WELLS COUNTY COUNCIL

BUDGET SESSION August 18, 2022

The Wells County Council met in budget session Thursday, August 18, 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, Vicki Andrews, Scott Elzey and Auditor Lisa McCormick. Jim Oswalt was absent.

Judge Kent Kiracofe and Chief Probation Officer Greg Werich were on hand to discuss Probation Officer pay ranges. Judge Kiracofe stated that Probation Officers wages are set at a minimum by the state. Probation Officer wages are impacted by years of service and education. The Supreme Court increased that minimum by 3.33% for 2023. Wells County Probation Officers are historically above the minimum. The 2023 submitted budget included the 3.33% Supreme Court increase. Council had discussion about how much they could, or should, increase Probation Officers wages.

Highway Supervisor Shawn Bonar addressed Council on Highway wages. He had suggested implementing a range of pay for his employees for 2023. The different departments in his Highway Fund make the ranges he wanted to implement impossible to do. Bonar suggested no changes for 2023, he will research more for the 2024 budget cycle.

Auditor Lisa McCormick informed the Council Members of an operating balance of \$180,029 when an 8% wage increase was implemented. Council would like no less than \$200,000, so started looking at other wage options. A 7.5% wage increase brought the operating balance up to an estimated \$207,000, 6% was roughly \$286,000 for the operating balance. Council preferred to go in between those two amounts and suggested a 7% increase in wages for all departments except the following exceptions: 3% for the Clerk and Auditor Deputies, \$3,000 + 3% for the Clerk, 3% for the Auditor + Grant Administrator stipend, 5% for Probation Officers and Chief Probation Officer, \$3,000 for Deputies in the Treasurer, Recorder, Assessor and Surveyor's offices, no increase for Council and 5% for Commissioners.

There was a discussion on the Cumulative Capital Development Fund rate. This fund will pay for the Highway garage project payment. Implementing the full rate of .0333 will generate \$655,000 for 2023. The Highway project is still fluid, Council decided to implement the full rate of .0333 for 2023.

Motion was made by Seth Whicker, seconded by Scott Elzey to implement all budgeting changes for the public hearing on September 6, 2022. Motion carried 6-0.

Adjourned: Meeting adjourned at 7:10PM.

WELLS CO	DUNTY COUNCIL
President, Steve Huggins	Vice President, Seth Whicker
Attest: Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor	