

Wells County Commissioners
Regular Session February 21, 2023

The Wells County Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, February 21, 2023, 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. Also, in attendance were County Attorney, Ted Storer and County Auditor, Lisa McCormick.

Minutes: Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the minutes as presented from the February 6, 2023, regular session and the February 6, 2023, Executive session. Motion carried 3-0.

Payroll and Claims: Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve Payroll #4 in the amount of \$279,946.19 and 328 claims totaling \$793,954.57. Motion carried 3-0.

Wells County Sheriff: Jeff Stringer reported the jail numbers: 65 inmates, 20 pretrial Superior, 29 pretrial Circuit, 8 F6 DOC and 4 DOC.

Wells County Highway Supervisor: Shawn Bonar updated the Commissioners on ongoing projects. Crews are beginning brush removal for the road conversion on CR 500W between 800S & 900S. Also, work is beginning for a road conversion on CR 200W between 1000N and 1100N. Tree and brush removal is continuing for the Bridge 105 project. Low voltage pricing was presented from a vendor. Commissioner Jeff Stringer would like to see other pricing options before a final review is made. Bonar had some pricing options for two trucks that if purchased could be put into the fleet by August of 2023. These trucks were ordered by other entities who had not followed through with the purchase. One truck, an International, could be purchased from Selking for a total price of \$242,000 including a 5-year warranty. The second truck, a Western Star, could be purchased from Stoops for a total price point of \$250,894. Bonar stated that this pricing was a unique opportunity with substantial savings to Wells County for these particular trucks. IC 5-22-10-5 states that a purchasing agent may make a special purchase when there exists a unique opportunity to obtain supplies or services at a substantial savings to the governmental body. County Attorney Ted Storer concurred that this circumstance would allow for the purchase. Motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to authorize the purchase of two trucks for a total price of \$492,894. Motion carried 3-0. Bonar stated that he is rebuilding the bodies on two 2014 trucks to increase the life span an additional 5 years. Bonar updated the Commissioners on the highway garage. The cold storage concrete slab is complete. The main building foundation is continuing as weather permits and the steel erection is scheduled to begin next week on the east side of the building.

Highway Engineer: Nate Rumschlag informed the Commissioners that CTL Engineering is completing an asbestos survey on Bridge 105. Cost of the survey is \$900 and will be a reimbursable to Janssen & Spaans. This will ensure that there are no asbestos containing materials on the bridge ahead of the replacement project. Rumschlag stated that this is unavoidable for federal projects. INDOT is looking into the crash history for the intersection of CR 300W & US 224. A concerned citizen contacted INDOT about the accidents at that intersection. Rumschlag confirmed that he would participate in any way to get safety improvements for our community. INDOT is considering some striping changes to the angles of approach, modify the curve, increasing the stop bar, or ancillary stop signs. Rumschlag will respond back in agreement with some of the options and suggest lighted stop signs or spinners for the stop signs.

Commissioner Gerber appreciates the spinners that have been installed on some stop signs around Wells County. A resident has requested adding stop signs at West and Market Street and West and Railroad Street in Craigville. Rumschlag said that similar improvements were done in Murray after the sewer project was completed. Rumschlag will have the County Attorney prepare an Ordinance to add the stop signs in Craigville and then add that to the traffic control ordinance. An agreement was presented for Bridge 54 for inspection services related to that federal aid project with Butler, Fairman & Seufert, Inc. \$462,000 is the not to exceed amount of the agreement. INDOT has not given final approval for the project yet, Rumschlag expects the approval within the week. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the contract with Butler, Fairman & Seufert, Inc. for inspection services for Bridge 54 conditional on INDOT's final approval. Motion carried 3-0.

Tourism Commission Board Appointments: Chad Kline requested approval of two board applications for the Tourism Commission Board. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to appoint Jeff Reed to the Tourism Commission effective immediately through December 31, 2023, and Michelle Blount to the Tourism Commission effective immediately through December 31, 2024. Motion carried 3-0. Beginning in 2024 the Reed appointment slot will move to a two-year appointment.

Road Use & Decommissioning Agreement: The road use & decommissioning agreements were not available for approval. The Commissioners tabled the topic to be discussed at the March 6th meeting.

Council on Aging: Betsy Collier submitted via email the 4th Quarter 2022 claim for reimbursement. The claim amount is \$101,598.00. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve, and allow the President to sign the 4th Quarter 2022 claim. Motion carried 3-0.

Jail Status Query: A contract bond status query was received from Liberty Mutual Surety on the status of the Jail renovation. Motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to allow the President to sign the status query for the Jail renovation and to allow the President to sign upcoming status query requests outside of the meeting. Motion carried 3-0.

Rights of Way: Two rights of way were presented for Commissioner approval. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the two rights of way. Motion carried 3-0.

Adjourned: Wells County Commissioners adjourned at 5:35 PM, motion was 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