

# PUTNAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



117 Putnam Drive, Suite A ♦ Eatonton, GA 31024

## Minutes

**Tuesday, February 17, 2026 ♦ 6:00 PM**

*Putnam County Administration Building – Room 203*

The Putnam County Board of Commissioners met on Tuesday, February 17, 2026 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 an Executive Session before the meeting is adjourned.

### **Motion to approve the agenda.**

**Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.**

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

3. Invocation - Pastor Avis Williams

Pastor Avis Williams gave the invocation.

4. Pledge of Allegiance (TM)

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Fire Chief McClain’s granddaughters, Zoey and Celeste Huntley, led the Pledge of Allegiance via video.

5. Special Presentation - Government Communicators Day Proclamation  
The commissioners presented a proclamation declaring February 20, 2026 as Government Communicators Day to Public Information Officer Stephanie McMullen.  
(Copy of proclamation made a part of the minutes on minute book page \_\_\_\_\_.)

**Zoning Public Hearing-Tabled from the 12-16-2025 Regular Meeting**

Chairman Sharp opened the Zoning Public Hearing at approximately 6:07 p.m.

- 6. Request by Ross Mundy, agent for Bradley Ashurst to rezone 30 acres on Harmony Road from AG to R-PUD. [Map 097, Parcel 033 001, District 1] (staff-P&D)
  - 7. Request by Ross Mundy, agent for Juaquin Cordona and Ewren Marshall to rezone 1.01 acres at 826 Harmony Road from AG to R-PUD. [Map 097, Parcel 035, District 1] (staff-P&D)
  - 8. Request by Ross Mundy, agent for Tempy and Davis Sharp to rezone 26.32 acres at 820 Harmony Road from AG to R-PUD. [Map 097, Part of Parcel 033, District 1] (staff-P&D)
- Items 6-8 were heard as one.

Mr. Ross Mundy, agent for the landowners, spoke in support of these requests and displayed a slideshow during his comments.

The following individuals commented in support of this request:

- Mr. Bill Vargo
- Ms. Barb Vargo

No one signed in to speak against this item.

Planning and Development staff recommends that the Board of Commissioners:

- 1. Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the County’s main arterial roads to evaluate existing conditions, growth trends, and development pressures.
- 2. Develop a list of community-compatible land uses that are appropriate for properties fronting these arterial corridors.
- 3. Adopt this list and establish overlay districts along key arterial roads, providing clear expectations for future rezonings while balancing the interests of residents, businesses, and other property owners.

This process will create consistency, improve public trust, and allow the County to accommodate growth while preserving the character of its communities. Subject to the same, staff previously recommended that the item be tabled until there is a completion of the arterial corridor assessment and an adoption of overlay districts. Upon further review, staff’s recommendation is for denial to rezone 30 acres on Harmony Road from AG to R-PUD. [Map 097, Parcel 033 001, District 1].

**Motion to combine items 6,7, and 8 and approve the requests by Ross Mundy, agent for Bradley Ashurst to rezone 30 acres on Harmony Road from AG to R-PUD. [Map 097,**

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Parcel 033 001, District 1], agent for Juaquin Cordona and Ewren Marshall to rezone 1.01 acres at 826 Harmony Road from AG to R-PUD. [Map 097, Parcel 035, District 1], and agent for Tempy and Davis Sharp to rezone 26.32 acres at 820 Harmony Road from AG to R-PUD. [Map 097, Part of Parcel 033, District 1] with 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 but not limited to entrances and exits to capture all activity 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.
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 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.
8. The residential density shall not exceed 4 units per acre.
9. The development shall substantially conform to the conceptual plan and narrative submitted in the rezoning application.
10. In the event a preliminary plat is not issued for the development within one year of the rezoning of the subject property, the Board of Commissioners shall consider rezoning the property to the AG zoning district.
11. The 1.01 acre parcel must be combined with the 26.32 acre parcel within 120 days of the rezoning approval.

Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.

Motion amended to add the following conditions:

12. The cottages shall be limited to occupants 55 years or older; nobody under the age of 55 can reside for more than 2 weeks, other than a spouse or partner.
13. The project shall be limited to one left-hand ingress lane.

Amendment made by Commissioner Hersey, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett.

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Meeting recessed at approximately 6:47 p.m.

Meeting reconvened at approximately 6:55 p.m.

County Attorney Adam Nelson advised that, for legal purposes, condition 12 should read as:  
12. The development shall require a mandatory homeowners association. The association shall publish and adhere to policies and procedures that demonstrate that the community is intended to provide housing for persons 55 and over including maintaining surveys or affidavits verifying compliance with 55 and older occupancy requirements as permitted by 42 U.S.C. Section 3607, (b) (2) (c) of the Federal Fair Housing Act.

Mr. Mundy was given time for rebuttal.

**Vote on amendment:**

**Voting Yea: Commissioner Garrett, Commissioner Hersey**

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

**Motion amended to add the following condition:**

**12. The development shall require a mandatory homeowners association. The association shall publish and adhere to policies and procedures that demonstrate that the community is intended to provide housing for persons 55 and over including maintaining surveys or affidavits verifying compliance with 55 and older occupancy requirements as permitted by 42 U.S.C. Section 3607, (b) (2) (c) of the Federal Fair Housing Act.**

**Amendment made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.**

**Vote on original motion as amended:**

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

(Copy of presentation made a part of the minutes on minute book pages \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.)

9. Request by Ross Mundy, agent for Tempy and Davis Sharp to rezone 5.99 acres at 826 Harmony Road from AG to C-1. [Map 097, Part of Parcel 033, District 1] (staff-P&D)

**Motion to approve the request by Ross Mundy, agent for Tempy and Davis Sharp to rezone 5.99 acres at 826 Harmony Road from AG to C-1. [Map 097, Part of Parcel 033, District 1] 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.**

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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 but not limited to entrances and exits to capture all activity 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.

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 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.

8. The residential density shall not exceed 4 units per acre.

9. The development shall substantially conform to the conceptual plan and narrative submitted in the rezoning application.

10. In the event a preliminary plat is not issued for the development within one year of the rezoning of the subject property, the Board of Commissioners shall consider rezoning the property to the AG zoning district.

11. The 1.01 acre parcel must be combined with the 26.32 acre parcel within 120 days of the rezoning approval.

12. The development shall require a mandatory homeowners association. The association shall publish and adhere to policies and procedures that demonstrate that the community is intended to provide housing for persons 55 and over including maintaining surveys or affidavits verifying compliance with 55 and older occupancy requirements as permitted by 42 U.S.C. Section 3607, (b) (2) (c) of the Federal Fair Housing Act.

Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.

Motion amended to strike condition 12.

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

Vote on original motion as amended:

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

Motion to direct staff to undertake the three items in the Planning & Development staff recommendation:

1. Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the County’s main arterial roads to evaluate existing conditions, growth trends, and development pressures.

2. Develop a list of community-compatible land uses that are appropriate for properties fronting these arterial corridors.

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**3. Adopt this list and establish overlay districts along key arterial roads, providing clear expectations for future rezonings while balancing the interests of residents, businesses, and other property owners.**

**Motion made by Commissioner Garrett, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.**

Chairman Sharp and County Attorney Nelson advised that an action item could not be added at this time and suggested it be added to the next regular meeting agenda.

Motion and second withdrawn.

Chairman Sharp closed the Zoning Public Hearing and opened the Ordinance Public Hearing at approximately 7:25 p.m.

**Ordinance Public Hearing**

10. Proposed adoption of changes to the Putnam County Code of Ordinances - Chapter 2 (Administration) (staff-CA)

The following individuals commented against portions of the proposed changes:

Ms. Jennifer Ray

Mr. Charles Ray

Mr. Billy Webster

Mr. Steve Miller

Ms. Barb Vargo

**Motion to approve the proposed changes to the Putnam County Code of Ordinances – Sec. 2-36.3.**

**Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett.**

**Motion amended to move Code enforcement under Planning and Development.**

**Amendment made by Commissioner Hersey, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett.**

**Vote on amendment:**

**Voting Yea: Commissioner Hersey**

**Voting Nay: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Garrett, Commissioner Wooten**

**Amendment fails.**

**Vote on original motion:**

**Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Garrett. Commissioner Wooten**

**Voting Nay: Commissioner Hersey**

**Motion to approve the proposed changes to the Putnam County Code of Ordinances - Sec. 2-37.**

**Motion made by Commissioner Wooten, Seconded by Commissioner McElhenney.**

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

**Voting Nay: Commissioner Hersey**

**Motion to approve the proposed changes to the Putnam County Code of Ordinances - Sec. 2-39.**

**Motion made by Commissioner Garrett, Seconded by Commissioner McElhenney.**

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

**Motion to approve the proposed changes to the Putnam County Code of Ordinances - Sec. 2-40.**

**Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.**

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

**Motion to approve the proposed changes to the Putnam County Code of Ordinances - Sec. 2-42 with the removal of “though no county equipment or property shall be used for distribution or display of such materials other than for distribution to members of the board.”**

**Motion made by Commissioner Hersey, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett.**

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

**Motion to approve the proposed changes to the Putnam County Code of Ordinances - Sec. 2-45.**

**Motion made by Commissioner Garrett, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.**

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

**Motion to approve the proposed changes to the Putnam County Code of Ordinances - Sec. 2-46.**

**Motion made by Commissioner Wooten, Seconded by Commissioner McElhenney.**

**Voting Yea: Commissioner Wooten**

**Voting Nay: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Garrett, Commissioner Hersey  
Motion fails.**

**Motion to approve the proposed changes to the Putnam County Code of Ordinances - Sec. 2-47.**

**Motion made by Commissioner Garrett, Seconded by Commissioner Hersey.**

**Motion amended to keep the last sentence, “as well as to each member of the county governing authority.”**

**Amendment made by Commissioner Garrett, Seconded by Commissioner Hersey.**

**Vote on amendment:**

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

**Vote on original motion as amended:**

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

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**Motion to approve the proposed changes to the Putnam County Code of Ordinances - Sec. 2-50.**

**Motion made by Commissioner Garrett, Seconded by Commissioner McElhenney.  
Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Garrett, Commissioner Hersey, Commissioner Wooten**

**Motion to approve the proposed changes to the Putnam County Code of Ordinances - Sec. 2-51.**

**Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.  
Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Garrett, Commissioner Hersey, Commissioner Wooten**

**Motion to approve the proposed changes to the Putnam County Code of Ordinances - Sec. 2-53.**

**Motion made by Commissioner Garrett, Seconded by Commissioner McElhenney.  
Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Garrett, Commissioner Hersey, Commissioner Wooten**

(Copy of changes made a part of the minutes on minute book pages \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.)

11. Proposed adoption of changes to the Putnam County Code of Ordinances - Chapter 46 (Roads, Bridges, and Other Public Property) (TM/PCSO)  
Mr. Bill Vargo commented and distributed a handout to the commissioners.

**Motion to accept the proposed changes to the Putnam County Code of Ordinances - Chapter 46, Article IV – Truck Routes.**

**Motion made by Commissioner Hersey, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.  
Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Garrett, Commissioner Hersey, Commissioner Wooten**

(Copy of handout and changes made a part of the minutes on minute book pages \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.)

**Regular Business Meeting**

12. Public Comments

Mr. Josh Sprayberry commented on the C-PACER Town Hall Meeting and program.  
Mr. Bill Vargo signed in to speak but passed on commenting.  
Ms. Barb Vargo commented on the 250th anniversary of the country.

13. Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of Minutes - January 20, 2026 Regular Meeting (staff-CC)
- b. Approval of Minutes - January 20, 2026 Executive Session (staff-CC)
- c. Approval of Minutes - January 22, 2026 Called Meeting (staff-CC)
- d. Approval of Minutes - January 22, 2026 Town Hall Meeting (staff-CC)
- e. Approval of Minutes - February 12, 2026 Town Hall Meeting (staff-CC)
- f. Approval of 2026 Alcohol Licenses (staff-CC)
- g. Approval of Revised Putnam County Transit FTA Procurement Policy (staff-Transit)

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Mr. Josh Sprayberry commented on his alcohol license application.

Commissioner Hersey requested to handle item e separately.

**Motion to approve the Consent Agenda with the removal of item e.**

**Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett.**

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

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

**Motion to approve Consent Agenda item e: February 12, 2026 Town Hall Meeting minutes.**

**Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett.**

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

**Voting Abstain: Commissioner Hersey (absent from meeting)**

14. Appointment to the Putnam County Department of Family and Children Services Board (staff-CC)

Commissioner McElhenney nominated Ms. Penny Hodges, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.

Commissioner Garrett nominated Mr. Charles Hodges, Seconded by Commissioner Hersey.

**Commissioner McElhenney voted for Ms. Penny Hodges.**

**Commissioner Garrett voted for Ms. Penny Hodges.**

**Commissioner Hersey voted for Ms. Penny Hodges.**

**Commissioner Wooten voted for Ms. Penny Hodges.**

**Reports/Announcements**

15. County Manager Report

No report.

16. County Attorney Report

No report.

17. Commissioner Announcements

Commissioner McElhenney: none

Commissioner Garrett: announced he is working on a plan for USA 250 and encouraged anyone interested in partnering to contact him

Commissioner Hersey: announced he intends to reactivate the Development Authority of Putnam County at the next regular meeting

Commissioner Wooten: expressed his support of the C-PACER program

Chairman Sharp: thanked everyone for attending

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**Executive Session**

18. 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 Litigation.**

**Motion made by Commissioner Hersey, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett.**

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

Meeting closed at approximately 9:00 p.m.

Commissioner Hersey left at approximately 9:33 p.m.

19. Reopen meeting following Executive Session

**Motion to reopen the meeting.**

**Motion made by Commissioner Garrett, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.**

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

Meeting reopened at approximately 9:34 p.m.

20. Execute Affidavit concerning the subject matter of the closed portion of the meeting

**Motion to execute the Affidavit concerning the subject matter of the closed portion of the meeting.**

**Motion made by Garrett. Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.**

**Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Garrett, Commissioner Wooten**  
(Copy of affidavit made a part of the minutes on minute book page \_\_\_\_\_.)

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

No action taken.

**Closing**

18. Adjournment

**Motion to adjourn the meeting.**

**Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett.**

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

Meeting adjourned at approximately 9:35 p.m.

ATTEST:

Mercy Fluker  
Deputy County Clerk

B. W. "Bill" Sharp  
Chairman

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