

## Wells County Commissioners

### Regular Session March 21, 2022

The Wells County Commissioners met in regular session on Monday March 21, 2022, at 9:30AM 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, Colin Andrews and County Auditor, Lisa McCormick.

**Minutes:** Motion made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to approve the minutes from March 7, 2022, regular session. Motion carried 3-0.

**Payroll and Claims:** Motion made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve Payroll #6 in the amount of \$259,416.10 and 179 claims totaling \$862,772.84. Motion carried 3-0.

**Wells County Sheriff:** Sheriff Holliday reported 80 inmates, 29 pretrial Superior, 27 pretrial Circuit, 9 F6 DOC and 6 DOC. A compressor for a freezer went down, a 53' trailer was brought in to store product until the freezer can be repaired. 11 air handlers were delivered to replace the current systems.

**Wells County Highway Supervisor:** Shawn Bonar informed the Commissioners that his department is repairing damaged and clogged tile for increased water flow during this wet season. Stone is still being added to gravel roads and will continue for several weeks. Dust control applications will be accepted April 4<sup>th</sup> through April 29<sup>th</sup>. Cost is \$1.57 per foot this year, cash or checks are the only form of payment accepted. An update from Conor Jackson was given on the Highway Garage. Bids were received for the pre-engineered metal building and steel erection. Three bids were received: Briner - \$1,834,465, CME - \$1,848,400, and James S Jackson Co, LLC - \$1,454,293. Jackson was the low bid. Commissioner Stringer would like a review of the bid documents before accepting a bid. A \$400,000 difference from the high to low bid was the reason. A progress meeting with the design team is scheduled for next week.

**Highway Engineer:** Nate Rumschlag informed the Commissioners that Wells County was awarded Federal Aid 2027 grant funds for phase 2 of the CR 200 S project. The award is for \$2,986,048 in construction and inspection services. The grant funds will connect Adams Street to SR1. The Murray Stormwater project will begin in April. A pre-construction meeting was held on March 17<sup>th</sup>. Rumschlag distributed a draft copy of the Local Road Safety Plan. The draft is posted on the Wells County website. Jerry Foust from NIRCC is scheduled to present details of the crash data and logic behind the plan at the April 18<sup>th</sup> Commissioner meeting. Comments on the plan should be presented in writing to the Highway Department, attention LRSP. Four utility permits for Craigville Telephone were presented for Commissioner approval. Motion made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the four utility permits. Motion carried 3-0.

**PTABOA Ordinance:** Attorney Colin Andrews presented an Ordinance that is restating the constitution of the Wells County Property Tax Assessment Board of Appeals and the Board of Commissioner procedures. This Ordinance would continue to maintain a three person PTABOA board. Two of the three board members are appointed by the Wells County Commissioners. IC Code 6-1.1-28-1 speaks on the matters of a PTABOA appointment but is silent on matters of removal. This Ordinance states that the Commissioners, the appointing authority over two PTABOA board members, may remove a member of the PTABOA board without cause. The board member against whom removal action is sought shall have notice of removal action at least seven days prior to the meeting where the matter would be

heard. The member would have the opportunity to be heard by the Commissioners prior to the removal action at a public meeting. The removal action would be considered passed if the removal motion receives a majority vote. Motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to approve Ordinance 2022-06 restating the constitution of the Wells County property tax assessment board of appeals and Commissioner procedures. Motion carried 3-0.

**Interlocal Agreement:** Attorney Andrews is working with the Town of Ossian and Economic Development on a draft interlocal agreement for a spec building in Ossian. A document was not presented for comment, the subject was tabled.

**Northeast Indiana Strategic Commission:** Commissioner Vanover presented a funding opportunity for the Wells County Commissioners at the March 7<sup>th</sup> meeting. Vanover introduced a study for a legislative agenda with a focus on infrastructure, housing, talent attraction. \$200,000 is needed to complete this study, of which \$100,000 is already available from other donations. The funding request was a contribution of \$5,000 to help offset the additional \$100,000 needed. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the \$5,000 contribution to the Northeast Indiana Strategic Commission. Motion carried 3-0.

**Cyber Application:** A cyber and technology insurance renewal application was presented for the Commissioner President signature. Motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to allow the President to sign the cyber and technology insurance application. Motion carried 3-0.

**Commissioner Certificate Sale:** The County Executive shall acquire liens and receive tax sale certificates for the properties listed that are delinquent in the payment of property taxes having been offered for tax sale. This property received no bids equal to or more than the minimum sale price. The County Executive can offer for sale to the public the certificate of sale acquired by the County Executive at a properly advertised Commissioner Tax Certificate sale. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve Resolution 2022-04 which sets a minimum bid of \$1,000.00 for certificate number 902100026 at 706 W. Wiley Ave., Bluffton, IN. Motion carried 3-0.

**Meeting Times:** Commissioner Stringer suggested an option of changing one if not both Commissioner meeting times to later in the day. He stated that he had received comments that the meetings are not accessible for everyone who wishes to attend. Commissioner Gerber discussed meeting times at the March 9<sup>th</sup> department head meeting. The department personnel would come to the meetings whenever they are held but would choose to keep them in the daytime hours. Commissioner Stringer stated that all government officials and employees work for the people of Wells County and that who is suggesting this change. This topic will be revisited at the April 4<sup>th</sup> Commissioner meeting.

**Council Comment:** Wells County Council member Chuck King questioned if the PTABOA Ordinance that was approved earlier in the meeting would cover the Council appointment to the PTABOA Board. Attorney Colin Andrews stated that it did not, if Council would like a similar Ordinance, he could draw one up for them.

**Adjourned:** Wells County Commissioners adjourned at 10:00 AM. Motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber. Motion carried 3-0.

**Wells County Commissioners**

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President, Michael K Vanover

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Vice President, Blake Gerber

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Jeff Stringer

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor