

Mayor: Ethan J. Barnes
Recorder-Treasurer: Willow R. Birdsell
Council Members: Tony Berry, Amy Clay-Thomas, Ashton Hester, Ginni Kauffman, Sue Taylor, Laura Smith
City Attorney:

City of Hardy, Arkansas



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Hardy City Council
Regular Business Meeting Minutes
April 13, 2026
Hardy Civic Center – 301 W. Main Street Hardy, Arkansas 72542

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m. by Mayor Ethan J. Barnes. Mayor Barnes asked everyone to join in the Pledge of Allegiance, led by Councilmember Sue Taylor. Councilmember Dr. Tony Berry offered the invocation. Recorder-Treasurer Willow Birdsell was not present; Mayor Barnes called the councilmember roll: Kauffman, Berry, Taylor, Clay-Thomas, and Smith. Five of five councilmembers were present—Quorum was established. Mayor Barnes was present as well.

Minutes from the March 16, 2026 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 March 16, 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 Smith made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Councilmember Clay-Thomas seconded the motion to approve the agenda. Mayor called for a voice vote—the ayes were in favor and the motion to approve the agenda passed.

Reports:

City Financials: R-T Birdsell was absent. Mayor Barnes provided that there was a city budget included within the councilmember packet.

Fire Department: Chief Josh Moore was paged to a Fire Department call—no report was given, however a run report was included within the councilmember packet reflecting 44 calls in March 2026.

Police Department: Interim Police Chief Michael Himschoot reported that the Hardy Police Department was doing well and was performing needed vehicle maintenance on the fleet.

Public Works Department: Superintendent Steve Morris reported that the Public Works Department had been busy at the wastewater treatment facility working on needed maintenance and repairs. Supt. Morris provided they had received some cold patch for road repairs around the city and that their team would start mowing the right-of-ways soon. Supt. Morris also reported that he had been working with the U.S. Postal Service Hardy Post Office on some requested road repairs to help the rural carrier delivery routes, but a few mailboxes may have to be relocated to accommodate the carrier's requests.

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Planning and Zoning Commission: Mayor Barnes reported three (3) permits were approved at the P & Z meeting earlier in the evening. One request was from Tennessee Williams to place a storage container at her residence, the second request was from John Treat for a fence at his business/residence, and the third request was from Sabor El Rey to build an outdoor patio addition.

Sharp County Regional Airport Commission: Mayor reported the commission met April 1, 2026 at the airport in Cherokee Village. Mayor reported that the commission was continuing to work on the grass runway project, the taxiway project, and was considering repairs to the courtesy car.

Tri-County Solid Waste Disposal Authority: Mayor reported the authority met March 18, 2026 at the landfill. The authority discussed trash collection charges, cardboard bailer repairs, and additional assistance from neighboring counties. Councilmember Kauffman asked what the TCSWDA charged the city for the mandated participation in the recycling program; Mayor Barnes stated the current annual charge was \$2.00 per resident.

Hardy Advertising and Promotion Commission (HAPC): Chairman Treat reported the commission was continuing to prepare advertising for the upcoming tourism season. Chairman Treat reported a copy of the most recent HAPC minutes were provided for council in the monthly packet. Chairman Treat reported that Civic Center property renovations continue with gravel that has been placed for additional parking in the meadow. Additionally, the HAPC is continuing to seek quotes for restroom renovations, and the mural restoration on Main Street should begin soon. Chairman Treat reported that there had been 525,000 visitors to the Visit Hardy Arkansas Facebook page in the last 30 days. Chairman Treat explained how visitors to the social media pages build engagement and help drive visitors to Hardy. Chairman Treat provided that the Fine Arts Fair was a success with over 340 attendees and 25 artists. He also reported that the Main Street Hardy Spring Gun and Knife Show had approximately 480 attendees. Chairman Treat provided that the HAPC is in the process of obtaining an agreement with the Jackson Family on establishing a new billboard advertising Hardy. Chairman Treat provided that a celebration for the 250th Anniversary of the United States is in the works, and the Commission hopes the Pocket Park will be completed by then with a possible dedication ceremony for the 4th of July.

Mayor's Report: Mayor Barnes provided that the residential spring cleanup was set for the week of May 4-8, 2026; Mayor reported the non-eligible items were items such as electronics, yard waste, tires, car batteries, paint, construction debris, hazardous materials, etc. Items must be placed by the curbside by May 3. Mayor provided that if anyone had questions regarding accepted items, they should contact Waste Connections at 870-994-7000 to inquire if the items were eligible. Mayor provided that he would be speaking later in the meeting regarding the Fun Park Grant and reported that the Loberg Park FEMA Project was on hold due to the partial DHS government shutdown. Mayor Barnes asked for the public's understanding and patience to ensure that the processes are being done properly. Mayor also reported on the financial report for 2024 regarding the unclassified items; Mayor provided that the corrections continue to be updated in the budgeting system. Mayor acknowledged the teamwork between the city and the HAPC regarding the correction of

and reported the corrections have been made to rectify the 80% (HAPC) and 20% (city) ownership of the land between the Civic Center and the now gravel parking area (Meadow).

Old Business: None

New Business:

Mayor Barnes presented the first item of new business, Vacancy: City Council—Ward 2 Position 1. Mayor read aloud the vacancy announcement that was publicized in the local newspaper. Mayor Barnes presented the three (3) interested parties' information that was included in the meeting packet to the council for the vacant position from Ashton Hester, Bruce Thurow, and Dr. Stephanie Crawford. Councilmember Berry made a motion for the council to enter into executive session for the purpose to discuss the appointment for the vacancy in Ward 2; Councilmember Taylor seconded the motion. Mayor called for a voice vote—the ayes were in favor and the council entered into executive session at 6:26 p.m. The council left the front meeting room and entered into the back area of the Civic Center.

The council returned to the front meeting room and Mayor Barnes reconvened the meeting at 7:05 p.m. Councilmember Berry made a motion to appoint Ashton Hester to fill the City Council Ward 2 Position 1 term expiring on December 31, 2026. Councilmember Smith seconded the motion to appoint Mr. Hester. Mayor called for a roll call vote: Smith—yes, Berry—yes, Clay—Thomas—yes, Taylor—yes, Kauffman—no. The result of the vote was four (4) ayes and one (1) nay. Mayor Barnes confirmed the motion to appoint Ashton Hester to City Council Ward 2 Position 1 passed.

Mayor Barnes asked Mr. Hester to come forward to the meeting table and then administered the Arkansas Oath of Office for a councilmember to Ashton Hester for Hardy City Council Ward 2 Position 1. Councilmember Hester joined the councilmember table after taking the Oath of Office. Mayor Barnes called a second attendance roll call to address all present members: Berry, Taylor, Kauffman, Clay-Thomas, Hester, and Smith at 7:11 p.m. Six of six members were now present.

Councilmember Kauffman brought forward the next item on the agenda, Discussion: Grants for A&P & City. Councilmember Kauffman wanted to ask the council if the A&P could seek grants. The council was supportive of being presented with grant application options and approving options after they were discussed in future meetings. Councilmember Kauffman also inquired regarding a social media post she had seen alleging that Fire Department fundraiser funds had been used erroneously. Mayor Barnes presented that all funds were used for Fire Department expenses in accordance with the 2025 budget on items such as supplies, equipment, small tools, uniforms, repairs, and maintenance expenses. Mayor also provided that FEMA has approved approximately \$7,500 for the replacement of the metal rescue boat for the department. Councilmember Hester advised that in the event another boat/item needs to be purchased, a request should be brought to council for review. Mayor Barnes recommended for council to look at the budget and consider revising expenses for city operations due to lower than anticipated revenues.

Mayor Barnes presented the final item on the agenda, FUN Park Grant. Mayor presented the information included in the meeting packet to council with an aerial view site map of the Loberg Park project. Mayor reported that three (3) benches are to be replaced, new wood fibers are to be installed for the play areas, six (6) new ADA accessible ramps for access into the area are to be installed, the gravel parking lot is to be resurfaced, an existing swing set to be replaced, some existing play systems are to be replaced, some existing play systems are possibly to be repaired, and the existing basketball goals to be replaced. These items are contingent upon proper procurement and best available pricing. Mayor provided that the FUN Park Grant was to be for \$100,000 from the state, however more funding would be needed to completely restore the park to its pre-disaster condition.

Citizen Commentary: None

Adjournment:

Councilmember Smith made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilmember Taylor 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 7:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Willow R. Birdsell

Recorder-Treasurer

PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 11th DAY OF May, 2026.

APPROVED:

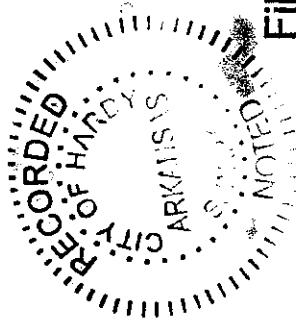


Ethan J. Barnes, Mayor

ATTEST:



Willow R. Birdsell, Recorder-Treasurer



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