

WELLS COUNTY COUNCIL

BUDGET SESSION August 11, 2022

The Wells County Council met in budget session Thursday, August 11, 2022, at 6:00PM in the Wells County Carnegie Annex Building, 223 W Washington St., Bluffton, IN. Present at the meeting were: Steve Huggins, Seth Whicker, Todd Mahnensmith, Chuck King, Jim Oswalt, Vicki Andrews, Scott Elzey and Auditor Lisa McCormick.

Sheriff: Sheriff Scott Holliday presented the general fund Sheriff's Office budget request of \$2,045,559, the Jail budget request of \$1,757,638 and LIT Public Safety budget request of \$529,671. The Sheriff was proposing one full-time security officer in lieu of all part time security. Three additional jailers were included in the jail budget request.

2022 Salary Ordinance: Clerk Beth Davis came before Council to request a pay rate for a part time position. She was requesting a \$15.00 per hour pay rate. The salary ordinance maximum rate is \$12.60 per hour for 2022. Motion was made by Seth Whicker, seconded by Chuck King to amend the 2022 Salary Ordinance to increase the maximum hourly rate for part time employees to \$15.00 per hour. Motion carried 7-0.

Auditor Lisa McCormick informed the Council Members that there was an operating balance of -\$89,243 in the General fund requested budget. Council Members agreed to look at salary increases after they reviewed the rest of the budgets.

Council members started reviewing each of the departments requested budgets. Council requested permission from Commissioner Gerber and Commissioner Vanover to move \$100,000 in EMS funding and \$100,000 in Care of Students into the LIT Economic Development fund. Commissioner Gerber did not have a problem with the EMS funding but would only allow up to \$50,000 be transferred for Care of Students. No reductions were made in the Solid Waste budget, Highway, the Surveyor, Health, Assessor, Recorder, Treasurer, Custodian, IT Department, Coroner, County Extension, Veterans, Soil & Water, Clerk, and Statewide 911. EMA had some cuts in PPE Supplies - \$3,000, Other Supplies - \$3,000, Travel, Lodging & Conf. Fees - \$500, and Room Rental - \$800. Area Plan had cuts made in Legal Services - \$830 and Travel, Lodging & Conf Fees for \$1,500. Superior Court had a cut made in Psychiatric Services - \$3,000. Circuit Court had a cut made in travel, Lodging & Conf fees - \$1,250. Community Corrections requested all annual wage increases to come from the General fund budget for all budgeted funds for their department. County Council cut those increases out of the General fund budget and moved those increases into the Project Income budget. The Sheriff's pension request was \$479,337, council opted to pay \$446,742 for Police Pension as well as offset it by another \$24,000 with fees from a user fee fund set up for police pensions. The Sheriff's Department also requested a full-time security position, council did not approve that position. Council approved of \$19.00 per hour for Courthouse Security for 2023. The Jail requested 3 additional jailers; Council did not add any additional jailers. The Auditor agreed to cut \$500 from Travel Lodging & Conf. Fees. Council cut increased wages out of their budget - \$1,519.

The Commissioners had requested an additional part time position for a Public Information Officer. This position would answer to the Commissioners. The work hours will average 10 hours per week with a pay rate of \$26.44/hour. Council approved the PIO position for 2023. The position will be reevaluated at 2023-year end. Council approved all board pay at \$65 per meeting. The Highway Department separated out job classifications and wages. Council approved of that transition and agreed that his

thought process was moving in the right direction. Community Corrections requested overtime pay for the employees in his department; two Case Managers, Field Officers 1 & 2 and the Administrative Assistant. The overtime line is in the Project Income budget. Council agreed to allow overtime pay for Community Corrections out of Project Income. The Health Department requested an increase in the Grant Administrator stipend to \$3,500, Council approved the request. The Auditor added Grant Administrator pay as a stipend for the Auditors grant job duties. Council approved the grant administrator pay. The Prosecutors office requested making a part time IV-D staff assistant into a full-time position. This would eliminate the part time position. Council agreed to allow the full-time position in leu of the part time. The Clerk requested adding \$3,000 additionally to her base wage for the cut in a deputy from her office in 2022. Council was open to considering that wage increase. The Surveyor brought to Councils attention that his Cornerstone stipend does not increase when budgets increase. Council agreed to add the Surveyor base pay and Cornerstones together when calculating the annual pay increase. A lengthy discussion followed regarding wage increases in all departments to bring all deputies in all departments in line with the Clerk and Auditors office. It was decided to recess and continue the wage discussion in more depth at the August 16th meeting.

Recess: Meeting recessed at 10:15PM until Tuesday, August 16th at 6PM.

WELLS COUNTY COUNCIL

President, Steve Huggins

Vice President, Seth Whicker

Attest: Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor