

PUTNAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



117 Putnam Drive, Suite A ♦ Eatonton, GA 31024

Minutes

Tuesday, June 24, 2025 ♦ 6:00 PM

Putnam County Administration Building – Room 203

The Putnam County Board of Commissioners met on Tuesday, June 24, 2025 at approximately 6:00 PM 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
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 6:00 p.m.

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

2. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda.

Motion made by Commissioner Wooten, Seconded by Commissioner McElhenney.

Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Garrett, Commissioner Wooten

3. Invocation

County Attorney Adam Nelson gave the invocation.

4. Pledge of Allegiance (BS)

Chairman Sharp led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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Chairman Sharp announced that Commissioner Hersey was arriving late due to an emergency and that the Board of Commissioners would be entering Executive Session whenever he arrived.

Regular Business Meeting

5. Public Comments

Ms. Erin Olson provided a handout and commented on the responsibilities of the Board of Commissioners in relation to the Board of Education.

Mr. Don Sadler summarized a complaint he previously filed with the Attorney General's office regarding an issue with the Jimmy Davis Park Partnership Advisory Council.

Mr. David Tateyama expressed his appreciation for the commissioners and their support of the Uncle Remus Golf Course and asked for continued support.

Ms. Patricia Bailey commented on the current state of the Alice Walker site not being kept up.

Mr. Terry Blythe thanked the commissioners for being public servants and requested continued support of the Uncle Remus Golf Course.

Mr. Brandon Burgess signed in but passed on his comments.

Commissioner Garrett thanked everyone who made comments and addressed some of the concerns.

(Copy of handouts made a part of the minutes on minute book pages _____ to _____.)

6. Consent Agenda

a. Approval of Minutes - June 6, 2025 Regular Business Meeting (staff-CC)

Motion to approve the consent agenda.

Motion made by Commissioner Garrett, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.

Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Garrett, Commissioner Wooten

7. Approval of Right-of-Way Permit Request by Tri-CoGo for work in the Possum Point Dr. Subdivision (staff-PW)

Public Works Office/Permit Manager Rindi Daniel explained the request and commented that it will bring internet to a lot of people.

Motion to approve the Right-of-Way Permit Request by Tri-CoGo for work in the Possum Point Dr. Subdivision.

Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett.

Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Garrett, Commissioner Wooten

(Copy of Right-of-Way Permit made a part of the minutes on minute book page _____.)

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8. Approval of beginning the process of Road Abandonment for Wooten Road and Joe Wooten Road (JW)

Mr. Billy Webster commented on various things to consider when abandoning a road, such as not isolating or landlocking any landowner and the impact on mail delivery services.

Commissioner Wooten commented that his family was always under the impression it was a private road and explained the history of maintaining farm roads for feed and milk trucks when agriculture was very important to the county. His family never found evidence showing the road was deeded to the county. He addressed the concerns regarding any isolated landowners, confirming there will be an easement given to the specific landowner in question, and confirmed that there are no mailboxes or school buses travelling on this road.

Motion to approve starting the process for road abandonment for Wooten Road and Joe Wooten Road.

Motion made by Commissioner Wooten, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett.

Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Garrett, Commissioner Wooten

9. Declaration of Road Abandonment of a segment of Napier Mill Road and authorization for Chairman to sign required documents (staff-CC)

Motion to approve the Declaration of Road Abandonment of a segment of Napier Mill Road and authorization for Chairman to sign required documents.

Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett.

Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Garrett, Commissioner Wooten
(Copy of documents made a part of the minutes on minute book pages _____ to _____.)

10. Authorization for Chairman to sign Intergovernmental Agreement for the Use and Distribution of Proceeds from SPLOST 10 (staff-CM)

Mr. Jim Berardicurti asked several questions about the different proposals in the meeting packet and commented on the state of the roads.

Commissioner Hersey arrived at 6:39 p.m.

Ms. Jennifer Ray showed photos and commented on road conditions.

Mr. Billy Webster submitted a handout and read a letter from the Pine Forest Property Owners Association supporting Commissioner Hersey's SPLOST 10 proposal.

County Manager Van Haute compared the two project lists and explained that one was discussed by the whole board at meetings and the other is Commissioner Hersey's proposal. He also explained that no roads were included on the initial list because TSPLOST #3 will be coming soon.

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Commissioner Hersey recalled previous SPLOST experiences where all commissioners submitted their own proposals, reviewed his proposed list, and expressed concern about SPLOST #10 not passing if there are no road allocations on it.

Motion to authorize Chairman to sign Intergovernmental Agreement for the Use and Distribution of Proceeds from SPLOST 10 as presented in Commissioner Hersey's proposal.

Motion made by Commissioner Hersey, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett.

Voting Yea: Commissioner Garrett, Commissioner Hersey

Voting Nay: Chairman Sharp, Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Wooten

Motion failed.

Motion to authorize Chairman to sign Intergovernmental Agreement for the Use and Distribution of Proceeds from SPLOST 10 as shown in the meeting packet.

Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.

Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Garrett, Commissioner Wooten

Voting Nay: Commissioner Hersey

(Copy of Intergovernmental Agreement made a part of the minutes on minute book pages _____ to _____.)

Chairman Sharp reminded everyone that since Commissioner Hersey had arrived, the Board would go into Executive Session.

Executive Session

11. Enter Executive Session as allowed by O.C.G.A. 50-14-4 for Personnel, Litigation, or Real Estate

Motion to enter Executive Session as allowed by O.C.G.A 50-14-4 for Litigation.

Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett.

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

Meeting closed at approximately 7:46 p.m.

12. Reopen meeting following Executive Session

Motion to reopen the meeting following Executive Session.

Motion made by Commissioner Wooten, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett.

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

Meeting reopened at approximately 8:20 p.m.

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13. Authorize Chairman to sign Affidavit concerning the subject matter of the closed portion of the meeting

Motion to authorize the Chairman to sign the Affidavit concerning the subject matter of the closed portion of the meeting.

Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett.

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

(Copy of affidavit made a part of the minutes on minute book page _____.)

14. Action, if any, resulting from the Executive Session

No action taken.

15. Discussion and possible action regarding the Live Streaming of all Commission meetings (SH)

Mr. Jim Berardicurti commented on the importance of live streaming all meetings for the people who can't attend in person and for documentation.

Ms. Jennifer Ray commented on the difficulty to attend meetings during the workday and the importance of part-time residents having access to all meetings.

Ms. Barbara Vargo commented on the importance of transparency for Board of Commissioner meetings and all other meetings related to county business (Planning & Zoning Commission, etc.)

Motion that the Putnam County Board of Commissioners Live Stream on a free social media platform all official meetings, including Regular meetings, Called meetings, Work Sessions and Town Halls; said Live Streaming shall be for viewing only.

Motion made by Commissioner Hersey, Seconded by Commissioner McElhenney.

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

16. Discussion and possible action on changing the Chairperson of the Jimmy Davis Park Partnership Advisory Council (RG)

Ms. Karen Henry-Garrett commented on the original appointments to the Jimmy Davis Park Partnership Advisory Council and the way the meetings have been conducted, including a lack of public comments and community participation.

Ms. Annette Bullard read a letter she previously emailed to the commissioners expressing her concern about Chairperson Janie Reid's conduct at a recent meeting and disrespect shown to Commissioner Garrett.

Mr. Don Sadler commented on meeting notices, agendas, and minutes not being done properly at the start of the council and that errors were blamed on personnel issues.

Commissioner Garrett explained that his fundamental reason for becoming a commissioner was to help Jimmy Davis Park and the community in large, and that he desires more openness and

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inclusiveness in the Jimmy Davis Park Partnership Advisory Council meetings. He expressed concern that the inherited Chairperson has been uncooperative and disrespectful, and that the meetings are not constructive. Commissioner Garrett also explained that he has received requests from members of the board, the public, and the recreation department for a new chairperson.

County Attorney Adam Nelson explained how the committee was created in March 2024 pursuant to Ordinance 2-51, and that the new Jimmy Davis Park Partnership Advisory Council bylaws state that the Board of Commissioners Chairman appoints the Jimmy Davis Park Partnership Advisory Council Chairperson.

Chairman Sharp expressed his respect for both Chairperson Janie Reid and Commissioner Garrett and the importance of Jimmy Davis Park and commented that great strides have been made and the need to work together. Chairman Sharp proposed that Chairperson Reid and Commissioner Garrett have a discussion with Mara Shaw, Senior Public Service Associate with the Carl Vinson Institute of Government, to try and resolve the issues expressed today. Commissioner Garrett was agreeable.

No action was taken.

Reports/Announcements

17. County Manager Report

No report.

18. County Attorney Report

No report.

19. Commissioner Announcements

Commissioner McElhenney: commented on a previous meeting's public comments regarding Ms. Ione Foster and confirmed he visited her house and addressed all of her concerns prior to that meeting.

Commissioner Garrett: congratulated the organizers of this year's Juneteenth event; announced there are a lot of vacant positions on boards and encouraged all to apply.

Commissioner Hersey: encouraged everyone to attend the Crooked Creek Community Association Annual Yard Sale June 27th-28th from 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m., raffle proceeds go to Putnam Christian Outreach.

Commissioner Wooten: none.

Chairman Sharp: encouraged everyone to apply for board vacancies.

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Closing

20. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett.

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

Meeting adjourned at approximately 9:12 p.m.

ATTEST:

Lynn Butterworth
County Clerk

B. W. "Bill" Sharp
Chairman

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