

# PUTNAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



117 Putnam Drive, Suite A ♦ Eatonton, GA 31024

## Minutes

**Friday, June 6, 2025 ♦ 10:00 AM**

*Putnam County Administration Building – Room 203*

The Putnam County Board of Commissioners met on Friday, June 6, 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 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 10:00 a.m.  
(Copy of agenda made a part of the minutes on minute book page \_\_\_\_\_.)

#### 2. Approval of Agenda

Chairman Sharp advised that the Putnam Development Authority requested to delay item #11 due to the absence of their chairman and attorney.

**Motion to approve the agenda with the removal of item #11.**

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

**Substitute motion to table item #11 indefinitely.**

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

**Motion to rescind Commissioner Hersey's substitute motion to table item #11 indefinitely.**

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

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**Voting yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Garrett, Commissioner Hersey, Commissioner Wooten.**  
**Substitute motion rescinded.**

**Vote on original motion:**

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

**3. Invocation**

Pastor Craig Williamson, First Baptist Church, gave the invocation.

**4. Pledge of Allegiance (BS)**

Reece Miller, daughter of Public Information Officer Stephanie McMullen, led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**5. Special Presentation - Retirement Proclamation - Allen Carlton McMichael**

The commissioners presented a proclamation and gift card to Sergeant McMichael congratulating him on his retirement.

**Regular Business Meeting**

**6. Public Comments**

Mr. John Fox, President of Sugar Creek Farms POA, requested repaving on Sugar Creek Trail which is approximately 1.1 miles long.

Ms. Jennifer Ray displayed photos and commented on a broken mirror that needs replacing and causing little visibility on the hill.

Mr. Billy Webster commented on behalf of Ione Foster, who lives on the lake where Wards Chapel meets Old Phoenix, having issues with her right-of-way and landscaping.

Mr. Bill Vargo signed up to speak but passed on comments.

**7. Consent agenda**

a. Approval of Minutes - May 20, 2025 Regular Business Meeting (staff-CC)

b. Approval of Minutes - May 20, 2025 Executive Session (staff-CC)

c. Approval of Minutes - May 23, 2025 Called Meeting (staff-CC)

d. Approval of Minutes - May 23, 2025 Executive Session (staff-CC)

e. Approval of 2025 Alcohol Licenses (staff-CC)

f. Authorization for Chairman to sign ACCG - Group Self-Insurance Worker's Compensation Fund Employee Safety Grant Application (staff-HR)

**Motion to approve the consent agenda.**

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

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

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8. Paving Update Report (staff-CM)

County Manager Van Haute provided the Paving Update Report. May was a rainy month and has delayed current projects; the June list has been posted on the website and social media. The current projects were approved in 2021. TSPLOST #3 projects will be discussed next year, and LMIG 2025 was just approved with those roads being in the engineering stage. County Manager Van Haute advised that the paving process is long and provided updates on several roads including Harmony Road, Sunfish Trail, Julep Drive, Parks Mill Road, Mahaffey Drive, Wards Chapel Road, and Collis Road. No action was taken.

9. Report from Jimmy Davis Park Partnership Advisory Council

Ms. Karen Henry-Garrett commented on the improvements and longer hours at Jimmy Davis Park and requested more conversations with the community to provide ideas.

Ms. Janie Reid presented the report from the Jimmy Davis Park Partnership Advisory Council. No action was taken.

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

10. Discussion and possible action on nominations for two additional members of the Jimmy Davis Park Partnership Advisory Council (RG)

Ms. Annette Bullard commented on Commissioner Garrett's efforts and requested that taxpayers be allowed to speak at meetings.

Commissioner Garrett began the discussion on this item, explaining that he is proud of the council and their helpful input to the park's revival. He agrees they want to allow public comments as a formal part of their proceedings, and wants youth to be a part of the council.

**Motion to approve the appointment of two additional members to the Jimmy Davis Park Partnership Advisory Council, Kilee Reid and Brandon Riley.**

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

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

11. Authorization for Chairman to sign Acknowledgement of Memorandum of Understanding between the Putnam Development Authority and Harmony Road GA, LLC (BS)

Item #11 was removed from the agenda.

12. Approval of Right-of-Way Permit Request by Bellsouth/AT&T for work on Parks Mill Drive, Hickory Point Drive, and Cedar Cove Drive (staff-PW)

Public Works Office Manager Rindi Daniel explained the request and answered questions.

**Motion to approve the Right-of-Way Permit Request by Bellsouth/AT&T for work on Parks Mill Drive, Hickory Point Drive, and Cedar Cove Drive.**

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

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

(Copy of permit made a part of the minutes on minute book page \_\_\_\_\_.)

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Meeting recessed at approximately 11:13 a.m.  
Meeting reconvened at approximately 11:18 a.m.

13. Approval of Vehicles Proposed for Surplus (staff-Fire)  
Assistant Chief McElhannon explained the request to surplus three vehicles due to age.

**Motion to approve the Fire Department vehicles proposed for surplus.**  
**Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Hersey.**  
**Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Garrett, Commissioner Hersey, Commissioner Wooten**  
(Copy of surplus list made a part of the minutes on minute book page \_\_\_\_\_.)

14. Submission of Names for Appointment to the Hospital Authority-Post 5 (staff-CC)  
**Motion to submit the following names for appointment to the Hospital Authority-Post 5: Phillip Ethridge, Rachel Deraney Harvey, Kevin Thomson-Hooper, and Bruce Micheal Faulk.**  
**Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Hersey.**  
**Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Garrett, Commissioner Hersey, Commissioner Wooten**

15. Appointment to the Putnam Development Authority (staff-CC)  
Ms. Barbara Vargo commented on the need for change on the boards and spoke in favor of applicant William Vargo.

Commissioner Hersey, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett, nominated William Vargo for appointment to the Putnam Development Authority.

Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten, nominated Patricia Burns to the Putnam Development Authority.

**Chairman Sharp called for the vote. Commissioner McElhenney voted for Patricia Burns. Commissioner Garrett voted for William Vargo. Commissioner Hersey voted for William Vargo. Commissioner Wooten voted for Patricia Burns. Due to the tied vote, Chairman Sharp voted for Patricia Burns.**

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16. Discussion and possible action regarding conditions applied to rezoning approvals (SH)  
Mr. Jerry Donovan lives in Thunder Valley and commented on the previous vote to not address updating rezoning conditions and an appeal by the TVOA of the approval of the commercial development plat; he also provided a handout of his comments.  
Mr. Brandon Burgess, the owner of the property for the commercial development, commented on the zoning and the processes he has followed in developing this project.

**Motion to direct staff to compile a list of all rezoning approvals including any conditions attached, to attach said list to the official zoning maps, and to complete this task on or before July 1, 2026.**

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

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

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

17. Discussion and possible action regarding a reduction in school taxes (SH)  
Ms. Jennifer Ray commented on the attempts to use fair market value instead of the assessed value in figuring senior exemptions.  
Ms. Barbara Vargo commented on the law and how tax reductions need to be handled.

Commissioner Hersey began the discussion and reviewed House Bill 1413, explaining that Chief Tax Assessor Chuck Anglin is not using assessed value but fair market value. He advised that assessed value is 40% of fair market value.

Mr. Anglin explained that the Board of Assessors was instructed by the school board to use fair market value for calculating senior exemptions. He advised that the Board of Assessors has a meeting on Monday, June 9, at 3:00 p.m., where the exemption calculation for seniors will be decided. Mr. Anglin assured the Board of Commissioners that the Board of Assessors will follow the law.

**Motion that within fifteen (15) days the County Attorney shall file in a court of competent jurisdiction for MANDAMUS in regard to House Bill 1413 unless the Putnam County Board of Assessors agrees to use the Assessed Value rather than the Fair Market Value as applied to the tax exemption provided in House Bill 1413.**

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

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

### **Reports/Announcements**

18. County Manager Report  
No report.

19. County Attorney Report  
No report.

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20. Commissioner Announcements

Commissioner McElhenney: none.

Commissioner Garrett: reminded everyone of the new summer hours at Jimmy Davis Park.

Commissioner Hersey: reminded everyone that the Dairy Festival is tomorrow.

Commissioner Wooten: thanked Public Works for removing trees after storms; reminded everyone of board vacancies and urged people to volunteer.

Chairman Sharp: reminded everyone that the board vacancies are posted and invited everyone to come to Dairy Festival to support the dairy industry and our farmers.

**Closing**

21. Adjournment

**Motion to adjourn the meeting.**

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

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

Meeting adjourned at approximately 12:30 p.m.

ATTEST:

Lynn Butterworth  
County Clerk

B. W. "Bill" Sharp  
Chairman

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