

WELLS COUNTY COUNCIL
REGULAR SESSION March 5, 2024

The Wells County Council met in regular session Tuesday, March 5, 2024, at 7PM in the Wells County Carnegie Annex Building, 223 W Washington St., Bluffton, IN. Present at the meeting were: Seth Whicker, Vicki Andrews, Todd Mahnensmith, Scott Elzey, Steve Huggins, Brandon Harnish, Brian Lambert, and Auditor Lisa McCormick.

Minutes: A motion was made by Todd Mahnensmith, seconded by Vicki Andrews to approve the minutes from the February 6, 2024, regular session. Motion carried 7-0.

Additional Appropriations: A motion was made by Steve Huggins, seconded by Brandon Harnish to approve the Additional Appropriation request for the Sheriff in the General fund and the Additional Appropriation request in the LIT Public Safety fund. Motion carried 7-0.

A motion was made by Todd Mahnensmith, seconded by Brandon Harnish to approve the Additional Appropriation request for the Immunization Coop Agreement Grant fund. Motion carried 7-0.

A motion was made by Vicki Andrews, seconded by Brandon Harnish to approve the Additional Appropriation request for the HAVA Election Security Grant fund. Motion carried 7-0.

A motion was made by Brandon Harnish, seconded by Vicki Andrews to approve the Additional Appropriation request for the Court Interpreter Grant fund. Motion carried 7-0.

A motion was made by Steve Huggins, seconded by Brian Lambert to approve the Additional Appropriation request for the CASA Grant fund. Motion carried 7-0.

A motion was made by Todd Mahnensmith, seconded by Brandon Harnish to approve the Additional Appropriation request for the CCMG 2023-02 450E Phase II Grant fund. Motion carried 7-0.

Transfers: A motion was made by Brandon Harnish, seconded by Steve Huggins to approve a transfer in the Health Fund. Motion carried 7-0.

A motion was made by Steve Huggins, seconded by Vicki Andrews to approve a transfer in the Highway Administration Fund. Motion carried 7-0.

Highway Stipend and Assistant Request: Highway Supervisor Shawn Bonar addressed the County Council regarding a stipend for extra work duties he has assumed since the Highway Engineer has left employment. Also requested was an additional office assistant for his front office to assume some of the added responsibilities. The stipend request was for \$27,000 annually. He referenced another county that had no grants that paid much more in personnel and wages than Wells County. He discussed organization and his idea of keeping things moving. The stipend would go away if or when Wells County hired a new Highway Engineer. Bonar spoke of being behind on training the highway drivers due to lack of time. His wish is to train the new front office worker to assume some of the responsibilities that he is currently tasked with. The bookkeeper would be cross trained to assume some of the current office assistants' responsibilities and some of the right-of-way work. Council Vice President Vicki Andrews asked if the move is part of the problem and might require more personnel for a time to get things settled and then reevaluate. Bonar suggested a new interlocal with Adams County for the Highway Engineer with reduced time. Council member Brandon Harnish inquired how a new interlocal would affect the dynamic. The current interlocal has the Engineer coming one day a week, Bonar suggested every other week for a day. With the new assistant, the administrative tasks would be handled in that position and not the Engineer. After much discussion Council members decided to digest the information and have a special session to discuss the topics further. Council members requested a job description for the added assistant.

Rainy Day Resolution: A resolution to appropriate funds from the Rainy Day fund was presented to the County Council for consideration. The Highway department would like to budget matching reimbursable grant funds in the Rainy Day fund for the Local Trax Grant. A motion was made by Scott Elzey, seconded by Vicki Andrews to approve Resolution 2024-03 to appropriate funds from the Rainy Day fund. Motion carried 7-0.

Health First Indiana: Dr. Kay Johnson-Keys presented a proposal for increased reimbursement for her services regarding grant work for the Health Department. Addressed were three new labor-intensive grant applications that she has been gathering statistics for. She feels that the current rate of compensation is not enough for the work that is entailed for the applications. One grant had an application deadline of March 15, 2024, two for June 1, 2024. The County Council instructed Dr. Johnson-Keys to go through her Health Board first for approval. Dr. Johnson-Keys thought approval had already been given. Council members instructed Dr. Johnson-Keys to stop doing work that she didn't feel she was being paid for.

Amended 2024 Wells County Salary Ordinance: An updated 2024 Salary Ordinance was presented to Council for approval. The update, a stipend for the ADA Coordinator, had been previously approved by the County Council. A motion was made by Scott Elzey, seconded by Brandon Harnish to approve Ordinance 2024-04 Wells County 2024-2 Salary Ordinance. Motion carried 7-0.

Public Comment: Dale Best spoke about Uniontown Cemetery and the road that was cleared for access to the cemetery. He stated that when the highway department cleared a path to the cemetery for access, they left large trees in the roadway. To get to the cemetery visitors must step over and on the trees. Highway Supervisor Shawn Bonar was in the audience, they were going to discuss and remedy the issue.

Closing Comments: Council President Seth Whicker stated for public comment that Wells County pays their bills. This statement stemmed from a Commissioner meeting discussion regarding an Economic Development fee for service agreement. If work is being performed for a service, Wells County will pay for that service, Whicker stressed.

Adjourned: The 8:44PM motion was made by Brandon Harnish, seconded by Vicki Andrews to adjourn. Motion carried 7-0.

WELLS COUNTY COUNCIL

President, Seth Whicker

Vice President, Vicki Andrews

Attest: Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor