

Wells County Commissioners

Regular Session January 3, 2022

The Wells County Commissioners met in regular session on Monday January 3, 2022, at 9:00AM in the Commissioner's Room of the Wells County Carnegie Annex, Bluffton, IN. Those in attendance were Commissioners, Blake Gerber, Michael Vanover and Jeff Stringer, County Attorney, Colin Andrews and County Auditor, Lisa McCormick.

Re-organization of Board: Auditor Lisa McCormick asked for nominations for the Board of Commissioners for 2022. Motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Michael Vanover to appoint Commissioner Michael Vanover as Commissioner President and to appoint Blake Gerber as Commissioner Vice-President. Motion carried 3-0.

Minutes: Motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to approve the minutes from the December 20, 2021, regular session. Motion carried 3-0.

Payroll and Claims: Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve Payroll #26 in the amount of \$246,881.75. Motion carried 3-0. Motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to approve 202 claims totaling \$387,179.13. Motion carried 3-0.

Wells County Sheriff: Sheriff Holliday reported 73 inmates, 32 pretrial Superior, 22 pretrial Circuit, 6 F6 DOC and 8 DOC. The jail renovation is on schedule, the new intake will be ready for use next month.

Highway Supervisor: Supervisor Shawn Bonar updated the Commissioners on ongoing projects. Brush cutting, grading gravel roads, and getting snow equipment ready for winter are the main projects. Commissioner Stringer inquired about 700N off Marzane Rd, Shawn stated that it should be finished today. The road needed swept for more even distribution of the stone.

Highway Engineer: Nate Rumschlag updated the commissioners on ongoing projects. Community Crossing Matching Grant 2022-01 opens today. Rumschlag will have the application and letter of commitment ready for approval and signatures at the January 18th meeting. Bridge 403 is an awarded CCMG 2021-02 project. Rumschlag was requesting permission to put this project out for bid. Motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to bid out Bridge 403 CCMG 2021-02. Motion carried 3-0. A public hearing for Bridge 106 was held for public comment. Nate Rumschlag stated that the event was lightly attended for the project. Information was distributed for those that attended to distribute to their neighbors.

Ossian Rescue Truck: Ossian Fire Chief Ben Fenstermaker reported to the Commissioners that the demo Spartan Rescue Truck was delivered to Ossian for inspection. Fenstermaker stated that it has more storage than expected and the unit fit into the fire house perfectly. The total cost for the unit with some upgrades and training is \$535,554.00. The cost to build a similar truck would be approximately \$750,000. Commissioner Gerber was going to investigate financing options with more discussion at the January 18th meeting. Ben Fenstermaker supplied an Emergency Vehicle sales contract with Hoosier Fire Equipment, Inc. This contract is for 90-day delivery, which will allow for upgrades on the unit to be completed as well as financing options to be investigated by Wells County. Motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to approve, and sign the Emergency Vehicle Sales Contract with Hoosier Fire Equipment, Inc. Motion carried 3-0.

Annual Nepotism Policy: The Annual Certification Regarding Disclosure of County Contracts with the Business Interests of Relatives was presented to the Commissioners for signatures.

2022 Solid Waste Contract: Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the 2022 Solid Waste Contract (Misc. 2022-01). Motion carried 3-0.

County Highway Garage: Nate Rumschlag gave an update on the Highway Garage. A progress kick off meeting is scheduled for Wednesday. Commissioner Stringer showed interest in attending the meetings.

Interlocal Agreements: Wells County is currently in negotiations with the City of Bluffton with two different interlocal agreements. One for Engineering Services and one for a joint Emergency Communications Department. Both of those agreements are in the City of Bluffton's hands for consideration.

Opioid Settlement: County Attorney Colin Andrews completed registration for Wells County to be included in a class action Opioid Settlement. Andrews will update the Commissioners as needed.

Unsold Tax Sale Property: This unsold property is a garage that had been split off the adjoining property from the house. It is currently a rental property; the current owner is not the owner of the garage. Auditor McCormick stated that a tax sale certificate has been issued to the Commissioners. The next step is to inform the owner of record, they then have 120 days to redeem the property. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to have Attorney Colin Andrews draft a letter to the owner of record on the Auditor letterhead. Motion carried 3-0.

2022 Board Appointments: Motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Michael Vanover to re-appoint Blake Gerber to the Chamber of Commerce board. Motion carried 3-0. Motion was made by Blake Gerber seconded by Jeff Stringer to appoint Jeff Stringer to the Economic Development board. Motion carried 3-0. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to re-appoint Michael Vanover to the EMA Advisory Board. Motion carried 3-0. Motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Michael Vanover to appoint Christopher Esterling to the Health Department Board for a 4-year term. Motion carried 2-1, Gerber voted no. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to re-appoint Theresa Salzano to the Huntington City/Town Public Library Board for a 4-year term. Motion carried 3-0. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to re-appoint Larry McChessney to the Property Tax Board of Appeals. Motion carried 3-0. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to appoint Chandler Gerber to the Property Tax Board of Appeals. Motion carried 3-0. Assessor Kelly Herman stated that there were outstanding appeals and would like permission for the outgoing PTABOA board member, Beth Singleton, to sit on the board for those appeals. Commissioner Blake Gerber showed support for that suggestion but no motion was made.

Title VI Coordinator: Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to appoint Colin Andrews as the Title VI Coordinator for Wells County. Motion carried 3-0. Former County Attorney Roy Johnson was the Title VI Coordinator for Wells County. County Attorney Colin Andrews will assume the Title VI Coordinator duties. Andrews informed the Commissioners that he is pursuing required classes through INDOT and updating the Title VI Policy.

Adams Wells Internet Telecom TV Support: A letter of support from the Commissioners for the Adams Wells Internet Telecom TV application for the Next Level Connections grant was presented for approval. The letter stated that rural areas throughout Wells County are in desperate need of better internet service. It is critical that our schools, hospitals, libraries, and businesses have access to a robust broadband service. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve, and sign the letter of support for Adams Wells Internet TV grant application. Motion carried 3-0.

Master Plan Growth Document: Economic Director Chad Kline came before the Commissioners requesting support for the Town of Zanesville. His request of \$10,000 was for partial funding from Wells County for a Master Plan Growth document for the Town of Zanesville. This study will identify future growth areas and ways to improve the area. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve partial funding of \$10,000 for the study, to be paid out of LIT funds. Motion carried 3-0.

Ossian Spec Building: Economic Director Chad Kline came before the Commissioners requesting support for a spec building in Ossian. His request was for a partnership between Ossian and Wells County in a 60/40 split. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to agree on a partnership with Ossian for the future spec building. Motion carried 3-0.

Maumee River Basin Commission: Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to provide a letter to Rodney Renkenberger, Executive Director of the Maumee River Basin Commission, appointing Diana Collins as proxy for Blake Gerber for the Maumee River Basin Commission meetings. Motion carried 3-0.

Adjourned: Wells County Commissioners adjourned at 10:50AM, motion made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer. Motion carried 3-0.

Wells County Commissioners

President, Michael K Vanover

Vice President, Blake Gerber

Jeff Stringer

Attest: _____
Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor