

Minutes

Hardin County Fiscal Court Regular Meeting

June 24, 2025 at 5:30 p.m.

County Judge/Executive Keith Taul called the meeting to order and requested a roll call vote.

Answering:

Squire Fred Clem, Jr.: here; Squire Larry Hicks: here; Squire Kenny Muse: here; Squire Aaron Pennington: here; Squire Kenny Saltsman: here; Squire EG Thompson: absent; Squire Patsy Whitehead: here; Squire Chris Yates: here; County Judge/Executive Keith Taul: here.

The Invocation was given by Squire Clem.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Squire Yates.

County Judge/Executive Keith Taul made opening comments welcoming those in attendance and previewing the agenda.

Approve Hardin County Fiscal Court 6.10.2025 minutes

Motion to Approve by Squire Muse and seconded by Squire Yates

Voting:

Squire Fred Clem, Jr.: yes; Squire Larry Hicks: yes; Squire Kenny Muse: yes; Squire Aaron Pennington: yes; Squire Kenny Saltsman: yes; Squire EG Thompson: absent; Squire Patsy Whitehead: yes; Squire Chris Yates: yes; County Judge/Executive Keith Taul: yes.

Motion passed.

Informational Items

- a. American Heart Association's mission: Lifeline Achievement Award – Mark Peterson
- b. Hardin County Flood Update – Mark Peterson

Department/Office Reports

Presentations

- i. Coroner - William Lee
- ii. Sheriff - Teri Bennett
- iii. Clerk - Meranda Caswell

Written Reports

- i. EMS - Mark Peterson
- ii. E-911 - Mike Leo
- iii. Planning - Adam King

Citizen's Concerns or Comments:

County Judge/Executive Keith Taul opened the floor for citizen comments. None were offered.

Ordinances/Resolutions/Agreements

- a. First Reading – **Ethics Ordinance No. 346 Series 2025**, Amending Ordinance No. 107, Series 1994.

Motion to Approve by Squire Saltsman and seconded by Squire Pennington.

Squire Saltsman and Squire Whitehead gave thanks to the county attorney, city attorney, and the mayor of West Point for their service concerning the Ethics Ordinance.

Voting:

Squire Fred Clem, Jr.: yes; Squire Larry Hicks: yes; Squire Kenny Muse: yes; Squire Aaron Pennington: yes; Squire Kenny Saltsman: yes; Squire EG Thompson: absent; Squire Patsy Whitehead: yes; Squire Chris Yates: yes; County Judge/Executive Keith Taul: yes.
Motion passed.

- b. Approve **Resolution No. 2025-110** related to approval of Road Department Job Description Revisions

Motion to Approve by Squire Pennington and seconded by Squire Yates.

Voting:

Squire Fred Clem, Jr.: yes; Squire Larry Hicks: yes; Squire Kenny Muse: yes; Squire Aaron Pennington: yes; Squire Kenny Saltsman: yes; Squire EG Thompson: absent; Squire Patsy Whitehead: yes; Squire Chris Yates: yes; County Judge/Executive Keith Taul: yes.
Motion passed.

- c. Approve **Resolution No. 2025-111** related to approval of Road Department Pay Grade Revisions

Motion to Approve by Squire Clem and seconded by Squire Saltsman.

Voting:

Squire Fred Clem, Jr.: yes; Squire Larry Hicks: yes; Squire Kenny Muse: yes; Squire Aaron Pennington: yes; Squire Kenny Saltsman: yes; Squire EG Thompson: absent; Squire Patsy Whitehead: yes; Squire Chris Yates: yes; County Judge/Executive Keith Taul: yes.
Motion passed.

- d. Approve **Resolution No. 2025-112** related to approval of E-911 Job Description Revisions

Motion to Approve by Squire Whitehead and seconded by Squire Yates.

Voting:

Squire Fred Clem, Jr.: yes; Squire Larry Hicks: yes; Squire Kenny Muse: yes; Squire Aaron Pennington: yes; Squire Kenny Saltsman: no; Squire EG Thompson: absent; Squire Patsy Whitehead: yes; Squire Chris Yates: yes; County Judge/Executive Keith Taul: yes.
Motion passed.

- e. Approve **Resolution No. 2025-113** related to approval of E-911 Pay Grade Revisions

Motion to Approve by Squire Whitehead and seconded by Squire Pennington.

Voting:

Squire Fred Clem, Jr.: yes; Squire Larry Hicks: yes; Squire Kenny Muse: yes; Squire Aaron Pennington: yes; Squire Kenny Saltsman: no; Squire EG Thompson: absent; Squire Patsy Whitehead: yes; Squire Chris Yates: yes; County Judge/Executive Keith Taul: yes.

Motion passed.

- f. Approve **Resolution No. 2025-114** related to approval of Detention Center Pay Grade Changes

Squire Muse stated that to be consistent with his no vote on the budget, there were some salary increases that he did not think needed to made, he would vote no.

Motion to Approve by Squire Saltsman and seconded by Squire Pennington.

Voting:

Squire Fred Clem, Jr.: yes; Squire Larry Hicks: yes; Squire Kenny Muse: no; Squire Aaron Pennington: yes; Squire Kenny Saltsman: yes; Squire EG Thompson: absent; Squire Patsy Whitehead: yes; Squire Chris Yates: yes; County Judge/Executive Keith Taul: yes.

Motion passed.

- g. Approve **Resolution No. 2025-122** related to approval of Changes to Hardin County Administrative Code

Judge/Executive Keith Taul stated that the changes were to four sections of the administrative code required by KRS 68.005. The current administrative code complies with all the laws and regulations but allows changes proposed by the magistrates in June of each year. This resolution requires a 2/3 majority vote of fiscal court members which would be six votes to approve.

Squire Yates made a motion to submit a revised resolution to remove the take-home policy along with the social media policy. The two exhibits are worded the exactly the same. Yates moved that Resolution No. 2025-122 be removed and replaced with **Resolution No. 2025-127** related to approval of the Use of County Facilities Policy and Fiscal Court Committees to Hardin County Administrative Code.

Motion was seconded by Squire Pennington.

Squire Hicks asked if the social media policy was being reentered into the Resolution. He voiced that Judge Taul was elected to be the Judge/Executive for Hardin County, and he did not like the magistrates trying to take over the court.

Judge/Executive Taul stated that Exhibit A is referring to the use of county facilities. The proposed change is item 2 for the promotion of private for-profit business. The proposal is redundant in that the parameters do not allow flexibility for food trucks on the government property. The second item is a committee chair creating a temporary committee. The judge/executive establishes fiscal court committees which are the four current committees: Public Works, Emergency Services, Resources and Community Support, and Finance. KRS 67.080 item 3 states that fiscal court shall not exercise executive authority except as specifically assigned by statute. The county judge/executive serves as the chief executive of the county and holds the primary administrative and executive authority.

Squire Saltsman said the only addition that he is proposing is the permitted use of the county government property and that is to prohibit the conduct or promotion of private for-profit businesses. The nonprofit community would still be allowed provided the county is a sponsor, member, or participant, and there is a clear connection between the organization's purpose and the services or mission of the county government.

Judge/Executive Taul said a mistake had been made and had been rectified, but the policy was already in place to say that this was not appropriate.

Voting:

Squire Fred Clem, Jr.: yes; Squire Larry Hicks: no; Squire Kenny Muse: yes; Squire Aaron Pennington: yes; Squire Kenny Saltsman: yes; Squire EG Thompson: absent; Squire Patsy Whitehead: yes; Squire Chris Yates: yes; County Judge/Executive Keith Taul: no.

Motion passed by 2/3 vote.

After the roll call, Judge/Executive stated that the consent agenda was next.

Squire Yates made a motion to add **Resolution No. 2025-128** in relation to the approval amendments of the Hardin County Personnel and Procedures Handbook.

It was seconded by Squire Pennington.

Squire Yates said he presented Resolution 2025-128. It is a change to the social media policy and the take-home vehicle policy to be put into the policies and procedures handbook. It was the exact same thing that was presented and talked about in the committee. The only difference in this one is the change from adding the code to the policies and procedures.

Judge/Executive Taul read the proposed resolution. "Be it resolved upon recommendation of Magistrate Aaron Pennington after discussion at the resources and community support committee to replace the social media policy in Chapter 8 Section 10 of the Hardin County personnel policies and procedures handbook with Exhibit A to this resolution. Be it resolved upon recommendation of Magistrate Aaron Pennington after discussion at the resources and community support committee to add the existing language of IT security policy 2.3 to Chapter 8 Section 7 of the Hardin County personnel policies and procedures handbook with Exhibit B to this resolution and to add form to execute this policy found in Exhibit D to this resolution. Be it resolved upon recommendation of Magistrate Chris Yates after discussion at the resources and community support committee to replace the county vehicle policy in Chapter 8 Section 8 of Hardin County personnel policies and procedures handbook with Exhibit C to this resolution. And be it resolved that all these policies inconsistent with this resolution shall conform." Since it is not a change to the administrative code, it just takes a simple majority vote.

Motion by Yates and seconded by Saltsman.

Discussion: Squire Whitehead stated that at this juncture, we are not prepared to revise our social media policies. Two things that she had concern about was that departments will fall, other than animal care and control, under Hardin County Government. Her concern was about the public, who had become familiar with the social media pages, losing vital information from departments such as emergency services, 911, and coroner office. Care needs to be taken in communicating these changes to the community members. She stated that she has an issue with the non-county government events and festivals that are not to be included on our social media page. Hardin County, as a whole, should support these events and activities. She stated that she has an issue with the take-home vehicle policy where more time is needed to investigate and itemize the consequences that will be created from the policy change.

Squire Hicks stated that this sounded like a sneak attack. The policy changes were all together, and then all of a sudden, two of the changes were removed. The public has been removed from saying anything from the meetings, and now the changes will take the public out of social media. He stated that he was upset that some magistrates are trying to overpower this court. There is a squad in Washington D. C. and a squad in Hardin County that is trying to rule everything their way. He was really disgusted with this. He will vote no on this.

Squire Yates said he anticipated push back from the take-home vehicle policy. Take-home vehicles are a valuable benefit. Who wouldn't appreciate having their commute covered by taxpayer dollars. His position is that the current guidelines are far too vague and leaves room for subjective interpretation. He did not believe in the compelling need for building and grounds or code enforcement to have take-home vehicles. He had a hard time classifying those roles as emergency responders. A clear line needs to be drawn between operational support roles and true emergency personnel who are expected to respond immediately at all hours. When it comes to emergency management, he agreed that some flexibility was necessary.

Judge/Executive Keith Taul said he opposed certain sections of the proposed social media policy, specifically, the shutdown of the Facebook pages of EMS emergency management; the language referring to official Hardin County government business services and events; promoting of non-county government sponsored events or festivals; limiting the county response to Facebook to this statement: Please contact us for further information about this at 270-765-2350 which is the general number that rings into his office area or info at HardinCounty.gov. Facebook is designed for two-way communication and interaction. The Hardin County government Facebook pages have about 24,000 followers, and over 7,600,000 views for the past six months.

Squire Pennington said there have been multiple discussions about the social media policy for the last two years. The main page for the Hardin County Government should be the only page for the followers to visit. The other pages were created when the magistrates took office, and they were not here under the previous administration. He stated that they needed to funnel everybody into one source of solid good information, not a bunch of different news sources that are not overseen by the PR person.

Judge/Executive Keith Taul asked about how much the risk of potential legal action was. The policy that is in place right now has disclaimers to take care of a high percentage of possible legal action. The policy would stop the ability to communicate information on festivals in the county.

County Attorney Oldham mentioned that the legal issue as of March 2024, she brought an initial social media policy because of a legal issue. This policy has changed since then, but it was in response to a US Supreme Court decision about a first amendment issue and that was about the comment feature to be on or off and some open records issues as well.

Judge/Executive Keith Taul asked if the disclaimers out there addressed the comment feature.

County Attorney Oldham stated that the disclaimers did not completely address the comment feature.

Squire Pennington said the disclaimers came initially from this policy when he brought it in the past.

Judge/Executive Keith Taul stated that the things that needed to be addressed were addressed.

County Attorney Oldham stated that it was not addressed.

Judge/Executive Keith Taul stated that it was going in the wrong direction.

Squire Clem stated that he agreed with Magistrate Pennington on his comments and his reasoning. This policy will give an opportunity to control potential abuse. It reduces potential liability. It will get accurate information out to the public.

Judge/Executive Keith Taul said he has issues with the designations of the take-home vehicle policy of which vehicles are take-home vehicles and which ones are not. There are specific circumstances that he has reviewed in relation to each vehicle and employee that is involved. He had considered the costs to the county in relation to the requirements for emergency call, location of the employees' home with respect to the large geographical area of the county and the resultant safety of the employees and citizens along with response times. If there should be a policy, then the judge/executive may make exceptions to which vehicles are take-home vehicles. This is another proposed restriction that limits the judge/executive to make the best decisions. There was no discussion with the judge/executive or the deputy judge/executive about the negative impacts on the citizens. An example, the director of buildings and grounds building is an exempt salaried employee that is required by the judge/executive to be available 24/7 for the safety of the employees and community visitors. The vehicle is equipped with tools necessary for emergency situations and is equipped to handle road conditions. The government department is responsible for E911 cell sites, building sites, the government building which includes the offices of sheriff and E911, emergency management buildings, the coroner's office, and animal control. Another example, the code enforcement officer is a non-exempt hourly employee. His vehicle is a clearly marked vehicle that drives onto private property and assists with the sheriff's office and health department in the early mornings and late afternoons. Another example, the deputy emergency management director who is an exempt salaried employee who is required to be on either first or second on-call 24/7 now lives approximately 10 miles from the county line. Within this policy, any employee that resides more than five miles outside of the Hardin County line will not be permitted to have a take-home vehicle. This change in policy would create some problems.

Squire Yates stated that it was the same resolution that was on the agenda, and the resolution was not sprung on the judge/executive. Squire Yates went on record to promise it was the exact same verbiage.

Judge/Executive Keith Taul stated that the proposal was taking one resolution, dividing it into two, coming up with numbers that don't even match. He said is a last-minute type of deal, and it makes it more difficult to work through this type of thing. He further stated that he would have liked to of known earlier that the resolution was being separated.

Squire Whitehead said this proposed change was introduced by Magistrate Yates at the resources and community support committee meeting on June 16th. She had no knowledge that these two items were going to be voted on today separately. She knew that they were being pulled, but she did not know that they were being introduced separately.

Squire Pennington stated that at that same meeting, there was no objection. Most had wanted to push forward. He stated that Patsy had mentioned how other places like Nolin have on-call vehicles to respond to emergency situations. Judge/Executive Keith Taul was not at the meeting.

Squire Whitehead clarified her comment that Magistrate Pennington had made. Through her experience through Nolin RECC when linemen are hired, they're told that is the policy. But in contrast, when the county employees are hired, we're changing what they've been told when they were hired. So, this will create a negative consequence. The pros and cons need to be examined because it is critical to those employees.

Squire Pennington stated that she had no problem with it.

Squire Whitehead stated that she did not at the time, but it was just introduced at the resources committee on June 16th.

Squire Pennington questioned Magistrate Whitehead about the discussion on the social media for the last two years.

Squire Whitehead stated that she had not seen a social media revised policy until recently.

Squire Saltsman questioned the judge/executive if GPS trackers were on all of the vehicles. Judge Executive Keith Taul responded that the vehicles for the road department have them installed on their vehicles.

Squire Saltsman called the question as a motion to end the current discussion and bring the motion on the floor to an immediate vote. It was seconded by Squire Yates.

Voting:

Squire Fred Clem, Jr.: yes; Squire Larry Hicks: no; Squire Kenny Muse: yes; Squire Aaron Pennington: yes; Squire Kenny Saltsman: yes; Squire EG Thompson: absent; Squire Patsy Whitehead: no; Squire Chris Yates: yes; County Judge/Executive Keith Taul: no.

Motion passed.

Voting on **Resolution No. 2025-128:**

Squire Fred Clem, Jr.: yes; Squire Larry Hicks: no; Squire Kenny Muse: yes; Squire Aaron Pennington: yes; Squire Kenny Saltsman: yes; Squire EG Thompson: absent; Squire Patsy Whitehead: no; Squire Chris Yates: yes; County Judge/Executive Keith Taul: no.

Motion passed.

Consent Agenda

a. Approve Treasurer's Financial Report 05.2025.

b. Approve June Claims 6.24.2025, June Library Claims 6.24.2025

- c. Approve May Payroll Registers (5.9.2025, 5.13.2025, 5.23.2025)
- d. Approve **Resolution No. 2025-115** related to approval of EMS Personnel
- e. Approve **Resolution No. 2025-116** related to approval of Channel Bound LLC Agreement for ACA Reporting
- f. Approve **Resolution No. 2025-117** related to approval of Reappointment of Steve Steck to the Hardin County Planning Board of Adjustment
- g. Approve **Resolution No. 2025-118** related to approval of HCEC-TV Service Fee Agreement
- h. Approve **Resolution No. 2025-119** related to approval of Interlocal Agreement with LTADD for Workforce Development
- i. Approve **Resolution No. 2025-120** related to approval of Financial Transfers
- j. Approve **Resolution No. 2025-121** related to approval of Amending **Resolution No. 2019-101** Cash Drawer Fund for E-911 Increasing to \$200 and **Resolution No. 2024-133** Cash Drawer Fund for Industrial Tax Increasing to \$200
- k. Approve **Resolution No. 2025-123** related to approval of Detention Center Medical Services Contract
- l. Approve **Resolution No. 2025-124** related to approval of Percell & Sons Funeral Home Cremation and Burial Rates Contract
- m. Approve **Resolution No. 2025-126** related to approval of Authorization of Back Payment to West Hardin Fire Department
- n. Approve Public Works Committee Meeting Minutes 6.9.2025
- o. Approve Resources and Community Support Committee Meeting Minutes 6.16.2025
- p. Approve Finance Committee Meeting Minutes 6.17.2025
- q. Approve Emergency Services Meeting Minutes 6.18.2025

Judge/Executive Keith Taul asked if any items were to be removed. Hearing none.

Motion to Approve by Squire Yates and seconded by Squire Muse.

Voting:

Squire Fred Clem, Jr.: yes; Squire Larry Hicks: yes; Squire Kenny Muse: yes; Squire Aaron Pennington: yes; Squire Kenny Saltsman: yes; Squire EG Thompson: absent; Squire Patsy Whitehead: yes; Squire Chris Yates: yes; County Judge/Executive Keith Taul: yes.

Motion passed.

Concluding Comments

Squire Yates invited the public to the next meeting of the Emergency Services.

Squire Whitehead invited the public to the next meeting of the Resources and Community Support Committee.

Squire Clem invited the public to attend the next meeting of the Finance Committee and the next meeting of the Town Hall Forum on July 29 at 5:30 p.m. at the Hardin County Fiscal Courtroom in the County Government Building. He encouraged the public to not drink and drive, nor text and drive.

Squire Hicks apologized to the citizens of Hardin County for the actions of some of the magistrates today and in the past. Please reach out to Squire Hicks at 270-234-4951.

Squire Muse invited the public to attend the next meeting of the Public Works Committee.

County Judge/Executive Taul invited the public to attend the next meeting of Fiscal Court. The Hardin County Government is closed on July 4, Independence Day. His final comment was that they were taking a step backwards as a county government. These changes make it much more difficult to execute things daily. He stated that he would keep on trudging forward for this county.

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by Squire Yates and seconded by Squire Muse. Court was adjourned without objection, County Judge/Executive Keith Taul presiding.



KEITH L. TAUL
HARDIN COUNTY JUDGE/EXECUTIVE

ATTEST:



BRIAN D. SMITH
CLERK, HARDIN COUNTY FISCAL COURT