

**WELLS COUNTY COUNCIL**

**BUDGET SESSION August 16, 2022**

The Wells County Council met in budget session Tuesday, August 16, 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.

Council members began wage discussions with PT jailer pay and agreed to increase it to \$19.00 per hour for 2023. The Surveyor had asked for Drainage Board compensation for his Secretary who must now attend after hours. Council felt board pay for that employee was unnecessary and should use comp time for reimbursement for those services. Part time jailers will now have a range of pay from \$15-\$19 per hour. County Council would like to have at least \$200,000 to \$250,000 as an operating balance for the General Fund. Seth Whicker created a spreadsheet for compensation for departments with wage amounts for 2021, 2022 and 2023 proposed amounts. Suggestions for wage increases were varied. Steve Huggins would like to keep inflation at the forefront, so salaries are not losing ground. A discussion regarding wage increases in all departments, to bring all deputies in all departments in line with the Clerk and Auditors office, was started at the August 11<sup>th</sup> meeting. Percentage and flat wage increases were discussed with differing opinions. Scott Elzey and Vicki Andrews discussed increasing County Council pay for 2023 to keep it in line so qualified candidates would consider running for that office in the future. Wage discussions were narrowed down to 8% for Elected Officials and other employees, \$3,000 for Deputies in the Treasurer, Assessor, Recorder and Surveyors offices, 3% for Clerk and Auditor Deputies, no Council increases and 5% for Commissioners. The Surveyor would get 8% based on his base pay and Cornerstones combined to determine the increase. Council instructed the Auditor to run the numbers and determine what the operating balance would be. Motion was made by Seth Whicker, seconded by Todd Mahnensmith to approve of the proposed budgeted wage increases if the Operating balance is \$200,000 or above. Motion carried 7-0. If those numbers do not hold up Council will meet on August 18, 2022, for more negotiations. Chuck King stated that he opposed the funding of \$100,000 for EMS services. He believes that one day EMS will be consolidated with another service and the funding that had been given to them would be for naught. Seth Whicker stated the EMS covers all of Wells County and if that happened the Fire Department would have to take over. Whicker doesn't feel that any other department would want that responsibility at this time.

**Adjourned: County Council adjourned at 7:30.**

WELLS COUNTY COUNCIL

---

President, Steve Huggins

---

Vice President, Seth Whicker

---

Attest: Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor