

PUTNAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



117 Putnam Drive, Suite A ♦ Eatonton, GA 31024

Minutes

Tuesday, September 16, 2025 ♦ 6:00 PM

Putnam County Administration Building – Room 203

The Putnam County Board of Commissioners met on Tuesday, September 16, 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

STAFF ABSENT

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 _____.)

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2. Approval of Agenda

County Attorney Nelson advised that item #8 “Request by Rick McAllister, agent for Imperial Park Holdings, LLC, to rezone 3.0 acres at 301 New Phoenix Road from AG to C-1 [Map 105, Part of Parcel 019, District 1]” needed to be removed from the agenda because when it was tabled a date and time were not included for the new meeting. The applicant was informed, and staff will need to readvertise for a Board of Commissioners Public Hearing and replace the signage.

Motion to approve the agenda with removal of item #8.

Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett.

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

3. Invocation

Pastor Craig Williamson, First Baptist Church, gave the invocation.

4. Pledge of Allegiance (RG)

Commissioner Garrett led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Zoning Public Hearing

Chairman Sharp opened the Zoning Public Hearing at approximately 6:06 p.m.

5. Request by Bailey Lively, agent for APC, for a conditional use at 1103 Oconee Springs Road, presently zoned AG [Map 107, Parcel 025, District 2] (staff-P&D)

Mr. Dale Lee, on behalf of APC Towers, spoke in support of this request. The following individuals also spoke in support: Mrs. B J Weems, Mr. Hassel Weems, and Mr. Bill Vargo. Mr. Taylor Carter, attorney for Gary Young, who lives next door to the proposed site, spoke against this item.

Planning and Development staff recommendation was for approval.

Motion to approve the request by Bailey Lively, agent for APC, for a conditional use at 1103 Oconee Springs Road, presently zoned AG [Map 107, Parcel 025, District 2].

Motion made by Commissioner Garrett, Seconded by Commissioner McElhenney.

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

Chairman Sharp closed the Zoning Public Hearing at approximately 6:37 p.m.

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Regular Business Meeting

6. Public Comments

Mr. Don Sadler commented on the removal of agenda item #8 and the Jimmy Davis Park Partnership Advisory Committee.

Ms. Jennifer Ray read a poem called the Man in the Mirror.

Mr. Ryan Diederichsen, with Ecoplex, distributed handouts, and commented on stand alone energy/battery storage systems and encouraged the board or staff to look into amending the code to include energy storage.

Mr. Billy Webster commented on the mill rate adoption not being on the agenda.

Mr. Bill Vargo commented on the Jimmy Davis Park Partnership Advisory Committee.

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

7. Consent Agenda

a. Approval of Minutes - September 5, 2025 Regular Meeting (staff-CC)

b. Authorization for Chairman to sign GDOT FY27 Grant Application-Section 5311 Program (staff-Transit)

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

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

8. Request by Rick McAllister, agent for Imperial Park Holdings, LLC, to rezone 3.0 acres at 301 New Phoenix Road from AG to C-1 [Map 105, Part of Parcel 019, District 1] (staff-P&D) (tabled at August 19, 2025 meeting)

Removed from the agenda

9. Authorization for Chairman to sign Thunder Valley Commercial Development August 2025 Settlement Agreement (staff-CA)

Attorney Nelson reminded everyone that at the August 29, 2025 called meeting the proposed agreement was submitted and the board approved it with the removal of two provisions. The agreement has been revised and resubmitted and needs to be approved again.

Motion to authorize the Chairman to sign the Thunder Valley Commercial Development August 2025 Settlement Agreement.

Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.

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

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

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10. Discussion and possible action to revise the fee and deposit for public rental of the building at Jimmy Davis Park (RG)

Mr. Don Sadler commented on the Jimmy Davis Park Partnership Advisory Committee.

Motion to revise the fee and deposit for the building at Jimmy Davis Park by lowering the rental fee to \$300; increasing the deposit to \$300 and extending the rental period from four to six hours.

Motion made by Commissioner Garrett, Seconded by Commissioner Hersey.

Voting Yea: Commissioner Garrett, Commissioner Hersey

Voting Nay: Chairman Sharp, Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Wooten

Motion failed. Staff was instructed to reevaluate the fees and come back to the board.

11. Discussion and possible action to enact a six-month moratorium on rezoning, preliminary plat approvals and major subdivisions (SH)

Mr. Charles Gray commented on the negative message that a six month moratorium would send and on what the ordinances to say regarding a developer building what they apply for.

Ms. Jennifer Ray distributed copies of Atlas invoices and commented on wasting tax dollars by using Atlas instead of hiring in house building inspectors.

Ms. Barb Vargo commented against a six month moratorium and against using Atlas.

Mr. Bill Vargo commented against a six month moratorium and on building inspections and inspectors and not needing Atlas engineers.

Motion to enact a six month moratorium on rezoning, preliminary plat approvals and major subdivisions on all properties north of Highway 16.

Motion made by Commissioner Hersey, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett.

Amended motion to enact an up to six month moratorium on all new rezoning applications in the county.

Amended motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.

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

Vote on original motion as amended

Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Garrett, Commissioner Wooten

Voting Nay: Commissioner Hersey

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12. Authorization for staff to schedule a Public Hearing on proposed changes to the Putnam County Code of Ordinances - Chapter 1 (General Provisions), Sec. 1-2. - Definitions and rules of construction (SH)

Ms. Barb Vargo signed in to speak but was confused about the agenda item.

Motion to authorize the staff to schedule a Public Hearing on proposed changes to the Putnam County Code of Ordinances - Chapter 1 (General Provisions), Sec. 1-2. - Definitions and rules of construction

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 _____.

Reports/Announcements

13. County Manager Report

No report.

14. County Attorney Report

No report.

15. Commissioner Announcements

Commissioner McElhenney: none

Commissioner Garrett: encouraged everyone to attend the Georgia Recovery bus stop on September 22, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. outside the courthouse.

Commissioner Hersey: none

Commissioner Wooten: none

Chairman Sharp: thanked everyone for attending

Closing

16. 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 8:26 p.m.

ATTEST:

Lynn Butterworth
County Clerk

B. W. "Bill" Sharp
Chairman

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