

## Wells County Commissioners

### Regular Session January 2, 2024

The Wells County Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, January 2, 2024, at 5:00 PM in the Commissioner's Room of the Wells County Carnegie Annex, Bluffton, IN. Those in attendance were Commissioners, Michael Vanover, Blake Gerber, and Jeff Stringer, Attorney Ted Storer and County Auditor Lisa McCormick.

**Re-organization of Board:** A motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Blake Gerber to appoint Commissioner Jeff Stringer as Commissioner President and Michael Vanover as Commissioner Vice President for 2024. Motion carried 3-0

**Minutes:** A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve the minutes from the December 18, 2023, regular session and the minutes from the December 18, 2023, Executive Session. Motion carried 3-0.

**Payroll and Claims:** A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve Payroll #26 in the amount of \$284,035.38 and 166 claims totaling \$681,652.63. Motion carried 3-0.

**Wells County Sheriff:** Sheriff Holliday reported 67 inmates, 17 pretrial Superior, 29 pretrial Circuit, 4 F6 DOC and 13 DOC. Holliday reported no building updates. Ameresco would like to have the final jail renovation payment, there are a couple outstanding HVAC items that Holliday would like completed prior to closeout. Ameresco will have representatives present at the January 16<sup>th</sup> meeting to discuss the matter.

**Highway Supervisor:** Supervisor Shawn Bonar updated the Commissioners on current projects. Equipment has been moved into the cold storage building for the winter at the new garage site. Bonar had requested approval to purchase merchandise from Northern Tool for the new highway garage. Northern Tool requires a credit account for purchases. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve Resolution 2024-01 approving a credit agreement for certain highway department purchases. Motion carried 3-0. Bonar updated the Commissioners on road conversions currently in process. 450S is getting added base stone, replaced, and resized cross pipes and tree removal, 450E is getting added base stone, and 100N is ready for base stone. The highway garage updates included plumbing fixtures are being installed, the sanitary line has been run to the pump station, painting and office areas are in process.

**Right-of-Way:** Five rights-of-way were presented to the Commissioners for approval. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve the five rights-of-way. Motion carried 3-0. Eric Gerber submitted a public sewer request for approval, Attorney Storer needed more time to research the document. The document from Eric Gerber was tabled until the January 16<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**Annual Disclosure Certification:** A motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Blake Gerber to sign the annual certification regarding disclosure of county contracts with the business interests of relatives. Motion carried 3-0.

**2024 Solid Waste Salary Contract:** A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve the 2024 Solid Waste Contract (Misc. 2024-01). Motion carried 3-0.

**2024 Board Appointment:** A recommendation was made by Blake Gerber to keep the appointments as they are for the Chamber of Commerce board and Economic Development board until an agreement is signed for 2024.

**ARPA Expenditures:** The expected expenditure for the ARPA funds is for utilities that will be run to the new highway garage. When those expenditures are finalized, the ARPA plan will be modified for that use.

**ADA Coordinator:** The subject was tabled until the January 16<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**Public Comment:** Jennifer Brink, 920 River Road, spoke regarding Health First Indiana. June 1, 2024, is the deadline for counties to opt in for 2025 funding. Brink suggested additional health board meetings to make sure the deadline could be met. Clarence Ostrander, 1533 W. Cherry St., asked for an update regarding property that is county owned, adjacent to his own property. He has commented previously that he has maintained the property for many years and would like to be the deed holder. Commissioner Gerber stated that Wells County was looking into it and would comment later.

**Vera Cruz Bridge:** INDOT representatives have reached out to Wells County officials with the possibility of acquiring the Vera Cruz bridge. This is a historic structure, INDOT would supply some funding to revitalize the bridge. Commissioner Gerber has spoken to several contacts regarding the bridge, opt out was the consensus. The subject will be revisited on January 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Adjourned:** Wells County Commissioners adjourned at 5:36 PM, motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover. Motion carried 3-0.

### Wells County Commissioners

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President, Jeff Stringer

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Vice President, Michael Vanover

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Member, Blake Gerber

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor