

Wells County Commissioners

Regular Session March 6, 2023

The Wells County Commissioners met in regular session on Monday March 6, 2023, at 5:00PM 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 from February 21, 2023, regular session and February 21, 2023, Executive session. Motion carried 3-0.

Payroll and Claims: Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve Payroll #5 in the amount of \$268,446.46 and 169 claims totaling \$282,476.11. Motion carried 3-0.

Wells County Sheriff: Sheriff Holliday reported 67 inmates, 23 pretrial Superior, 28 pretrial Circuit, 7 F6 DOC and 2 DOC. Sheriff Holliday stated that punch list items are ongoing, landscaping will be completed in early spring. Final walkthrough will be scheduled prior to March 28th and Holliday extended an invitation to the Commissioners to attend.

Wells County Highway Supervisor: Shawn Bonar informed the Commissioners that work is continuing on the road conversion for 500W between 800S and 900S with brush removal. The low voltage design is complete, Bonar is compiling quotes for the work, to be reviewed at the March 20th meeting. Randolph County has a berm machine that they would allow Wells County to use as needed at no cost to Wells County. Bonar suggested an interlocal agreement with Randolph County for the use of that machinery. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to allow County Attorney Storer to draft an agreement with Randolph County for berm machine sharing for the March 20th meeting. Bonar would like to post local Wells County detour signs in conjunction with state detours with Commissioner approval. The Commissioners will leave it up to Bonar's discretion when posting that signage. Cold storage is complete at the Highway garage site, main building has 20% of the concrete complete. Commissioner Stringer requested a 2023 road conversion list. Rumschlag said the road conversion list is updated in July and then posted on the website.

Highway Engineer: Nate Rumschlag presented to the Commissioners a coordination agreement for a railroad overpass on 200S. The agreement is between Wells County Highway Department and Norfolk Southern Railway Company and is for preliminary engineering services for a bridge to carry 200S over the Norfolk Southern Railway for \$26,512.00. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the coordination agreement with Norfolk Southern Railway Company for \$26,512.00. Motion carried 3-0. Rumschlag recommended approval to allow the President of the Commissioners to sign the Community Crossing Matching grant 2022-02, CR 450E, when received by DocuSign. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to allow President Michael Vanover to sign CCMG 2022-02 for CR 450E via DocuSign. Motion carried 3-0. Rumschlag is finalizing the list of small structures for 2023. Rumschlag will review the drainage at Timber Ridge and a proposed highway culvert replacement. Four rights-of-way were presented to the Commissioners for approval, motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the four rights-of-way. Motion carried 3-0.

Flood Safety Awareness: County Surveyor Jarrod Hahn presented a proclamation to the Board of Commissioners to proclaim March 13-17, 2023, as “Flood Safety Awareness Week”. Some facts regarding floods; 6 inches of fast-moving flood water can knock an adult off their feet, 12 inches can carry off a small car. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to proclaim March 13-17, 2023, as Flood Safety Awareness Week. Motion carried 3-0.

Family Centered Services: Paige Hamilton, Executive Director of Family Centered Services, presented a request for the annual funding for Family Centered Services in the amount of \$15,000. 1,000 Wells County residents were treated in 2022. Relapse prevention programs are being implemented in 2023, these classes were available to any adult with a dependent under the age of 18 in the house. Family Centered Services assists with making sure the adult goes to rehab, pays bills, and becomes the adult the the household needs to support that family. Paige stated that they are trying to get more grant funding for more services in the community. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve funding for Family Centered Services for \$15,000. Motion carried 3-0.

Road Use and Decommissioning Agreement: Attorney Storer stated that through discussion concerning the road use and decommissioning agreement, representatives for Paddlefish Solar have not provided details on roadways and plans moving forward. Rumschlag echoed that Paddlefish has not been willing to outline the roads involved in the plan. Commissioner Vanover asked if there was a reason for them to withhold this information. Storer advised not approving the agreements without better understanding this information. Storer, Rumschlag, Bonar and Surveyor Hahn would like the opportunity to review roads and potential impacts prior to finalizing the agreement. The agreement will be tabled until more information on the roads that will be used can be obtained.

Utility Permit: A utility permit from Citizens telephone for 1100W and 1200S was presented to Commissioners for approval. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the utility permit for Citizens telephone. Motion carried 3-0.

Library Board Appointment: Motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to appoint Matt Yergler to the Wells County Library board effective March 6, 2022, through August 15, 2025. Motion carried 3-0.

Wells County GIS: Commissioner Gerber discussed the possibility of posting property tax bills on Beacon Snider for taxpayer accessibility. Gerber suggested funding the initial expense from LIT Economic Development and start budgeting out of the GIS budget in 2024. Motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to implement tax bill placement on the Wells County GIS system funding the 2023 expenses out of LIT Economic Development for a maximum expense of \$1,000.00. Motion carried 3-0.

Staffing Meeting: Attorney Ted Storer suggested staffing meetings for the Commissioners with any department who wishes to be on the regularly scheduled meeting agenda. These meetings would cover any discussion item that did not require a vote. The proposed meeting would take place the Wednesday prior to the regular meeting before agendas are hung. This would lead to more streamlined regular meeting with only voting topics on the agenda. Commissioners would like this topic to be added to the March 20th agenda for further discussion.

Adjourned: Wells County Commissioners adjourned at 5:59 PM, motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer.

Wells County Commissioners

President, Michael K Vanover

Vice President, Blake Gerber

Member, Jeff Stringer

Attest: _____
Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor