## WELLS COUNTY COUNCIL

## **REGULAR SESSION June 6, 2023**

Wells County Council met in regular session Tuesday, June 6, 2023, 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, Steve Huggins, Brian Lambert, Brandon Harnish, Scott Elzey, and Auditor Lisa McCormick.

<u>Minutes:</u> A motion was made by Vicki Andrews, seconded by Todd Mahnensmith to approve the minutes from May 2, 2023, regular session. Motion carried 7-0.

<u>Transfer:</u> A motion was made by Brian Lambert, seconded by Scott Elzey to approve a transfer in LIT Economic Development. Motion carried 7-0.

<u>Additional Appropriation:</u> A motion was made by Steve Huggins, seconded by Vicki Andrews to approve the Additional Appropriation request for Highway Maintenance & Repair. Motion carried 7-0.

**Bi-County Services:** Tim Ramsey presented the annual financial update and request for funding for Bi-County Services to the County Council. Tim stated that Bi-County's biggest challenge is staffing. Finding qualified staff is a difficulty that they are constantly working to overcome. Their focus currently is on maximizing program revenue, controlling operating expenses and improving staffing levels. An increase in wage to \$14.00 per hour has been implemented as well as 6 bonuses per staff person, based on hours worked, throughout the year. Bi-County is asking for a 10% increase in funding for 2024, \$45,408.00. Adams County Commissioners and Council have approved the same contribution amount. A motion was made by Todd Mahnensmith, seconded by Vicki Andrews to approve the 2024 funding of \$45,408.00 for Bi-County services. Motion carried 6-0-1. Seth Whicker abstained due to being on the Bi-County board.

<u>Highway Update:</u> Conor Jackson updated County Council on the Highway Garage progress. The foundation is complete. Structural steel and framing are as complete as possible. Siding is 50% complete. Plumbing is mostly complete with electrical in process. There have been hiccups recently. The strong winds in April caused some damage, bending and stretching of anchor bolts, which led to the discovery of some concrete issues. All repairs have been made and the issues alleviated, Conor is pleased with the progress. The construction end date is still February 4, 2024.

<u>Haven Manufacturing CF-1 Compliance:</u> Wells County Economic Development Director Chad Kline presented 5 CF-1 Compliance forms for Haven Manufacturing. One was issued in 2014, one issued in 2018, one issued in 2019, one issued in 2021 and one issued in 2022. A motion was made by Scott Elzey, seconded by Vicki Andrews to approve 5 CF-1 Compliance forms for Haven Manufacturing. Motion Carried 7-0.

Heartland Broadband CF-1 Compliance: Nick Caley presented CF-1 Compliance forms for Heartland REMC that were issued in 2019 for fiber development. Caley first updated the County Council on the Heartland project. The Uniondale zone is complete, 1200 homes are eligible for service, 720 have selected service. Jefferson, Liberty, and Warren are the next three service areas. Caley did not believe this would be a big service area, the current provider for that area is Citizens, which is a good provider. A motion was made by Todd Mahnensmith, seconded by Steve Huggins to approve the CF-1 Compliance forms for Heartland REMC. Motion carried 7-0.

Matrix Proposal: County Council was presented a County Matrix proposal for review. This proposal included all county employees not covered by an already approved pay matrix or another state pay schedule. Elected Officials are included on the proposed matrix with a wage of 20% more than the 20-year deputy wage for that office. Elected officials cannot get an increase in wages mid-year, those increases will be decided at budget time for 2024. Recognizing years of experience on the matrix for a new employee, who comes from a different county, was added to the conversation. Some thought that at a future date that might be a conversation, but not at the current time. The motion was made by Brandon Harnish, seconded by Brian Lambert to approve the Employee Pay Matrix effective July 1, 2023. Motion carried 7-0. Auditor McCormick asked if the Council would like County Attorney Storer to create an Ordinance to repeal Ordinance 1985-2 regarding the \$500 first year of service reduction. County Council members stated that they would like to have that Ordinance on the July agenda.

<u>Adjourned:</u> Wells County Council adjourned at 8:02PM. The motion was made by Vicki Andrews, seconded by Scott Elzey.

WELLS COUNTY COUNCIL	
President, Seth Whicker	Vice President, Vicki Andrews
Attest: Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor	