

Wells County Commissioners

Regular Session January 16, 2024

The Wells County Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday January 16, 2024, at 5:00PM in the Commissioner's Room of the Wells County Carnegie Annex, Bluffton, IN. Those in attendance were Commissioners, Jeff Stringer, and Blake Gerber, County Attorney Ted Storer and County Auditor Lisa McCormick. Michael Vanover was absent.

Minutes: A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the minutes from the January 2, 2024, regular session. Motion carried 2-0.

Payroll and Claims: A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve Payroll #1 in the amount of \$289,179.16 and 163 claims totaling \$530,361.62. Motion carried 2-0.

Wells County Sheriff: Sheriff Holliday reported 74 inmates, 18 pretrial Superior, 32 pretrial Circuit, 3 F6 DOC and 17 DOC. Holliday reported a slight roof leak in a cell block area in the new roofing area. The leak will be addressed to Ameresco. Also reported was a sewer smell that has been detected in the Administrative area. Upon further investigation faulty venting between the cement walls in the restroom area has been found. The Sheriff is getting quotes for the repair and will report back. Holliday requested a wording change for the Sheriff Department Civilian sick bank policy. The current policy requires a current employee to opt in within 4 months of hire. If that employee wants to enroll later, they are currently required to donate sick days that would have been applied to their sick bank enrollment upon hire. Holliday suggested a wording change to "if a full-time employee who did not previously want to join, wishes to join the sick leave bank, he/she must deposit two (2) sick days in January and may not withdraw from the sick leave bank for one year". A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the updated sick leave bank policy for Sheriff Department Civilian employees and sign the document. Motion carried 2-0.

Highway Supervisor: Shawn Bonar updated the Commissioners on ongoing projects. Snow and tree removal, hauling stone and moving items to the new Highway Garage site are keeping the employees occupied. The 450S, 400E and 100N road conversions are progressing. The highway garage update included: electrical is getting finished up in the service area, a transformer for the sanitary pump station is expected to be installed, painting is in process, low voltage is in process and floor paint will be complete next week.

Ordinance Updates: Michael Lautzenheiser, Jr. presented three Ordinance amendments for Commissioner review. The amendments came with a do pass from the Area Plan Commission. A Wells County Zoning Amendment Ordinance was discussed with the Commissioners. Lautzenheiser highlighted the amendments within the Ordinance. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve, and sign Ordinance 2024-01 amending the Wells County Zoning Ordinance. Motion carried 2-0. A Wells County Subdivision Control Ordinance was discussed with the Commissioners, Lautzenheiser highlighted the amendments to the proposed Ordinance. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve, and sign Ordinance 2024-02 amending the Wells County Subdivision Control Ordinance. Motion carried 2-0. A Wells County Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance was discussed with the Commissioners. Lautzenheiser discussed and highlighted the amendments within the Ordinance. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to

approve, and sign Ordinance 2024-03 amending the Wells County Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance. Motion carried 2-0.

Markle Fish & Game Park: Mike Grant and Nick Lund updated the Commissioners on projects for Markle park and to ask for a commitment of funding for a grant application. The grant, if approved, would provide funding for updates to the softball diamond(s), pool house, stage, beach, slides, playground equipment, pickleball court, batting cage(s), among others. The ask was for a commitment from the Commissioners of a specified dollar amount to be included in the grant. The Commissioners stated that they will make a commitment to contribute funds but would like to wait for all Commissioners to weigh in on the dollar amount.

Workers Compensation Renewal: Walker Hughes Insurance presented an updated Workers Compensation Renewal to the Commissioners. The effective date of the policy is 02/01/2024-02/01/2025. One quote proposal was offered which was Indiana Public Employers' Plan for \$74,040, which was down from the prior premium. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to accept the Indiana Public Employers' Plan proposal for \$74,040 and allow the President to sign the proposal. Motion carried 2-0.

Portable Alcohol Unit Contract: Community Corrections Director Blake Poindexter presented a portable alcohol unit contract for Commissioner review. This is a new vendor contract for the alcohol monitoring system for his department. The system will have a cost savings of .30 cents per day for each unit. He currently has 14 to 16 units in use per day. The contract is for 36 months and has automatic renewal language included in the contract for an additional 12 months. Commissioners Stringer and Gerber would like to have an advance renewal notification to alert the Director prior to the deadline. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the portable alcohol unit contract with prior renewal notification included. Motion carried 2-0.

Right-of-Way and Utility Permit: Two rights-of-way and an application for a permit to locate buried or overhead utility were presented to the Commissioners for review. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the two rights-of-way and utility permit. Motion carried 2-0.

Engineer Interlocal Agreement: An interlocal agreement was presented for review between Adams County and Wells County regarding part-time engineering services for Wells County. Adams County employes Engineer Nate Rumschlag as a full-time engineer. The Interlocal Agreement would allow Rumschlag to perform part-time engineering services for Wells County at a rate of \$1,500 per day as a reimbursement to Adams County. The term of the agreement is from January 15, 2024, and continues for 90 days, with no auto renewal clause. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the Interlocal Agreement with Adams County for part-time engineering services. Motion carried 2-0.

Vera Cruz Bridge: Highway Supervisor Bonar asked the Commissioners if they were interested in acquiring the Vera Cruz bridge from INDOT. The Commissioners instructed Bonar to respond back to INDOT that they were not interested in acquiring the bridge.

ADA Coordinator: A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to appoint Bobbette Studebaker as the ADA Coordinator for Wells County through December 31, 2024. Motion carried 2-0.

Statement of Wages and Compensation: The Commissioners received and reviewed the annual 100R report and the Summary of Receipts and Expenditures for 2023. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to accept the 100R and the Summary of Receipts and Expenditures. Motion carried 2-0.

Local Trax Document: A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve, and sign a letter with USI regarding Local Trax Grant funding. Motion carried 2-0.

Public Comment: Jennifer Brink, 920 River Road, wanted to discuss Health First Indiana. June 1st is the deadline for Wells County to opt in for 2025 Health First funding. Brink thought other entities should be brought in for discussion and comment for Health First funding. She suggested looking at Economic Development, industry, and business owners regarding how accepting the funding would make Wells County more appealing for residents and businesses to relocate to our area.

Adjourned: Wells County Commissioners adjourned at 6:27PM. The motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer. Motion carried 2-0.

Wells County Commissioners

President, Jeff Stringer

Vice President, Michael K Vanover

Member, Blake Gerber

Attest: _____
Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor