

PUTNAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



117 Putnam Drive, Suite A ♦ Eatonton, GA 31024

Minutes

Friday, March 01, 2024 ♦ 10:00 AM

Putnam County Administration Building – Room 203

The Putnam County Board of Commissioners met on Friday, March 1, 2024 at approximately 10: a.m. in the Putnam County Administration Building, 117 Putnam Drive, Room 203, Eatonton, Georgia.

PRESENT

Chairman Bill Sharp
Commissioner Gary McElhenney
Commissioner Daniel Brown
Commissioner Steve Hersey
Commissioner Jeff Wooten

STAFF PRESENT

County Attorney Adam Nelson
County Manager Paul Van Haute
Deputy County Clerk Donna Todd

STAFF ABSENT

County Clerk Lynn Butterworth

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 _____.)

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2. Approval of Agenda

Commissioner McElhenney moved to remove Item A, Approval of Minutes from February 20, 2024 Regular Business Meeting, from the Consent Agenda and table the item until the March 19, 2024 meeting, due to an error in the meeting minutes.

Motion to remove Item a. Approval of Minutes – February 20, 2024 Regular Meeting from the Consent Agenda and table it until the March 19, 2024 Meeting.

Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.

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

Commissioner McElhenney made another motion to add Public Comments to the agenda as it was originally omitted.

Motion to add Public Comments to the agenda.

Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.

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

Commissioner McElhenney made a motion to approve the remaining agenda, taking into consideration the two items that were just changed.

Motion to approve the remaining agenda with consideration to the two items that were changed.

Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.

Commissioner Hersey requested another correction to item #7 on the agenda, changing it to read “state floral emblem.”

Motion to change the wording of agenda item #7 to “state floral emblem.”

Motion made by Commissioner Hersey, no one seconded the motion.

The motion dies without a second.

Motion to approve the remaining agenda with consideration to the two items that were changed.

Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Brown.

Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Brown, Commissioner Wooten.

Voting Nay: Commissioner Hersey

3. Invocation – County Attorney Adam Nelson

County Attorney Adam Nelson gave the invocation.

4. Pledge of Allegiance (DB)

Commissioner Brown led the Pledge of Allegiance.

5. Special Presentation - Putnam Development Authority Quarterly Update (staff-PDA)

Mr. Matt Poyner, from the Putnam Development Authority presented an update from the Development Authority, which has rebranded to “Putnam Forward.” They have a new logo and are focusing on different classes of industry which will work well for Putnam County. Mr. Poyner reminded us that we are competing for businesses on a national and global level.

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6. Special Presentation - Proclamation for Matt and Keith Housworth (staff-Animal Services)
 The Commissioners presented Matt and Keith Housworth of Southeastern Buildings with a Proclamation honoring them for their generous donation to Animal Services. Animal Services Director, Christine Tillman, thanked the team at Southeastern Buildings and the Housworths for their continued support in helping to find homes for shelter animals.
 (Copy of proclamation made a part of the minutes on minute book page _____.)

7. Special Presentation - Senate Bill 518 - Proclamation supporting the changing of the State Flower (Virginia Linch)
 Virginia Linch spoke to the board and presented information about the Sweetbay Magnolia, a flower that may replace our state flower which is currently the Cherokee Rose. The Sweetbay Magnolia is indigenous to Georgia and supports the life cycle of the butterfly. Ms. Linch provided information about the history of both plants, the rationale behind making the change, and encouraged the board to support the efforts to make the change.
 (Copy of proclamation and documents made a part of the minutes on minute book pages _____ to _____.)

Regular Business Meeting

8. Public Comments

Mr. Billy Webster spoke about the general obligation bonds article in the Eatonton Messenger. Mr. Webster questioned the necessity of the bonds and questioned the amount that was projected to be left over from the current TSPLOST.
 Mr. Bill Vargo also spoke about the general obligation bonds and echoed what Mr. Webster said. He questioned where the extra money to make the payments would come from and whether property taxes would be raised to pay it off.
 Mrs. Barbara Vargo spoke about TSPLOST and expressed concern about voting on SPLOST without knowing where the money would come from to pay for the roads and all the other things TSPLOST pays for.

9. Consent Agenda

a. Approval of Minutes - February 20, 2024 Regular Meeting (staff-CC)

Item a was removed from the agenda and tabled until the March 19, 2024 meeting.

b. Approval of Minutes - February 20, 2024 Executive Session (staff-CC)

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda consisting of one item, the February 20, 2024 Executive Session Minutes.

Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Brown.

Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Brown, Commissioner Hersey, Commissioner Wooten.

Chairman Sharp offered Mr. Billy Webster an opportunity to comment publicly on item #2 of the Regular Business Meeting, for which he had signed up. Mr. Webster declined.

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10. 2025 Budget and 2024 Mill Rate Schedule (staff-Finance)

Ms. Jennifer Fricks, Assistant Finance Director, attended the meeting and welcomed any questions on the proposed 2025 Budget and 2024 Mill Rate Schedule.

Commissioner Hersey commented that the Mill Rate Schedule did not come out four days prior to the meeting; therefore, no action can be taken and the schedule must be taken for informational purposes only. County Attorney Nelson confirmed that under the County Ordinance, any action must be added at least four business days prior to a meeting. County Attorney Nelson confirmed that an email had been sent on Monday, February 26, at 4:12 p.m. containing a proposed agenda containing the 2025 Budget and 2024 Mill Rate Schedule.

Motion to approve the 2025 Budget and 2024 Mill Rate Schedule.

Motion made by Commissioner Brown, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.

Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Brown, Commissioner Hersey, Commissioner McElhenney.

(Copy of 2025 Budget and 2024 Mill Rate Schedule made a part of the minutes on minute book page _____.)

Reports/Announcements

11. County Manager Report

County Manager Van Haute reported the following:

- The latest set of Highway 44 drawings are in room 204 on the table. We have requested a modified set of plans to show the roundabouts.
- A representative from the Georgia Department of Transportation will hold a meeting here at the Administration Building concerning Highway 44. The meeting will be advertised according to DOT standards.

12. County Attorney Report

County Attorney Nelson reported that a settlement has been reached regarding the Superior Court appeal on the short term rental status of 113 B River Bend Court.

13. Commissioner Announcements

Commissioner McElhenney: none

Commissioner Brown: none

Commissioner Hersey: reminded everyone that early voting for the presidential preference primary and the general obligation bond referendum is ongoing. Hopefully everyone will get out and vote.

Commissioner Wooten: thanked Ms. Lisa Jackson for the great work she and her staff do. Commissioner Wooten also reported that the Pine Forest Property Owners Association of Little River Trail are working to adopt the highway and pick up the trash there.

Chairman Sharp announced that the State of the City and County was held at the Administration Building the week prior to today’s meeting. He also reported that there would be a Work Session following today’s Regular Business Meeting. The work session concerns Chapters 66, 28 and 32 changes and revisions.

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Closing

14. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.

Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Brown, Commissioner Hersey, Commissioner Wooten.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 11:04 a.m.

ATTEST:

Donna Todd
Deputy County Clerk

B. W. "Bill" Sharp
Chairman

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