

Minutes

Hardin County Fiscal Court Regular Meeting January 13, 2026 at 3:30 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: here; Squire Patsy Whitehead: here; Squire Chris Yates: here; County Judge/Executive Keith Taul: here.

The Invocation was given by Squire Thompson.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Squire Hicks.

County Judge/Executive Keith Taul made opening comments welcoming those in attendance and previewing the agenda. Judge/Executive Keith Taul summarized the major events in the county for the calendar year 2025.

Approve Hardin County Fiscal Court 12.18.2025 minutes

Motion to Approve by Squire Whitehead 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: yes; Squire Patsy Whitehead: yes; Squire Chris Yates: yes; County Judge/Executive Keith Taul: yes.

Motion passed.

Informational Items

Hardin County Detention Center Medical Billing Update – Josh Lindblom – After an audit, the Baptist Health Hospital reimbursed the Hardin County Detention Center \$50,383.53 for medical billing. There will be 3 more checks to be reimbursed to the Hardin County Detention Center.

Department/Office Reports

Presentations

- a. Planning – Adam King
- b. Public Works – Stephanie Givens
- c. Engineering – Mark Absher
- d. Road Department – Dwight Morgan

Written Reports

- a. Animal Control – Mike McNutt - December 2025 Fiscal Court Report - Fort Knox
Animal Intake 2022-2025 - Larue County Animal Intake 2022-2025 - 2025 Totals for Municipality Monthly Report
- b. Emergency Management – Joey Scott
- c. Planning – Adam King

Citizen's Concerns or Comments:

County Judge/Executive Keith Taul opened the floor for citizen comments. Justin Poland stated that he was a representative for this area for Congressman Andy Barr's campaign for US Senate, and they offered their services to the county.

Closed Session – Pursuant to KRS 61.810 (1) (g) discussions concerning a specific proposal, if open discussions would jeopardize the siting, retention, expansion or upgrading of the business.

Motion to Approve by Judge-Executive Keith Taul and seconded by Squire Whitehead.

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: yes; Squire Patsy Whitehead: yes; Squire Chris Yates: yes; County Judge/Executive Keith Taul: yes.

Motion passed.

Ordinances/Resolutions/Agreements

- a. Approve **Resolution No. 2026-008** related to approval of Assignment of Solid Waste Franchise Agreement to Unified Disposal Partners Holdings LLC

Motion to Approve by Squire Muse and seconded by Squire Hicks

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: yes; Squire Patsy Whitehead: yes; Squire Chris Yates: yes; County Judge/Executive Keith Taul: yes.

Motion passed.

- b. Approve **Resolution No. 2026-009** related to approval of Assignment of Intergovernmental Support Agreement IGSA to Unified Disposal Partners Holdings LLC

Motion to Approve by Squire Clem 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: yes; Squire Patsy Whitehead: yes; Squire Chris Yates: yes; County Judge/Executive Keith Taul: yes.

Motion passed.

- c. Approve **Resolution No. 2026-007** related to approval of Engineering Personnel
Judge/Executive Keith Taul said that this resolution was from the last meeting but with a different start date. County Attorney Jenny Oldham state that in Kentucky, if there is a tie vote on appointment of personnel, and if that continued for 15 days or more, then the judge executive can make the appointment without the vote of Fiscal Court. Judge/Executive Keith Taul asked if there was a motion to approve Resolution 2026-007 for the hiring of the GIS coordinator as stated in the original resolution 2025-246 that failed on deadlock.

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

Judge/Executive Keith Taul reminded the court that Mark Absher is the senior county engineer, and along with his guidance, the county needs a full-time GIS coordinator to complete all the requirements of a large, growing county. He stated that the Lincoln Trail ADD contract was a

stop gap with a maximum of \$80,000 paid annually until the court was able to fill the position. He also stated that since the position was vacated in May 2025, there was no one available to generate maps for engineers, for the sheriff's office, or for planning and zoning. He stated that contract engineering services should be project-related only, not a replacement for full-time daily or routine services.

