

WELLS COUNTY COUNCIL

REGULAR SESSION February 8, 2022

The Wells County Council met in regular session Tuesday, February 8, 2022, at 7PM in the Wells County Carnegie Annex Building, 223 W Washington St., Bluffton, IN. Physically present at the meeting were: Steve Huggins, Seth Whicker, Todd Mahnensmith, Chuck King, Vicki Andrews, Scott Elzey and Auditor, Lisa McCormick. Council member Jim Oswalt participated in the meeting by electronic means of communication, Zoom, which allowed the public to simultaneously attend and observe the meeting. All votes taken during the meeting were taken by roll call vote.

Minutes: Motion was made by Seth Whicker, seconded by Chuck King to approve the minutes from the January 4, 2022, meeting. Motion carried 7-0 by roll call vote.

Additional Appropriations: Motion was made by Chuck King, seconded by Vicki Andrews to approve the Additional Appropriation requests for Bridge 71 Rock Creek fund and CR 200S Adams to Clark fund. Motion carried 7-0 by roll call vote.

Wells County Sheriff: Sheriff Holliday reported 76 inmates, 34 pretrial Superior, 24 pretrial Circuit, 5 F6 DOC and 4 DOC. Sheriff Holliday submitted the monthly reports. Construction is moving forward and on schedule. Sheriff Holliday has an employee who has been entering information into the Indiana Data Communications System. No contact orders, warrants, stolen vehicles, missing persons, and such are entered into this system. He would like to compensate that employee for the added duty. There is training required to be qualified to enter data into the state system. Holliday suggested the position be titled IDACS Coordinator and to be compensated the same as the Sergeant position. He provided a IDACS Coordinator job description for that position. Also updated was the Central Control Officer job description, in leu of the Dispatcher job description. Motion was made by Seth Whicker, seconded by Todd Mahnensmith to approve the IDACS Coordinator position and additional compensation. Motion carried 7-0 by roll call vote.

Veterans Annual Report: Dewey Randall updated the Commissioners on the 2021 activity in the Veterans Office. Walk-ins, incoming calls, outgoing calls, claims, and questions were all up in 2021. New POA and Veteran deaths were down in 2021. Randall has completed on-line courses and gained accreditation with the Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs. A Veteran ID card outreach event was held, he felt the response was good. Randall thanked the Commissioners for his 2022 reappointment.

Economic Development Annual Report and 2022 Agreement: Economic Development Director Chad Kline presented his 2021 Annual Report. Chad went over the Key Activities including business expansion & retention, industrial attraction, education & information, workforce development, collaboration & networking and revolving loan funding. Wells County Economic Development partnered with Purdue for National Manufacturing Day 2021. 300 Wells County students were able to participate. The report indicated \$34 million in new investment, 135 new jobs and \$4.7 million in new payroll. The 2022 projects include continued speculative building space, broadband growth, housing development, promote Wells County to increase tourism, population attraction and population retention, facilitate training programs for employers, among others.

Bluffton NOW!: Mike Lautzenheiser, Bluffton NOW! President presented the Bluffton NOW! 2021 Annual report. The downtown assessed value increased \$1,706,503 from 2019. Downtown occupancy

has increased: first floor occupancy is at 91%, second floor occupancy is at 69%, third floor occupancy is 69%. Fundraising goals were increased, new business and residential opportunities were attracted to the downtown area. Bluffton NOW! Partnered with several organizations for events and studies concerning the plaza. Eight new businesses were established into the downtown area in 2021. Future plans include a downtown pathways project, which is 61% funded.

Auditor and Clerk Staff Modification: Auditor Lisa McCormick and Clerk Beth Davis were requesting additional compensation for Deputies in their offices. Both offices had an employee retire and McCormick and Davis had made the like decision to not replace that retiring employee. Technology has reduced the time it takes to do these jobs, but not in any way the responsibilities of those tasks. All staff in the offices have taken on the added job duties of the retiring employee. Both the Auditor and Clerk brought a list of duties that have been added to the other staff members as well as the Elected Officials. A Deputy in the Clerk and Auditor offices are compensated the same amount annually. The request was \$3,000 additional annual salary for all personnel in each office. The amount of savings for one Deputy for wages and benefits annually is \$54,673.96, a spreadsheet was distributed. Chuck King was concerned that the equity council strives for would be skewed. Scott Elzey inquired how the new salaries could compare to other Courthouse Deputy pay. Motion was made by Vicki Andrews, seconded by Seth Whicker to approve of the additional compensation of \$3,000 annually for the Clerk and Auditor Deputies, effective immediately. Motion carried 7-0 by roll call vote. The compensation of an elected official cannot be changed in the year for which it is fixed, therefore the Clerk and Auditor shall ask for the additional compensation during the 2023 budget session.

*The internet connection was disrupted, the electronic means of communication, Zoom, was not operational. Therefore, Jim Oswalt could not be seen and heard. Council member Oswalt was not a voting member for the conclusion of the meeting.

Additional Appropriations: Motion was made by Vicki Andrews, seconded by Scott Elzey to approve the Additional Appropriation request for the Rainy Day fund. Motion carried 6-0 by roll call vote.

Investment Policy: A Treasurers Investment policy was presented to the Board of Finance during a board of finance meeting on January 18, 2022. The board of finance approved the policy. The Wells County Commissioners approved the policy on February 7, 2022. Motion was made by Todd Mahnensmith, seconded by Vicki Andrews to approve the Treasurers Investment policy as Wells County Council. Motion carried 6-0 by roll call vote.

Adjourned: 8:17 PM Motion was made by Seth Whicker, seconded by Chuck King to adjourn. Motion carried 6-0 by roll call vote.

WELLS COUNTY COUNCIL

President, Steve Huggins

Vice President, Seth Whicker

Attest: Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor