

Wells County Commissioners
Regular Session February 20, 2024

The Wells County Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, February 20, 2024, at 5:00 PM in the Commissioner's Room of the Wells County Carnegie Annex, Bluffton, IN. Physically present were Commissioners, Michael Vanover, Blake Gerber, County Attorney, Ted Storer and County Auditor, Lisa McCormick. Commissioner Jeff Stinger was present via Zoom, he could only be heard, not seen, so he was not a voting member.

Minutes: A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve the minutes as presented from the February 5, 2024, regular session, the February 5, 2024, Executive session, and the February 14, 2024, Executive Session. Motion carried 2-0.

Payroll and Claims: A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve Payroll #4 in the amount of \$296,620.20 and 214 claims totaling \$509,289.81. Motion carried 2-0.

Wells County Sheriff: Michael Vanover reported the jail numbers, 82 inmates, 31 pretrial Superior, 41 pretrial Circuit, 3 F6 DOC and 6 DOC.

Library Updates: Sarah MacNeill and John Stauffer presented an update of statistics for the Wells County Library. 372 children have completed 1000 books before kindergarten program. The Library now has memory kits and puzzles for Alzheimer's and Dementia patients. There was an increase of 951 new library cards, 6.7%. Circulation of physical material was up 14%, eMaterial was up 19%, eAudiobooks was up by 35%, eBooks by 32% and eMagazines by 245%. Public computer use held steady with a 2% increase and wireless connections increased by 20%. Meeting room use was up 15%, study room use was up 15%, supervised visits was the only decrease with 3%. Reference questions increased by 8%, programming attendance increased by 38%, book-a-librarian increased by 44%, notary services increased by 12% and the patron count increased by 8%. New programs include overnight pick-up lockers at Bluffton and Ossian branches and Southern Wells Jr./Sr. High School, which allows patrons to pick up materials outside operating hours. 354 patrons were assisted during tax season, and Sprunger and Sprunger hosted a pro bono day.

Wells County Highway Supervisor: Shawn Bonar updated the Commissioners on ongoing projects. The highway department is completing tasks in the new highway garage. Road conversion updates include final stone on 450S, and 100N is getting pipes replaced. The garage update included the pump station pumps are in and toilets are flushing, the electrical is winding down, salt storage is complete, the punch list is reducing but not totally complete. Bonar is planning on working out of the new building on Thursday of this week. Bonar spoke to a ROW holdout; he stated that the holdout will now work with the highway. The property owner requested a 25' ROW in lieu of 30' ROW, Commissioner Gerber would like the location so he can view the specifics on this area. The Commissioners were updated on current grants. Bonar spoke of his increased job responsibilities since the departure of Engineer Rumschlag. Rumschlag assists one day a week, per the Interlocal Agreement with Adams County. Bonar referred to additional meetings regarding grants as well as getting the ERC license so Wells County could fulfill requirements for current and future obligations. Bonar suggested a stipend be issued for compensation for those additional responsibilities. Also requested was an additional full-time front office employee to assist with the additional duties. Commissioners Gerber and Vanover offered gratitude to Bonar for stepping up with the increased job responsibilities.

Council on Aging: 2023 Wells on Wheels stats were presented to the Commissioners. The statistics are trending up and keeping the drivers busy. Betsy Collier submitted the 4th Quarter 2023 invoice for reimbursement. The invoice amount was \$205,592. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve, and allow the Vice President to sign the 4th Quarter 2023 claim. Motion carried 2-0.

Right-of-Way and Utility Permits: Four rights-of-way were presented for Commissioner approval. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve the four rights-of-way. Motion carried 2-0. Three utility permits were presented for Commissioner approval. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve the three utility permits. Motion carried 2-0.

Adjourned: Wells County Commissioners adjourned at 5:46 PM, the motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover. Motion carried 2-0.

Wells County Commissioners

President, Jeff Stringer

Vice President, Michael K Vanover

Member, Blake Gerber

Attest: _____
Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor