

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
August 10, 2026
Hardy Civic Center – 301 W. Main Street Hardy, Arkansas 72542**

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 p.m. by Mayor Ethan J. Barnes. Mayor Barnes asked Tim Seager to lead everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance; Councilmember Dr. Tony Berry offered the invocation. Mayor Barnes called the council roll due to the absence of R-T Birdsell: Berry, Taylor, Clay-Thomas, Kauffman, Smith-excused and Hester. Quorum was established with five council members present.

Minutes from the June 15, 2026 and July 13, 2026 Regular Business Meetings were presented for approval. A motion was made by Councilmember Berry to approve both sets of minutes; Councilmember Taylor seconded the motion to approve the June 15, 2026 and July 13, 2026 Regular Business Meeting minutes. Mayor Barnes called for a voice vote—the ayes were in favor and the motion to approve the minutes passed.

Mayor Barnes presented an updated agenda for the meeting (the agenda was updated due to the HAPC requesting additional items—two HAPC Commissioner appointments, Position 2 and Position 3). Councilmember Kauffman made a motion to approve the updated agenda for the meeting. Councilmember Taylor seconded the motion to approve the updated agenda. Mayor called for a voice vote—the ayes were in favor and the motion to approve the updated agenda passed.

Reports:

City Financials: Mayor Barnes offered a report regarding city financials. Mayor offered that expenses are reflecting as under-budget for the year thus far. Mayor offered that sales tax revenues for June were as expected. Councilmember Kauffman inquired for an anticipated schedule on when to expect a budget meeting for 2027's budget. Mayor Barnes offered that the 2027 budget process would begin in or around October and a meeting would be set soon.

Fire Department: Chief Moore presented the HVFD run report. The run report for year to date reflected 316 calls for service. July totaled 55 calls: 30 medical, 9 cancelled, 9 traffic controls, 2 law enforcement support, 3 fires, and 2 motor vehicle accidents. The HVFD, along with all other city and county personnel, are hard working with high call volumes.

Police Department: Police Chief Michael Himschoot reported that the Hardy Police Department was increasing traffic control efforts to prevent speeding and reminded everyone to be alert for school buses and children as the new school year started.

Public Works Department: Mayor Barnes offered a report that the Public Works Department had been working hard mowing, working to cut back brush, working with the inmate program to cleanup around

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the city, working to fill potholes in the roads, and performing repair work at the wastewater treatment plant. Mayor asked that due to the extreme weather temperatures, please remember to thank the hard working men in the Public Works Department for their service to the city.

Planning and Zoning Commission: Mayor Barnes reported that there was not a P & Z meeting earlier in the evening.

Sharp County Regional Airport Commission: Mayor reported the airport authority met on July 1, 2026. Equipment repairs were performed on the tractor, the new EAA Chapter met on June 20, 2026, and the taxiway project continues progress. The authority also approved a HAM radio group to install a repeater at the airport. Mayor reported that the next meeting would be at 3:00 p.m. on the first Wednesday of the next month.

Tri-County Solid Waste Disposal Authority: Mayor reported the authority met July 15, 2026. Mayor reported that there were 33 bales of cardboard weighing over 34,000 pounds put out of production for recycling. The facility also processed 1,220 pounds of regular plastic and 950 pounds of number two plastics. Mayor reported that forklift repairs continued, and that the facility is still actively seeking volunteer time/labor.

Hardy Advertising and Promotion Commission (HAPC): Chairman Treat reported the A&P had another busy month, noting that the local restaurants were reporting increased revenues for the tourism season. Funding was approved for the Safe Night Ministries "Denim and Diamonds" event at the Civic Center on October 3, 2026. Civic Center renovations were ongoing with bids to be solicited, the mural project was planned for completion by the end of the week, the Twilight Symphony was scheduled for August 15, 2026, and the commission was discussing methods to coordinate with the city to better update one another on mobile food vendors in the city. The commission determined a mid-year budget review was not needed, and that they were pursuing an AEDC Rural Community Grant for \$15,000 in matching state funds for kitchen equipment in the Civic Center.

Mayor's Report: Mayor reported that the summer season and tourism was going very well this year for Hardy, with a visible increase in tourists compared to year 2025 (flooding year.) Mayor highlighted back to school safety due to Highland Schools resuming this week. Mayor also reported on Homesteaders Day, September 26, 2026. Mayor thanks the Sharp County Community Inmate Program for their service to Hardy. Mayor asked for residents to please report blinking, out, or dim streetlights to City Hall and asked for volunteers to assist on Wednesdays for recycling. Mayor concluded regarding the upcoming city November election, and urged everyone to remain respectful to one another and to please be positive to all seeking public office.

Old Business:

Discussion of City Projects Updates was listed under old business. Mayor provided that these old business items were being addressed under new business with updates regarding the various projects.

New Business:

Regarding FEMA Public Assistance Updates: \$2.72 Million Approved – Mayor Barnes presented updates all ongoing city projects. Details of those projects are listed below:

In summarization, FEMA approved up to roughly \$1,000,000 available for reimbursement to the city for damages in Loberg Park. Total FEMA Public Assistance to the City of Hardy that is available under DR-4873 is \$2,727,039.41. The scope of planned projects include the following: Loberg Park, Buford Beach, the Hardy Campground and RV Park, the City Hall Building on Woodland Hills Road, damaged city signs, repairing approximately 15 city streets, ensuring continued clean drinking water, ensuring continued sewer services, and replacing various damaged equipment for city departments. Mayor Barnes offered information on the 25% cost share for clarification to the council. The procurement process for an engineering firm was started and would be published in Wednesday's newspaper. Mayor offered that the Street Repair project was approximately \$213,306.47 for the following effected streets: James Road, South Spring Street, Bobo Street, Barber Drive, Front Street, East Valley Drive, North Spring Street, areas in Rio Vista, Pecan Grove Road, Burton Road, Robinhood Lane, Holden Lane, Holden Road, Broken Arrow Road, and Bee Run Road.

Regarding Discussion for the FUN Park Playground Grant Project, Mayor Barnes provided the site plans for the Loberg Park playground that was provided by Civil Engineer Associates LLC of Jonesboro, Arkansas. Mayor reviewed notes 1-10 and outlined what the site plans illustrated. Discussion ensued regarding funding options, key decisions to make, and what the local cost-share match of funds would look like with both the FEMA PA available, and the FUN Park Grant available. If the city choses to move forward with the FEMA Public Assistance, the city would need to interject approximately \$300,000 in order to receive reimbursement of up to \$1M from FEMA, or accept the site plans as-is for the FUN Park Grant to re-use equipment in the park, add some new equipment, and make the entrances ADA compliant. Mayor concluded that he would reach out to inquire about some potential private donors to contribute the 25% (\$300K) cost-share so that the city may utilize the FEMA Public Assistance to have the best outcome available for the needed repairs in Loberg Park.

Mayor Barnes presented the next topic of the Wastewater Treatment Facility Project- U.S. Congress Funds. Mayor provided that the City of Hardy had been selected in the Appropriations Bill from Congress to receive federal assistance for repairs at the wastewater treatment facility center. The City has a current offer of 75% grant funding from ANRC, however, the Congressionally Delegated Spending funding would provide 80% grant funding, saving the city/citizens 5% or roughly \$65,000. Mayor Barnes thanked U.S. Senator John Boozman's office for their assistance to make this grant opportunity possible.

Mayor Barnes presented the next topic of the Water Meter System Replacement Grant Project. Mayor offered that this project was in process and was 100% grant funded for \$778,865.00 to replace the city's water meters, boxes, and setters, as well as provide technology to digitally read meters, saving time and funding. This new technology would be able to detect and locate leaks in real-time, reducing water loss and expense for Hardy. This project would be funded by ANRC.

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Regarding ARDOT: Signage Review U.S. HWY 62 & U.S. HWY 63. Mayor Barnes presented an update from ARDOT and provided that all signage recommendations were based on an in-site investigation and recent crash data from the District 5 Engineer's Office. After surveying the area, ARDOT found that there was a need to place signage (3 signs) to encourage all trucks to follow marked highways, to hopefully deter large trucks from entering city streets, refrain traffic from going downtown on Main Street, and encouraging the use of the Truck Route.

Mayor Barnes presented the next topic of Arkansas State Aid City Street Program for discussion. Mayor reviewed the document in the packet highlighting the state's program and asked for the councilmembers to conduct a needs assessment survey in each of their Wards for potential streets that need improvement. Mayor offered that there is up to \$400,000 available by request to improve city streets in Hardy. Mayor asked for councilmembers to please return the assessment to the City Hall office for discussion in the following month's meeting. Mayor also offered that he would be asking the Public Works Director to provide information as well, and that this is an information gathering phase at this time for roads to be considered.

