

PUTNAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



117 Putnam Drive, Suite A ♦ Eatonton, GA 31024

Minutes

Tuesday, May 20, 2025 ♦ 6:00 PM

Putnam County Administration Building – Room 203

The Putnam County Board of Commissioners met on Tuesday, May 20, 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

Motion to approve the agenda.

Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett.

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

3. Invocation

Commissioner Wooten gave the invocation.

4. Pledge of Allegiance (JW)

Commissioner Wooten led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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5. Special Presentation - 2025 Putnam County Recreation 8u Girls Allstar Basketball Team Proclamation

The Commissioners presented a proclamation to the 2025 Putnam County Recreation 8u Girls Allstar Basketball team congratulating them on winning the 2025 Georgia Recreation and Park Association 8u Girls Class C Basketball State Championship.
(Copy of proclamation made a part of the minutes on minute book page _____.)

Zoning Public Hearing

Chairman Sharp opened the Zoning Public Hearing at approximately 6:05 p.m.

6. Request by Dennis and Rebecca Hitchcock to rezone 11 acres at 109 Elmwood Road from R-2 to AG [Map 109, Part of Parcel 026, District 3] (staff-P&D)

Ms. Cheryl Williams spoke against this item.

The following people spoke in favor of this item:

Mr. Bill Vargo

Ms. Barbara Vargo

Ms. Rebecca Hitchcock

Planning and Development staff recommendation was for denial to rezone 11 acres at 109 Elmwood Road from R-2 to AG [Map 109, Part of Parcel 026, District 3].

Motion to deny the request by Dennis and Rebecca Hitchcock to rezone 11 acres at 109 Elmwood Road from R-2 to AG [Map 109, Part of Parcel 026, District 3].

Motion made by Commissioner Hersey, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.

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

7. Request by Joe Hudson and Lois Schell to rezone 10.27 acres on Lakeshore Drive from AG to R-1 [Map 056, Parcel 003027, District 4] (staff-P&D)

No one signed in to speak for or against this item.

Planning and Development staff recommendation was for approval to rezone 10.27 acres on Lakeshore Drive from AG to R-1 [Map 056, Parcel 003027, District 4].

Motion to approve the request by Joe Hudson and Lois Schell to rezone 10.27 acres on Lakeshore Drive from AG to R-1 [Map 056, Parcel 003027, District 4].

Motion made by Commissioner Wooten, Seconded by Commissioner Hersey.

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

Chairman Sharp closed the Zoning Public Hearing at approximately 6:30 p.m.

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Ordinance Public Hearing

Chairman Sharp opened the Ordinance Public Hearing at approximately 6:30 p.m.

8. Proposed adoption of changes to the Putnam County Code of Ordinances - Chapter 2 (Administration) and Chapter 18 (Buildings and Building Regulations)

Motion to approve the proposed adoption of changes to the Putnam County Code of Ordinances - Chapter 2 (Administration) and 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 ordinances made a part of the minutes on minute book pages _____ to _____.)

Chairman Sharp closed the Ordinance Public Hearing at approximately 6:47 p.m.

Regular Business Meeting

9. Public Comments

Ms. Erin Olson commented on the Goodwill project, Putnam Development Authority volunteers, changes to the MOU, and traffic at Scott Road and Hwy 44.

Ms. Jennifer Ray showed photos and submitted a handout to the board; commented on road conditions and the amount of SPLOST funds allocated to the golf course.

Ms. Lilly Parham commented about living in Thunder Valley and being scared to walk in the neighborhood due to traffic if the commercial development is approved.

Mr. Brian Adams owns 104 Thunder Road; commented on the lot next door being excavated for drainage and the value of his property.

Ms. Renee Burgdorf commented about a meeting last week between Thunder Valley residents and Mr. Burgess, proposed alternatives to keep traffic down in the commercial development, and GDOT requirements.

Mr. Tom Parham submitted a handout to the board; commented on profit for the commercial development and the alternatives presented.

Mr. Brandon Burgess commented about greenspace in the commercial development, communication with GDOT and their recommendations, and restrictions for previously rezoned properties.

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

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10. Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of Minutes - May 2, 2025 Regular Business Meeting (staff-CC)
- b. Approval of Minutes - May 2, 2025 Executive Session (staff-CC)
- c. Approval of Minutes - May 13, 2025 Called Meeting (staff-CC)
- d. Approval of Minutes - May 13, 2025 Executive Session (staff-CC)
- e. Authorization for Chairman to sign GDOT FTA 5311 FY2026 Operating, Small and Large Capital, and Mobility Management Contract (Project Number-T008349) (staff-Transit)

Motion to approve the consent agenda.

Motion made by Commissioner Hersey, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.

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

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

11. Approval of SPLOST 10 Project List

Mr. Billy Webster showed photos of the Extension office and old Piggly Wiggly building; commented about citizen comment time at town hall meetings compared to comment time for SPLOST items, refurbishing the Extension office with help from EPWSA, and refurbishing the vacant Piggly Wiggly building for indoor pickleball courts.

Mr. Keith Fielder showed photos of the Extension building; commented on the damage.

Ms. Jennifer Ray showed photos of the Public Works buildings; commented on their SPLOST allocation and the cost of refurbishing the Extension office.

Mr. Bill Vargo commented about SPLOST approval, the wishes from each department, and being conservative on spending.

Ms. Barbara Vargo commented about remodeling the Extension office, the Administration building needing work, spending on the golf course, the estimates for the new jail, and renovating tennis courts for pickleball.

County Manager Van Haute reviewed the SPLOST list and estimated collections.

Commissioner Hersey commented on more funds for roads and that he would like to see the project costs rounded, not inflated for increases; thanked Paul and staff for the detailed project list.

Commissioner Wooten requested clarification on what is included in allocations for roads.

County Manager Van Haute requested specific language on the ballot for PGH concerning max or percentage.

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Motion to schedule a Town Hall meeting to discuss SPLOST 10 projects immediately following the June 6, 2025 BOC meeting.

Motion made by Commissioner Garrett, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.

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

The final project list will be approved at the June 17, 2025 BOC meeting.

Meeting recessed at 7:55 p.m.

Meeting reconvened at 8:08 p.m.

12. Authorization for Chairman to sign Probation Services Agreement between Judicial Alternatives of Georgia and the Putnam County Superior Court (staff-CC)

County Manager Van Haute explained the agreement, which is sent every year and this year's is about \$4,000 less than last year.

Motion to authorize the Chairman to sign Probation Services Agreement between Judicial Alternatives of Georgia and the Putnam County Superior Court.

Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett.

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

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

13. Discussion and possible action on Thunder Pointe Commercial Subdivision (SH)

Mr. Brandon Burgess signed in to speak but declined comments.

Motion to direct staff to file for a declaratory judgment as to the current validity of the limited access conditions imposed by the Putnam County Board of Commissioners in the rezoning resolution of November 7, 1995 for the commercial property known as the Thunder Pointe Commercial Subdivision [Map 102, Parcel B032] and to prohibit staff from approving or signing a preliminary plat until the issue is adjudicated.

Motion made by Commissioner Hersey, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett.

County Attorney Nelson reminded the board that generally, topics like this are discussed in Executive Session.

Commissioner Hersey explained his concern and presented background information on his motion.

Motion to enter Executive Session as allowed by O.C.G.A. 50-14-4 for Litigation.

Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.

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

Meeting closed at approximately 8:21 p.m.

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Motion to reopen the meeting following Executive Session.

Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.

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

Meeting reconvened at approximately 9:17 p.m.

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 _____.)

Motion to table the motion to direct staff to file for a declaratory judgment as to the current validity of the limited access conditions imposed by the Putnam County Board of Commissioners in the rezoning resolution of November 7, 1995 for the commercial property known as the Thunder Pointe Commercial Subdivision [Map 102, Parcel B032] and to prohibit staff from approving or signing a preliminary plat until the issue is adjudicated.

Motion made by Commissioner Hersey, Seconded by Commissioner McElhenney.

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: none

Commissioner Hersey: none

Commissioner Wooten: none

Chairman Sharp: reminded everyone Memorial Day is coming up and to drive safe.

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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 9:21 p.m.

ATTEST:

Lynn Butterworth
County Clerk

B. W. "Bill" Sharp
Chairman

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