

## Wells County Commissioners

### Regular Session 6-19-2017

The Wells County Commissioners met in regular session on Monday June 19, 2017 at 9:30AM in the Commissioner's Room of the Wells County Carnegie Annex, Bluffton, IN. Those in attendance were Commissioners, Blake Gerber, Kevin Woodward and Tamara Robbins. Also in attendance were County Attorney, Roy Johnson and County Auditor, Beth Davis.

**Minutes:** Motion made by Tamara Robbins, seconded by Kevin Woodward to approve the minutes from June 5, 2017 regular session. Motion carried 3-0.

**Payroll And Claims:** Motion made by Tamara Robbins, seconded by Kevin Woodward to approve Payroll #13 in the amount of \$222,534.64 and 245 claims totaling \$492,472.78. Motion carried 3-0.

**Wells County Sheriff:** Sheriff Fisher reported 89 inmates, 3 are DOC and 20 are F6 DOC. Wells County is holding 6 inmates for another county. Sheriff Fisher informed the commissioners that he has received three quotes for a new water heater and he is recommending that the commissioner approve the low bid of \$34,950.00 from Arnold & Son. Motion made by Kevin Woodward, seconded by Tamara Robbins to approve the Sheriff's recommendation and accept the low bid from Arnold & Son. Motion carried 3-0.

**Wells County Highway Supervisor:** Josh Cotton informed the commissioners that the 1<sup>st</sup> round of ditch mowing has been completed and they are ready to start round 2 this week. They are continuing to work on the road conversion projects on county roads 500 W and 500 S. The hand patching in the southern part of the county will be done this week and then they will start patching in the northern part of the county. As soon as the patching is all done they will start with the chip and sealing of the scheduled roads. Over the next 4 to 6 weeks they are planning on installing the scheduled large culverts throughout the county. There are several culverts to install so some may not get installed until this fall. There was some discussion on who is responsible for the administration of the County Highway Budget. Motion made by Tamara Robbins, seconded by Kevin Woodward for the Highway Supervisor, not the Highway Engineer to be responsible for the operation of the County Highway Budget. Motion carried 3-0.

**Highway Engineer:** Nate Rumschlag informed the commissioners that work is proposed to start on Bridge #2 on county road 700N east of county road 600E in the next two weeks pending REMC relocate work. Work is also proposed to start on Bridge #203 on county road 1000S east of county road 600E within the next three to four weeks pending AEP overhead line work. Construction time on both projects is estimated to take between 4-6 weeks. Nate is requesting to close both roads during the construction. Motion made by Kevin Woodward, seconded by Tamara Robbins to approve the request to close the roads during construction. Motion carried 3-0. Nate informed the Commissioners that the PASER ratings are done and he is now updating the Traffic and Bridge Asset Management Plans so he will be ready to complete the application for the 2017 Community Crossing Matching Grant. Nate presented the 2017-2020 Bridge Inspection Contract with USI Consultants to the Commissioners for their approval. Motion made by Kevin Woodward, seconded by Tamara Robbins to approve the Bridge inspection contract with USI Consultants, Inc. in the amount of \$278,752.84. Motion carried 3-0. One ROW dedication was presented for county road 800N. Motion made by Tamara Robbins, seconded by Kevin Woodward to approve the Right-of-Way. Motion carried 3-0.

**Zoning Ordinance Amendments:** Area Plan Director Mike Lautzenheiser Jr. presented 6 zoning ordinance amendments and one Subdivision Control Ordinance amendment to the Board of Commissioners for their approval. The amendments included; Power Plant Overlay district, Wineries and Breweries, Require Cost Estimates, Kennels in general business district, Setback Measurement, Residential Development in Central Business District, and Right-of-Way Grant for Minor Subdivisions. The commissioners had questions concerning a few of the changes. Commissioner Gerber questioned the changes on the “Require Cost Estimates” which will require an estimated cost for items to be included in the application permit and he also addressed concerns about the “Residential Development in Central Business District” which under Special Exceptions could allow Residences on first floor, ground level, or in the basement in a Central Business District. Commissioner Robbins asked about the “Power Plant Overlay District” process, Mike explained that this would create a public hearing and rezoning process that would come before the commissioners for approval. The Board of Commissioners would like more time to review the amendments so they took them under advisement under the next meeting scheduled for July 5, 2017.

**Wells County EMS:** EMS Director Rick Piepenbrink and Treasurer Trent Bucher came before the Board of Commissioners to provide information on how Wells County EMS has been operating over the past 17 years. The investment proceeds from the sale of the County Hospital back in 2000 were to be used to subsidize EMS operations. Because of the limited means of many patients, the EMS suffers a loss of over \$300 per run primarily from Medicare, Medicaid and self-pay (uninsured) patients who make up the majority of its runs. The investment proceeds were intended to cover the shortfall of operations, but with increased cost and investment markets it has been necessary to spend into the endowment at an average rate of \$94,000 per year over to past 17 years. Although the EMS/Foundation is still strong it is apparent that the Foundation’s assets will be exhausted if changes are not made. Therefore, Wells County EMS is asking the Board of Commissioners to add \$125,000.00 to the annual budget for EMS services beginning with the 2018 Budget year. Rick stated that significant cuts have been made over the year like closing the Markle station and only operating with three county stations in Bluffton, Ossian and Chester Township. Motion made by Kevin Woodward, seconded by Tamara Robbins to approve the request of \$125,000.00 as an annual contribution to the Wells County EMS. Motion carried 3-0.

**Use of Courthouse Plaza:** Motion made by Kevin Woodward, seconded by Tamara Robbins to approve the use of the Courthouse Plaza for the Bluffton Street Fair From Sunday, September 17<sup>th</sup> through Sunday, September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017. Motion carried 3-0.

**Washington/Main Parking Lot Permit:** Motion made by Tamara Robbins, seconded by Kevin Woodward to approve the request to use the Washington/Main Parking Lot on Saturday, July 22, 2017 from 6:00AM to 7:00PM for the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual “Tye King Ride to Remember” D.A.R.E. Benefit. Motion carried 3-0.

**Conflict of Interest Policy:** Motion made by Tamara Robbins, seconded by Kevin Woodward to approve Ordinance No. 2017-06 “An Ordinance of the Board of Commissioners of the County of Wells Concerning the Adoption of a Conflict of Interest Policy and Amending the Wells County Employee Handbook”. Motion carried 3-0.

**Courthouse steps:** Commissioner Gerber hopes to have a proposal for the Courthouse steps to be presented at the July meeting.

**Wells County Regional Sewer District:** Commissioner Gerber stated that he would reach out to a couple of residents to see if they would be interested in serving on the board for the newest sewer issue on state road 116. A plan is being worked on that could cost around \$5,000. This will be discussed at the July meeting.

**County Cemetery Board:** The board members for the Wells County Cemetery Board are working on a Budget to present to the Board of Commissioners for the 2018 Budget year.

**Wells County HazMat Day:** Wells County had a record number of 438 for the HazMat Day that was held on Saturday, June 17, 2017.

**Adjourned:** Motion made by Kevin Woodward, seconded by Tamara Robbins to adjourn at 10:28AM. Motion carried 3-0.

**Wells County Commissioners**

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President, Blake Gerber

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Vice President, Kevin Woodward

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Tamara Robbins

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Beth Davis, Wells County Auditor