

PUTNAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



117 Putnam Drive, Suite A ♦ Eatonton, GA 31024

Minutes

Tuesday, March 17, 2026 ♦ 6:00 PM

Putnam County Administration Building – Room 203

The Putnam County Board of Commissioners met on Tuesday, March 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 Kurt Worthington
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 Wooten, Seconded by Commissioner Hersey.

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

3. Invocation - Craig Williamson, First Baptist Church of Eatonton

Dr. Craig Williamson from First Baptist Church of Eatonton gave the invocation.

4. Pledge of Allegiance (RG)

Commissioner Garrett led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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Regular Business Meeting

5. Public Comments

Ms. Jennifer Ray commented on the quarry tabling, future quarry meeting locations and the USA’s 250th anniversary.

Mr. William Vargo commented on the USA’s 250th birthday.

Ms. Barb Vargo commented on violence regarding the quarry and adding the quarry to the November ballot.

Ms. Denise Merritt commented on the Boys & Girls Club and the services it can provide to students in Eatonton.

6. Consent Agenda

a. Approval of Minutes - March 6, 2026 Regular Meeting (staff-CC)

b. Approval of 2026 Alcohol Licenses (staff-CC)

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda.

Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Hersey.

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

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

7. Audit Presentation (staff-Finance)

Mr. Pat Muse from McNair, McLemore, Middlebrooks & Co. made the Annual Audit Presentation.

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

8. Approval of the 2027 Budget & 2026 Mill Rate Schedule (staff-Finance)

Motion to approve the 2027 Budget & 2026 Mill Rate Schedule.

Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett.

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

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

Reports/Announcements

9. County Manager Report

County Manager Paul Van Haute congratulated the finance department and thanked McNair, McLemore, Middlebrooks & Co.

10. County Attorney Report

County Attorney Kurt Worthington announced that an Executive Session is needed for one personnel matter.

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11. Commissioner Announcements

Commissioner McElhenney thanked everyone who supported the hospital gala and expressed his appreciation for the Putnam Leadership class who surpassed their fundraising goal to replace the AC unit at the hospital.

Commissioner Garrett reminded everyone of the upcoming Butler Baker Luncheon honoring the High School Class of 1971, which was the first mandatory integrated class, and encouraged members of that graduating class to attend. Commissioner Garrett also addressed several of the public comments.

Commissioner Hersey announced that the 180-day moratorium on nuisance buildings has expired and since no one has made any suggestions about changes in the ordinances, reports of nuisance buildings as defined in the code can be made to Planning & Development.

Commissioner Wooten thanked the Finance Department and commended Jennifer Fricks for taking over as Finance Director.

Chairman Sharp thanked everyone who attended the hospital gala and encouraged everyone to continue supporting the hospital.

Executive Session

12. 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 Personnel.

Motion made by Commissioner Garrett, Seconded by Commissioner McElhenney.

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

Meeting closed at approximately 6:37 p.m.

13. Reopen meeting following Executive Session

Motion to reopen the meeting.

Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.

Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Garrett, Commissioner Wooten

Meeting reopened at approximately 7:16 p.m.

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14. 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 Wooten, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett.

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

15. Action, if any, resulting from the Executive Session
No action taken.

Closing

16. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Hersey.

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

Meeting adjourned at approximately 7:18 p.m.

ATTEST:

Mercy Fluker
Deputy County Clerk

B. W. "Bill" Sharp
Chairman

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