

## Wells County Commissioners

### Regular Session April 1, 2024

The Wells County Commissioners met in regular session on Monday April 1, 2024, at 5:00PM in the Commissioner's Room of the Wells County Carnegie Annex, Bluffton, IN. Physically present at the meeting were Commissioners, Jeff Stringer and Blake Gerber, County Attorney Ted Storer and Auditor Lisa McCormick. Commissioner Michael Vanover participated in the meeting by electronic means of communication, Zoom, which allowed the public to simultaneously attend and observe the meeting. All votes taken during the meeting were taken by roll call vote.

**Minutes:** A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve the minutes from the March 18, 2024, regular session. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

**Payroll and Claims:** A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve Payroll #7 in the amount of \$287,898.44 and 153 claims totaling \$909,855.05. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

**Wells County Sheriff:** Sherriff Holliday reported 71 inmates, 22 pretrial Superior, 35 pretrial Circuit, 3 F6 DOC and 9 DOC. Holliday reported that the bathroom repairs are complete. An ARPA funding request was made by the Sheriff for one or more of his new police vehicles for 2024. The Commissioners will take the request under advisement. An eclipse update was given by Sheriff Holliday and EMA Director Rick Valesquez. Holliday reported that there will be a large presence of coverage as well as on call coverage. Wells County, Bluffton, Ossian and Markle will have extra patrol coverage during the day and into the evening as needed. He encouraged preplanning as far as gas and any necessities that might be needed to keep the traffic flow down as much as possible. Valesquez distributed a disaster declaration for April 8<sup>th</sup> that was granted by the Governor. Holliday reported that the DNR will have an increased presence at the State Park. Valesquez estimated an influx of between 20,000 to 50,000 tourists that could travel to Wells County.

**Highway:** The Commissioners were updated on ongoing projects. Bridge 170 replacement will start within the next 2 weeks, 900S between 700E and 800E will be closed for approximately 90 days. Dust control sign ups begin today through May 1<sup>st</sup>, cost is \$2.07 per foot. Road conversion updates included: 450S and 450E are getting drainage finalized and field entrances installed, 100N is continuing to get drainage preparation. HVAC issues are getting resolved for the administrative offices in the highway garage, wash bays are complete and functional, generator issues are being resolved. An unofficial detour was presented for Commissioner review. The detour is for a small structure replacement and a small structure pipe liner on SR 1. The unofficial detour will be 450S to 200E to Clark Avenue to Spring Street. The work will begin as early as Spring 2025. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve the Unofficial Detour for SR 1. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote. The highway department painted parking striping and placed parking curbs in the Bargain Hut parking lot. The cost for the curbing is \$1,275.35. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve the payment from the Commissioners budget to reimburse the highway department for the curbing. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

**Walker Hughes:** Walker Hughes Agent, Dan Lipp, presented a renewal proposal for County liability insurance. Lipp had requested proposals from other carriers, of which only one new carrier provided a quote. The quote from EMC/Public Risk was approximately \$25,000 higher annually than Selective, with

reduced coverage and limits. Selective Insurance, increasing 24.15% to \$87,511 annually, covers the property and Inland Marine items. Bliss McKnight, increasing 8.44% to \$219,484 annually, covers the multiclass liability, wrongful acts, and commercial auto. The proposed rate from Chubb, increasing 75.07% to \$26,591 annually, covers cyber liability. Lipp thought the Chubb proposal could be reduced with an updated application. The total premium for all policies effective 5/1/2024-5/1/2025 is \$333,586. Commissioner review of the renewal proposal replacement costs revealed building replacement estimates that seemed inadequate. The jail replacement cost was listed as \$5,312,063. The Sheriff estimated a new jail built at today's cost would be \$20,000,000 to \$30,000,000. The highway salt barn was not included in the inventory. Personal property for the Courthouse and Highway was questioned. Attorney Storer suggested increasing the \$5,000 deductibles where applicable to \$10,000. Lipp will recalculate the replacement costs and resubmit to Selective for an updated proposal. Walker Hughes will return to the April 15<sup>th</sup> meeting to submit a new proposal.

**Community Corrections Grant:** Director Blake Poindexter presented the 2025 Community Corrections Grant application letter of approval for Commissioner signatures. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve, and sign the 2025 Community Corrections Grant letter of approval. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

**Zoning Ordinance Amendment:** Mike Lautzenheiser presented a recommended APC do pass amendment to the Wells County zoning ordinance. The requested zoning changes were from a Residential-1 Zoned District to a Business-3 Zoned District for lots 6-8 in the DW Hoopingarner Subdivision. Also included in the zoning amendment ordinance was a rezoning commitment agreement that included conditions regarding the rezoning. The conditions included: 1. The B-3 rezoning on the property described in Exhibit A shall only be used by the following businesses or used by a substantially similar use business: a. Meyer Renovations, b. Meyer Removal. c. Creative Cabinets and Countertops. 2. A General Development Plan will be filed for with the APC within one hundred twenty (120) days of the Commissioners approval of this Rezoning request. Compliance with lighting, sanitary sewer, buffers, and drainage requirements would be completed through this process. 3. A Wells County Health Department septic permit will be applied for within thirty (30) days of the Commissioners approval of this Rezoning request. The Commissioners discussed the well placement, Commissioner Stringer suggested leaving the well as "at risk" and leaving it as it is. Additional language in the Commitment agreement was requested concerning the well and the property being designated as a single-family dwelling again only if the board of zoning approves a special exception. A motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Blake Gerber to approve Ordinance 2024-05 to amend the Wells County zoning ordinance and zone maps and to approve the Commitment Agreement with the additional conditions concerning the well and single-family dwelling, to be signed at the April 15<sup>th</sup> meeting. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

**Family Centered Services:** Paige Hamilton, Executive Director of Family Centered Services, presented a request for funding for three relapse prevention coaches. Additional certification is required to attain the title as a relapse prevention coach. The request was for \$5,000 for each certification. The Commissioners suggested Hamilton reach out to the Health Department for Indiana Health First funds. Hamilton will come to the April 15<sup>th</sup> meeting after conferring with the Health Department.

**Utility and Right-of-Way:** Two utility permits and one right-of-way document were presented to the Commissioners for approval. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to accept, and sign the two utility permits and one right-of-way document. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

**Engineer Interlocal:** The Commissioners instructed Attorney Storer to draft an extension of the current interlocal agreement with Adams County for an additional 60 days to be presented at the April 15<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**Adjourned:** Wells County Commissioners adjourned at 6:04PM. The motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to adjourn.

**Wells County Commissioners**

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President, Jeff Stringer

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Vice President, Michael K Vanover

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Member, Blake Gerber

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