

# PUTNAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



---

117 Putnam Drive, Suite A ♦ Eatonton, GA 31024

## Minutes

Friday, January 3, 2025 ♦ 10:00 AM

Putnam County Administration Building – Room 203

The Putnam County Board of Commissioners met on Friday, January 3, 2025 at approximately 10:00 AM in the Putnam County Administration Building, 117 Putnam Drive, Room 203, Eatonton, Georgia.

### *PRESENT*

Chairman Bill Sharp  
Commissioner Tom McElhenney  
Commissioner Richard Garrett  
Commissioner Steve Hersey

### *ABSENT*

Commissioner Jeff Wooten

### *STAFF PRESENT*

County Attorney Adam Nelson  
County Manager Paul Van Haute  
County Clerk Lynn Butterworth  
Deputy County Clerk Mercy Fluker

### **Opening**

1. Welcome - Call to Order

Chairman Sharp called the meeting to order at approximately 10:00 a.m.

(Copy of agenda made a part of the minutes on minute book page \_\_\_\_\_.)

2. Approval of Agenda

**Motion to approve the agenda with the removal of Item #7 – “Appeal by Ann Foster of the Planning & Zoning Commission decision to grant sideline setback at 407 E. Riverbend Drive.”**

**Motion made by Commissioner Hersey, Seconded by Commissioner McElhenney.**

**Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Garrett, Commissioner Hersey**

Chairman Sharp welcomed Commissioner Garrett to his first meeting and reported that Commissioner Wooten couldn't be here today.

Minutes	Page 1 of 6	Approved
January 3, 2025		February 7, 2025

3. Invocation

Planning and Development Director Lisa Jackson gave the invocation.

4. Pledge of Allegiance (staff)

County Manager Van Haute led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Regular Business Meeting**

5. Public Comments

Mr. Bill Vargo commented on misinformation on websites.

Ms. Jennifer Ray commented on the December 17, 2024 meeting and the Chamber of Commerce Contract.

Mr. Billy Webster commented on the distribution percentages in the new contract with the Chamber of Commerce.

6. Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of Minutes - December 17, 2024 Regular Meeting

**Motion to approve the Consent Agenda.**

**Motion made by Commissioner Hersey, Seconded by Commissioner McElhenney.**

**Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Garrett, Commissioner Hersey**

7. Appeal by Ann Foster of the Planning & Zoning Commission decision to grant sideline setback at 407 E. Riverbend Drive (staff-P&D)

This item was removed from the agenda and will be heard at the February 7, 2025 BOC meeting.

8. Request from LA Development LLC for Revised Final Plat Subdivision Approval for Overlook at Pea Ridge (staff-P&D)

Mr. Lowell White III spoke in support. This is a 14-lot subdivision, and the current residents want entrance gates. No one signed in to speak against this item.

Planning and Development staff recommendation was for approval.

**Motion to approve the Request from LA Development LLC for Revised Final Plat Subdivision Approval for Overlook at Pea Ridge to add gates.**

**Motion made by Commissioner Garrett, Seconded by Commissioner Hersey.**

**Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Garrett, Commissioner Hersey**  
(Copy of plat made a part of the minutes on minute book pages \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.)

Minutes	Page 2 of 6	Approved
January 3, 2025		February 7, 2025

9. Report from Putnam Development Authority

Economic Development Director Matt Poyner gave an overview of the activities of the Putnam Development Authority.

- Presented marketing videos for Cosmo Cabinets and Manley Metalworks, and explained they will be doing more videos this year since they are amazing marketing tools
- Industry update - three planned expansions
- Project update - 10 acre tract selling to ER Snell - trying to wrap up by mid January; additional 10 acres of land to sell; expect increase at Tech Park due to Rivian
- Holy Cow was named one of seven small businesses to be featured by the Georgia Department of Economic Development during the Holidays
- Marble Works was named Family-Owned Small Business of the Year by the University of Georgia Small Business Development Center

10. Authorization for Chairman to sign Resolutions for the Tax Commissioner's office (staff-Tax Comm)

- a. Resolution for Authority for the Tax Commissioner to Receive Funds
- b. Resolution for Establishing Tax Due Date
- c. Resolution for the Waiver of Penalties and Interest on Unpaid Ad Valorem Taxes

Tax Commissioner Terrell Abernathy reviewed each resolution and explained that these resolutions are renewed and refreshed at the beginning of every term.

**Motion to authorize Chairman to sign Resolutions for the Tax Commissioner's office:**

- a. Resolution for Authority for the Tax Commissioner to Receive Funds**
- b. Resolution for Establishing Tax Due Date**
- c. Resolution for the Waiver of Penalties and Interest on Unpaid Ad Valorem Taxes**

**Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Hersey.**

**Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Garrett, Commissioner Hersey**  
(Copy of resolutions made a part of the minutes on minute book pages \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.)

11. Authorization for Chairman to sign ACCG Defined Benefit Plan Resolution (staff-CM)  
County Manager Van Haute explained that the resolution allows Putnam to use accumulated contributions to partially or fully offset a required contribution in any year.

**Motion to authorize Chairman to sign ACCG Defined Benefit Plan Resolution.**

**Motion made by Commissioner Garrett, Seconded by Commissioner Hersey.**

**Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Garrett, Commissioner Hersey**  
(Copy of resolution made a part of the minutes on minute book pages \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.)

Minutes	Page 3 of 6	Approved
January 3, 2025		February 7, 2025

12. Discussion and possible action regarding the creation of a Recreation Authority (staff-CM)  
County Manager Van Haute explained creating a Recreation Authority could help with competing for grants for the county’s recreation facilities, including Jimmy Davis Park, the swimming pool, Oconee Springs Park, and Uncle Remus Golf Course. He also suggested a 501c3 option that might be better than setting up an authority.

County Attorney Nelson explained the following options: 1. Recreation Authority through Local Legislation; 2. Under state law create authority at county level, County Ordinance Section 2-51 allows establishment of committees (advisory only); 3. Ordinance change - displayed Henry County's ordinance establishing recreation commission as an example.

Chairman Sharp proposed that the staff create a proposal(s) and have a work session to discuss further.

**Motion to have County Manager and County Attorney offer examples of alternative proposals for a Recreation Advisory and/or Authority/Board and to have a Work Session on such proposals on February 5, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.**

**Motion made by Commissioner Hersey, Seconded by Commissioner McElhenney.**

**Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Garrett, Commissioner Hersey**

13. Approval of Certification of Road Abandonment for a portion of Napier Mill Road (staff-CC)

**Motion to Approve Certification of Road Abandonment for a portion of Napier Mill Road.**

**Motion made by Commissioner Hersey, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett.**

**Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Garrett, Commissioner Hersey**

(Copy of certification made a part of the minutes on minute book pages \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.)

14. Appointment to the Eatonton-Putnam County Library Board (staff-CC)

**Motion to appoint Mr. Rex Bishop to the Eatonton-Putnam County Library Board.**

**Motion made by Commissioner Hersey, Seconded by Commissioner McElhenney.**

**Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Garrett, Commissioner Hersey**

Minutes	Page 4 of 6	Approved
January 3, 2025		February 7, 2025

15. Discussion and possible action regarding Facebook Live Streaming of BOC Meetings (staff-CM)

Mr. Bill Vargo commented on continuing the BOC meeting live-streaming.

Ms. Jennifer Ray commented on the wording of the agenda item, the Facebook views on today's meeting, and taxpayer representation.

County Manager Van Haute explained that there has been a significant increase in comments made on the Putnam County Facebook Page that have outstripped its usefulness. Over the past couple of years the platform has become something else including being used to solicit members for other Facebook groups and other inappropriate uses. Streaming of Commission meetings is not required by law. County Manager Van Haute proposed to eliminate Facebook live-streaming of BOC meetings.

County Attorney Nelson advised that Putnam County is allowed to turn off comments on social media but cannot pick and choose which ones to turn off; there are no legal requirements to live-stream meetings.

**Motion to continue Facebook live-streaming of BOC Meetings when possible and turn off comments.**

**Motion made by Commissioner Hersey, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett.**

**Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Garrett, Commissioner Hersey**

**Reports/Announcements**

16. County Manager Report

No report.

17. County Attorney Report

No report but congratulated Commissioner Garrett on his first meeting as Commissioner.

18. Commissioner Announcements

Commissioner McElhenney: none

Commissioner Garrett: commented on the Jimmy Davis Park Partnership Advisory Council and some possible changes such as instituting public comments, publishing full and timely minutes, and continuing the council beyond the sunset date; also thanked County Clerk Butterworth and Chairman Sharp for welcoming him and getting him up to speed.

Commissioner Hersey: wished a Happy New Year to all and sympathized with Bulldogs fans in their recent loss.

Chairman Sharp: announced Commissioner McElhenney was sworn in December 23, 2024 for the term beginning January 1, 2025, and wished everyone a Happy New Year and thanked everyone for being here.

Minutes	Page 5 of 6	Approved
January 3, 2025		February 7, 2025

**Closing**

19. Adjournment

**Motion to adjourn the meeting.**

**Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Hersey.**

**Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Garrett, Commissioner Hersey**

Meeting adjourned at approximately 11:51 a.m.

ATTEST:

Lynn Butterworth  
County Clerk

B. W. "Bill" Sharp  
Chairman

Minutes	Page 6 of 6	Approved
January 3, 2025		February 7, 2025