

PUTNAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



117 Putnam Drive, Suite A ♦ Eatonton, GA 31024

Minutes

Friday, November 3, 2023 ♦ 10:00 AM

Putnam County Administration Building – Room 203

The Putnam County Board of Commissioners met on Friday, November 3, 2023 at approximately 10:00 AM in the Putnam County Administration Building, 117 Putnam Drive, Room 203, Eatonton, Georgia.

PRESENT

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

STAFF PRESENT

County Attorney Barry Fleming
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 10:00 a.m.
(Copy of agenda made a part of the minutes on minute book page _____.)

2. Approval of Agenda

Chairman Sharp advised that there was a request for item #9 “Request for final plat subdivision approval - Section E - Phase 2 Cuscowilla on Lake Oconee” to be postponed until the next BOC meeting on November, 21, 2023.

Motion to approve the Agenda, with the removal of item #9.

Motion made by Commissioner Brown, Seconded by Commissioner McElhenney.

Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Brown, Commissioner Wooten

3. Invocation - Ms. Lisa Jackson

Ms. Lisa Jackson, Director of Putnam County Planning and Development, gave the invocation.

4. Pledge of Allegiance (GM)

Commissioner McElhenney led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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5. Special Presentation - Proclamation for Maureen Clemons
The commissioners presented a proclamation to Ms. Maureen Clemons in honor and celebration of her 102nd birthday.
(Copy of proclamation made a part of the minutes on minute book page _____.)

Regular Business Meeting

6. Public Comments
Dr. Steve Hersey commented favorably on a recent Planning and Zoning Commission decision to recommend denial for rezoning for storage buildings.

7. Consent Agenda
- a. Approval of Minutes - October 17, 2023 Regular Meeting (staff-CC)
 - b. Approval of Minutes - October 30, 2023 Called Meeting (staff-CC)
 - c. Approval of Minutes - October 30, 2023 Executive Session (staff-CC)

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda.
Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.
Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Brown, Commissioner Wooten

8. Request for final plat subdivision approval - Harmony Farms Phase 3 (staff-P&D)
Planning and Development Director Lisa Jackson reported that all the inspections had been done for Harmony Farms Phase 3, all the requirements have been met and the plat has been placed before the commissioners for final approval.

Motion to approve the request for final plat subdivision approval for Harmony Farms Phase 3.
Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.
Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Brown, Commissioner Wooten
(Copy of plat made a part of the minutes on minute book pages _____ to _____.)

9. Request for final plat subdivision approval - Section E - Phase 2 Cuscowilla on Lake Oconee (staff-P&D)
This item was removed from the meeting agenda to be postponed until the November 21, 2023 meeting.

10. Request by AT&T for a Right-of-Way Permit for work to be done on Harmony Road and Little Road (staff-PW)
Motion to approve the Right-of-Way Permit for AT&T for work to be done on Harmony and Little Roads.
Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.
Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Brown, Commissioner Wooten
(Copy of permit made a part of the minutes on minute book page _____.)

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11. Approval of 2023 Budget Amendment #2 (staff-Finance)

Dr. Steve Hersey commented that the budget amendment appears to restore \$700,000 to the fund balance and questioned why and how the General Admin budget was overspent by over \$500,000.

Mr. Billy Webster echoed Dr. Hersey's comments adding that Public Works overspent their budget by \$500,000.

Finance Director Linda Cook answered previous questions and reviewed the budget amendment. She stated that General Admin was over budget due to funding an unfunded pension liability to ACCG and a project fund. She further advised that Public Works was over budget due to post-closure costs for the old landfill, but we only took \$186,000 out of the fund balance.

Motion to approve the 2023 Budget Amendment #2.

Motion made by Commissioner Brown, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.

Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Brown, Commissioner Wooten

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

12. Request by Public Works to Purchase a new Asphalt Distributor (staff-PW)

Mr. Charles Gray spoke in support of Public Works buying the Asphalt Distributor and replacing the 25 year old machine; he asked for clarification on what the State Contract is and how it funds the purchase of the equipment.

Mr. Bill Vargo spoke in support of the equipment purchase.

Public Works Director Frazier explained that the main pump has almost completely failed in the current equipment. Without this equipment, Public Works cannot patch potholes or pave. He recommended that this available unit be purchased now, otherwise it will have to wait two years to have one built.

County Manager Van Haute advised that the cost for this equipment will be paid out of TSPLOST.

Motion to approve a request by Public Works to purchase a new Asphalt Distributor.

Motion made by Commissioner Wooten, Seconded by Commissioner Brown.

Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Brown, Commissioner Wooten

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13. Discussion and possible action on Speed Limit Change for Scott Road (staff-PW)
Dr. Steve Hersey spoke in support of a reduction in speed limit for Scott Road and further commented that it really needs to be straightened, widened and repaved.

Public Works Director Frazier explained that the current speed limit on Scott Road is 55 mph and that without conducting a traffic study 35 mph is probably appropriate.

Sheriff Howard Sills stated that the Board of Commissioners can't lower the speed limit on Scott Road without a traffic study and that GDOT must approve speed limits for enforcement. He further commented that signs mean nothing legally without an ordinance; however, a *no through trucks* sign could be posted with a resolution and no traffic study.

County Manager Van Haute stated that Scott Road is scheduled for improvements for additional Right of Way and making it less curvy.

Motion to conduct a traffic study on Scott Road to prepare for reduction in speed limit to 35 mph and to instruct County Attorney and staff to prepare an ordinance for no through trucks signs.

Motion made by Commissioner Brown, Seconded by Commissioner McElhenney.

Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Brown, Commissioner Wooten

14. Authorization for Chairman to sign Resolution Urging the Governor and General Assembly of Georgia to Continue Efforts to Reform and Improve Mental Health Services for the Citizens of Georgia (BS)

Chairman Sharp introduced the resolution, conveying that ACCG encourages every county to adopt this resolution to support the citizens of Georgia.

Motion to authorize the Chairman to sign the Resolution Urging the Governor and General Assembly of Georgia to Continue Efforts to Reform and Improve Mental Health Services for the Citizens of Georgia.

Motion made by Commissioner Brown, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.

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

15. Authorization for Chairman to sign Resolution Recognizing Operation Green Light for Veterans for Supporting Veterans and Raising Awareness about Important County Resources Available to Help Veterans Transition to Civilian Life (staff-CM)

County Manager Van Haute introduced this resolution and reported that all 3069 counties across the nation are promoting it to recognize and support veterans. Green glass has been purchased to light up the courthouse from November 6 - 12 in recognition and support of our veterans.

Motion to authorize the Chairman to sign the Resolution Recognizing Operation Green Light for Veterans for Supporting Veterans and Raising Awareness about Important County Resources Available to Help Veterans Transition to Civilian Life.

Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.

Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Brown, Commissioner Wooten
(Copy of resolution made a part of the minutes on minute book pages _____ to _____.)

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16. Discussion and possible action regarding an update to HB 300 (compensation of board members) (BS)

Dr. Steve Hersey commented that HB 300 is legislation to set compensation for the Board of Commissioners and expressed concern that there was nothing in the meeting packet telling what changes are being considered. He asked the board to postpone any decisions until full details of the commissioners' compensation packages are made public.

Mr. Billy Webster stated that he would like to comment about the update to HB 300 but had no clue what is being updated.

Chairman Sharp advised that the county's financial policy had been updated, increasing the employee's travel daily meal rate from a maximum of \$50 to a maximum of \$65 for days with an overnight stay. The proposed change would increase the commissioners' travel per diem from \$50 to \$65.

County Attorney Fleming stated that his office would prepare the necessary documents and research how to properly handle making the change.

Motion to instruct County Attorney and staff to research the protocol for changing the commissioner's per diem from \$50 to \$65.

Motion made by Commissioner Brown, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.

Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Brown, Commissioner Wooten

Reports/Announcements

17. County Manager Report

County Manager Van Haute reported the following:

- Requested an Executive Session to discuss a real estate matter.
- Congratulated everyone on the success of Monday's Grand Opening of Station 10 and the Gary McElhenney Coroner's Office.
- The paperwork for the Bethel Church Water Line reimbursement has been completed and sent to the Department of Transportation.
- Asked for one mile of road from each district at the next BOC meeting for LMIG projects.

18. County Attorney Report

No report.

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19. Commissioner Announcements

Commissioner McElhenney: thanked County Manager Van Haute, staff, and fellow commissioners for the honor bestowed on him Monday by naming the coroner’s office after him. He said it was one of the best days of is life and that the honor was very unexpected and humbling.

Commissioner Brown: thanked Matt Poyner, Executive Director of the Putnam Development Authority, for his hard work. The old downtown hotel closed yesterday allowing work to begin on the new hotel, which is expected to change downtown Eatonton for the better and be very nice for our citizens and visitors.

Commissioner Wooten: none

Chairman Sharp: continued the accolades for Commissioner McElhenney and echoed that the honor was well deserved in light of his exemplary service to this county for over 35 years.

20. 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 Real Estate.
Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten
Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Brown, Commissioner Wooten**

Meeting closed at approximately 11:21 a.m.

21. Reopen meeting following Executive Session

**Motion to reopen the meeting following Executive Session.
Motion made by Commissioner Wooten, Seconded by Commissioner Brown.
Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Brown, Commissioner Wooten**

Meeting reconvened at approximately 11:47 a.m.

22. Authorize Chairman to sign Affidavit concerning the subject matter of the closed portion of the meeting

**Motion to authorize the Chairman to sign the Affidavit concerning the subject matter of the closed portion of the meeting.
Motion made by Commissioner Wooten, Seconded by Commissioner McElhenney.
Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Brown, Commissioner Wooten
(Copy of affidavit made a part of the minutes on minute book page _____.)**

23. Action, if any, resulting from the Executive Session

No action taken.

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Closing

24. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.

Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Brown, Commissioner Wooten

Meeting adjourned at approximately 11:49 a.m.

ATTEST:

Lynn Butterworth
County Clerk

B. W. "Bill" Sharp
Chairman

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