Squire Yates stated that he was surprised to see the resolution back on the agenda, and his position has not changed. He stated that Lincoln Trail ADD currently employs the county's former county engineer. He stated that his position on the matter is driven by saving the taxpayers' money. He stated that the county already had two GIS positions: one with planning and zoning, and the other with 911. As long as those two coordinators continue to handle their departmental responsibilities and Lincoln Trail ADD is tasked solely with assisting the county engineer, he believed that the county can realize meaningful cost savings. He stated that the upcoming budget will be a challenge to find \$400,000 to maintain a full-time ambulance in White Mills. He stated that the county is spending more than the county is taking in.

Squire Clem stated that his position on this resolution was not about a person, position, or the Judge/Executive, but about the role as Fiscal Court members to be fiscally responsible. He stated that he did not get the impression that it was going to be a stop gap. He stated that he wanted to give the contract a chance. If it does work, then the county got a win-win for the taxpayers and the engineering department. If it doesn't work, then the county would do something differently. He stated for those reasons, he would vote no.

Judge/Executive Keith Taul stated that he did hear some pushback on filling the position. However, he stated that he had heard that there was some desire to bring in contract labor. He stated that after he discussed with the county engineer who actually ran the department, not some theoretical approach, he would fill the position to provide services that would benefit the citizens.

Squire Whitehead stated that her position would remain the same as last time. She stated that she understood that it was a temporary fix, and she stated that Judge Taul was responsible for the day-to-day operations of county government and the employees of the county government. She stated that the position was a budgeted position and that it was at his discretion to do that. She stated that she would vote yes.

Squire Thompson stated that he held the engineering department in high value. He asked if the services provided of the GIS coordinator from Lincoln Trail ADD district had been inadequate or inadequate? He believed that it would be a cost savings. Currently, he was not ready to move ahead with it.

Judge/Executive Keith Taul stated that he could answer the question that the contract person has been adequate. Judge Taul stated that we have a backlog of projects and availability has been the question from day one. Judge Taul stated that in his career with contract types of services, it had been a mixed bag of results.

Squire Saltsman stated that the contractor was Lincoln Trail ADD in which the fiscal court gives money to each year to be a part of that organization. He stated that Judge Taul sat on the board, too, along with twenty-three percent of that board that are Hardin Countians. He disagreed with the argument that contract services doesn't work.

Squire Pennington stated that from a builder/developer standpoint, he had never once used the county GIS. He stated that the county engineer and his paid engineer have interactions, but his paid engineer does the work. He also stated that after conversations with planning and zoning, they can do their own GIS services. He stated that Adam King was applying for a drone pilot license. He stated that we have a contract and that we have an opportunity to trim the fat.

Judge/Executive Keith Taul responded that the county engineer doesn't put together the whole development. He said that each of the departments will probably end up absorbing the cost.

Squire Pennington stated that his plans were turned into planning and zoning, not Mark Absher. The engineer would sign off on the plans, not a GIS coordinator. He said that we have the contract now, let's use it.

Squire Muse stated that when we entered the contract, he thought it was a temporary stop gap until we could fill it. He stated that when we hired the engineer, then the engineer would decide what was needed to run his department. He also stated that the engineer is stating that he needed a full-time GIS coordinator instead of the contract.

Judge/Executive Keith Taul responded that we should be dependent on the department head to give good input and to understand why he is against contract labor.

Squire Saltsman motioned to call the question.

Squire Hicks stated that he had been sitting here for three years and to his knowledge this is the first time that some magistrates are concerned about saving the taxpayers' money. He stated that we didn't have to spend almost triple the money for three ambulances. He also stated that we were not interested in savings taxpayers' money when the industrial tax was put in. He stated that Judge Taul brings something up, then a group of magistrates just want to fight him on it. He stated that he would be voting yes on it.

Squire Pennington clarified that the EMS director asked for the ambulances, and we budgeted for them. After realizing the economy, the director brought new quotes to the court. He stated that he would not gamble with people's lives. A few weeks afterwards, the director offered an option of repurposed boxes which did not add to our fleet.

Squire Hicks stated that he was not against purchasing the ambulances; he was against spending triple the money.

Squire Whitehead made some final comments that when Mr. Absher gave his report about his projected goals and needs about signage and safety in 2026, it looked like a lot of projects. She stated that we owe it to the engineer and to Judge Taul to hire a GIS in-house employee.

Voting:

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

Motion failed.

Consent Agenda

- a. Approve January Claims 1-13-2026, January ACH Claims 1-13-2026, December Recurring Claims 12-2025, December Utility Claims 12-2025
- b. Approve **Resolution 2026-010** related to approval of Financial Transfers
- c. Approve **Resolution 2026-002** related to approval of 2026 Deceased Farm Animal Removal Application
- d. Approve **Resolution 2026-003** related to approval of Pearl Hollow Hay Lease (Mink) 2026 revised
- ~~e. Approve **Resolution 2026-004** related to approval of 2026 Holiday Schedule~~
- f. Approve **Resolution 2026-005** related to approval of EMS Personnel
- g. Approve **Resolution 2026-006** related to approval of Engineering Personnel

Judge/Executive Keith Taul opened to the magistrates the opportunity to remove any item from the consent agenda. Squire Saltsman asked to remove Resolution 2026-004 related to approval of 2026 Holiday.

Motion to Approve the amended consent agenda was made 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: yes; Squire Patsy Whitehead: yes; Squire Chris Yates: yes; County Judge/Executive Keith Taul: yes.

Motion passed.

Approve **Resolution No. 2026-004** related to approval of 2026 Holiday Schedule

Motion to Approve by Judge/Executive Keith Taul and seconded by Squire Hicks.

Squire Saltsman asked if this had been the procedure since 2022, why didn't it reflect the two extra days President's Day and Columbus' Day in the Personnel Policies and Procedures Handbook?

Squire Yates stated that he didn't mind giving two extra days, but asked what did the Sheriff make his budget on. The extra holidays have a financial impact.

Judge/Executive Taul stated that the holiday schedule was already included in the Sheriff's budget. These holidays have been common practice for the last four years.

Squire Yates stated that he did not realize the holiday schedule did not follow the state schedule. He asked Mrs. Bennett if these two holidays were included in the Sheriff's budget. Her response to Squire Yates was that these two holidays were included in the Sheriff's budget.

Squire Whitehead asked Mrs. Bennett if the two holidays were accounted for in the Sheriff's budget? Mrs. Bennett stated that the two holidays were accounted for in the Sheriff's budget.

Squire Clem stated that it was an oversight on everybody's part. They had assumed the calendar was in compliance with the personnel manual.

Judge/Executive Keith Taul stated that the resolution was presented because the two holidays were not in the personnel manual.

Squire Clem asked if the court would have to vote to change the personnel policy to mirror this resolution?

County Attorney Jenny Oldham stated that the personnel policy did not need to change. The resolution states what days are to have as holidays.

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: yes; Squire Patsy Whitehead: yes; Squire Chris Yates: yes; County Judge/Executive Keith Taul: yes.
Motion passed.

Squire Yates invited the public to the annual Radcliff Mayor's breakfast. He thanked Clem, the jailer, and the county attorney for getting the reimbursement of the fifty thousand dollars. He offered his condolences to Magistrate Thompson on the loss of his brother Harlie Thompson.

Squire Saltsman offered his condolences to Magistrate Thompson on the loss of his brother Harlie Thompson. He invited the public to attend the Radcliff Mayor's breakfast in its 16th year.

Squire Whitehead offered her condolences to Magistrate Thompson on the loss of his brother Harlie Thompson. She invited the public to the next meeting of the Resources and Community Support Committee.

Squire Clem thanked Josh Lindblom and the county attorney for their cooperation in obtaining the fifty thousand dollars. He offered his condolences to Magistrate Thompson on the loss of his brother Harlie Thompson. He invited the public to attend the next meeting of the Finance Committee. He invited the public to the next Town Hall Forum meeting. He encouraged the public to not drink and drive, nor text and drive.

Squire Pennington invited the public to the next Emergency Services meeting.

Squire Thompson stated that he appreciated the condolences from each of the fiscal court members.

Squire Hicks offered his condolences to Magistrate Thompson on the loss of his brother Harlie Thompson.

Squire Muse offered his condolences to Magistrate Thompson on the loss of his brother Harlie Thompson. He invited the public to the next Public Works Committee Meeting.

County Judge/Executive Taul invited the public to attend the next meeting of Fiscal Court. He announced that the county government will be closed on January 19 for Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday.

Adjourn

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