

PUTNAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



117 Putnam Drive, Suite A ♦ Eatonton, GA 31024

Minutes

Tuesday, July 15, 2025 ♦ 6:00 PM

Putnam County Administration Building – Room 203

The Putnam County Board of Commissioners met on Tuesday, July 15, 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 Simon Williams
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

Chairman Sharp requested to remove item #8 and announced there will be a special called meeting Friday, July 18, 2025 to discuss the Georgia Indigent Defense Services Agreement.

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

Motion made by Commissioner Wooten, Seconded by Chairman Sharp.

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

3. Invocation - Paul Gardner, Mt. Ararat Church

Paul Gardner, Mt. Ararat Church, gave the invocation.

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4. Pledge of Allegiance (staff)

County Manager Van Haute led the Pledge of Allegiance.

5. Special Presentation - Laura Pilafas, The Recovery Bus

Laura Pilafas introduced herself and spoke about The Georgia Recovers Bus Tour, requesting support from the Board of Commissioners and a proclamation bringing awareness to recovery month.

Motion to proclaim the month of September as National Recovery Month and to present the proclamation at The Georgia Recovers Bus Tour in Eatonton on September 22, 2025.

Motion made by Commissioner Garrett, Seconded by Commissioner McElhenney.

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

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

Regular Business Meeting

6. Public Comments

Ms. Judy Bell commented on the regular business meeting held April 4th and the approval to hold a work session to discuss development processes, and advocated that this be held sooner rather than later with lead time for residents to participate.

Ms. Lane Poole commented on the nuisance ordinance and read a letter on behalf of her neighbor requesting updates on their complaint.

Ms. Barb Vargo commented on Jimmy Davis Park and Chairperson Janie Reid's behavior at a recent Jimmy Davis Park Partnership Advisory Council meeting, and the budget requests for towers and department head raises.

Mr. Bill Vargo echoed Barb's comments regarding Janie Reid being unprofessional and commented on a replacement floating dock at Oconee Springs Park.

Ms. Erin Olson displayed photos of several roads and commented on the need for repair on roads throughout Putnam County.

Mr. Charles Ray commented on Commissioner Garrett's motion at the last regular business meeting regarding the replacement of Janie Reid as Chairperson of the Jimmy Davis Park Partnership Advisory Council and requested the commissioners reconsider the request due to her behavior at a recent council meeting.

Mr. Daniel Brown commented on Jimmy Davis Park and how the current council members were chosen, and requested the city and county continue to work together for the sake of the park.

Ms. Karen Henry-Garrett commented on Jimmy Davis Park and encouraged the commissioners to come to the meetings and use their power to change the way the council is being run.

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Mr. Brandon Burgess thanked the commissioners for allowing growth and expressed interest in serving on boards regarding development.

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

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7. Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of Minutes - June 24, 2025 Regular Meeting (staff-CC)
- b. Approval of Minutes - June 24, 2025 Executive Session (staff-CC)
- c. Ratify Land Purchase and Sale Agreement of property to provide access to the Lake Oconee boats/boathouses of the Sheriff's Office and Fire Department (staff-CA)
- d. Approval of Updated Putnam County Transit Procurement Policy (staff-Transit)

Motion to approve the consent agenda.

Motion made by Commissioner Hersey, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett.

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

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8. Authorization for Chairman to sign Georgia Indigent Defense Services Agreement (staff-Finance)

This item was removed from the agenda and will be heard at the July 18, 2025 Called Meeting.

9. Approval of Invoice to Digitize Old Zoning Maps (staff-P&D)

Planning and Development Director Lisa Jackson explained the quote, the condition of the maps, and the steps involved for digitizing the old zoning maps.

Motion to approve the invoice from Kofile to digitize the old zoning maps at \$109,060.00.

Motion made by Commissioner Wooten, Seconded by Commissioner McElhenney.

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

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

10. Approval of Vehicles and Equipment Proposed for Surplus (staff-Fire)

Chief McClain reviewed the surplus lists and answered questions.

Motion to approve the vehicles and equipment proposed for surplus.

Motion made by Commissioner Wooten, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett.

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

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11. Discussion and possible action on the Fund Balance (TM)
Ms. Barb Vargo commented on the purpose of the fund balance.

Commissioner McElhenney commented on the recent discussions regarding the fund balance and proposed using the fund balance for roads rather than adding them to SPLOST 10.

Motion to allocate \$3.6M from the fund balance to be spent on repaving/repairing roads over the next 6 years at \$600K per year.

Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.

Motion amended to dedicate \$3.6M from the fund balance to be spent on repaving/repairing roads over the next 6 years at \$600K per year and the list of roads to be repaired is to be presented to the Board of Commissioners within 30 days.

Amended motion made by Commissioner Hersey, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett.

Chairman Sharp requested that the road lists be presented within 90 days instead of 30 days.
Commissioner Hersey and Commissioner Garrett agreed.

Vote on amended motion:

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

Amended motion approved. On the advice of counsel, the original motion did not require additional action.

12. Discussion and possible action regarding how Putnam County might, with other local governments and groups, mark our nation's 250th anniversary in 2026 (RG)

Ms. Barb Vargo requested fireworks in a place everyone can go without a boat as well as a parade.

Mr. Bill Vargo requested fireworks and a car show in support of the Georgia Sheriff's Youth Home and expressed interest in serving on the new recreation committee.

Ms. Jennifer Ray thanked Commissioner Garrett for putting this item on the agenda and suggested ideas for the celebrations, including spreading them out from Memorial Day through Independence Day.

Commissioner Garrett commented on the opportunity for the community to come together and celebrate America's history and requested support from other commissioners for the county to be a part of organizing these celebrations.

Commissioner Wooten agreed with the need for celebrations but the various civic groups in the county should handle the planning.

Commissioner Hersey suggested forming a committee with a representative from the county, the city, and the school board.

Commissioner Garrett volunteered to reach out to various groups regarding interest.

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No action taken.

13. Discussion and possible action regarding road repairs (SH)

Ms. Barb Vargo asked about roads being paved in-house since the county has a paver and road crews.

Mr. Bill Vargo commented on the budget for roads and paving, and a new law that was passed this year for gross vehicle weight ratings on county roads.

Mr. Brandon Burgess thanked the board for the decision to use the fund balance for roads.

Ms. Jennifer Ray commented on the dangerous conditions of Twin Bridges Road and requested the road lists made by the commissioners to be released to the public.

Mr. Charles Ray commented on the standards used for addressing roads that need to be repaired.

Mr. Billy Webster commented on including roads in SPLOST 10 and submitted a list of additional roads for repairing/repaving.

Commissioner Hersey provided information on the history of ACCG and the original purpose of building and maintaining roads in Georgia and suggested that the county keep roads as a very high priority.

Commissioner Garrett suggested maintaining a running list of roads in need with an objective way to scale them in severity.

County Manager Van Haute confirmed Public Works Director Anthony Frazier knows which roads need to be addressed but it often becomes a political decision and not a perfect science.

No action taken.

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

Reports/Announcements

14. County Manager Report

No report.

15. County Attorney Report

No report.

16. Commissioner Announcements

Commissioner McElhenney: expressed appreciation for everyone's input on roads and commented on the recent concert at Oconee Springs Park featuring the Swingin' Medallions; that it was a great concert at a great venue and encouraged support of the park.

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Commissioner Garrett: shared that he attended the inaugural banquet for the African American Cultural Experience Complex and supports their initiative for an African American history museum in Putnam County; also shared that he attended the HONK musical at the Plaza and gave credit to everyone involved for an amazing and professional performance.

Commissioner Hersey: commented that he will be late to the budget work session tomorrow morning due to the new teacher orientation at the high school.

Commissioner Wooten: none.

Chairman Sharp: shared information and encouraged everyone to support the Georgia Heart Hospital Program, in which you can designate state income tax to Putnam General Hospital or your hospital of choice; also reminded everyone that the FY26 Budget Work Sessions will take place this week beginning at 9:00 a.m. on July 16th and 18th and that they will be live-streamed.

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 8:46 p.m.

ATTEST:

Lynn Butterworth
County Clerk

B. W. “Bill” Sharp
Chairman

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