

PUTNAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



117 Putnam Drive, Suite A ♦ Eatonton, GA 31024

Minutes

Friday, May 2, 2025 ♦ 10:00 AM

Putnam County Administration Building – Room 203

The Putnam County Board of Commissioners met on Friday, May 2, 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 Simon Williams
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 10:01 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 Garrett, Seconded by Commissioner Hersey.

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

3. Invocation

Pastor Brandon Walton, Bible Fellowship Church, gave the invocation.

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4. Pledge of Allegiance (JW)

Commissioner Wooten led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Regular Business Meeting

Chairman Sharp announced that the Association County Commissioners of Georgia (ACCG), in conjunction with the Georgia County Clerks' Association (GCCA), recently honored Putnam County Clerk Lynn Butterworth with the 2025 Clerk of the Year Award.

5. Public Comments

The following individuals commented on the need for additional dedicated pickleball courts:

Ms. Judy Sanders

Ms. Ellen Littleton

Mr. Harold Young

Ms. Tracy Abar

Mr. David Field

The following individuals commented on the commercial development adjacent to Thunder Valley:

Ms. Renee Burgdorf, President of the Thunder Valley Owners Association, distributed a handout and commented on the impact it will have on the neighborhood and that current plans violate 1995 minutes.

Mr. Tom Parham commented that the commissioners need to make sure the code is enforced.

Ms. Lisa Peterson commented on the increased danger to walkers and that commercial property should have no access to neighborhood roads.

Ms. Connie Johnson commented that the planned retention pond at 102 Thunder Road will be an eyesore.

Ms. Sherry Donovan distributed a brochure and commented that the commercial development will create increased light and noise pollution.

Mr. Harold Jones passed.

Ms. Barbara Vargo thanked the commissioners for paving Quesenberry Road.

Mr. William Vargo commented that he is not in favor of a tax abatement for the Goodwill project and that he is not for or against pickleball but would rather see a motor sports park.

6. Consent Agenda

a. Approval of Minutes - April 15, 2025 Regular Business Meeting (staff-CC)

b. Approval of Minutes - April 25, 2025 Called Meeting (staff-CC)

Commissioner Hersey requested to remove item b (April 25, 2025 Called Meeting Minutes) from the consent agenda and handle separately.

Motion to approve consent agenda item a (April 15, 2025 Regular Business Meeting Minutes).

Motion made by Commissioner Hersey, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett.

Motion amended to add language to the April 15, 2025 Regular Business Meeting Minutes as follows (before "Commissioner McElhenney called for the question"): "Staff confirmed that it would not be possible - within the county's R-2 development standards - to build

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more than three residences on this property. Property owners are free to develop their land within the terms of the applicable zoning."

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

Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Garrett, Commissioner Wooten

Voting Nay: Commissioner Hersey

Vote on original motion as amended:

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

Motion to approve consent agenda item b (April 25, 2025 Called Meeting Minutes).

Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Hersey.

Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Garrett, Commissioner Wooten

Voting Abstaining: Commissioner Hersey

7. Land Use Assessment Presentation - George Kelecheck

Mr. George Kelecheck showed a video by Urban3 entitled *Suburbia is Subsidized: Here's the Math* which highlighted the advantages of "walkable neighborhoods." He also discussed and provided some handouts regarding smart planning and advised that the county should slow down and invest money in assessments (like the ones from Urban3) to get things right in our ordinances. No action was taken.

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

8. Approval of FY 2025 Budget Amendment #1 (staff-Finance)

Assistant Finance Director Fricks reviewed the budget amendment.

Motion to approve FY 2025 Budget Amendment #1.

Motion made by Commissioner Garrett, Seconded by Commissioner McElhenney.

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

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

9. Approval of Vehicles Proposed for Surplus (staff-CM)

County Manager Van Haute reviewed the list of vehicles from Sheriff Sills.

Motion to approve the lists of vehicles proposed for surplus.

Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.

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

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

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Reports/Announcements

10. County Manager Report

County Manager Van Haute added his congratulations to County Clerk Butterworth for being named Clerk of the Year and invited the Fire Chief to the podium for an announcement.

Fire Chief McClain announced Putnam County's new ISO rating as going from a five (5) to a four (4) and that it takes effect August 1, 2025.

11. County Attorney Report

No report.

12. Commissioner Announcements

Commissioner McElhenney: recently attended ACCG conference in Savannah and had many conversations with commissioners from all over the state; after hearing from those other commissioners, Putnam County is in great shape; expressed appreciation for the work of the county employees.

Commissioner Garrett: echoed the comments of Commissioner McElhenney and offered his congratulations to County Clerk Butterworth; thanked the public for attending the meeting and all their comments.

Commissioner Hersey: none

Commissioner Wooten: congratulated County Clerk Butterworth and thanked Commissioners McElhenney and Garrett for getting things done and that they are a pleasure to work with.

Chairman Sharp: congratulated County Clerk Butterworth and advised that at the ACCG conference he learned there were 536 cities in the state of Georgia; he also thanked the commissioners who attended the ACCG conference.

Executive Session

13. 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 Real Estate.

Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett.

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

Meeting closed at approximately 11:30 a.m.

14. Reopen meeting following Executive Session

Motion to reopen the meeting.

Motion made by Commissioner Wooten, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett.

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

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Meeting reconvened at approximately 12:05 p.m.

15. 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 Wooten.

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

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

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

No final action was taken.

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 12:07 p.m.

ATTEST:

Lynn Butterworth
County Clerk

B. W. "Bill" Sharp
Chairman

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