

PUTNAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



117 Putnam Drive, Suite A ♦ Eatonton, GA 31024

Minutes

Friday, August 1, 2025 ♦ 10:00 AM

Putnam County Administration Building – Room 203

The Putnam County Board of Commissioners met on Friday, August 1, 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.

Chairman Sharp reminded everyone of the Budget Work Session immediately following the Regular Business Meeting.

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

2. Approval of Agenda

Chairman Sharp requested to move item #11 “Report from Putnam Development Authority” to right after item #5 “Special Presentation”.

Motion to approve the agenda with item #11 “Report from Putnam Development Authority” moved to right after item #5 “Special Presentation” and the deletion of item #18 “Approval of Final Plat for Thunder Pointe Commercial Subdivision”.

Motion made by Commissioner Hersey, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett.

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Motion amended to change the wording of item #18 to “Discussion and possible action regarding the approval of Final Plat for Thunder Pointe Commercial Subdivision”
Motion amended by Commissioner Garrett, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.
Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Garrett, Commissioner Hersey, Commissioner Wooten

Motion to approve the agenda with item #11 “Report from Putnam Development Authority” moved to right after item #5 “Special Presentation” and item #18 changed to “Discussion and possible action regarding the approval of Final Plat for Thunder Pointe Commercial Subdivision”.

Motion made by Commissioner Wooten, Seconded by Commissioner Hersey.

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

3. Invocation

Rev. Avis Williams gave the invocation.

4. Pledge of Allegiance (TM)

Commissioner McElhenney led the Pledge of Allegiance.

5. Special Presentation - Brandy Jones and Dr. Daniel Bennett, Putnam General Hospital Heart Fund

Putnam General Hospital Foundation and Marketing Director Brandy Jones and CEO Alan Horton (Dr. Bennett was unable to be present) presented information about the Georgia Heart Hospital Program.

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

6. Report from Putnam Development Authority (previously item #11)

Matt Poyner presented the quarterly report for the Putnam Development Authority.

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

Meeting recessed at approximately 10:54 a.m.

Meeting reconvened at approximately 11:04 a.m.

Mill Rate Public Hearing

Chairman Sharp opened the Mill Rate Public Hearing at approximately 11:04 a.m.

7. Presentation of Proposed 2025 Mill Rate (staff-CM & Finance)

County Manager Paul Van Haute presented information about the Proposed 2025 Mill Rate.

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

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8. Comments from the Public

None.

9. Comments from Commissioners and/or Staff

Commissioner Hersey commented on advertising the mill rate and the need to hold three public hearings if the mill rate is increased; he also commented on the hotel motel tax revenues in the general fund, and increases in tax bills due to appraisals.

Commissioner Wooten commented on viewing the county as a whole instead of by district.

Commissioner Garrett commented on the tradeoffs of raising taxes and discussing the rate further at the Budget Work Session.

Commissioner McElhenney asked about the Tax Assessor's final numbers.

Chairman Sharp closed the Mill Rate Public Hearing at approximately 11:27 a.m.

Regular Business Meeting

10. Public Comments

Mr. John Repetto signed up to speak but left the meeting before being called.

Ms. Wanda Addeo from Overview Inc. provided a handout and reviewed their annual report that highlights the programs they offer in Putnam County.

Ms. Barbara Vargo commented on the FY26 budget.

Mr. Bill Vargo commented on the FY26 budget.

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

11. Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of Minutes - July 15, 2025 Regular Business Meeting (staff-CC)
- b. Approval of Minutes - July 16, 2025 Budget Work Session (staff-CC)
- c. Approval of Minutes - July 18, 2025 Budget Work Session (staff-CC)
- d. Approval of Minutes - July 18, 2025 Called Meeting (staff-CC)

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda.

Motion made by Commissioner Wooten, Seconded by Commissioner McElhenney.

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

Report from Putnam Development Authority

Moved to item #6.

12. ISO Rating Presentation (staff-Fire)

Chief McClain presented information on Putnam County's new ISO rating. No action was taken.

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13. Ratification for After-School and Summer Enrichment Grant for Jimmy Davis Park (staff-CM)

Mr. Don Sadler commented on the procedures of committees presenting items to the Board of Commissioners.

Mr. Billy Webster commented on the grant submission deadline and the proper channels for submitting it.

Jimmy Davis Park Partnership Advisory Committee Chairperson Janie Reid explained that Beyond the Bell is the applying entity and reviewed some of the programs Beyond the Bell has offered in Putnam County. The grant is for \$181,000.00 to be used for an after-school and summer enrichment program that would launch October 2025; the application has been submitted with a suggestion to hold the program at Jimmy Davis Park but no commitments have been made on behalf of Putnam County.

Motion to table the Ratification for After-School and Summer Enrichment Grant for Jimmy Davis Park.

Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett.

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

14. Appointment of Chairperson to the Putnam County Board of Elections and Registration (staff-CC)

Nomination to appoint Charles Patten as Chairperson of the Putnam County Board of Elections and Registration.

Nomination made by Commissioner Hersey, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett.

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

15. Authorization for Chairman to sign EPD Letter of Concurrence for Glades Landing (CA)
County Attorney Nelson explained this letter allows the Glades Landing development to be serviced by a water line. This only says we will allow the service; this item will come back before the board for the actual placement of the line.

Motion to authorize the Chairman to sign the EPD Letter of Concurrence for Glades Landing.

Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.

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

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

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16. Approval of 180-day Moratorium on Putnam County Code of Ordinances Chapter 18 "Public Nuisance Dwellings, Buildings, or Structures" for review and possible update (JW)
Commissioner Wooten explained that the ordinance needs to be restructured for efficiency due to a backlog of complaints that have been received about older houses around the lake in the 4th district.

**Motion to approve a 180-day Moratorium on Putnam County Code of Ordinances Chapter 18 “Public Nuisance Dwellings, Buildings, or Structures” for review and possible update.
Motion made by Commissioner Wooten, Seconded by Commissioner McElhenney.**

County Attorney Nelson suggested adding to the motion that pending complaints will not be affected.

**Motion amended to add language, “with any pending cases still moving forward.”
Amended motion made by Commissioner Wooten, Seconded by Commissioner McElhenney.**

**Voting Yea: Commission McElhenney, Commission Wooten, Chairman Sharp
Voting Nay: Commission Garrett, Commissioner Hersey**

Vote on original motion as amended:

**Voting Yea: Commission McElhenney, Commission Wooten, Chairman Sharp
Voting Nay: Commission Garrett, Commissioner Hersey**

17. Discussion and possible action regarding widening Harmony Road from Highway 44 to Scott Road (staff-CM)

County Manager Van Haute reminded the Commissioners that he sent an email with the estimated costs for widening 1.64 miles of Harmony Road from Highway 44 to Scott Road and creating a middle turning lane. Engineering through construction of creating the third lane with curb and gutter is a \$5M proposal; without curb and gutter is a \$4.3M proposal. With numbers this large, County Manager Van Haute wanted to bring this back before the board to confirm if they are interested in moving forward.

The Commissioners discussed the increased traffic on Harmony Road and Old Phoenix Road and how best to plan for the next five years, including staff looking into additional proposals. No action was taken.

18. Discussion and possible action on Final Plat for Thunder Pointe Commercial Subdivision (staff-P&D)

Ms. Renee Burgdorf commented that the neighborhood attorney has sent constitutional and legal objection to this final plat and requested that the developer study their modified plan and find a better way to proceed; also need to wait until appeal is heard before approving the final plat.

Mr. Jerry Donovan read a letter from his neighbor, Mr. Brian Adamo, regarding opposition to the proposed sediment pond and commercial access through the residential neighborhood. Letter also submitted for the record.

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Mr. Tom Parham commented that there are numerous legal defects in the final plat, including location of detention pond on a residential zoned property; he requested the matter be tabled.

Mr. Brandon Burgess read numerous letters in support of this project.

Planning and Development Director Jackson advised that all inspections were completed and all necessary county officials have signed off on the plat as meeting minimum requirements of the county code.

County Attorney Nelson explained what has happened so far: the developer put up a bond to finish out the portions of the project not completed as of today; several documents have been filed by both the attorneys for Thunder Valley and attorneys for the developer; the only action taken place so far is the preliminary plat has been approved by the Planning and Development Director and other necessary county officials; appeal of the preliminary plat is scheduled to be heard next Thursday evening at the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting; the code allows the developer to move forward at their own risk.

**Motion to table consideration or approval of the final plat for Thunder Pointe commercial subdivision until such time as the preliminary plat appeals have run their course.
Motion made by Commissioner Hersey, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett.**

Motion amended to table the discussion and possible action on Final Plat for Thunder Pointe Commercial Subdivision.

Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett.

Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Garrett, Commissioner Hersey

Voting Nay: Commissioner Wooten

Reports/Announcements

19. County Manager Report

None

20. County Attorney Report

None

21. Commissioner Announcements

Commissioner McElhenney: recently rode the unpaved roads in his area; thanked Public Works for all they do.

Commissioner Garrett: looking forward to connecting with Public Works and going for a ride on the county roads in his district

Commissioner Hersey: none

Commissioner Wooten: none

Chairman Sharp: thanked Public Works

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Closing

22. 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 2:10 p.m.

ATTEST:

Lynn Butterworth
County Clerk

B. W. "Bill" Sharp
Chairman

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