

WELLS COUNTY COUNCIL

REGULAR SESSION

July 02, 2024

Wells County Council met in regular session on Tuesday, July 2, 2024, at 7:00PM in the Wells County Carnegie Annex Building, 223 W Washington St., Bluffton, IN. Physically present at the meeting were Council members, Vicki Andrews, Steve Huggins, Scott Elzey, Todd Mahnensmith, Brandon Harnish, Brian Lambert, and Auditor, Lisa McCormick. Council President Seth Whicker participated in the meeting by electronic means of communication, Zoom, which allowed Whicker to simultaneously attend and observe the meeting. All votes taken during the meeting were taken by roll call vote.

Minutes: A motion was made by Scott Elzey, seconded by Todd Mahnensmith to approve the minutes from the June 4, 2024, regular session. Motion carried 7-0 by roll call vote.

A motion was made by Seth Whicker, seconded by Brandon Harnish to approve the minutes from the June 12, 2024, special session. Motion carried 6-0-1, Todd Mahnensmith abstained he was not present at the special session, by roll call vote.

Transfers: A motion was made by Steve Huggins, seconded by Brian Lambert to approve the transfer request in the General Fund for the Clerk's Records Perpetuation Fund. Motion carried 7-0 by roll call vote.

A motion was made by Todd Mahnensmith, seconded by Scott Elzey to approve the transfer request in Highway - Administration. Motion carried 7-0 by roll call vote.

Additional Appropriations: A motion was made by Brandon Harnish, seconded by Steve Huggins to approve the Additional Appropriation requests in the General Fund for the Auditor, and the County Election Board, the Drug Free Community (CADA) Fund, and the Wells County CASA Grant Fund. Motion carried 7-0 by roll call vote.

Wells County Sheriff: Sheriff Holliday reported 80 inmates, 27 pretrial Superior, 40 pretrial Circuit, 2 F6 Doc and 12 DOC. The monthly Officer/Jail report for June was presented to Council Members. The Commissary Report was distributed for the period of January through June and a Courthouse activity report was distributed for the months of April through June. Holliday updated Council on ongoing and new projects. The Courthouse security x-ray machine is aging, the Sheriff will look at possible updates and/or a new x-ray machine. An opening for a Sheriff Deputy is narrowing down, when a candidate is hired the next opening for training at the academy is in January 2025. The padded cell has been recovered at a cost of \$40,000, three bids were received for the project. The sheriff used LIT Public Safety funds for the project and might need additional funds appropriated later in the year.

Rainy Day Transfer Resolution: A resolution was presented to the County Council to transfer funds from the General Fund into the Rainy Day Fund. The Resolution states that Wells County Council desires to transfer certain unused and unencumbered funds from the General Fund into the Rainy Day Fund in the amount of Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$500,000.00). The Resolution will take effect upon passage. A motion was made by Brandon Harnish, seconded by Todd Mahnensmith to approve Resolution 2024-06 to transfer funds into the Rainy Day Fund. Motion carried 7-0 by roll call vote.

Utility Scale Solar Tax Abatement Ordinance: An Ordinance imposing a moratorium on tax abatements for commercial solar development in Wells County was presented to the County Council for review. The

Ordinance stated that this Ordinance shall not be deemed to impact, effect, delay, repeal, reject or deny any abatements for any prior and existing proposal. Also stated, the Council has found that there is a lack of public support for commercial solar facilities themselves and the suggestion of offering tax incentive for commercial solar facilities is even less popular. A motion was made by Scott Elzey, seconded by Brandon Harnish to approve and sign Ordinance 2024-10 imposing a moratorium on tax abatements for commercial solar development in Wells County. Motion carried 7-0 by roll call vote.

CADA Annual Report: Molly Hoag and Chris Walker presented the 2024 grant distributions for Citizens Against Drug Abuse (CADA). Funds for the grants are collected through the “Drug Free Community Fund”; a total of \$19,784.86 was collected in 2023 for distribution in 2024. Total grant requests for the 2024 period were \$19,333.21. The grants are divided within four categories: Administration, Education/Prevention, Treatment/Intervention, and Judicial. \$4,946.20 being distributed for Other/Admin, \$4,946.22 being distributed to Education/Prevention, \$4,944.22 being distributed to Treatment/Intervention, and \$4,496.57 being distributed to Judicial.

Bluffton City 911 Budget for 2025: 911 Director Mike Miller presented the proposed Bluffton City 911 budget to County Council. Per the interlocal agreement for the universal 911 dispatch center, the proposed budget must be presented to the Wells County Commissioners and Wells County Council for review. The proposed budget for 2025 totals \$1,303,130.00. The City of Bluffton will have a final review of this budget during their budgeting process.

Veterans Office 2023 Activity Report: Veterans Officer Dewey Randall presented 2023 statistics for local veterans. The Service Officer activity report included 731 walk-ins, 702 incoming calls, 465 outgoing calls, 228 claims filed, 401 questions, 81 new POA, and 43 Veteran deaths. Randall discussed area veteran population stats and funding that is provided by the US department of Veterans affairs to local entities.

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2025 Budgets: The 2025 Budget worksheets, Council General Fund, the Cumulative Capital Development Fund, the Rainy Day Fund, the LIT Correction/Rehab Facility Fund, the LIT Dedicated to PSAP Fund, and the LIT Dedicated to EMS Fund, were presented to the County Council for review. Council President Seth Whicker and Vice President Vicki Andrews had compiled the data for the worksheets. A motion was made by Steve Huggins, seconded by Todd Mahnensmith to approve the 2025 budget worksheets as presented. Motion carried 7-0 by roll call vote.

Library Board Appointment: Four applications were received for the expiring Library Board appointment and were reviewed by the County Council. A motion was made by Brandon Harnish, seconded by Steve Huggins to appoint Lauren Andrews to the Library board for a four-year term commencing on August 16, 2024 – August 15, 2028. Motion carried 7-0 by roll call vote.

Adjourned: A 7:55 PM motion was made by Brandon Harnish, seconded by Todd Mahnensmith to adjourn. Motion carried 7-0 by roll call vote.

WELLS COUNTY COUNCIL

President, Seth Whicker

Vice President, Vicki Andrews

Attest: Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor