

Mayor: Ethan J. Barnes

Recorder-Treasurer: Willow R. Sharp

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
July 13, 2026**

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

The meeting was called to order at 6:14 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. Mayor Barnes asked everyone to join in a moment of silence for the passing of U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham. Recorder Treasurer Willow Birdsall called the council roll: Berry, Clay-Thomas, Kauffman, Hester-*excused*, Smith, and Taylor. Quorum was established with five council members present. Mayor Barnes and R-T Birdsall were present as well.

Minutes from the June 15, 2026 Regular Business Meeting were presented for approval. Councilmember Kauffman noted page two of the minutes were accidentally not copied into the packet final for the meeting at the office. A motion was made by Councilmember Kauffman and seconded by Councilmember Clay-Thomas to table the minutes from the June 15, 2026 Regular Business Meeting until the following month. Mayor Barnes called for a voice vote—the ayes were in favor and the motion to table the minutes passed.

Mayor Barnes presented the agenda for the evening's meeting. Mayor discussed a draft resolution that Councilmember Kauffman wanted to bring before council for the A & P to seek a grant for the Civic Center. Discussion endured and it was decided that the final resolution would be brought before council next month in August. Councilmember Smith made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Councilmember Taylor 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 Birdsall offered a report regarding city financials. R-T Birdsall reported the city's expenses are in line with the budget. R-T Birdsall reported an update on the Municipal Treasurer Training in the ACE Hub, and provided that the training must be completed by December 31, 2026. Councilmember Kauffman inquired regarding the revenues of the 2026 Grant Fund. Mayor Barnes provided that the difference of the totals was funding received in year 2025 and funding received in year 2026. Councilmember Kauffman also had a question regarding the budget and monthly expenses. R-T Birdsall offered that the monthly budget provided in the packet was the year to current date amount of revenues and expenditures. Councilmember Kauffman provided that she wanted to request a budget meeting for the city. Mayor Barnes offered that the city is running conservatively under budget for 2026, that no large purchases have been made, and that funds may be reflective/ available in the operating budgets, however, that did not mean that funds would be expended as the Department Heads work closely with administration to ensure good budgeting.

Fire Department: Captain Creasey presented the HVFD report. The run report for the year 2026 reflected 281 calls for service to date. Captain Creasey projected that the department is on track to have well over 400 calls for service by the end of the year.

Police Department: Police Chief Michael Himschoot reported that the Hardy Police Department had no major issues in the last month, and that extra coverage was provided for the 4th of July holiday.

Public Works Department: Superintendent Steve Morris reported that the Public Works Department had 15 water leaks and that a main line was leaking and would be repaired the following day. Supt. Morris also provided that they had one sewer issue that had been resolved as well. Councilmember Kauffman inquired regarding the mowing of the pump station

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areas; Superintendent Morris explained the mowing contract obligations and provided that his team would service the station areas soon.

Planning and Zoning Commission: Mayor Barnes reported no P & Z meeting was held earlier in the evening.

Sharp County Regional Airport Commission: Mayor reported the airport authority had not met since the last report provided.

Tri-County Solid Waste Disposal Authority: Mayor reported the authority met June 23, 2026. Mayor reported that the authority was still working towards a possible forklift replacement and had addressed some insurance needs. Mayor reported the next meeting was to be held July 15, 2026, at 9:30 a.m. at the landfill in Cherokee Village.

Hardy Advertising and Promotion Commission (HAPC): Chairman Treat reported the A&P had another busy and good month. Chair Treat provided an update on Civic Center renovations and the mural project downtown. Chair Treat provided that the Kenneth & Mary King Pocket Park had a fantastic dedication on the 4th of July, and that celebration across the city was also a success for America's 250. Chair Treat provided an update on upcoming events in Hardy: Treasures in the Ozarks, Homesteaders Day (with music and dance at the Civic Center), and the Twilight Quartet Concert scheduled for August 15. Chair Treat reported that a proposal was submitted to host the 2027 Ozark Gateway Marketing Summit and that the HAPC had approved contracting with an influencer company named Arkie Travels to showcase Hardy. Chair Treat provided that the topic of food trucks had been discussed during the discussion of the upcoming Civic Center lease revisions. Chair Treat provided that Hardy's social media presence was still growing with 1.5 million Facebook views and 3,800 new followers.

Mayor's Report: Mayor reported that the Independence Day Holiday was a huge success for Hardy, along with the Kenneth & Mary King Pocket Park Dedication. Mayor Barnes thanked the HAPC for hosting Music on Main again this year and provided that it has been a wonderful success for the community. Mayor also thanked the Police Department, the Fire Department, and the Public Works Department for all their hard work over the course of the summer season thus far.

Old Business: None

New Business:

Mayor Barnes presented the item of Discussion: City Projects Updates:

- A. Fun Park Grant: \$100,000 grant available from the State of Arkansas to help restore Loberg Park. Mayor updated that the engineers were currently working on plans for this project and would bring them before council as soon as they were ready for review.
- B. Water Metering System Replacement Project: \$778,000 grant to upgrade and replace the city's water meters, boxes, and setters from a manual read system to a digital electronic monitoring system that will help identify leaks, reduce water loss, conserve energy, and lessen man hours reading meters by hand with pen and paper.
- C. Loberg Park Public Assistance Grant (Large Project): Mayor provided that damages are estimated at roughly \$1.3 million with \$1 million available of reimbursement funding to the city. This project will reimburse the city as work is completed, up to the \$1 million threshold (75% federal cost-share).
- D. Hardy Campground and RV Park Public Assistance Grant: Mayor provided that these funds were available to the city to start working towards repairing the city's campground in the near future.
- E. Street Repair Public Assistance Project: Mayor provided that damages were estimated at approximately \$270,000 on various city streets. Mayor would be working to get this project moving forward as well.

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F. Wastewater Treatment Facility Center Rehabilitation Grant Project: Mayor provided that there was approximately \$1.07 million to \$1.3 million available to the city for this project. Mayor provided that there was currently a 75% grant available for this need, with the possibility of a cost-share waiver request for this project.

Mayor Barnes offered that these projects would take some time to complete and see across the finish line. Mayor also offered that the projects are funded by grants and that the required steps are being taken for the numerous processes to be completed. Mayor provided that he is working to lessen the financial burden upon the city by carefully planning out the order of the projects. Mayor Barnes opened the floor for questions from council regarding the on-going projects. Councilmember Smith inquired about the city's Campground and RV Park. Councilmember Kauffman inquired about the playground equipment. Discussion ensued regarding all the projects, infrastructure needs/improvements, and recent factors that are impacting the city's water system.

Councilmember Kauffman provided that the Mary & Kenneth King Family Pocket Park would need to be added to the city's insurance coverage. Commissioner Treat provided that the park cost was approximately \$55,000. Councilmember Kauffman discussed the city's engine braking ordinance. Discussion ensued regarding signage and how the engine braking is normally executed for driving safety. Police Chief Himschoot offered to council his opinion on engine braking in the city.

Mayor Barnes encouraged everyone to attend the benefit dinner that was taking place this evening at the Spring River Draft House for Dillon Sitz, a local Hardy area community member. Mayor provided there was a \$10 dinner plate available along with a silent auction to help with recovery expense needs.

Citizen Commentary: None

Adjournment:

Councilmember Smith made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilmember Taylor seconded the motion to adjourn. Mayor 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

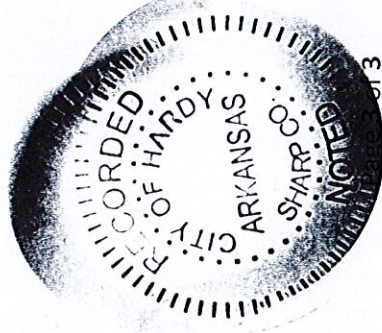
PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 10th DAY OF August, 2026.

APPROVED:


Ethan J. Barnes, Mayor

ATTEST:


Willow R. Birdsell
Recorder-Treasurer



Filed 8/11/2026 W2383
City of Hardy, Arkansas
Recorder-Treasurer Office