

PUTNAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



117 Putnam Drive, Suite A ♦ Eatonton, GA 31024

Minutes

Tuesday, November 21, 2023 ♦ 6:00 PM

Putnam County Administration Building – Room 203

The Putnam County Board of Commissioners met on Tuesday, November 21, 2023 at approximately 6:00 p.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
County Clerk Lynn Butterworth
Deputy County Clerk Donna Todd

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 McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Hersey.

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

Chairman Sharp welcomed Dr. Steve Hersey, District 3 Commissioner who was sworn in just before the meeting.

3. Invocation - Pastor James Smith - Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church

Pastor James Smith, from Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church, gave the invocation.

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4. Pledge of Allegiance (GM)

Commissioner McElhenney led the Pledge of Allegiance.

5. Special Presentation

Mr. Henry R. Craig, Baldwin County Commissioner and ACCG President, spoke about mental health services for Georgians, stating that lack of adequate mental health care is a problem in all 159 counties in Georgia. Chairman Sharp reminded participants that Putnam County passed a resolution at the last meeting, in support of improving mental health services in Georgia.

Chairman Sharp opened the Zoning Public Hearing at approximately 6:12 p.m.

Zoning Public Hearing

6. Request by Brandon Burgess, agent for Brett Mauldin, to rezone 1.21 acres on Harmony Road from C-1 to C-2 [Map 102A, Parcel 172, District 3] (staff-P&D)

Mr. Brandon Burgess spoke in support of the rezoning. No one signed in to speak against this item. Planning & Development staff recommendation was for approval.

Motion to approve the request by Brandon Burgess, agent for Brett Mauldin, to rezone 1.21 acres on Harmony Road from C-1 to C-2 [Map 102A, Parcel 172, District 3].

Motion made by Commissioner Hersey, Seconded by Commissioner Brown.

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

7. Request by Rick McAllister, Agent for Nell J. McDonald to rezone 5.31 acres at 331 New Phoenix Road from AG to C-1 [Map 105, Parcel 016, District 1] (staff-P&D)

Mr. Rick McAllister spoke in support and provided a handout to Commissioners.

Ms. Kay Stevens spoke in support of the rezoning and provided a handout to Commissioners.

Mr. Joe Reitman, Attorney for the Manville Family, stated that, per the petition, 125 citizens are against the rezoning due to stormwater runoff concerns and concerns that it will ruin the land use area. Mr. Reitman provided a 4-page hand-out, copies of a petition signed by residents, and photos of the area to the Commissioners.

The following people spoke against the proposed rezoning:

Ms. Kathy Wardlaw

Ms. Jan Bloodworth

Mr. John Bloodworth

Ms. Lynn Youngblood

Mr. Willie Manville

Ms. Amy Manville

Ms. Karen McGinnis

Ms. Lauren Holder

Ms. Kim Robinson

Mr. Charles Sapper

Mr. William Vargo

Mr. Albert Frontz passed on his opportunity to speak.

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Mr. Rick McAllister used his remaining time to speak for rebuttal. He distributed a graphic to the Commissioners.

Planning & Development staff recommendation was for approval to rezone 5.31 acres at 331 New Phoenix Road from AG to C-1, [Map 105, Parcel 016, District 1], with the following condition: The developer shall develop and maintain a 50-foot undisturbed buffer or berm along the property lines that abut Map 105, Parcel 017 as stated in Section 66-104(g) of the Putnam County Code of Ordinances.

Motion to approve request by Rick McAllister, Agent for Nell J. McDonald to rezone 5.31 acres at 331 New Phoenix Road from AG to C-1 [Map 105, Parcel 016] with the condition that the developer shall develop and maintain a 50-foot undisturbed buffer or berm along the property lines that abut Map 105, Parcel 017 as stated in Section 66-104(g) of the Putnam County Code of Ordinances.

Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.

Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Brown, Commissioner Wooten

Voting Nay: Commissioner Hersey

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

Chairman Sharp closed the Zoning Public Hearing at approximately 7:13 p.m.

Code of Ordinances Public Hearing

8. Proposed adoption of changes to the Putnam County Code of Ordinances - Chapter 32 (Fire Protection and Prevention)

Commissioner Hersey raised a point of information to ask questions about the ordinance.

Chairman Sharp stated there would be no further action until the business was continued and at that point, questions would be answered. County Attorney Nelson responded to Commissioner Hersey with explanations about the state regulations.

Fire Chief Thomas McClain reviewed the proposed changes and explained that they are designed to support the growth of commercial and residential properties. During the review, he advised that “no burning on Sunday” needed to be removed from pages 17 & 18.

Commissioner Brown stated that he could not approve the changes to the ordinance and would like to schedule a work session to examine and carefully draft the changes to avoid putting a hardship on our citizens.

Motion to table the adoption of the changes to the Putnam County Code of Ordinances – Chapter 32 (Fire Protection and Prevention) until next year when a work session with Chief McClain and the Commissioners could be scheduled.

Rick McAllister signed in to speak but declined his turn when called.

Motion made by Commissioner Brown, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.

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

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Regular Business Meeting

9. Public Comments

Mr. Charles Patten commented on the recent special election. He stated that because the public voted strongly for Dr. Hersey, their vote was a call for better control of short term rentals.

10. Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of Minutes - November 3, 2023 Regular Meeting (staff-CC)
- b. Approval of Minutes - November 3, 2023 Executive Session (staff-CC)
- c. Approval of 2024 Alcohol License(s) (staff-CC)
- d. Authorization for Chairman to sign Agreement between Putnam County Transit and Georgia DOT for Transit Trust Fund Program Allocation (staff-Transit)

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda.

Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Hersey.

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

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

11. Request for final plat subdivision approval - Section E - Phase 2 Cuscowilla on Lake Oconee (staff - P&D)

Mr. Rick McAllister spoke in support of and explained the request.

Motion to approve the request for final plat subdivision approval – Section E – Phase 2 Cuscowilla on Lake Oconee.

Motion made by Commissioner Hersey, Seconded by Commissioner Brown.

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

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

12. Authorization for Chairman to sign Resolution Calling a Referendum to Authorize the Issuance of General Obligation Bonds (staff-CM)

Mr. Doug Gebhardt from Davenport & Company made a presentation on the bonding process, issues, and other items related to bond issuance and distributed a copy of the presentation to the Commissioners.

Motion to authorize the Chairman to sign the Resolution Calling a Referendum to Authorize the Issuance of General Obligation Bonds.

Motion made by Commissioner Brown, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.

Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Brown, Commissioner Wooten

Voting Nay: Commissioner Hersey

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

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13. Discussion and possible action regarding proposal from Holland & Knight (staff-CM)
County Manager Van Haute introduced the item, which was a proposal to hire a lobbyist to work on behalf of Putnam County for ARPA funds unencumbered by 2026. Unused ARPA funds are coming back to the state, and the County could use some of this money for infrastructure for high density work force housing.

Motion to decline offer from Holland & Knight.

Motion made by Commissioner Hersey, Seconded by Commissioner Brown.

Voting Yea: Commissioner Hersey

Voting Nay: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Brown, Commissioner Wooten

Motion to authorize the Chairman to sign the proposal with Holland & Knight.

Motion made by Commissioner Brown, Seconded by Commissioner McElhenney.

Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Brown, Commissioner Wooten

Voting Nay: Commissioner Hersey

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

14. Authorization for the Chairman to sign Eighth Amendment to Exclusive Contract for Solid Waste and Recycling Collection Services (staff-CM)

Commissioner Hersey made a point of inquiry about the dates in the contract being correct.

County Manager Van Haute responded that Waste Management is holding the cost for another year.

Mr. Billy Webster commented that the previous agenda item is not allowed to be sole sourced according to the County's financial policy and that the third largest expense for Putnam County is trash collection and disposal and that this would deplete the Special Service District fund balance.

County Manager Van Haute responded that professional services don't require bids.

Motion to authorize the Chairman to sign the Eighth Amendment to Exclusive Contract for Solid Waste and Recycling Collection Services.

Motion made by Commissioner Brown, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.

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

(Copy of amendment to contract made a part of minutes on minute book pages _____ to _____.)

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Reports/Announcements

15. County Manager Report

County Manager Van Haute reported the following:

- Distributed to Commissioners a copy of the LMIG project list consisting of items that will be approved before the end of the year.
- Fire Chief McClain will be asking for equipment before the end of the year. The current wait time is 42 months to get trucks.
- Presented a sample of the new high-performance pavement, which can withstand 500,000 psi, is waterproof, and is a sub-base. It will be used on Sammons and Scott Road.
- Public Works has been paving the cart paths at the golf course and are doing a great job.

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

16. County Attorney Report

No report

17. Commissioner Announcements

Commissioner McElhenney: None

Commissioner Brown: Wished everyone a great Thanksgiving.

Commissioner Hersey: Wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and commented that it was an interesting first meeting.

Commissioner Wooten: Announced that Tommy Jefferson is the new Sinclair Water Authority Chairman. He thanked Bobby Brown for his service as Chair in the past. He reminded everyone that 31 years ago was one of the darkest times in Putnam County, when a tornado went from one end of the county to the other. He thanked Chief McClain for where we are today in terms of staff and equipment and how far we have come in the time since then.

Chairman Sharp: Wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving, reminded everyone to count your blessings, and thanked the Commissioners for what they do.

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Closing

18. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.

Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Brown, Commissioner Wooten

Voting Abstaining: Commissioner Hersey

Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:51 p.m.

ATTEST:

Lynn Butterworth
County Clerk

B. W. "Bill" Sharp
Chairman

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