmember Berry seconded the motion to adjourn. Mayor Barnes called for a voice vote—the ayes were in favor and the motion to adjourn the meeting passed. The meeting was declared adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Willow R. Birdsell

Recorder-Treasurer

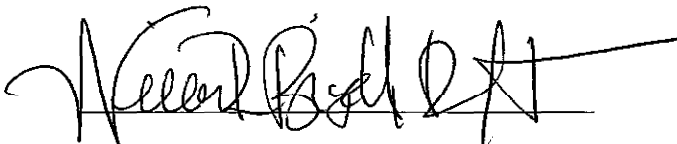
PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 13th DAY OF April, 2026.

APPROVED:



Ethan J. Barnes, Mayor

ATTEST:



Willow R. Birdsell, Recorder-Treasurer



Filed 4/29/2026 MB 505
City of Hardy, Arkansas
Recorder-Treasurer Office