

**MINUTES OF THE HARDEMAN COUNTY
LEGISLATIVE BODY AUGUST TERM
SEPTEMBER 15, 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 15th day September of 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. Ricky Griggs, Hon. Bobby Hensley, Hon. Terry Howell, Hon. Joe Jenkins, Hon. Jeff Kennamore, Hon. Chandra Y. Lake, Hon. Johnny Lanier, Hon. Jackie Sain, Hon. Dylan Stewart, Hon. Johnny Weems, Hon. Erica Woods and Hon. Bobby Wright, County Interim Attorney Steve Hale and County Clerk Tonet Griggs were present, and the meeting was opened in due form of the law and had to wit:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Hon. Jackie Sain made a motion to accept the minutes for August 18, 2026, and Hon. Michion Gatlin seconded.

CARRIED BY ACCLAMATION

APPROVAL OF NOTARIES:

Hon. Bobby Wright made a motion to approve the notaries for September 15, 2026. Hon. Cory Bufford seconded the motion.

CARRIED BY ACCLAMATION

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Gary Barrowclough: Spoke regarding the long-term declining population trends in Hardeman County and the resulting tax burden on remaining residents. Highlighted traffic congestion and revenue loss from commuters driving out of county for work (e.g., shift changes near Hwy 57/125). Emphasized a major local housing shortage and challenged the commission to develop a 5-, 10-, and 20-year strategic growth plan in conjunction with state organizations and universities.

REPORTS FROM COUNTY OFFICIALS:

HARDEMAN COUNTY SCHOOLS — DR. CHRISTY SMITH: Dr. Smith presented multiple state grants, budget amendments, and academic updates:

Grants & Programs:

State School Improvement Grant (C 3.0): Allocated specifically to White Elementary for teacher bonuses, instructional supplies (\$7,250), an additional assistant principal, and Kids First consulting services.

Special Education Preschool Grant: Funds instructional manipulatives and visuals for 3- and 4-year-olds at Toone Elementary.

Innovative School Grant (Year 4): Final year funding for CTE program supplies (welding, nursing, law), Jackson State textbooks, professional development, and CTE building improvements at Central High School.

Centralized Cafeteria Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program: Annual grant serving Toone and Grand Junction elementaries.

Tennessee Tutoring Grant: New grant for grades K–5 across six elementary schools focusing on math manipulatives and literacy programs.

BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGET AMENDMENTS:

Fund 141 to Fund 177 Transfer: \$1.5 million transferred from the General Purpose School fund balance to Capital Projects (Fund 177) to fund lighting upgrades and 12 recently completed restroom renovation projects at Middleton High School and Bolivar Central High School.

Pre-K Budget Amendment: Adjusted for \$18,675 in additional state allocations towards supplies and aligned teacher salary adjustments.

Transition School to Work: \$20,000 local match transfer for special education workforce transition services.

Education Reserve / Furniture: Transfer from committed education funds to line item 71100 (\$20,000) for school desks and classroom chairs.

Commission Inquiries & Academic Recap:

Dr. Smith addressed questions regarding teacher staffing, daily substitute usage, bonus disbursement rules, and teacher-to-student ratios.

Reported increased overall Pre-K and Kindergarten enrollment for the first time in several years.

Shared academic growth metrics from 2021–2026 and highlighted expansion in Middle College enrollment (79 students enrolled).

Hon. Johnny Lanier made a motion to accept the B.O.E budget amendments. Hon. Jeff Kennamore seconded.

ROLL CALL VOTE 16 AYE 0 NAY

SHERIFF'S OFFICE — SHERIFF PARHAM:

Litter Program: Collected 3,680 lbs of roadside litter in the past month (38,640 lbs YTD).

Monthly Activity Report: 81 total arrests, 61 criminal incident reports, 15 death investigations, 10 assaults, 7 traffic offenses, 7 harassment/threats, 3 sex offenses, 1 murder, and 13 animal control calls.

Inmate Population: Currently housing 71 inmates (facility total capacity is approximately 200).

ZONING RESOLUTIONS & PUBLIC HEARINGS:

Zoning Compliance Director Ron Pirtle presented three zoning measures.

Rezoning property on Freeway from Forestry Agriculture (F) to Commercial (C-2) across from Freeway Garage for RV Resolution Amendment: Establishing zoning standards for Recreational Vehicle (RV) parks and defining "Recreational Vehicle" in county definitions.

Chapter 3 (303A4) Survey Requirements Amendment: Clarifying specific survey map details required by the zoning compliance officer when an applicant requests allowing two principal buildings on a single lot within Forestry Agriculture (F) zones.

Public Hearing: The Commission voted to enter a public hearing session. Seeing no public comments on the zoning items, the Commission voted to close the public hearing and re-enter regular session.

ROLL CALL VOTE 16 AYE 0 NAY

BOARD & COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS:

Reappointment/appointment presented to the Commission to add Mary Ann Polk. Hon. Jackie Sain made the motion to appoint her to the library Board. Hon. Jeff Kennamore seconded the motion.

CARRIED BY ACCLAMATION

BUDGET AMENDMENTS & FINANCIAL LETTERS:

Budget Amendment #1 — Juvenile Court Salary Adjustment.

Initial Proposal: Debit fund balance \$6,555 to increase supervisor salary and benefits by \$5,000.

Amended Proposal: Following discussions between Judge Thompson and Commissioner Lanier, Judge Thompson requested an amended raise amount of \$2,000 (hourly rate moving from \$21.89 to \$22.99).

Justification: Judge Thompson outlined the extensive administrative duties performed by court administrator Amanda Hopkins Lewis across Juvenile and General Sessions court.

Financial Breakdown: Total debit from fund balance of \$2,422 (\$2,000 salary + \$124 Social Security + \$269 State Retirement + \$29 Medicare).

Hon. Chandra Lake made a motion to accept Budget Amendment #1. Hon. Johnny Weems seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE 16 AYE 0 NAY

Motion made and seconded to approve Budget Amendments #2 through #23 as corrected. Hon. Johnny Weems made a motion to approve the budget amendments 2 through 23 as corrected. Hon. Jeff Kennamore.

ROLL CALL VOTE 16 AYE 0 NAY

DEPARTMENTAL UPDATES & OTHER BUSINESS

AIRPORT PROJECT: Mayor Pulse reported Phase 2 of the airport project is complete and moving into the next state/federal aeronautics phase.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT — DIRECTOR ANGEL HUDDLESTON:

Announced the expansion of primary care services at the Hardeman County Health Department targeted for launch in December 2026 through a Rural Health Transformation Grant. Primary focus will be providing primary care and chronic disease management (diabetes, acute illness) to uninsured county residents alongside insured individuals. Offered ongoing countywide overdose prevention training.

LITTLE COURTHOUSE MUSEUM & HISTORY CLUB: Sissy Pierce / Presentation. Judge Harriett Thompson reported on the inauguration of the county History Club and Friends of the Little Courthouse Museum (13 founding members).

Announced upcoming historical walking tours in October, trips to the National Bird Dog Museum in Grand Junction, Davis Bridge Battlefield, and local landmarks.

MAYOR'S REPORT:

CJC ENERGY GRANT: \$425,000 Department of Energy grant secured for jail HVAC/energy units. Mayor Pulse requested the Building Committee meet to evaluate incoming bids.

INTERIM COUNTY ATTORNEY: Mayor Pulse appointed Steve Hale as Interim County Attorney on a temporary basis, retaining the previous compensation structure of a \$1,500/month retainer and \$200/hour that will be charged against the retainer and thereafter.

Hon. Jeff Kennamore made a motion to accept Steve Hale as interim attorney, and Hon. Chandra Lake seconded.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 16 AYE 0 NAY

AIRPORT ENGINEERING SERVICES (A2H): Confirmed A2H architectural/design work was grant-funded/privately funded at no county cost. Approved motion to proceed with design and retain A2H as engineer of record for landfill and airport engineering projects. Hon. Michion Gatlin made a motion to approve the redesign of the project, and Hon. Cory Bufford seconded the motion.

CARRIED BY ACCLAMATION

Hon. Jeff Kennamore made a motion to retain A2H as engineer, and Hon. Johnny Weems seconded.

CARRIED BY ACCLAMATION

POWELL CHAPEL CONVENIENCE CENTER: Property owner requested to end the current \$150/month site lease by October 15th to construct a home. Mayor Pulse and the Landfill Committee are working with TDEC and local landowners to secure an alternative site directly across the road on Powell Chapel Rd, including necessary concrete pads and expanded entry lanes.

KILGORE PLANT CLOSURE & JOB FAIR: Mayor Pulse briefed the Commission on the upcoming plant closure at Kilgore. Coordinating with Mayor McTizic, State Workforce Development, and the Hardeman County Library ("Leg Up" micro-credential program) to host a joint Job Fair on October 5th.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Johnny Lanier made a motion to adjourn, and Hon. Bobby Wright seconded.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, October 20, 2026.

COUNTY MAYOR 

COUNTY CLERK 