

SARDINIA COUNCIL MEETING

March 9, 2026 7:00 P.M.

Prayer Amy Mason, Administrator

Pledge Mayor Dusty Puckett

Roll Call: Gary Troutman, Anna Turner, Peggy Vance, Michael McRoberts, Dean Vaughn

Also in Attendance: Amy Mason, Administrator, Tony Baker, Solicitor, Robin Michelle Taylor, Fiscal Officer, Venita Milburn, Clerk

Meeting began at 7:04 p.m.

Dusty Puckett began the meeting by reading the resignation of Ashlie Webster effective immediately. *Motion to accept Ashlie Webster resignation made by Anna Turner, seconded by Dean Vaughn. Roll call all yes except Peggy Vance no.*

Mr. Baker stated, "given that we have accepted the resignation of Ashlie Webster, the President Pro Temp, Dustin Puckett, will be filling that vacancy." Mr. Baker swore Mr. Puckett as the Mayor of Sardinia under oath also stating that Mayor Puckett's term would be until December 31, 2027.

COUNCIL NOTES

Council reviewed meeting minutes from February 2026, regular meeting.

Motion to accept February 2026 minutes made by Dean Vaughn, seconded by Michael McRoberts. Roll call all yes.

Minutes were signed by Dustin Puckett as Mayor; President Pro Temp signature was left blank since that seat had not been nominated for as of this meeting.

Attachments: Meeting minutes of February 2026.

FINANCIALS

Financials were reviewed for January 2026 which were shared at last council meeting on February 9, 2026. *Motion to accept January 2026 financials made by Dean Vaughn, seconded by Peggy Vance. Roll call all yes.*

February financials were presented at this meeting for review. Mr. Troutman did mention that, on the spreadsheet he created, there was some missing data where the numbers were not included. The receipts and expenses are correct and shown in the financial report accurately, but the numbers just were not inputting onto Mr. Troutman's spread sheet. February financials will be reviewed by council prior to the next council meeting to be accepted at that time. If there are any questions prior to the next meeting, council may reach out to Ms. Mason, Mr. Troutman, or Ms. Taylor.

Attachments: January 2026 financials

Administration

Ms. Mason wanted to give an update on the sidewalk grant. There are two different sidewalk grants for the Village currently. The first was written in 2021 by, at that time, Mayor Tina Townes. This grant was approved by the Brown County Commissioners through CDBG funds. These are certain funds that are set aside for community improvement. The money for this is all run through Brown County so we do not have a say in where those funds are used, but we do get to submit what we would like them to use the funds for. There was \$90,000 approved which is to be used for some restoration on Graham Street. The Village had to agree to put in a certain percentage which was \$14,263.00 for this project which they sent the scale in 2023. This was supposed to be done in 2025 but then in 2024 when they went to bid the project it was realized that no engineer had drawn up the plans. So, Brown County Economic Development would need to get the project drawn up. Ms. Mason was working with Kelly Cole that was going to have an engineer draw up the plans. Then, unfortunately, Ms. Cole transitioned out of Brown County, so this project got lost in the shuffle. When Austin Sanders-Williams became the Economic Development Director Ms. Mason reached out to him to see if the funds were still available. Mr. Sanders-Williams reached out to CDBG to request an extension which was granted so the funds can still be used. Brown County Economic Development is getting drawings from Verdantas and working with Economic Development. The total approved was \$90,000 and we will be providing \$14,263.00. This money has never been sent to the Village it is all managed through them. Once the drawings are completed, they will be approved by the Commissioners then sent out for bid. The completion is 2026.

Ms. Mason then shared about the sidewalk grant through the Department of Transportation which was received last year. This is not a grant to fix the sidewalks it is a PLANNING grant. They have awarded the Village \$115,000 by the Department of Transportation to plan a sidewalk and they are the only ones that can plan it. An update was received the week of February 24th from the person overseeing this project. He stated the week of March 9th they will be out for the proposed improved pedestrian infrastructure for approximately .25-mile of Tri-County Highway in the Village of Sardinia which includes extending the existing sidewalk along the southwest side of Tri-County Highway from existing sidewalks from northwest of Castle Avenue to Crestview Mobile Home Park. They will be meeting with the people who live in that area to look at the right of ways. They have sent a letter that they drafted that should either be mailed or hand-delivered to those residents. This is the research and planning part of the grant and when they have completed this they will present it to a grant committee to get funding for those sidewalks.

Second reading of Ordinance Amending and Confirming the Rate of Pay for Timothy Mock of the Village of Sardinia. Whereas the Village of Sardinia previously enacted an Ordinance for the rate of pay and compensation for Timothy Mock. Timothy Mock has received and obtained his Level 2 certification, increasing his value to the Village of Sardinia. This is recognizing and rewarding by increasing his hourly rate of pay. Back in 2023 in updating the Policy Manual there was incentive to obtain licensure so that the Village was not dependent on contracted services for the sewer department. With each licensure there is a \$2.00 per hour update as they are obtained. New rate of pay would be \$30.64 with 65% for sewer department and 35% for water department. *First reading was February 9, 2026.* As you know David Klump will be retiring on April 30, 2026. He is currently Sewer Operator Level 2 of record with the EPA. We are required to have a Level 2 operator on site. The third reading will be in April so as soon as Mr. Klump retires there will need to have an amended ordinance to show that 100% of Mr. Mock's salary will come out of sewer budget to send to the auditor.

We have received an event form from Hope and Promise who had originally was going to use the property the Village owns and close Sears Lane, but they have decided to use the space that was used last year. They are requesting to close S. Main Street from the Hope Church parking lot to the four way stop. This would be from 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Hope and Promise will provide their own road barriers and cones for this. They are requesting police presence at this time with the dates of May 2, June 6, and August 1 so this would be from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Mr. Vaughn asked if this would be axillary officers with Ms. Mason responding the officers usually work on Saturday so the schedule would be made to accommodate this time.

Motion to approve the closure of S. Main for the dates of Market Days made by Gary Troutman, seconded by Anna Turner. Roll call all yes.

Ms. Mason updated council on road repair in the Village. Council was reminded of the road repair study that was done last year by Verdantas of the 9.8 miles of Village roads of which 9.2 miles are what the Village maintains. If any of the new council members would like to see the study that could be made available. The report looked at all the roads, rated each road, and what it would cost to repair them. Unfortunately, it is millions of dollars to repair all the roads. The Village gets about \$50,000 a year from taxes for the roads. Last year council approved adding an additional \$50,000 for road repair so we would be able to put \$100,000 a year into the roads. Dave Dyer has reached out to Roberts Paving to repair 10 sections of road that need repair which the estimate was \$15,015. Ms. Mason has pictures of the 10 worst sections of roads and the cost of repair. Ms. Mason has submitted this information to the finance committee but wanted to present it to council. We did this with Roberts Paving last year, but it was later in the year, so we were further on the list since they do all the schools first. Ms. Mason would like to get this approved, so these roads are put on Roberts Paving schedule before the schools close. Ms. Vance asked if this was the same plan that had been approved by council previously, but Ms. Mason stated it was not. This was taking the roads that were significantly worse and patching them, covering more citizens, instead of taking \$100,000 to fix one road. Mr. Vaughn asked about the road paving the railroad has said that they were going to do when they fixed the railroad. Ms. Mason informed him the railroad decided not to do the original plan so this is one that will get a patch.

Motion to approve Roberts Paving to repair as it is presented made by Peggy Vance, seconded by Dean Vaughn. Roll call all yes.

Ms. Mason did the third reading of the Village of Sardina 2026 Permanent Budget. This is the budget that will be sent to Jill Hall, Brown County Auditor. This needs to be submitted by the end of March to Ms. Hall. This has been reviewed by the finance committee twice with no other revisions made. Mr. Vaughn questioned if something had to be changed, which Ms. Mason replied that an appropriation would be made then sent to Jill Hall as updated.

Motion made to approve the 2026 Permanent Budget made by Dean Vaughn, seconded by Gary Troutman. Roll call all yes, with Mr. McRoberts agreeing yes as he understood it.

*Attachments: Second reading Ordinance Amending and Confirming rate of pay for Timothy Mock
2026 Permanent Budget*

POLICE DEPARTMENT

No police report currently.

MAYOR

Mayor asked if there were any updates for the committees:

Mr. Troutman did say there were no updates except that the committee was going to continue to learn. Also, he would like to start the temporary budget earlier for 2027 which will be due in July. Ms. Mason stated that the 2026 budget is completed, so now is the time to begin the work for the 2027 budget.

