

Wells County Commissioners

Regular Session January 18, 2022

The Wells County Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday January 18, 2022, at 9:30AM 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, County Attorney, Colin Andrews and County Auditor, Lisa McCormick.

Minutes: Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the minutes from the January 3, 2022, regular session. Motion carried 3-0.

Payroll and Claims: Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve Payroll #1 in the amount of \$263,588.64 and 158 claims totaling \$408,155.12. Motion carried 3-0.

Wells County Sheriff: Sheriff Holliday reported 85 inmates, 35 pretrial Superior, 28 pretrial Circuit, 7 F6 DOC and 9 DOC. An annual Jail Inspection Report was distributed to the Commissioners. Construction is on schedule; current projects are fire alarm loops and lighting.

Highway Supervisor: Shawn Bonar updated the Commissioners on ongoing projects. The highway employees are currently spot grading gravel roads. Crews have been brush cutting north and south. As weather allows, broken tiles are being repaired. A 20-year employee is leaving, a replacement should be starting next week. Conor Jackson from Jackson Construction updated the Commissioners on the Highway Garage. A programming meeting was held, the meeting lasted 6 hours. PCI should have a preliminary floor plan this week based off the information from that meeting. The parking bay area width has been increased due to the turning radius of the trucks. Stody is performing a Topographical survey to be completed by the end of the week for the garage site.

Highway Bids: The highway advertised for bids for Bituminous Dust Control Material Liquid, Stone/Aggregates, Bituminous Material Liquid, Fuel, Aluminum Box Culverts, Precast Concrete Arch Structures and Boxes, All Steel Bridge Packages Including Beam Span and Truss Structures, Bridge Decking Products, Treated Timber Bridge Products, Steel Pipe Products and Miscellaneous Pipe and Fittings. Bids for products were received from Irving Materials, IMI, Rock Creek Stone Quarry, Klink Trucking, US Aggregates, Asphalt Materials, National Oil & Gas, Steffen Oil, St. Regis Culvert, Worthington Industries, K-Tech Specialty Coatings, American Timber Bridge and Civil Con. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to accept all bids for 2022, to be used at the discretion of the Highway department, based on location and availability. Motion carried 3-0.

Highway Engineer: Nate Rumschlag presented letters of financial commitment for the commissioners' signatures. The first letter of commitment is for the 2022-1 Community Crossings matching grant for Bridge 19. The total estimated project cost is \$625,862.50, requiring \$156,287.50 in county matching funds. The matching funding would come from LIT Bridge funds. The second letter of commitment is for the 2022-1 Community Crossings matching grant for CR 450 E. The total estimated project cost is \$533,249.52, requiring \$133,312.38 in county matching funds. The matching funding would come from the Highway CCMG line. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve, and sign the letters of commitment for Bridge 19, and CR 450 E, 2022-01 CCMG. Motion carried 3-0. Nate Rumschlag also presented a letter of financial commitment for the NOFA 2026 Federal Grant. This letter of commitment is for 200 S, Phase 1. The total estimated project cost is \$614,425.00, requiring

\$122,885.00 in county matching funds. The matching funding would come from SR 301 Relinquishment Fund. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve, and sign the letter of commitment for NOFA 2026 for 200 S, Phase 1 Preliminary Engineering. Motion carried 3-0. A road closure for Bridge 121 will start this week for approximately 90 days. Notice went out to the media and emergency services. Bid opening for Bridge 403 is February 3rd. Rumschlag also presented an Ordinance placing a stop sign at the intersection of Spruce Drive and Maple Drive. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve Ordinance 2022-01 to place a stop sign at the intersection of Spruce Drive and Maple Drive when applicable. Motion carried 3-0. Commissioner Gerber stated that the barriers at the West exit of Premier Flats were not supposed to be removed until the apartment complex is rented at 80% capacity (reference July 6, 2020, Commissioner minutes). Rumschlag was unaware of that stipulation as was acting upon the City's request. Rumschlag will investigate further. The Stormwater SRF Grant for the Murray project requires a drugfree workplace certification. The Indiana Finance Authority was requesting this document as part of the grant paperwork. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve, and allow the President to sign the State of Indiana Drug-Free Workplace Certification. Motion carried 3-0. Six rights of way were presented to the commissioners for approval, motion made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the right of ways. Motion carried 3-0.

Veterans Annual Report: Dewey Randall updated the Commissioners on the 2021 activity in the Veterans Office. Walk-ins, incoming calls, outgoing calls, claims, and questions were all up in 2021. New POA and Veteran deaths were down in 2021. Randall has completed on-line courses and gained accreditation with the Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs. A Veteran ID card outreach event was held, he felt the response was good. Randall thanked the Commissioners for his 2022 reappointment.

Economic Development Annual Report and 2022 Agreement: Economic Development Director Chad Kline presented his 2021 Annual Report. Chad went over the Key Activities including business expansion & retention, industrial attraction, education & information, workforce development, collaboration & networking and revolving loan funding. Wells County Economic Development partnered with Purdue for National Manufacturing Day 2021. 300 Wells County students were able to participate. The report indicated \$34 million in new investment, 135 new jobs and \$4.7 million in new payroll. The 2022 projects include continued speculative building space, broadband growth, housing development, promote Wells County to increase tourism, population attraction and population retention, facilitate training programs for employers, among others. Kline also presented the 2022 Economic Development Agreement for Commissioner review. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the 2022 agreement for performance of Economic Development Services for \$100,000 (Misc. 2022-02). Motion carried 3-0.

Zoning Ordinance Amendment: Mike Lautzenheiser presented a recommended APC do pass amendment to the Wells County zoning ordinance. The recommended zoning changes are from Suburban-1 Zoned District to an Industrial-1 Zoned District. The property is located at 2570 N. Main, Craigville, IN 46731. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve Ordinance 2022-02 amending Wells County zoning ordinance and zone maps. Motion carried 3-0.

Ossian Rescue Truck: The Commissioners are pursuing financing with a municipal lease via the Indiana Bond Bank. If other financing options are needed, Commissioners will advertise for an RFQ. Ben Fenstermaker provided an update, the unit is having maintenance performed prior to delivery. The upgraded seats are 20 weeks out.

Statement of Wages and Compensation: Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to acknowledge that they received and reviewed the annual 100R report and the Summary of Receipts and Expenditures for 2021. Motion carried 3-0.

Unsold Tax Sale Property: Attorney Colin Andrews stated that the unsold tax sale property is under the 120-day redemption period. Andrews stated that the current owner has not shown interest in redeeming the property.

Temporary Remote Work Policy: County Attorney Colin Andrews presented a Temporary Remote Work policy for Commissioner comment. The policy would amend the Wells County personnel policy and employee handbook. The remote work policy would be in place in the event of a health pandemic or an FMLA-qualifying condition of an employee. The temporary remote work policy includes the necessity for employees to complete the temporary remote work request form. The employee and the employee's elected official and or department head supervisor must complete and submit the remote work log to the Auditor's office with the pay voucher. Each request will be presented to the Commissioners for approval by each department head. The remote policy that was presented did not have the clarification that the Commissioners approve each submission. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve Resolution 2022-01 amending the Wells County Personnel Policy and employee handbook adding the temporary remote work policy with the amended statement that the Commissioners approve each request. Motion carried 3-0.

Health Department Update: Health Administrator Marlene Hoag presented an update for the Commissioners. Wells County is designated as Orange, unofficially she stated Wells Counties designation would be changing to Red. We have a 30% positivity rate. Testing is done at the Health Department on Monday mornings and Thursday's, all day. The Moderna, Pfizer and Johnson and Johnson vaccines are being administered at the Health Department on Monday afternoons and Wednesday's, all day. Tuesday afternoons are being added for vaccines. There have been restrictions put on tests, under 18 with symptoms and over 50 with symptoms may be tested. The week of January 2 through the 8th, 37 out of 44 tested positive for the Omicron variant.

RQAW: Josh Goodman from RQAW was on hand to discuss a parting of ways between RQAW and the Wells County Commissioners. Goodman just wanted to reinforce RQAW's position to move forward and open the path for future projects. Commissioner Vanover stated that the Commissioners would have no problem reaching out for future projects.

Adjourned: Wells County Commissioners adjourned at 10:43AM. Motion made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer. Motion carried 3-0.

Wells County Commissioners

President, Michael K Vanover

Vice President, Blake Gerber

Member, Jeff Stringer

Attest: _____
Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor