

WELLS COUNTY COUNCIL

BUDGET SESSION August 14, 2023

The Wells County Council met in budget session Monday, August 14, 2023, at 6:00PM 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, Scott Elzey, Brandon Harnish, Brian Lambert, and Auditor Lisa McCormick.

LIT Credits: Lit Property Tax Credit Allocations had been approved at the August 8th meeting for advertising. County Council was under the impression that those rates could go down after the public hearing if so decided. After the August 8th meeting, Auditor McCormick posed that question to the DLGF for confirmation. The DLGF stated that once the notice to taxpayers was advertised that decision could not be changed. A motion was made by Scott Elzey, seconded by Vicki Andrews to publish the Notice to Taxpayers on proposed Local Income Tax Ordinance 2023-12 with a reduction in credits of .09 with .05 going into LIT PSAP and .04 going into LIT EMS, the remaining credits will be distributed with 85% going to the 1% Allocation type and 15% going to the 2% Allocation type, the public hearing will be held on September 5, 2023, at 7PM. Motion carried 6-0.

Budget Discussions: Auditor Lisa McCormick informed the Council Members that there was an operating balance of -\$478,024 in the General fund requested budget. Council members started reviewing each of the department's requested budgets. No reductions were made in the Commissioner, Solid Waste, Health, Assessor, Recorder, Treasurer, IT, County Extension, Veterans, Soil & Water, Superior Court, Community Corrections, Auditor, Innkeepers, and Statewide 911. Council stated that no new positions would be considered initially. Cuts made from the budgets for additional personnel were the Highway budget, the Sheriff for a full-time Security position, the Jail for two additional jailers, and the Prosecutor for a part-time investigator. EMA had some cuts in PPE Supplies -\$4,000, Repair/Maint. Supplies -\$5,000, Travel, Lodging & Conf. Fees -\$2,000, Repairs & Maintenance -\$1,000, Room Rental - \$800, Machinery/Equipment -\$3,000, and Vehicle -\$3,000. Area Plan had cuts made in Legal Services - \$6,000 and Travel, Lodging & Conf Fees -\$2,000, also requested was \$70 in board pay, Council will leave board pay at \$65 for all boards. The Surveyor's Corner Perpetuation Capital Equipment was reduced - \$2,000. Circuit Court had made a request for an Assistant Chief Probation Officer stipend of \$5,000, it was budgeted in the General fund, Judge Kiracofe would like it moved into the Adult Probation Services fund, it was cut from the General fund budget. The Sheriff's pension request was \$535,696, council opted to pay \$500,336 for Police Pension. The jail budget was reduced in Jail supplies -\$10,000 and Meals -\$30,000. The Clerk had requested \$202,000 in the Election Board budget for new poll pads, the poll pads will be paid out of the Rainy Day budget so it was cut from the Election Board budget. The Coroner had requested an increase in pay for the on-call Coroner Deputies from \$75 per call up to \$125 per call, Council agreed on \$100 per call for 2024. A discussion regarding the PIO position in the Commissioners budget did not get a final decision. There was an entry error in the Courthouse budget so -\$12,600 was reduced in Pest Control.

A discussion followed regarding wage increases in all departments. The Highway and County employees, that were not already included in a pay matrix, had a pay matrix implemented during 2023. It was decided that those employees would not get another pay increase. County Elected Officials not already included in a pay matrix will go onto a matrix for 2024. Each official will be paid 20% more than the 20-year matrix amount for their department. The council tentatively settled on 3.5% increases for

part-time employees, the Sheriff's department, jail, and Probation Officers. Auditor McCormick will put the decisions agreed upon during the meeting into action and come back with updated budgeting numbers. It was decided to recess and continue the wage discussion in more depth at the August 23rd meeting.

Recess: Meeting recessed at 8:17PM until Tuesday, August 23rd at 6PM.

WELLS COUNTY COUNCIL

President, Seth Whicker

Vice President, Vicki Andrews

Attest: Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor