

**MINUTES OF THE HARDEMAN COUNTY
LEGISLATIVE BODY APRIL TERM
APRIL 21, 2026**

Be it remembered that a Regular Meeting of the Legislative Body for the County of Hardeman, State of Tennessee was conducted in the Hardeman County Courthouse in the City of Bolivar, on the 21st day of April, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. Hon. Todd Pulse, County Mayor, was present and presiding, and a quorum of Commissioners, namely, Hon. David Bell, Hon. Cory Bufford, Hon. Russell Deberry, Hon. Michion Gatlin, Hon. Mark Gilliam, Hon. Brad Grantham, Hon. Bobby Hensley, Hon. Joe Jenkins, Hon. Jeff Kennamore, Hon. Chandra Y. Lake, Hon. Johnny M. Lanier, Hon. Bethany Miller, Hon. Jackie Sain, Hon. John Vickers, Hon. Johnny Weems, and Hon. Bobby Wright, County Attorney Dale Conder and County Clerk Tonet Griggs were present. The meeting was opened in due form of the law and had to wit:

16 PRESENT 0 ABSENT

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes from the regular session on March 17, 2026, were approved as presented. Hon. Jackie Sain made the motion to approve, and Hon. Michion Gatlin seconded the motion.

CARRIED BY ACCLAMATION

APPROVAL OF NOTARIES

A list of notary public applicants was approved. Hon. Johnny Lanier made a motion to approve the notaries, and Hon. Jackie Sain seconded the motion.

CARRIED BY ACCLAMATION

SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS

The Commission recognized the top 10 students from Central High School and Middleton High School for their academic achievements. Certificates were presented to students, including Valedictorian and Salutatorian candidates.

The daughters of Zach and Beth Dole of Hornsby, Norah K. (Miss Tennessee Universal Baby) and Kinsley Miller (Miss Rocky Top Universal Pre-Teen), were recognized for their upcoming national competition.

PUBLIC COMMENT - AGENDA ITEMS

Karen Clayton raised concerns regarding the accuracy of public notices for rezoning applications, specifically citing discrepancies in parcel descriptions and site plans for an I2 rezoning request.

REPORTS FROM COUNTY OFFICIALS

ASSESSOR OF PROPERTY

Josh Pulse requested and received approval for the reappointment of the Board of Equalization. Hon. Johnny Lanier made a motion to accept the reappointment, and Hon. Jackie Sain seconded the motion.

CARRIED BY ACCLAMATION

REGISTER OF DEEDS

Lily Barnes stated she will be retiring at the end of this term. With her retirement after 30-plus years, there are a lot of working records that need to be purged. She needs to schedule an archive records meeting with the Archive Committee to get the required approval to purge the temporary files.

SHERIFF’S DEPARTMENT

Sheriff Doolen reported that Charles Woods has been hired as the supervisor for the inmate crew for the Litter Program.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Dr Christy Smith brought forth a budget amendment for utilities (\$55,500) due to increased natural gas and water costs. Hon. Johnny Lanier made the motion to accept the budget amendment, and Hon. Johnny Weems seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE 16 AYE 0 NAY

Approved a Tennessee tutoring grant budget for grades 1–8.

AMBULANCE DEPARTMENT

Recognized EMT Austin and partner Michelle for life-saving actions.

Ambulance Committee: Ruby Kirby (Administrator of Bolivar General Hospital) came with a positive recommendation to be added to the committee as a nonvoter, but was added in an advisory role. Hon. Johnny Lanier made a motion to approve the recommendation, and Hon. Chandra Lake seconded the motion.

EMS Director Rusty Thigpen said that they averaged about 450 calls this past month.

CARRIED BY ACCLAMATION

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Hon. Johnny Lanier was asked by Superintendent Casey Swift to stand in for him as he is unable to make it to present a budget amendment for equipment insurance. Hon. Bethany Miller made a motion to accept the budget amendment, and Hon. Jackie Sain seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE
16 AYE 0 NAY

ARCHIVE COMMITTEE

Commissioner Brad Grantham stated that they had a meeting recently, and they are trying to put a rush on the renovations of the archive building. The county received a grant through T-DOT, which is a 70/30 grant. The county will be responsible for 30 percent, and the state will pay for 70 percent. They are pushing to finish because the window for the grant is coming to an end.

BUDGET COMMITTEE & AMENDMENTS

The following budget amendments 1- 4, 6, and 7 were reviewed. Hon. Jackie Sain made a motion to approve the budget amendments, and Hon. Johnny Weems seconded the motion and approved them. Budget amendments 5, 8-16 were approved by the Budget Committee with no need to be brought to the commission.

ROLL CALL VOTE
16 AYE 0 NAY

County Attorney: \$140,000 for outstanding legal fees for Steve Hale.

Land Purchase: \$17,756 for land purchased at tax sales.

Sheriff’s Office: \$1,000 line-item transfer for sex offender fund supplies.

Sheriff’s Office: \$60,000 transfer from deputy/guard pay to overtime to cover staffing shortages.

Circuit Court: \$1,000 from automation reserve for office equipment.

Landfill: \$53,000 line-item transfer to cover repairs, maintenance, and utilities.

PUBLIC HEARING: REZONING REQUEST

The Commission entered a public hearing to discuss a request to rezone 2.74 acres to extend an existing I2 (Industrial) zone for a furniture manufacturing facility expansion. Hon. Johnny Lanier made the motion to move into public hearing, and Hon. Johnny Weems seconded the motion.

Discussion: Mike Mitchell raised concerns regarding public water requirements for I2 zones and potential legal precedents for future industrial developments (e.g., solar farms and other industrial facilities). The parcels are currently in Mr. Ray Byler’s name, although they were acquired at different times.

Legal Opinion: Attorney Dale Conder noted that the business is permitted to use and expand if consistent with previous zoning actions.

Hon. Johnny Lanier made a motion to move back into closed session, and Hon. Chandra Lake seconded the motion.

Action: Following the public hearing, Hon. Johnny Lanier made a motion to approve the rezoning request to extend the existing I2 zone, and Hon. Jackie Sain seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE 14 AYE 2 NAY

MAYOR’S REPORT

WET Center: Announced the groundbreaking of a state-funded water rescue and training facility at Lone Oaks Farm.

Community Programs: Highlighted upcoming Alzheimer’s awareness programs and services provided by Southwest Tennessee Development District (Meals on Wheels, elder care, etc.).

FEMA/TEMA Assistance: Announced mobile units would be available in Middleton on April 23–25 to assist residents affected by recent ice storms.

COUNTY ATTORNEY REPORT

Litigation Update: Provided updates on pending cases, including Andrews vs. Hardeman County (County dismissed) and various bond-related lawsuits.

Public Comment Law: Informed the Commission of new state legislation expanding public comment to any matter within the Commission's jurisdiction, not just agenda items. The Commission voted to formally adopt this policy. Hon. Jeff Kennamore made a motion to adopt this policy, and Hon. Johnny Lanier seconded the motion.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Johnny Lanier made a motion to adjourn, and Hon. Michion Gatlin seconded the motion.

Next meeting to be held on May 19, 2026.

COUNTY MAYOR 

COUNTY CLERK 