

PUTNAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



117 Putnam Drive, Suite A ♦ Eatonton, GA 31024

Minutes

Friday, April 4, 2025 ♦ 10:00 AM

Putnam County Administration Building – Room 203

The Putnam County Board of Commissioners met on Friday, April 4, 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
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 10:02 a.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 Hersey, Commissioner Wooten

3. Invocation

Pastor Jonathon Dawson from Lakepoint Community Church gave the invocation.

4. Pledge of Allegiance (SH)

Commissioner Hersey led the pledge of allegiance.

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Regular Business Meeting

5. Public Comments

Mr. William Vargo signed in to speak but passed.

6. Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of Minutes - March 17, 2025 Joint Called Meeting (staff-CC)
- b. Approval of Minutes - March 18, 2025 Regular Meeting (staff-CC)

Motion to approve the consent agenda.

Motion made by Commissioner Garrett, Seconded by Commissioner McElhenney.

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

7. Report from Putnam Development Authority

Economic Development Director Matt Poyner presented the quarterly report for the Putnam Development Authority.

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

8. Short Term Rental Update (BS)

- a. Licensing
- b. Code Enforcement

STR Coordinator Monica Evans, Code Enforcement Officer Cedrick Moreland, Planning & Development Director Lisa Jackson, and Sheriff Howard Sills presented information and answered questions about Short Term Rental Licensing and Code Enforcement.

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

9. Authorization for Chairman to sign Resolution Naming County Roads in Proposed Habitat for Humanity Community (staff-CM)

Ms. Kristine Tarrer, a lawyer on behalf of Habitat for Humanity, commented that she is here for questions and gave information regarding the roads being renamed.

Mr. Billy Webster commented on the condition of roads not being up to standards and requested the renaming be delayed until the roads are improved.

County Manager Van Haute provided background information and advised the roads were accepted by Putnam County back in the early 1990's.

Motion to authorize the Chairman to sign the Resolution Naming County Roads in Proposed Habitat for Humanity Community.

Motion made by Commissioner Wooten, Seconded by Commissioner McElhenney.

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

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

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10. Authorization for staff to schedule a Public Hearing on proposed changes to the Putnam County Code of Ordinances - Chapter 2 (Administration) (staff-CA)
County Attorney Adam Nelson briefly explained the creation of the new code and changes to the ordinance that need a public hearing to discuss recreation and resources.

Motion to authorize staff to schedule a Public Hearing on proposed changes to the Putnam County Code of Ordinances – Chapter 2 (Administration).

Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett.

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

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

11. Authorization for staff to schedule a Public Hearing on proposed changes to the Putnam County Code of Ordinances - Chapter 18 (Buildings and Building Regulations) (SH)
Commissioner Hersey explained this is about nuisance structures, not based on appearances but on health, safety, and law enforcement issues in the county, and reviewed how the process would work (steps 1-8). This code is based off the state code.

County Attorney Adam Nelson explained this would be new to our code and that it is a state code mandated process but is not required.

Motion to authorize staff to schedule a Public Hearing on proposed changes to the Putnam County Code of Ordinances – Chapter 18 (Buildings and Building Regulations).

Motion made by Commissioner Hersey, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett.

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

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

12. Discussion and possible action on Harmony Road widening project (SH)
Commissioner Hersey explained this would allow the county to come up with a design and obtain the potential costs for adding a third lane to Harmony Road and pointed out that there are several questions that need to be answered by the engineers to determine if this can be done. Commissioner McElhenney commented that this is something worth looking into to see if it is viable and worth spending money on.

Motion to authorize staff to obtain an engineering study and probable cost estimate for adding a 3rd lane to Harmony Road between Hwy 44 and Scott Road.

Motion made by Commissioner Hersey, Seconded by Commissioner McElhenney.

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

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13. Authorization for the Chairman to sign a Resolution enacting a moratorium on development in District Three and to schedule a Work Session on development in Putnam County (SH)

Mr. Charles Gray commented on the consequences and financial impact to contractors and developers, as well as how pending applications will be handled and how this could impact district three and the entire county.

Mr. Josh Sprayberry requested the board not to approve this and commented on his current project and other projects bringing jobs to the area and the message this sends.

Ms. Tracy Southerland, representing Brandon Burgess, read a letter from Mr. Burgess.

Mr. Todd Ciavola commented on smart growth and smart development, the lack of notice for people to make public comments, modifying the moratorium, damages to landowners and land values, the process for comprehensive land use plans, and participating in a study committee.

Mr. Derrick Daniel requested clarification regarding the permits being included in this and commented on long-term residents losing their investments.

County Attorney Adam Nelson reviewed a letter received this morning from Jeff Haymore, that it is a threat of litigation against any action taken today that can be discussed in executive session if desired.

Commissioner Hersey explained that the resolution has been revised to only have a moratorium on rezoning applications and major subdivisions and commented that he would like to see Planning & Development use conditional uses instead of rezoning. Conditional use ties the property owner to a particular plan; if the plan changes then the conditional use goes away.

Motion to authorize the Chairman to sign a Resolution enacting a 90-day Moratorium on major subdivisions and rezoning in District Three (beginning April 5, 2025 at 11:00 a.m.).

Motion made by Commissioner Hersey, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett.

Voting Yea: Commissioner Hersey

Voting Nay: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Garrett, Commissioner Wooten

Motion fails.

Motion to authorize the Chairman to schedule a Work Session to discuss development processes in Putnam County.

Motion made by Commissioner Hersey, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten,

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

Reports/Announcements

14. County Manager Report

No report.

15. County Attorney Report

No report.

16. Commissioner Announcements

Commissioner McElhenney: none

Commissioner Garrett: commended Butler Baker Alumni group on a successful luncheon and announced that they are 100% owners now.

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Commissioner Hersey: none

Commissioner Wooten: none

Chairman Sharp: announced a Work Session on SPLOST 10 Projects is scheduled on Friday, April 11th at 10:00 a.m. in Room 203.

Closing

17. 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 12:03 p.m.

ATTEST:

Lynn Butterworth
County Clerk

B. W. "Bill" Sharp
Chairman

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