

Wells County Commissioners

Regular Session March 7, 2022

The Wells County Commissioners met in regular session on Monday March 7, 2022, at 9:00AM 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, Colin Andrews and County Auditor, Lisa McCormick.

Minutes: Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the minutes from February 22, 2022, regular 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 \$250,861.96 and 133 claims totaling \$354,776.55. Motion carried 3-0.

Wells County Sheriff: Sheriff Holliday reported 76 inmates, 28 pretrial Superior, 26 pretrial Circuit, 10 F6 DOC and 4 DOC. Sheriff Holliday gave an update on the construction project; the exterior masonry is complete. Construction meetings are held every 2 weeks.

Wells County Highway Supervisor: Shawn Bonar informed the Commissioners that the weather has allowed touch up of gravel roads in the prior week. Stone is being hauled to gravel roads for prep for the summer months. It takes approximately 3-4 weeks to complete the gravel roads. The Wells County Highway Garage, bid package #1, pre-engineered metal building and steel erection is advertised for bid, bid opening on March 17, 2022. Dust control application requests will be available for purchase from April 4th through April 29th. Office hours are Monday through Friday from 7am to 3pm. Cost is \$1.57 per foot. Post cards will be sent to previous customers.

Highway Engineer: Nate Rumschlag informed the Commissioners that Bridge 121 construction is progressing. Guardrail installation is complete up to the bridge. Rumschlag would like to implement guardrail installations on other projects. The Murray Stormwater project bids were opened on March 3rd. Two bids were received, VTF Excavation bid was \$601,920.00, Culy Contracting bid was \$831,358.00. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the ATF Excavation bid of \$601,920.00 for the Murray Stormwater project. Motion carried 3-0. Rumschlag requested approval of the Indiana Finance Authority Grant for the Murray Stormwater project. The accepted bid was below estimates, Rumschlag negotiated with IFA to use the Engineering Contact and NIRCC agreements as the co-funding for the grant. IFA has set aside \$700,000 in grant funds for this agreement. The additional funds can go for unforeseen issues or supplies. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the Indiana Finance Authority Grant. Motion carried 3-0. Rumschlag presented three unofficial detours for Commissioner approval. #1 - SR 124 over Carries Hall Ditch, the detour will be SR 124 S on S 300 W to east on W 100 S to north on Meridian Rd. returning to SR 124. #2 – SR 218 over Carries Brown-Wolf Ditch; SR 218 N on S 300 W to west on 500 S to south on S 400 W returning to SR 218. #3 – SR 124 over Carries drain; SR 124 south on SR 201 to east on 100 S to north on SR 301 returning to SR 124. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the three unofficial detours. Motion carried 3-0. A right of way was presented to the Commissioners for approval, motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the right of way. Motion carried 3-0.

Flood Safety Awareness: County Surveyor Jarrod Hahn presented a proclamation to the Board of Commissioners to proclaim March 14-18, 2022, as "Flood Safety Awareness Week". Jarrod stated facts regarding floods; 6 inches 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 14-18, 2022, 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. This funding supports teen court and the closet for Wells County teens and children. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve funding for Family Centered Services for \$15,000. Motion carried 3-0.

Ossian Rescue Truck: Requests for Proposals were opened for the Ossian Rescue Truck. The lease or loan amount is \$536,554 over 7 years, with the first annual payment in 2022. Five proposals were received; US Bankcorp lease 2.394%, STAR Financial Bank had no percentage, the annual payment was \$88,589.22, Farmers & Merchants State Bank 2.75%, US Bank loan 3.1% and 3 Rivers Federal Credit Union was Wall Street Market Prime rate at date of closing, which prime currently is 3.25%. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to accept the proposal from US Bankcorp for the lease with 2.394% financing. Motion carried 3-0.

Regional Chamber: Bill Konya with the Regional Chamber discussed Business Personal Property tax elimination with the Commissioners. A report from Policy Analytics was distributed. The report contained stats on the elimination of Business Personal Property tax and the impact on taxpayers. Konya was requesting funding of \$1,090 to assist in support of the LITO Council. This funding would aid in watchdog efforts for taxpayers. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to fund the request for \$1,090 for LITO Council. Motion carried 3-0.

Health Update: Marlene Hoag provided an update on the Health Department. Wells County is Blue, and numbers are trending down. To date, there have been 6477 cases of COVID reported in Wells County and 127 deaths. Home tests are not included in the totals, they are not reported. 161 children have been vaccinated, most of the testing requests are for travel. Hoag distributed the annual report for the health department. The Health Department had a server go down. The server had not had a backup performed for over a year and a half. Hoag could not assist patrons with birth or death records. \$15,000 was the cost to recover the information from the server. The Commissioners were aware of the situation and supported going ahead with the recovery.

Premier Flats Barricade: A request to remove the barricade at Premier Flats was received by the Commissioners from the City of Bluffton. Commissioner Vanover stated the Commissioners would remove the barricades and move forward.

Northeast Indiana Strategic Commission: Commissioner Vanover was appointed by Governor Holcomb to be on the Northeast Indiana Strategic Commission. This Commission has a focus on an 11-county region with a focus on infrastructure, housing, talent attraction, any area that these 11 counties deem as important. Vanover introduced a study for a legislative agenda. \$200,000 is needed to complete this study, of which \$100,000 is already available from other donations. His request was for each of the 11 counties contribute \$5,000 to help offset the additional \$100,000. Commissioners Stringer and Gerber suggested revisiting the topic at the March 21st meeting.

Bi County Transportation: Adams County would like to partner with Wells County for Rural Transit. County Attorney Colin Andrews was conferring with Adams County Attorney Mark Burry. Contact with the Adams County Commissioners did not get responses back. The Commissioners felt we were late to the game. The deadline for submission of the grant paperwork was relatively soon. Commissioner Gerber felt it was best to do it once and do it right. Commissioner Stringer was not in support because of the lack of response, he felt most of the burden would be on Wells County. No action was taken.

Ossian Spec Building: County Attorney Colin Andrews has been in conversation with Chad Kline regarding the Ossian Spec building. His understanding was Ossian had signed an agreement, Wells County has not. Of the \$250,000 that is in the agreement, Ossian would pay a percentage and Wells County would pay a percentage. The agreement would be over a 3-year period or until the building was under lease. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to move ahead with the Ossian Spec Building #1. Motion carried 3-0. Commissioner Stringer had heard that the building had been leased. His concern was to not move the lease ahead to another project, if so.

Adjourned: Wells County Commissioners adjourned at 10:16AM, motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer.

Wells County Commissioners

President, Michael K Vanover

Vice President, Blake Gerber

Jeff Stringer

Attest: _____
Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor