

PUTNAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



117 Putnam Drive, Suite A ♦ Eatonton, GA 31024

Local Option Sales Tax Mediation

Minutes

Monday, April 11, 2022 ♦ 10:00 AM

Putnam County Administration Building – Room 203

The Putnam County Board of Commissioners met on Monday, April 11, 2022 at approximately 10:00 AM in the Putnam County Administration Building, 117 Putnam Drive, Room 203, Eatonton, Georgia.

PRESENT

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

STAFF PRESENT

County Attorney Adam Nelson
County Manager Paul Van Haute
County Clerk Lynn Butterworth

OTHERS PRESENT

Mediator Denny C. Galis
City Consultant Phil Suttom
County Consultant Doug Eaves

PRESENT FROM CITY

Mayor John Reid
Mayor Pro Tem Chip Walker
Councilmember Marie Rainey (late)
Councilmember James Gorley
Councilmember Janie Reid
Councilmember Teresa Doster
City Attorney Chris Huskins
City Administrator Gary Sanders
City Clerk Maria Jimenez

Opening

1. Call to Order

Chairman Webster 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. Pledge of Allegiance

County Manager Paul Van Haute led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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3. City Comments and Offer

Mayor John Reid made some opening comments. City Consultant Mr. Phil Sutton presented his Local Option Sales Tax Mediation Report and provided a copy to everyone. The City's proposed split for the Local Option Sales Tax is 34% to the City and 66% to the County.

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

4. County Comments and Offer

County Consultant Mr. Doug Eaves made the presentation for the County. The County's initial offer (10-12-2021) for the Local Option Sales Tax split was 85% to the County and 15% to the City. The County's second offer (4-4-2022) was 80% to the County and 20% to the City. At today's meeting, the County made their third offer to roll in the new split over five years starting at 72% to the County and 28% to the City in year 1; 74% to the County and 26% to the City in year 2; 76% to the County and 24% to the City in year 3; 78% to the County and 22% to the City in year 4; and 80% to the County and 20% to the City in years 5-10.

Chairman Webster commented that the County has been negotiating in good faith, while the City has not changed their offer at all.

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

The meeting recessed at approximately 11:01 a.m.

The meeting reconvened at approximately 11:07 a.m.

5. Comments by Mediator

Mediator Mr. Denny Galis made some opening comments:

- People can quote the same laws and come up with different conclusions
- Remember that this is 2022 not 1992
- City and County limits mean nothing to the average citizen
- We are all in this together
- We are all citizens of the same community
- We all ride on the same roads and shop in the same shops
- There is no real separation of City and County on a daily basis

Mr. Galis also provided an explanation of how the mediation will work:

- He will talk to each side separately
- He can't make anyone do what they don't want to do
- Mediation will not make everybody happy, but it is in the best interests of the citizens to resolve this
- Both sides can tell him things in confidence and can ask him to step out of the room to talk among themselves
- Ask questions at any time

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Executive Session

- 6. Motion to enter Executive Session as allowed by O.C.G.A. 50-14-4, if necessary, for Personnel, Litigation, or Real Estate
 - a. Eatonton City Council in Room 204
 - b. Putnam County Board of Commissioners in Room 137

Motion to enter Executive Session as allowed by O.C.G.A. 50-14-4 for Litigation.

Motion made by Commissioner Sharp, Seconded by Commissioner Wooten.

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

The City Council made and approved a similar motion.

The meeting closed at approximately 11:13 a.m.

Commissioner Sharp had to leave the meeting at approximately 2:20 p.m.

- 7. Motion to reopen meeting and execute affidavit concerning the subject matter of the closed portion of the meeting

Motion to reopen the meeting and execute the affidavit concerning the subject matter of the closed portion of the meeting.

Motion made by Commissioner McElhenney, Seconded by Commissioner Brown.

Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Brown, Commissioner Wooten

The City Council made and approved a similar motion.

The meeting reopened at approximately 3:00 p.m.

- 8. Action, if any, resulting from Executive Session

Motion to extend mediation for a period of 30 days until May 11, 2022 in response to the City's request for an opportunity to consider the County's offer on LOST distribution.

Motion made by Commissioner Wooten, Seconded by Commissioner McElhenney.

Voting Yea: Commissioner McElhenney, Commissioner Brown, Commissioner Wooten

The City Council made and approved a similar motion.

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Closing

9. Adjournment

Chairman Webster adjourned the meeting at approximately 3:03 p.m.

ATTEST:

Lynn Butterworth
County Clerk

Billy Webster
Chairman

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