Regarding Wrap-Up: Summary of All Current Projects in Progress. Mayor Barnes provided a summary of all current projects in process. See the listing below:

1. FEMA Pubic Assistance Grant (DR4873).....	\$2,727,039.41
2. ANRC Grant for Water Meter Replacement System	\$778,865.00
3. U.S. Congress Appropriations Grant (Wastewater Facility)	\$1,072,000.00
4. State of Arkansas Dept. of Parks, Heritage and Tourism FUN Grant.....	\$100,000.00
5. State of Arkansas State Aid City Street Grant Program.....	\$400,000

Total value of Hardy's major projects currently in process\$5,077,904.41

Mayor Barnes offered that these projects would take some time to complete. Mayor offered that these projects are funded by grant processes, and how the required steps must be taken and followed for these processes to be completed correctly, so that the financial burden upon the city and the taxpayer is reduced as much as possible. Mayor Barnes opened the floor for questions regarding the mentioned projects. Councilmember Kauffman asked about the playground equipment; discussion continued regarding the various projects, infrastructure improvements, factors that are impacting our water systems, and the recently updated Water & Wastewater Board required classes that would need to be taken soon (a schedule was placed in the councilmember's mailboxes for availability to be reported back to the Mayor's Office for scheduling).

Mayor Barnes presented *Resolution 2026-03: AEDC Rural Community Grant*. This resolution was provided to the Mayor from the HAPC, to authorize the HAPC to apply for a grant to purchase kitchen equipment for the Civic Center. Councilmember Clay-Thomas made a motion to read *Resolution 2026-03*—seconded by Councilmember Hester. Mayor called for a voice vote—the ayes were in favor and the motion to read *Resolution 2026-03* passed. Mayor read *Resolution 2026-03* aloud. Councilmember Taylor made a motion to approve *Resolution 2026-03*—seconded by Councilmember Kauffman. Mayor called for a voice vote—the ayes were in favor and the motion to approve *Resolution 2026-03* passed.

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Mayor Barnes presented the City of Hardy Advertising & Promotion Commission Appointment Confirmations:

HAPC Position 3: Dining/Lodging. Nimmi Desai was voted on at a HAPC meeting to continue service for an additional four years, with a term expiration date of September 1, 2030. Councilmember Taylor made a motion to approve Nimmi Desai to Position 3 with a term expiration date of September 1, 2030. Councilmember Clay-Thomas seconded the motion to approve. Mayor called for a voice vote—the ayes were in favor and the motion to approve Nimmi Desai to HAPC Position 3 passed. Ms. Desai currently had an Oath of Office recorded and still in effect.

HAPC Position 2: Dining/Lodging. Jacob McIntosh was voted on at a HAPC meeting to begin service with a term expiration date of September 1, 2027, filing the remainder of a vacancy on the HAPC. Councilmember Clay-Thomas made a motion to approve Jacob McIntosh to Position 2 with a term expiration date of September 1, 2027. Councilmember Kauffman seconded the motion to approve. Mayor called for a voice vote—the ayes were in favor and the motion to approve Jacob McIntosh to HAPC Position 2 passed. Mr. McIntosh was not in attendance at the meeting; it was determined that he would take his Oath of Office at a later date.

Citizen Commentary:

Ralph Lowe of the Spring River Collective addressed the council with the topic of election, discussed Hardy's current successes, encouraged a positive climate in Hardy during this time of election season, and delivered an excerpt of a poem.

Jon Osborne also addressed the council with the topic of election, thanked Mayor Barnes for his service, thanked Mrs. Taylor for her service, and thanked Mrs. Kauffman for her service. Mr. Osborne asked a few questions to Mrs. Kauffman and she responded that this was not the place to have these discussions in public and she would be glad to talk with him privately.

John Treat addressed the council with the topic of State of the City, in his personal capacity. He addressed the topic of running clean campaigns and addressed Mr. Osborne's involvement in the elections. Mayor Barnes encouraged that if there was a disagreement between individuals to take the conversation outside and work it out.

Tim Seager addressed the council with the topic of The People of Hardy. Mr. Seager encouraged people to not talk bad about one another, to not sling mud during election season, because we do not really know each other's lives individually. Mr. Seager wished peace, love, and happiness for all.

Mayor Barnes thanked all for their input and encouraged that we all work together for Hardy.

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Adjournment:

Councilmember Hester 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 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Willow R. Birdsell
Recorder-Treasurer

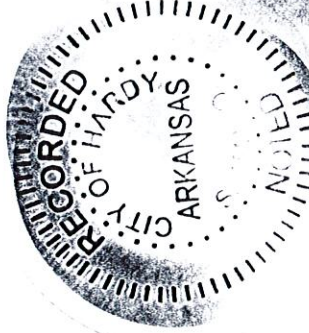
PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 14th DAY OF September, 2026.

APPROVED:


Ethan J. Barnes
Mayor

ATTEST:


Willow R. Birdsell
Recorder-Treasurer



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