Personnel Committee per Anna Turner met on March 2, 2026, to discuss the personnel manual which needs updating. The committee is reviewing the manual so will get back to council with their recommendations. Lots of verbiage in the manual that needs to be slimmed down. Ms. Mason stated that there have been several changes in the manual made by motion, for example the pay period changed to Monday to Sunday, that just needs to be updated in the manual. Mr. McRoberts asked if a copy would be given, which was yes, a full copy will be presented with the first reading. Next Personnel Committee meeting is April 6, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Darla Louderback – lives at 130 South Main has some concerns about the three trailers on Hope Lane that are abandoned there. Plan was to rehab them by owner but currently they are habitats for snakes, racoons, other rodents that are coming into her backyard. She had been told that there was drug use going on in there also. She has a 5-year-old and 7-year-old that she is afraid to let in her backyard. Trailers are covered in mold and trashed on the inside. Mr. Vaughn stated that Mr. Mays had purchased but he unfortunately had passed away. Ms. Mason informed Ms. Louderback that the trailers were in probate, which currently nothing can be done until the probate is resolved. Mr. Baker stated he would follow up to see what the probate status is.

Bruce Stinson – First time to a council meeting has lived here 30 years. Came to ask why, after paying for water tap six months ago, has this not been completed yet. Ms. Mason commented that Mr. Stinson wanted a 1” tap which has not been available due to being on back order only 5/8” taps are in stock. Ms. Mason stated that she would check the status of the 1” tap and will call Mr. Stinson tomorrow with update. He is seeking to being compensated for lost rent but will address this later.

Mr. Stinson also mentioned that his property is at the lowest elevation in the Village neighboring the cemetery. Mr. Stinson said that he had met with Ms. Mason in September regarding the fence line where equipment and material has been put over the fence and the fence has been cut. Ms. Mason stated that the conversation was to have the property surveyed but will check on this as she does not know the status of the situation. Ms. Mason stated that the last conversation with Mr. Stinson was that he was going to hire a surveyor and when the surveyor came, he was to call the Village so that they could walk the property together. Mr. Stinson stated he was not paying for a surveyor. Ms. Mason stated her notes were in her office so she cannot be sure of details, but the Village would pay for their portion of the survey. Mr. Stinson stated that the surveyor, Mitchell’s, had located the corners but the stakes are currently gone. Ms. Mason informed Mr. Stinson that she would check with Dave and get back to Mr. Stinson. Mr. Baker stated that the Village will order a survey to be done, weather permitting and surveyor’s availability, to be completed by the next council meeting.

Shauna Weis - The Easter Egg Hunt will be March 28th sponsored by Sardinia Hope & Promise, the library, and the Hope Church. This will be behind the library at Veteran’s Park starting at 10:00 a.m. If there is rain the Easter Egg Hunt will be cancelled but the library will still have their event. Sardinia Hope & Promise is asking that people attending bring a non-perishable item for the Agape Food Pantry. The collection of these items will be at all Hope & Promise events this year.

Cristina Colgate – lives on Tracy Road. Came to introduce herself and to educate our community about what is happening in Mt. Orab. Ms. Colgate stated she had been attending Mt. Orab council meetings for about eight weeks to listen to the information coming out on the large hyperscale data center. Not your traditional data center that is less than 25 megawatts but are over 2000 plus megawatts with 90 plus buildings that will impact our environment, our utility bills due to capacity levels, and it will also impact our property values. Due to the size of the mega data center they will bring in SMRs (small modular reactors) that are uranium-based that will just be 3-4 miles down the road. Ms. Colgate is asking the council to get involved because if something was to go wrong with the nuclear reactors Sardinia would be in

the fallout zone. Ms. Colgate would like the council to be involved at the Brown County level, the State level but definitely with the council at Mt. Orab. Ms. Colgate is asking that the EMS, Police, and fire departments all be trained for emergencies if something goes wrong with the reactors. There are 13 communities across Ohio that are dealing with these large data centers. On March 21 these 13 communities are coming together at the University of Cincinnati along with environmentalists, congressmen, and politicians that are going to speak to educate on the hyperscale data centers.

Lastly, Southern Ohio Responsible Development (SORD) which is just a group of individuals who are fighting for property rights, environmental rights, our water rights and our land values. There is a petition that needs about 2000 signatures that will possibly change the Ohio constitution to allow people to vote on whether or not we want these data centers in Ohio. You must be registered as a voter in the State of Ohio. Ms. Colgate asked if there was permission needed to stand on the corners or go into businesses to ask for signatures for the petition. Ms. Mason replied that if someone was going to go door to door there was a form that needed to be filled out with a copy of a driver's license just in case there were any complaints.

Ms. Colgate did ask if someone would be interested in being at the Mt. Orab council meeting on March 24th to represent Sardinia. Mr. Vaughn asked if it had been confirmed that this was going to be giant mega data center with the nuclear reactors. Ms. Colgate responded that the nuclear reactor has not been confirmed but it has been confirmed that it will be a data system.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Baker noted that this was not on the agenda but was referenced to the investigation that the prosecutor's office would not get involved unless there was an independent investigation done first. Mr. Baker recommended that an outside investigator should be chosen. Mr. Baker had previously recommended Ms. Kathy Bailey; he understands that this is a steep bill. Mr. Baker did state that he had reached out to Georgetown where Ms. Bailey had done a similar investigation to which the payment for this was not exorbitant. Mr. Vaughn mentioned that he had been given the name of Brian Mount, who was the Police Chief in Mt. Orab and now works for Adams County, that he does this type of investigation. Mr. Vaughn also asked about the decision of the officers in question, which Mr. Baker responded that former Mayor Ashlie Webster had opted to keep the police on duty until a decision was made about an investigation. The mayor must be the one to bring charges against the police. Ms. Vance requested that she would like to see the allegations against the officers, as there have been no written statements from the officers that are making the accusations.

Ms. Mason stated that at the time Ms. Webster resigned, she had not been given any written statements from the officers which had been requested from all of them. Ms. Vance stated you cannot fire officers without due process and written statements. Mr. Baker stated that Mayor Puckett could ask the officers for the statements. Suddenly, Mr. McRoberts pulled the officer's statements out of his binder and slid them across the table towards Mayor Puckett. Mr. McRoberts said that this was not all that he had, but the statements were all that he was given permission to give to the mayor and council. Mayor Puckett asked for a vote to hire Ms. Bailey to start the investigation. Mayor Puckett also said that the council cannot do anything productive and to get unity, which the Village deserves, until an investigation was done. Asked for a motion to hire Kathleen Bailey

Motion was made to hire a third-party investigator made by Peggy Vance. There was then mentioned that there needed to be a name of who that investigator would be because that was the problem with the motion at the last council meeting. Motion made to hire Kathy Bailey made by Dean Vaughn, seconded by Mike McRoberts. Roll call all yes.

At this time Mr. Troutman asked for a discussion. He asked if there should be a parameter put on the cost of the investigation which Mr. Baker stated he hesitated to do that.

Mr. Vaughn asked Mayor Puckett when he could review the statements, to which the mayor responded that he would be able to get something by the following Friday. Mr. Vaughn also asked about the officers being locked out of the computers, which Ms. Mason responded that the officers had a computer in the patrol office that could be accessed.

Attachments: Officer's statements

ROUND TABLE

Mr. Vaughn asked about the filling of the open seat for council. Mr. Baker responded that candidates needed to be interviewed by council. This seat needs to be filled within 30 days of the date of vacancy. Decision was made to schedule a special council meeting on March 23rd at 7:00 p.m. The meeting will only be to interview candidates for the open council seat. Any other topic that needs to be addressed at this council meeting must be put on the agenda 24 hours prior to the scheduled special meeting.

Mr. Baker will contact Ms. Bailey tomorrow to begin the investigation. Mr. Baker also asked for a motion to allow Mayor Puckett to sign the authorization to have Ms. Bailey begin the investigation. He also stated that she does not require a retainer.

Motion made to allow Mayor Puckett to sign the authorization for Ms. Bailey made by Gary Troutman, seconded by Dean Vaughn. Roll call all yes.

Mayor Puckett asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion to adjourn made by Dean Vaughn, seconded by Gary Troutman. Roll call as yes except for Mike McRoberts who voted no to adjourn the meeting.

NEXT MEETING

SPECIAL MEETING TO INTERVIEW CANDIDATES FOR COUNCIL SEAT MARCH 23, 2026, AT 7:00 P.M.

NEXT REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING APRIL 13, 2026, AT 7:00 P.M.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:09 P.M.

4-27-2026

Date Approved



Mayor



President of Council