

PUTNAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



117 Putnam Drive, Suite A ♦ Eatonton, GA 31024

Minutes

Tuesday, November 18, 2025 ♦ 6:00 PM

Putnam County Administration Building – Room 203

The Putnam County Board of Commissioners met on Tuesday, November 18, 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

Commissioner Hersey requested to add item 13. Discussion of C-PACE to the agenda.
Motion to approve the agenda with the addition of item 13. Discussion of C-PACE.
Motion made by Commissioner Garrett, Seconded by Commissioner McElhenney.
Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Garrett, Commissioner Hersey, Commissioner Wooten

3. Invocation - Joe Ezzard, Smithboro Baptist Church

Joe Ezzard was absent. County Attorney Adam Nelson gave the invocation.

4. Pledge of Allegiance (JW)

Commissioner Wooten led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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Zoning Public Hearing I

Chairman Sharp opened Zoning Public Hearing I at approximately 6:02 p.m.

5. 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)

Mr. Rick McAllister, agent for the landowner, spoke in support of this request. Ms. Kay Copelan also spoke in support.

Ms. Sharron Callahan spoke against this request.

Planning and Development staff recommendation was for approval with the following conditions:

1. The property must be used for the purpose stated in the filed application, unless approved by the Board of Commissioners.
2. The developer shall install both a right turn lane and left turn lane, on Old Phoenix and New Phoenix Road, per state and local guidelines.
3. This rezoning shall be conditioned upon the resurveying and recordation in the Superior Court of Putnam County of an accurate plat within 120 days of approval by the board of commissioners. A copy of the recorded plat shall be filed with the planning and development department director. Failure to file a plat pursuant to this subsection shall have the effect of invalidating the rezoning action.
4. Failure to abide by the stated conditions shall cause the property to revert to the Agriculture designation.

Motion to approve the 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] with the conditions as stated by staff along with the following conditions:

1. All outdoor lighting fixtures shall be installed and maintained in a manner to minimize negative environmental effects, particularly light pollution, by using only the necessary amount of warm-colored light, shielded and directed downward, and only when needed.
2. A buffer of natural, existing, or established vegetation shall be installed and maintained between the property and any adjoining property of a residential use and/or in a residential district to screen the property from the view of the adjoining property.
3. Exterior landscaping, including, at a minimum, sod and shrubbery, shall be installed and maintained on the property.
4. Any dumpsters and/or other receptacles of waste shall not be located along the lot line of any adjoining property of a residential use and/or in a residential district, shall be located as far as practicable away from any adjoining property of a residential use and/or in a residential district, and shall be screened from view by a fence, wall, hedge, or other structure.
5. Security cameras must be installed and maintained at all key locations, including every gas pump, store entrance and exit, and point of sale, to capture all activity in the convenience store and otherwise on the property, and recordings from such cameras must be stored for a minimum of 30 days and be viewable with accurate date and time stamps.

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6. No exterior sign shall exceed 60 inches in height measured from the newly established grade after construction, exclusive of any filling, berming, mounding, or excavating solely undertaken for the purpose of locating or increasing the height of the sign, to the top of the highest attached component of the sign.
7. There shall be no public shower facilities located in the convenience store or otherwise on the property.
8. There shall be no public laundry facilities located in the convenience store or otherwise on the property.
9. There shall be no overnight parking of commercial motor vehicles on the property. As used herein, the term “commercial motor vehicle” shall mean any self-propelled or towed motor vehicle used in intrastate or interstate commerce or both to transport passengers or property.
10. The sale of alternative nicotine and/or vapor products shall not make up more than 35% of the gross sales, exclusive of the gross sales from the sale of fuel, of the convenience store.

Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.

Motion to amend by adding additional conditions:

1. Require minimum of 8-foot privacy fence where property abuts residential use property (Lori Morgan property)
2. Store contain public restrooms
3. Hours of operation of store be 6:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Motion made by Commissioner Hersey, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett.

Mr. Rick McAllister was given his rebuttal time.

Vote on amendment.

Voting Yea: Commissioner Garrett, Commissioner Hersey

Voting Nay: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Wooten, Chairman Sharp
Amendment fails.

Meeting recessed at 7:01pm

Meeting reconvened at 7:09pm

Motion to amend by removing condition 4 from the Planning and Development staff recommendation.

Motion made by Commissioner Garrett, Seconded by Commissioner Hersey.

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

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Vote on original motion as amended.

Voting Yea: Chairman Sharp, Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Wooten

Voting Nay: Commissioner Garrett, Commissioner Hersey

Chairman Sharp closed Zoning Public Hearing I and opened Zoning Public Hearing II at approximately 7:14 p.m.

Zoning Public Hearing II

6. Request by Tyler and Allie Mathis to rezone 1.0 acres at 166 Dennis Station Road from AG to R-2 [Map 060, Part of Parcel 026004 001, District 4] (staff-P&D)

Mr. Tyler Mathis spoke in support of this request.

No one signed in to speak against.

Planning and Development staff recommendation was for approval with the following condition:

1. This rezoning approval shall be conditioned upon the resurveying and recordation in the Superior Court of Putnam County of an accurate plat within 60 days of approval by the board of commissioners. A copy of the recorded plat shall be filed with the planning and development department director. Failure to file a plat pursuant to this subsection shall have the effect of invalidating the rezoning action as stated in Section 66-165(e)(3) of the Putnam County Code of Ordinances.

Chairman Sharp questioned if the condition should be for 120 days instead of 60 days. County Attorney Nelson confirmed.

Motion to approve the Request by Tyler and Allie Mathis to rezone 1.0 acres at 166 Dennis Station Road from AG to R-2 [Map 060, Part of Parcel 026004 001, District 4] with the following condition:

1. This rezoning approval shall be conditioned upon the resurveying and recordation in the Superior Court of Putnam County of an accurate plat within 120 days of approval by the board of commissioners. A copy of the recorded plat shall be filed with the planning and development department director. Failure to file a plat pursuant to this subsection shall have the effect of invalidating the rezoning action as stated in Section 66-165(e)(3) of the Putnam County Code of Ordinances.

Motion made by Commissioner Wooten, Seconded by Commissioner McElhenney.

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

7. Request by Lowell White III, agent for One Thirteen Investments, LLC, to rezone 1.16 acres at 881 Harmony Road from C-1 to C-2 [Map 102D, Parcel 038, District 3] (staff-P&D)

Mr. Lowell White spoke in support of this request.

No one signed in to speak against.

Planning and Development staff recommendation was for approval.

Motion to approve the Request by Lowell White III, agent for One Thirteen Investments, LLC, to rezone 1.16 acres at 881 Harmony Road from C-1 to C-2 [Map 102D, Parcel 038, District 3].

Motion made by Commissioner Hersey, Seconded by Commissioner McElhenney.

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

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Chairman Sharp closed Zoning Public Hearing II at approximately 7:33 p.m.

Regular Business Meeting

8. Public Comments

Ms. Jennifer Ray requested the board's public support in promoting volunteering efforts for Wreaths Across America Day, which will take place on Saturday, December 13, 2025.

9. Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of Minutes - November 7, 2025 Regular Meeting (staff-CC)

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda.

Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.

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

10. Appointment to the Board of Assessors (staff-CC)

Nomination to appoint John L. Richter to the Board of Assessors.

Nomination made by Commissioner Wooten, Seconded by Commissioner Hersey.

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

11. Approval of 2026 BOC Regular Meeting Schedule (staff-CC)

Motion to approve the 2026 BOC Regular Meeting Schedule.

Motion made by Commissioner Wooten, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett.

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

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

12. Authorization for the Chairman to sign a Resolution to Request Local Legislation to Amend the Local Act Creating the Board of Commissioners for Putnam County to Establish the Procedure for Vacancies in Office ("Gary McElhenney Resolution") (staff-CM) (tabled from 11-7-25 BOC meeting)

Ms. Pamela Smith commented about the lack of need for this resolution.

Ms. Jennifer Ray commented about the need for advertising and public input on items like this, and following the same procedures as changing a county ordinance.

Motion to take the item from the table.

Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.

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

Motion to authorize the Chairman to sign a Resolution to Request Local Legislation to Amend the Local Act Creating the Board of Commissioners for Putnam County to Establish the Procedure for Vacancies in Office ("Gary McElhenney Resolution")

Motion made by Commissioner Wooten, Seconded by Commissioner McElhenney.

Commissioner Hersey objected the motion. Chairman Sharp did not accept the objection.

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County Attorney Nelson explained the changes made to the proposal since it was tabled at the November 7, 2025 meeting, and reminded the commissioners that this is a request to the legislators who may or may not approve the change.

Motion to amend the language in Section 3 (a) (2) to 2) be a nominee and member of the local political party of the prior office holder.

Motion made by Commissioner Garrett, Seconded by Commissioner Hersey.

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

Vote on original motion as amended.

Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Garrett, Commissioner Wooten

Voting Nay: Commissioner Hersey

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

13. Discussion of C-PACE

Commissioner Hersey began the discussion by defining C-PACE and explaining its origins. He explained the reason for bringing it up now is for transparency and this was brought to his attention by constituents instead of staff or colleagues. Commissioner Hersey requested for County Manager Van Haute to explain the meeting he attended regarding the LEN Resort and C-PACE.

County Manager Van Haute read the Georgia C-PACE 101 document he provided to the board and explained that he attended a meeting which was a green sales pitch for a private developer to help them get funds.

No action taken.

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

Reports/Announcements

14. County Manager Report

County Manager Van Haute commended the Finance Department on another award-winning year and wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

15. County Attorney Report

County Attorney Nelson thanked the board for their involvement in the Work Session earlier today.

16. Commissioner Announcements

Commissioner McElhenney: wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and safe travels

Commissioner Garrett: thanked County Attorney Nelson for the Work Session, and highlighted a food drive being held Saturday, November 22nd at 9:00 a.m. at the old elementary school and they need volunteers Friday and Saturday; encouraged everyone to go see On Golden Pond at the Plaza

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Commissioner Hersey: wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and announced that he is going to form an exploratory committee to seek the Chair of the board

Commissioner Wooten: congratulated the Finance department for their award-winning year and expressed his gratitude for everyone working together

Closing

17. Adjournment

Motion made 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:

Mercy Fluker
Deputy County Clerk

B. W. "Bill" Sharp
Chairman

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