

Minutes

Hardin County Fiscal Court Regular Meeting

May 12, 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 reviewing the agenda.

Approve Hardin County Fiscal Court 4/27/2026 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

- a. Period Poverty Proclamation – Beth Avey
- b. Emergency Medical Services Week Proclamation

Public Hearing

- a. County Road Aid and Local Government Economic Assistance Funds Conducted by Jenny Oldham, County Attorney. The hearing was open to public comment. No one came forward to comment.

Department/Office Reports

- a. Presentations
 - i. Planning – Adam King
 - ii. Public Works – Stephanie Givens
 - iii. Engineering – Mark Absher
 - iv. Road Department – Mark Absher
 - v. Clerk – Brian D. Smith

Written Reports

- i. Animal Control – Mike McNutt---- April 2026 Fiscal Court Report; Fort Knox Animal Intake 2026 – 2029; Larue County Animal Intake 2026 – 2029; 2026 Totals for Municipality Monthly Report
- ii. Emergency Management – Joey Scott

iii. Fire Chief Report – Matt Huddle

iv.– Planning - Adam King

Citizen's Concerns or Comments:

County Judge/Executive Keith Taul opened the floor for citizen comments.

1) Mr. Bill Noles spoke, saying he had been with county fire service since 1994.

- Expressed disappointment over proposed budget cuts to “learning assistance” and removal of Deputy Director for Learning and Partnerships.
- Emphasized need for coordination and data systems (response data, staffing, training, apparatus condition, operational gaps).
- Cited 2024 emergency services evaluation: aging apparatus, declining volunteerism, increasing call volume, limited daytime staffing, unsustainable funding.
- Referenced NIOSH findings on firefighter LODDs: insufficient staffing, inadequate training, incident command failures, lack of accountability.
- Called for long-term funding solutions, infrastructure building, public education, and honest communication.

2) Matt McDougal (Elizabethtown resident)

- Advocated strategic investment in EMS and fire, competitive compensation, and planning for future infrastructure.
- Questioned use of available funds (e.g., hospital sale proceeds).
- Urged unified leadership, data-informed decisions, and collaboration.

Ordinances/Resolutions/Agreements

a. First Reading **Ordinance No. 347, Series 2026**, FY 2026/2027 Budget.

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

Squire Clem started the discussion by saying that the Department of Local Government lays out the budget process. He said April 27, 2026 was the first time that members of the court got a look at the budget. The Special Called Finance Committee meeting on May 5, 2026 was the first time members had the opportunity to talk around the table and go line by line through the budget. He emphasized that the line by line review resulted in consensus by the magistrates. He said there were two major issues, salaries and a new EMS building. He said every member of Fiscal Court wants to give raises, and this budget includes a 1% raise and one step raise. He added that employees have access to healthcare and retirement. He acknowledged that there are some employees that aren't compensated as well as they should. He noted that Magistrate Pennington is working to improve the benefits for those employees. He noted that while the state budget secured \$6.5 million for a new EMS building in Glendale, the total cost will be very expensive build, equip, man and maintain. While everyone agrees that there is a need to improve emergency services, the question remains on how to pay for it. He said a prior study pointed to increasing taxes to pay for it. He said before we can start, we should know what the plan is to pay for it and what combination of taxes may be required. He warned that special taxing districts are controlled by a board, not fiscal court.

Squire Pennington said that the current step and grade system is flawed and doesn't reward those who stay long term. He asked why new positions were being created when the county cannot afford the ones they already have. He noted that the cost of staff salaries has increased 75%. He said this is not sustainable. He asked how many firefighters will it take to staff the new building. Judge Taul responded that he would not talk about that today. Pennington said he may be all for

the added positions, if he knew how they were to be paid for. Pennington then asked if they spend all this money and have to fix the White Mills bridge, how would they pay for it. He also said there has been very little discussion on the cost of equipment, and if it is better to purchase or lease it. He said it was a bold-faced lie that magistrates would not take care of the needs of this community. He said the court must be responsible and can add the purchase of heart monitors by budget amendment.

Squire Whitehead discussed budget amendments saying that a budget is a plan and it can be amended. She said they are in favor of better equipment and services, but the issue is how to make it possible. She said that members of fiscal court must be accountable, just like one does in their home.

Squire Yates, noting his role as Chairman of the Emergency Services Committee, said he is committed to expanding services, but there must be a plan. He said there have been discussion about adding positions, but not how to pay for existing ones. Yates said that emergency services and equipment purchases will go through committee. He said that the purchase of heart monitors was sprung on the court during the special called meeting in violation of the law, adding that the Judge knows it is against the law. He said that the political post made on the Hardin County Government Facebook page contained half-truths and scare tactics. It left him frustrated with the administration.

Squire Muse added that he agreed with the others that the budget is a compromise. He said he thought it was fair and represented a consensus.

Judge Taul started by reviewing his original budget. He wanted it noted that not all of the reserve funds would be used and there are no increases in property taxes. He said that the cash reserves as of March 31, 2026 are approximately \$34 million (including ~\$16 million "rainy day"); proposed budget adds ~\$700,000 to cash reserves; ~\$2 million of annual hospital sale payment utilized (~\$2.7 million/year; 19 years remaining). He said the reserve has increased each year the court has been in office.

He said that good wages reduce turnover. He said his proposed personnel adjustments include: 5% one-grade increase for EMS full-time positions (~\$360,000); 2% COLA; market adjustments for select positions; part-time student co-op (~\$15,000). For fire services planning: Proposed Fire Services Deputy Director (~\$94,000); ~\$50,000 for Glendale Emergency Services Fire/EMS building design work. He said we need the Fire Services Deputy Director to help develop a plan and understand what will be needed.

He said that increase costs of employee health insurance will cost employees 1%. He said that increases in salaries were in response to high inflation. He said that salary increases will help keep employees with the county and not going to surrounding counties.

Taul stated that the items removed/reduced in revisions include: EMS one-grade increase (~\$360,000); COLA reduced from 2% to 1% (~\$300,000); Fire Services Deputy Director; GIS Coordinator restoration (he said the move to contract this work out has not saved the county money); modest grade increases in Engineering/Finance (~\$18,000 total); student co-op (~\$15,000); cardiac monitor direct purchase (~\$900,000) replaced by no placeholder; department operating expense reductions (~\$71,000); Glendale EMS building design fees (\$50,000).

Totaling \$1,946,000 adding \$2.6 million to reserves that are already at \$34 million and will result in a cut in services and high turnover. He said he didn't agree with any of these changes.

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: yes; Squire Patsy Whitehead: yes; Squire Chris Yates: yes; County Judge/Executive Keith Taul: no.
Motion passed.

b. Reading and Adoption of **Ordinance No. 348, Series 2026** – Annual Standing Order to Pre-Approved Recurring Expenses.

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

c. Second Reading and Adoption of **Ordinance No. 344-4, Series 2025**, Amending FY 2025/2026 Budget Amendment No. 4.

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

Consent Agenda

a. Approve **May Claims 5.12.26, May ACH Claims 5.12.26, April Recurring Claims, April Utility Claims.**

b. Approve **Resolution 2026-074** related to Finance Transfers.

c. Approve **Resolution 2026-076** related to EMS Personnel.

d. Approve **Resolution 2026-077** related to Animal Control Personnel.

e. Approve **Resolution 2026-078** related to Road Department Personnel.

f. Approve **Resolution 2026-079** related to Engineer Technician.

g. Approve **Resolution 2026-080** related to E-911 Personnel.

h. Approve **Resolution 2026-081** related to Buildings & Grounds Personnel.

i. Approve **Resolution 2026-082** related to Interaction Insight Corporation.

j. Approve **Resolution 2026-075** related to Motorola Service Agreement.

k. Approve **Resolution 2026-083** related to BRIC Grant Application.

l. Approve **Special Called Emergency Services Committee Meeting Minutes May 7, 2026.**

m. Approve **Special Called Finance Committee Meeting Minutes May 5, 2026.**

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

Concluding Comments:

Squire Yates invited the public to attend the next Emergency Services Committee meeting. He also announced May 10-16, 2026 is National Police Week, with the 15th being National Police Memorial Day.

Squire Saltsman sought clarification on references to the HMH sale proceeds and government building payoff, noting figures discussed in prior budget materials, and questioning figures previously quoted by Judge Taul. He asked about the \$50,000 budget allocation for the Glendale emergency services building plans, and asked where it was in the budget presentation. He said the name of the budget line item was called something else.

Squire Whitehead announced the "Pink Dot Project" supply donation boxes, including one in the County Clerk's Office. She encouraged donations and noted the importance of this project. She invited the public to the next Resources and Community Support committee meeting.

Squire Clem invited the public to attend the next Finance Committee meeting. He thanked the magistrates for their work on a responsible budget. He reminded the public to neither drink and drive, nor text and drive.

Squire Thompson invited the public to attend Glendale Springfest.

Squire Hicks invited everyone to get out and vote, noting that many have sacrificed for this right.

Squire Muse invited the public to the next Public Works committee meeting.

Judge Taul invited the public to attend the next Fiscal Court meeting and noted the upcoming Memorial Day holiday.

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