

Putnam County Board of Commissioners



117 Putnam Drive, Suite A ♦ Eatonton, GA 31024

Minutes

Tuesday, July 21, 2026 ♦ 6:00 PM

Putnam County Administration Building – Room 203

Opening

The Putnam County Board of Commissioners met on Tuesday, July 21, 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 (via phone), Commissioner Richard Garrett, Commissioner Steve Hersey, Commissioner Jeff Wooten

Staff Present:

County Attorney Adam Nelson, Interim County Manager Byron Lombard, County Clerk Lynn Butterworth, Deputy County Clerk Mercy Fluker

1. Welcome - Call to Order

Chairman Sharp called the meeting to order at approximately 6:01 PM.

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

2. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda.

Motion made by Jeff Wooten, Seconded by Richard Garrett.

Motion amended to postpone items 13-18 until the first meeting in February 2027 when the new board is seated.

Amended motion made by Steve Hersey, Seconded by Richard Garrett.

Voting Yea: Steve Hersey

Voting Nay: Tom McElhenney, Richard Garrett, Jeff Wooten

Amended Motion Failed

Vote on original motion:

Voting Yea: Tom McElhenney, Richard Garrett, Steve Hersey, Jeff Wooten

Voting Nay: None

Motion Passed

3. Invocation - County Attorney Adam Nelson
County Attorney Adam Nelson gave the invocation.

4. Pledge of Allegiance (staff)
County Manager Byron Lombard led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Regular Business Meeting

5. Public Comments
Ms. Ellen Littleton commented in opposition to the proposed rock quarry.
Ms. Sue Malone commented in opposition to the proposed rock quarry.
Ms. Judy Veal commented in opposition to the proposed rock quarry.
Ms. Pamela Smith commented in opposition to the proposed rock quarry.

6. Consent Agenda
- a. Approval of Minutes — June 5, 2026 Regular Meeting (staff-CC)
 - b. Approval of Minutes — June 16, 2026 Work Session (staff-CC)
 - c. Approval of Minutes — June 22, 2026 Budget Work Session (staff-CC)
 - d. Approval of Minutes — June 23, 2026 Budget Work Session (staff-CC)
 - e. Approval of Minutes — June 26, 2026 Called Meeting (staff-CC)
 - f. Approval of Minutes — June 30, 2026 Joint Called Meeting (staff-CC)

Commissioner Hersey requested to vote on Item F separately due to not being present at the June 30, 2026 Called Meeting.

Motion to Approve Consent Agenda Items A-E.

Motion made by Richard Garrett, Seconded by Jeff Wooten.

Voting Yea: Tom McElhenney, Richard Garrett, Steve Hersey, Jeff Wooten

Voting Nay: None

Motion Passed

Motion to Approve Consent Agenda Item F.

Motion made by Richard Garrett, Seconded by Jeff Wooten.

Voting Yea: Tom McElhenney, Richard Garrett, Jeff Wooten

Voting Nay: None

Abstained: Steve Hersey

Motion Passed

7. Authorization for Chairman to sign Revised Intergovernmental Agreement for the Use and Distribution of Proceeds from SPLOST #10 (staff-CM)

County Manager Lombard explained the Intergovernmental Agreement and its purpose to allow other projects to move forward while the Tier 1 Project (Jail) is on hold. The Eatonton City Council approved the agreement at their meeting on July 7, 2026.

Motion to Authorize the Chairman to sign the Revised Intergovernmental Agreement for the Use and Distribution of Proceeds from SPLOST #10.

Motion made by Tom McElhenney, Seconded by Steve Hersey.

Voting Yea: Tom McElhenney, Richard Garrett, Steve Hersey, Jeff Wooten

Voting Nay: None

Motion Passed

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

8. Authorization for Chairman to sign Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Eatonton to implement a Special District Mass Transportation Sales and Use Tax (TSPLOST #3) (staff-CM)

County Manager Lombard explained that this Intergovernmental Agreement is one of the required steps in order to call for a TSPLOST referendum, and the collections will be split with 75% to Putnam County and 25% to the City of Eatonton. The Eatonton City Council approved the agreement at their meeting on July 7, 2026.

Motion to Authorize the Chairman to sign the Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Eatonton to implement a Special District Mass Transportation Sales and Use Tax.

Motion made by Jeff Wooten, Seconded by Richard Garrett.

Voting Yea: Tom McElhenney, Richard Garrett, Steve Hersey, Jeff Wooten

Voting Nay: None

Motion Passed

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

9. Discussion and possible action regarding InfraHub Quote for Annual Pavement Assessment Services (staff-CM/Public Works)

County Manager Lombard explained the InfraHub quote and services, including how they score the condition of the roads and confirmed all data collected would be owned by Putnam County.

Motion to Purchase the InfraHub Annual Pavement Assessment Services for \$42,500.

Motion made by Jeff Wooten, Seconded by Richard Garrett.

Voting Yea: Tom McElhenney, Richard Garrett, Steve Hersey, Jeff Wooten

Voting Nay: None

Motion Passed

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

10. Adoption of proposed changes to the Putnam County Code of Ordinances — Chapter 32 (Fire Protection and Prevention) (staff-CM/Fire)

Mr. Brandon Burgess signed in to speak but passed when called.

County Manager Lombard and Chief McClain explained the changes made to the code since the last time it was before the board.

Motion to Approve the proposed changes to Chapter 32 (Fire Protection and Prevention) with the addition of "Short Term Rentals with an occupancy of ten or greater" to be included in Sec. 32-21(c)(1).

Motion made by Steve Hersey, Seconded by Richard Garrett.

Voting Yea: Tom McElhenney, Richard Garrett, Steve Hersey, Jeff Wooten

Voting Nay: None

Motion Passed

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

11. Approval of 2026 Budget Amendment #1 (staff-Finance)

County Manager Lombard explained the proposed amendment to use excess revenues over projections of the General Fund for the purchase of a heavy-duty grapple truck that would allow Public Works to remove trees more efficiently and expedite storm clean-up.

Motion to Approve 2026 Budget Amendment #1 for \$319,324.00.

Motion made by Jeff Wooten, Seconded by Richard Garrett.

Voting Yea: Tom McElhenney, Richard Garrett, Jeff Wooten

Voting Nay: Steve Hersey

Motion Passed

12. Authorization for Chairman to sign Resolution Number 2026.7.21(b) in connection with Constitutional Carry (staff-CM)

County Manager Lombard explained the resolution is in accordance with the passage of state law and to clarify security arrangements at county facilities.

Motion to Authorize the Chairman to sign Resolution Number 2026.7.21(b) in connection with Constitutional Carry.

Motion made by Jeff Wooten, Seconded by Richard Garrett.

Voting Yea: Tom McElhenney, Richard Garrett, Steve Hersey, Jeff Wooten

Voting Nay: None

Motion Passed

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

13. Appointment to the Board of Assessors (staff-CC)

Commissioner Wooten nominated Virginia M. Daley, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett.

Tom McElhenney voted for Virginia M. Daley.

Richard Garrett voted for Virginia M. Daley.

Steve Hersey voted for Virginia M. Daley.

Jeff Wooten voted for Virginia M. Daley.

Ms. Virginia M. Daley was appointed to the Board of Assessors for a four-year term.

14. Appointments to the Eatonton-Putnam Library Board (staff-CC)

Commissioner McElhenney nominated Gail Farmer, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett.

Tom McElhenney voted for Gail Farmer.

Richard Garrett voted for Gail Farmer.

Steve Hersey voted for Gail Farmer.

Jeff Wooten voted for Gail Farmer.

Commissioner Garrett nominated Charles Hodges, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.

Tom McElhenney voted for Charles Hodges.

Richard Garrett voted for Charles Hodges.

Steve Hersey voted for Charles Hodges.

Jeff Wooten voted for Charles Hodges.

Ms. Gail Farmer and Mr. Charles Hodges were appointed to the Eatonton-Putnam Library Board for six-year terms.

15. Appointments to the Lake Oconee Area Development Authority (staff-CC)

Ms. Tracy Hall introduced herself as an applicant for the Lake Oconee Area Development Authority.

Commissioner Hersey nominated Tracy Hall, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett.

Commissioner Wooten nominated William Vargo, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett.

Tom McElhenney voted for William Vargo.

Richard Garrett voted for Tracy Hall.

Steve Hersey voted for Tracy Hall.

Jeff Wooten voted for William Vargo.

Bill Sharp voted for William Vargo.

Commissioner Garrett nominated Tracy Hall, Seconded by Commissioner Hersey.

Commissioner Wooten nominated Scott Joris, Seconded by Commissioner McElhenney.

Tom McElhenney voted for Scott Joris.

Richard Garrett voted for Tracy Hall.

Steve Hersey voted for Tracy Hall.

Jeff Wooten voted for Scott Joris.

Bill Sharp voted for Scott Joris.

Mr. William Vargo and Mr. Scott Joris were appointed to the Lake Oconee Area Development Authority for five-year terms.

16. Appointment to the Putnam County Department of Family and Children Services Board (staff-CC)
Commissioner Garrett nominated Denise Merritt, Seconded by Commissioner McElhenney.
Tom McElhenney voted for Denise Merritt.
Richard Garrett voted for Denise Merritt.
Steve Hersey voted for Denise Merritt.
Jeff Wooten voted for Denise Merritt.

Ms. Denise Merritt was appointed to the Putnam County Department of Family and Children Services Board for an unexpired term ending December 5, 2030.

17. Appointment to the Putnam Development Authority (staff-CC)
Ms. Sandy Decker introduced herself as an applicant for the Putnam Development Authority.

Commissioner Hersey nominated Sandy Decker, Seconded by Commissioner McElhenney.
Commissioner Wooten nominated John Wojtas, Seconded by Commissioner Garrett.
Tom McElhenney voted for John Wojtas.
Richard Garrett voted for John Wojtas.
Steve Hersey voted for Sandy Decker.
Jeff Wooten voted for John Wojtas.

Mr. John Wojtas was appointed to the Putnam Development Authority for a five-year term.

18. Appointment to the Region Two Behavioral Health and Development Disabilities Planning Board (staff-CC)
Commissioner Garrett nominated Valerie Hurt, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.
Tom McElhenney voted for Valerie Hurt.
Richard Garrett voted for Valerie Hurt.
Steve Hersey voted for Valerie Hurt.
Jeff Wooten voted for Valerie Hurt.

Ms. Valerie Hurt was appointed to the Region Two Behavioral Health and Development Disabilities Planning Board for a three-year term.

Reports/Announcements

19. County Manager Report
No report.

20. County Attorney Report
County Attorney Nelson advised that he will report back to the commissioners regarding Commissioner Hersey's short term rental provision to the fire ordinance.

21. Commissioner Announcements

Commissioner McElhenney thanked County Manager Lombard for fantastic job so far.

Commissioner Garrett seconded Commissioner McElhenney's comment toward County Manager Lombard and thanked everyone for their support for the USA 250 drone show.

Commissioner Hersey congratulated and thanked Commissioner Garrett for organizing the drone show.

Commissioner Wooten echoed Commissioner Hersey's comments about the drone show and thanked County Manager Lombard for doing a great job.

Chairman Sharp thanked Commissioner Garrett for a great program at the drone show and commended County Manager Lombard for his hard work.

Closing

22. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion made by Tom McElhenney, Seconded by Richard Garrett.

Voting Yea: Tom McElhenney, Richard Garrett, Steve Hersey, Jeff Wooten

Voting Nay: None

Motion Passed

Meeting adjourned at approximately 7:57 PM.

ATTEST:

Mercy Fluker
Deputy County Clerk

B.W. "Bill" Sharp
Chairman