

Wells County Commissioners

Regular Session March 20, 2023

The Wells County Commissioners met in regular session 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, County Attorney, Ted Storer and County Auditor, Lisa McCormick.

Minutes: A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the minutes from the March 6, 2023, regular session. Motion carried 3-0.

Payroll and Claims: A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve Payroll #6 in the amount of \$286,826.83 and 195 claims totaling \$445,660.44. Motion carried 3-0.

Wells County Sheriff: Sheriff Holliday reported 67 inmates, 18 pretrial Superior, 29 pretrial Circuit, 11 F6 DOC and 3 DOC. Holliday presented the 2022 Annual Jail Report to the Commissioners. The remaining punch list items for the jail remodel should be complete by Monday March 27th.

Wells County Highway Supervisor: Shawn Bonar updated the Commissioners on current projects. Stone is being added to gravel roads. Advertising and postcards are in process for the 2023 dust control program, cost is \$1.82 per foot with a 200-foot minimum. Signup for the program will be April 10 through May 4th. The department is repairing broken tiles as they can and continuing brush removal for the road conversion on 500W. The Commissioners were presented a letter of understanding for an unofficial detour for SR 3 for a bridge replacement. The bridge is 1.32 miles south of SR 218. The anticipated start date is August 2023 and will have an approximate 120-day closure. The unofficial detour will be from 1000S to 600W to SR 218. Wells County will be responsible for signing any weight restrictions on the unofficial detour. The motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the unofficial detour for SR 3. Motion carried 3-0. Three quotes were received for the low voltage design for the new highway garage. Quoted were the camera system, entry access, TV network & data cabling, HDTV's, timeclock, and OTA antenna installation. The Commissioners would like to take the quotes under advisement and revisit at the April 3rd meeting. An Ordinance to establish a clearing account for the Highway department was presented for Commissioner review. The proposed ordinance would establish a clearing account for receipt of the newly established permit fee collections. All fees would be remitted to the Wells County Treasurer monthly. The proposed account would have no authority to issue checks other than to the Wells County Treasurer. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve Ordinance 2023-02 to establish a clearing account for the Wells County Highway Department. Motion carried 3-0. Bonar informed the Commissioners that he will advertise for bids for a new or used Hydro Vac Trailer. The price point for a new unit has increased to approximately \$150,000 and the budgeted amount is \$105,000. Bonar will advertise for bids for either a new or used Hydro Vac trailer and bring those bids back to the Commissioners. Permit applications for road cuts, driveway and right of way cuts were presented for Commissioner review. The highway garage's main foundation is continuing as weather permits. The steel erection on the main structure is going up. Electrical in the cold storage building is near completion. A request was made for a 30-day medical leave extension for a highway worker. A motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to extend the medical leave for an additional 30 days. Motion carried 3-0. Commissioner Stringer inquired about a section of gravel on Meridian Road and when it will be on the schedule for conversion. Bonar stated that there was one holdout on the right-of-way. Commissioner Stringer suggested that Bonar meet with Attorney Storer to form a plan of resolution for that right-of-way.

Bonar stated that he was going to treat that section of gravel road with Calcium Chloride to help with the surface until it can be scheduled for chip and seal. Another discussion was about the threshold of purchases that the Commissioners would like to be informed of regarding purchases for the new highway garage. \$30,000 is the threshold the Commissioners would like to have input on. Bonar stated he will get three bids for any purchases and provide regular updates.

Highway Engineer: Nate Rumschlag presented an interlocal matching funds agreement with Adams County regarding Bridge 19 replacement for Commissioner review. This agreement will need Wells and Adams County Commissioner approval as well as Wells and Adams County Council approval prior to execution. The grant will cover 75% of the total cost of the project, which is \$395,438.83. The 25% match would be split between Adams County, \$65,906.47, and Wells County, \$65,906.48. The project and administration would be administered through Wells County. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the Interlocal Government Agreement with Adams County (Misc. 2023-04) for Bridge 19. Motion carried 3-0. Rumschlag recommended approval to allow the President of the Commissioners to sign the Bridge 71 agreement with INDOT when received from DocuSign. The motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to allow President Michael Vanover to sign the Bridge 71 agreement for right of way acquisitions via DocuSign. Motion carried 3-0.

National Ag Day: Wells County Farm Bureau President, Jacob Slusher, was on hand to pay tribute to national ag day and national ag week. The Commissioners stated that they appreciate the local ag community and strive for good communication.

PTABOA Training Agreement: Assessor Laura Roberts presented a proposal for engagement with Haller Colvin PC for PTABOA board training. The proposal engages Sarah Schreiber for a training session of approximately two hours to be billed at \$250 per hour. Roberts is requiring the training for current PTABOA board members. A motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to approve, and sign the proposal for engagement with Haller Colvin PC for training. Motion carried 3-0.

Medical Leave Request: Health Administrator Tricia Ross requested a 30-day medical leave of absence for an employee in the Health Department. A motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to allow medical leave from March 6 through April 17 for a health department employee. Motion carried 3-0. County Attorney Ted Storer suggested having an executive session prior to a meeting where a medical condition will be discussed. Information could be exchanged about the condition in the executive session. An informed decision could then be made in the following regular meeting.

Clearing Account Request: Health Administrator Tricia Ross requested the creation of an Ordinance to establish a clearing account for the Health Department. The clearing account would be for receipt of health department fees that would be remitted to the Wells County Treasurer monthly. No checks would be issued out of the account except to the Wells County Treasurer. The motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to allow the creation of the Ordinance for the Health Department by County Attorney Storer. Motion carried 3-0. Discussion followed regarding having a county hub for collecting credit card payments for miscellaneous fees for offices that do not require a separate bank account. Attorney Storer will coordinate with departments to assess the need.

Staffing Meeting Discussion: Attorney Ted Storer suggested staffing meetings for the Commissioners with any department who wishes to be on the regularly scheduled meeting agenda during the March 6th meeting. This would lead to more streamlined regular meetings with only voting topics on the agenda.

The Commissioners were skeptical if they could accommodate additional meetings. Nate Rumschlag commented that better communication from the departments prior to the deadline for the agenda would eliminate some issues.

First Amendment to the Interlocal Agreement for Emergency Communications: An amendment to the Interlocal Agreement for Emergency Communications was presented to the Commissioners for approval. The amendment in the document strikes section 12 in the original document to state “the County shall be responsible to the City for fifty percent of the expenses for operation of the Dispatch Center and the City shall be responsible for fifty percent of the expenses for operation of the Dispatch center. The City shall invoice the County four times a year for the County’s contribution for the Dispatch Center’s expenses incurred during the quarter for which the invoice is applicable”. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the first amendment to the interlocal agreement for emergency communications (Misc. 2023-05). Motion carried 3-0.

Right-of-Way: One right-of-way was presented to the Commissioners for approval, the motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the one right-of-way. Motion carried 3-0.

April 3rd Meeting: Commissioner Vanover will be attending the April 3rd meeting via Zoom and would like Commissioner Blake Gerber to lead the meeting on April 3rd.

Adjourned: Wells County Commissioners adjourned at 6:27 PM. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to adjourn. Motion carried 3-0.

Wells County Commissioners

President, Michael K Vanover

Vice President, Blake Gerber

Member, Jeff Stringer

Attest: _____
Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor