WELLS COUNTY COUNCIL

PUBLIC HEARINGS & REGULAR SESSION September 7, 2021

Wells County Council held three Public Hearings and the Regular Session on Tuesday, September 7, 2021, at 7PM in the Wells County Carnegie Annex Building, 223 W Washington St., Bluffton, IN. Present at the meeting were: Steve Huggins, Seth Whicker, Chuck King, Vicki Andrews, Todd Mahnensmith, Jim Oswalt, Scott Elzey, and Auditor Lisa McCormick.

PUBLIC HEARING: LIT Rates

Wells County Council held a public hearing regarding the proposed ordinance for local income tax imposed within Wells County. The proposed ordinance will decrease the current Property Tax Relief Rate from .3% to no less than .2% and increase the Expenditure Rate from 1.8% to not more than 1.9%. There were no public comments.

PUBLIC HEARING: Appropriations

Wells County Council held a public hearing on the matter of (i) appropriating the proceeds of the "Wells County, Indiana General Obligation Bonds, Series 2021" (the "Bonds"), in an amount not to exceed \$5,575,000, together with any investment earnings thereon, to be applied to pay all or a portion of the costs of the acquisition, construction, improvement, renovation, equipping and/or expansion of the existing jail facility located at 1615 West Western Avenue, Bluffton, Indiana 46714, together with any related improvements (collectively, the "Project"), including preliminary expenses and the costs of issuing the Bonds, and (ii) appropriating moneys from the Wells County ARP Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund, in an amount not to exceed \$2,700,000, for the purpose of paying all or a portion of the costs of the Project that are related to the County's response to the COVID-19 public health emergency, including, without limitation, (A) the renovation, repair and/or replacement of the HVAC system and air handling units at the jail facility, and (B) the construction, renovation, installation and/or equipping of a new inmate intake/processing space, isolation cells, visitation rooms and similar rooms to provide space designed to stop the spread of infectious diseases among inmates, staff and visitors at the jail facility. There were no public comments.

PUBLIC HEARING: 2022 Budgets

Public Hearing on Rock Creek Conservancy: The 2022 Rock Creek Conservancy requested budget is \$85,300 which is a fundable budget for the district. Council President Steve Huggins opened the floor for any public comment and there were no public comments.

Public Hearing on Wells County Solid Waste District: The 2022 Wells County Solid Waste District requested budget is \$225,866 which is a fundable budget for the district. Council President Steve Huggins opened the floor for any public comment and there were no public comments.

Public Hearing on Wells County Budget: The 2022 Wells County requested budget is \$23,432,620 which is a fundable budget. Council President Steve Huggins opened the floor for any public comment and there were no public comments.

REGULAR SESSION

<u>Minutes:</u> Motion made by Seth Whicker, seconded by Todd Mahnensmith to approve the minutes from the August 3, 2021 regular session, the August 3, 2021 Joint Executive session, the August 10, 2021 and August 12, 2021 budget meetings. Motion carried 7-0.

Transfers: Motion made by Chuck King, seconded by Vicki Andrews to approve transfers in the General Fund for Superior Court; also, a transfer for Community Corrections Project Income fund. Motion carried 7-0.

<u>Additional Appropriations</u>: Motion made by Todd Mahnensmith, seconded by Seth Whicker to approve the additional appropriation for the SR 301 Road Transfer fund. Motion carried 7-0. This appropriation will be reimbursed back to this fund after bonding for the jail renovation project is complete.

Wells County Sheriff: Sheriff Holliday reported 62 inmates, 19 pretrial Superior, 20 pretrial Circuit, 10 F6 DOC and 9 DOC. Monthly reports were also presented. Sheriff Holliday informed Council of additional improvement requests for the current jail renovation project. The sallyport would be enclosed and expanded as well as fire suppression unit upgrades. The proposed changes will add \$371,404.00 to the total renovation. Commissioners Woodward, Vanover and Gerber stated that they publicly support the additional improvement requests at their meeting earlier in the day. Motion made by Todd Mahnensmith, seconded by Chuck King to approve, and sign the change order for the additional renovations and costs. Motion carried 7-0.

Ordinance 2021-09: Wells County Council held a public hearing regarding the proposed ordinance for local income tax imposed within Wells County. There was a brief discussion on rates to be allocated into the Correctional or Rehabilitation Facilities expenditure fund. Council was looking at .06%, .07% or .08% to be allocated into that fund. The majority around the room preferred to reduce the Property Tax Relief Rate to .23% and redistribute .07% into the Correctional or Rehabilitation Facilities expenditure fund. That amount of funding would generate an estimated \$490,655 annually. Motion made by Vicki Andrews, seconded by Seth Whicker to approve Ordinance 2021-09 Modifying Local Income Tax Rates. Motion carried 7-0.

American Rescue Plan Act County Plan: Wells County has been allocated \$5,496,166 Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery funds. Wells County received its first tranche of funds in the amount of \$2,748,083 on June 7, 2021 and expects to receive its second tranche in May 2022. This plan describes how the county will spend those funds. The plan numbers are estimates for each category and may change based on need, COVID conditions and or bids/quotes that come in higher or lower. Likewise, projects may be added and or removed. This plan is to layout a roadmap for Wells County Government to utilize these dollars to have the greatest overall impact on Wells County. Input for this plan has been received from community members, business leaders, department heads and elected officials. Motion made by Jim Oswalt, seconded by Chuck King to approve the American Rescue Plan Act County Plan, updated as of September 2, 2021 (Misc. 2021-10). Motion carried 7-0.

<u>Ordinance 2021-12</u>: Motion made by Vicki Andrews, seconded by Todd Mahnensmith to adopt Ordinance 2021-12 establishing a Wells County ARP Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Plan. Motion carried 7-0.

Ordinance 2021-13: An ordinance was presented to Wells County Council pledging certain Federal Grants to pay for a portion of the costs of certain capital improvements to the existing Wells County Jail facility. Also, appropriating moneys from the Wells County ARP Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery fund for such purpose. The County has previously created and established the Wells County ARP Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (Fund Number 8950) into which certain grants received, or to be received, from the federal government pursuant to Section 603 of the Social Security Act, as added by Section 9901 of the American Reserve Plan Act of 2021 ("ARP") have been or will be deposited, for the purpose of paying certain costs incurred by the County prior to December 31, 2024, as permitted by the ARP and the regulations thereunder and in accordance with the County's ARP Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Plan previously adopted by the County. An appropriation from the Fund in the amount of Two Million Seven Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$2,700,000), to be used for the purpose of paying all or a portion of the costs of the Project that are related to the County's response to the COVID-19 public health emergency, including, without limitation, (A) the renovation, repair and/or replacement of the HVAC system and air handling units at the jail facility, and (B) the construction, renovation, installation and/or equipping of a new inmate intake/processing space, isolation cells, visitation rooms and similar rooms to provide space designed to stop the spread of infectious diseases among inmates, staff and visitors at the jail facility. Such appropriation shall be in addition to all appropriations provided for in the existing budget and shall continue in effect until the completion of the described purposes. A notice of a hearing on said appropriation has been duly given by publication as required by law, and the hearing on said appropriation has been held, at which all taxpayers and other interested persons had an opportunity to appear and express their views as to such appropriation. Motion made by Jim Oswalt, seconded by Seth Whicker to approve Ordinance 2021-13 pledging certain Federal Grants to pay for a portion of the costs of certain capital improvements to the existing Wells County Jail facility and appropriating moneys from the Wells County ARP Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery fund for such purpose. Motion carried 7-0.

Ordinance 2021-14: An ordinance was presented to Wells County Council authorizing the issuance of general obligation bonds of the county. Those bonds will provide funds to pay for the costs of certain capital improvements to the existing Wells County Jail facility and incidentals in connection therewith and on account of the issuance of the bonds, appropriating the proceeds of such bonds. Council has found that there are insufficient funds available or provided for in the existing budget and tax levy which may be applied to the costs of the Project and has authorized the issuance of the Bonds to procure a portion of such funds, and that a need exists for the making of the additional appropriation. A notice of a hearing on said appropriation has been duly given by publication as required by law, and the hearing on said appropriation has been held, at which all taxpayers and other interested persons had an opportunity to appear and express their views as to such appropriation. To provide financing for the Project, capitalized interest on the Bonds (if necessary), and incidental expenses incurred in connection therewith and on account of the issuance of the Bonds, the County shall borrow money and issue the Bonds as herein authorized. Such incidental expenses shall include, without limitation, all expenses of every kind incurred preliminarily to the funding of the Project, including the costs of issuing the Bonds. The County covenants that the proceeds of the Bonds will not be used for any purpose except as described in this Ordinance. The County hereby declares the official intent of the County to reimburse expenditures for the Project which may be incurred prior to the issuance of the Bonds with proceeds of the Bonds, when and if issued, in accordance with U.S. Treasury Regulation § 1.150-2 and Indiana Code § 5-1-14-6(c). Motion made by Seth Whicker, seconded by Todd Mahnensmith to approve Ordinance 2021-14 authorizing the issuance of general obligation bonds and appropriating the proceeds of such bonds. Motion carried 7-0.

Amended 2021 Salary Ordinance: An amended 2021 Salary Ordinance was presented to Wells County Council. Sheriff Holliday had requested an updated jail matrix allowing an employee to be eligible for a sergeant position after 1 year of employment instead of 2 years. The Health Department had requested a comp time and vacation day payout for two employees who had extra duties due to the COVID pandemic. Council had previously approved of those changes. Motion made by Vicki Andrews, seconded by Todd Mahnensmith to approve Ordinance 2021-15 that amends the 2021 Salary Ordinance. Motion carried 7-0.

2022 Budget Discussion: Council members discussed an outstanding budget request. Blake Poindexter had requested the current full-time Educator be made into a part time position in 2022. He had requested an hourly rate for that position to be \$27.35 for 2022. Motion made by Chuck King, seconded by Vicki Andrews to pay the Part-time Educator \$27.35 in 2022. Motion carried 7-0.

Adjourned: 7:40 PM Motion made by Todd Mahnensmith, seconded by Seth Whicker to adjourn. Motion carried 7-0.

WELLS COUNTY COUNCIL

President, Steve Huggins

Vice President, Seth Whicker

Attest: Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor