

WELLS COUNTY COUNCIL

REGULAR SESSION February 5, 2019

The Wells County Council met in regular session Tuesday, February 5, 2019, at 7PM in the Wells County Carnegie Annex Building, 223 W Washington St., Bluffton, IN. Present at the meeting were: Todd Mahnensmith, Mike Mossburg, Steve Huggins, Chuck King, Vicki Andrews, Seth Whicker and Deputy Auditor Julie Eicher. Council member Jim Oswalt was absent.

Condolences-Todd Mahnensmith expressed his condolences to the families of Melba Cole and Robert Halterman from the Wells County Council. Both served on township advisory boards in Wells County and had recently passed.

Minutes: Motion made by Chuck King, seconded by Vicki Andrews to approve the minutes from the January 8, 2019 meeting. Motion carried 6-0.

Transfers-Transfers were approved for the Highway Department and Local Road & Street. Local Road & Street transferred \$500,000.00 from Hot Mix to Highway Equipment. The Highway budget transferred \$377,529.40 from Highway Equipment to Hot Mix. Mike Mossburg motioned and Seth Whicker seconded to approve the transfers. Motion carried 6-0.

Wells County Sheriff: Sheriff Holliday reported 106 inmates, of those 12 are DOC and 6 are F6 DOC. Holliday also reported that the Sheriff's Department is back to full strength. A newly hired Deputy will start later in February and that is the last open position currently for Sheriff Deputies. Holliday felt the 2019 pay matrix helped with the pool of candidates that applied for the position. Holliday also reiterated that work release was still an option for inmates; it is not being used as much due to home detention programs.

Regional Sewer District-County Engineer Nate Rumschlag, Loen Berning and Mark Burry, RSD council, gave a status report on the RSD. Rumschlag stated that the preliminary engineering report is ready and the next step is to solicit wholesale rates from Bluffton Board of Public Works and Ossian Town Council Utility Board. Rumschlag also stated that the group is trying to secure grant and loan funds that the RSD might be eligible for. To be selected for the funds the applications need to be turned in before this fiscal year end, hopefully by June 1, 2019. The application would entail an agreement with Bluffton and Ossian on wholesale rates with the RSD. Mark Burry explained the process of getting launched as an RSD and the environmental aspects of not having an RSD. Over time, areas will deteriorate with continued pollution; areas will also flourish with treatment. The end result should be that the Regional Sewer District would be self-sufficient. The fall of 2020 is the timeline the RSD is looking at for the project to start.

Economic Development Annual Report: Economic Development Director Chad Kline presented his 2018 annual report to the council members. Chad highlighted some Key activities including Business Expansion and Retention, Industrial Attraction and Education. The Economic Investment in 2018 was \$58.9 Million of new investment, 128 new jobs and \$5,760,000 in new payroll. The 2019 Projects include broadband growth, increase internship opportunities for students and facilitate training programs for employers.

2019 Solid Waste Salary Contract-Seth Whicker motioned and Chuck King seconded to approve and sign the 2019 Solid Waste Salary Contract (Misc. 2019-02). Motion carried 6-0.

Reappointment-Chuck King motioned and Vicki Andrews seconded to reappoint Jamie Hoffman to the Huntington City/Town Public Library Board. Motion carried 6-0.

Highway Garage-Todd Mahnensmith discussed preliminary information regarding three outlying Highway Garages that have been newly constructed concerning costs and funding options. Those options included off site construction for the different garages. When discussing Wells County's needs in a Highway Garage, the most imperative needs were new workshop, offices, equipment storage and breakroom. Equipment is currently being stored inside utilizing two existing buildings. The employee total is currently 21, which has not grown, but dropped off in the last 30 years. Mahnensmith stated that a new building, approx. 120' X 65' X 24' that would house a new workshop, offices, equipment storage and breakroom, would have an estimated cost of \$1,500,000.00. The existing building would serve as cold storage. Vicki Andrews questioned if the Council and Commissioners were going to meet to have further discussion. Blake Gerber requested that the information discussed be forwarded to him. Andrews also thanked Todd Mahnensmith for the information provided.

Adjourned: 8:43 PM Motion made by Vicki Andrews, seconded by Mike Mossburg to adjourn.

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President, Todd Mahnensmith

Vice President, Mike Mossburg

Attest: Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor