

Wells County Commissioners

Regular Session April 17, 2023

The Wells County Commissioners met in regular session on Monday April 17, 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, 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 April 3, 2023, regular session and April 3, 2023, Executive session. Motion carried 3-0.

Payroll and Claims: A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve Payroll #8 in the amount of \$282,664.04 and 234 claims totaling \$350,951.35. Motion carried 3-0.

Wells County Sheriff: Sheriff Holliday reported 73 inmates, 27 pretrial Superior, 24 pretrial Circuit, 11 F6 and 6 DOC. Sheriff Holliday reported 42 total arrests, of which twelve were related to substances. Five were involving marijuana, four involving alcohol, two involving narcotics, one involving methamphetamines. Holliday stated that he would include these statistics in his report for the County Council. Sheriff Holliday informed the Commissioners that all medications collected at the Sheriff's Department will be incinerated by the Drug Enforcement Agency. Medications will not have to be sorted for Hazardous Waste day in the future.

Wells County Highway: Shawn Bonar reported that he has completed training with LTAP to allow him to train employees to obtain a CDL. He has a current employee that has started the training. Road conversion work is continuing for 500W, 200W and 700N. Spreading of spring stone is being completed. The windstorms produced some damage for the new highway garage construction. That damage is being investigated. The main building is moving forward, the highway employees are also creating a privacy berm for the home to the south of the building site.

Highway Engineer: Nate Rumschlag informed the Commissioners about ongoing projects. \$647,417.25 was awarded in Community Crossing Matching Grant funding for Wells County. Bridge 170 was awarded \$405,992.25 and Bridge 85 was awarded \$241,425. \$352,582.75 remains in eligible funding for 2023, Rumschlag plans to apply for CCMG 2023-02 for CR 450E rehabilitation. Rumschlag requested additional proposals for engineering services for Bridge 404, none were received. A motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to approve the Engineering Resources proposal for design services for Bridge 404, River Road over Markley Ditch, for \$56,900. Motion carried 3-0. Rumschlag is preparing for grant funding applications for County Home Road & 300S for 2024. The next step is to reach out to landowners with conveyance documents for rights-of-way from the landowners. He was asking guidance from the Commissioners on negotiating up to the statutory limit with the landowners. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to allow Rumschlag negotiating power for rights-of-way with the landowners. Motion carried 3-0. Darren Bates, Data Pit Stop, has been working with Nate regarding additional revenue for funding alternatives for bridges. Rumschlag informed the Commissioners that Bates would present to them on funding options at a future meeting. Work on Bridge 19 is starting on April 21st and is anticipated to take 30-60 days. Rumschlag will give notice to area schools and county dispatch prior to the start of work. Request for Proposals have been issued for the countywide bridge inspection contract for 2025-2028.

Council on Aging (WOW): Sandra Bayne, transportation director, went over some statistical comparison flow charts on trips and riders using the public transit system. Betsy Collier, Executive Director, requested an additional funding amount from the Wells County Commissioners of \$4,000 for 2024, a total of \$44,000. This amount is a ten percent increase over the 2023 amount of \$40,000. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the local financial certification and assurances for \$40,000 for 2024 and allow the president to sign. Motion carried 3-0. Commissioner Gerber would like the additional funding requests to come prior to the application deadline. Collier also presented the 2024 Rural Public Transit grant application for approval with the Commissioner President's signature. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve, and allow the President to sign the 2024 Rural Public Transit grant application, to approve and allow the Auditor to sign Resolution 2023-02 authorizing the Auditor to make necessary certifications and assurances with INDOT on behalf of the Wells County Commissioners. Motion carried 3-0. Collier presented a notification of De-obligation of Federal Transit administration and State transit funds for the Commissioner President to sign. \$75,217 which was awarded for Operating Funds in 2021 and 2022 will be de-obligated and re-programmed for other expenditures. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve, and allow President Michael Vanover to sign the de-obligation of Federal Transit administration and State Transit funds. Motion carried 3-0.

General Insurance Renewal: General Insurance, Dan Lipp and Danica Dunwiddie, presented a renewal proposal for County Insurance. Selective Insurance, increasing 12.17% to \$70,478 annually, covers the property and Inland Marine items. Bliss McKnight, increasing 8.88% to \$199,863 annually, covers the multiclass liability, wrongful acts, and commercial auto. Chubb, increasing 3.75% to \$15,188 annually, covers cyber liability. The total premium for all policies effective 5/1/2023-5/1/2024 is \$285,529. The County has had several claims on auto and some pending liability claims. Lipp stated that other carriers were notified for additional quotes for liability coverage, Travelers and Selective, but needed more time. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to increase deductibles for property to \$10,000 and have a special session to discuss how the rates will be affected. Motion carried 3-0.

Medical Leave Request: Health Administrator Tricia Ross requested an extended 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 April 18 through May 19th for a health department employee. Motion carried 3-0.

Community Corrections Grant: Blake Poindexter presented the 2024 Community Corrections Grant application letter of approval for Commissioner signatures. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to sign the 2024 Community Corrections Grant letter of approval. Motion carried 3-0. Poindexter informed the Commissioners of a Community Corrections board member resignation. This will create an opening on the board for a minority board member.

Library Updates: Sarah MacNeill presented an update of statistics for the Wells County Library. John Stauffer, a library board of trustee member, Dustin Brown and Matt Yergler, library board members, and Jason Habegger, adult services manager, were also in attendance. 346 children completed the 1000 books before kindergarten program. The library participates in block parties, home book reading programs for daycare, a hoopla streaming program, board games have also been added to the inventory. The library staff is digitizing area maps. Stats for 2022 are up with 876 new library cards, audio books have increased, physical checkout of books have increased, overall, the stats are above or even with pre COVID numbers. The current staffing is 44 employees, including the Ossian branch, 13 are full-time employees. Also discussed were communication matters between the library and the Board of

Commissioners. Commissioner Stringer stated that he receives calls from the community regarding tax dollars going to the library. The appointments to the board should be diverse for differing views, Stringer stated. The Commissioners would like to have quarterly updates from the library to keep communications open.

SRI: SRI presented a tax sale services support addendum for Commissioner approval. The addendum increases service fees for each parcel sold to \$125.00. The current fee is \$100 per parcel. The fee is absorbed by the bidder. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the Tax Sale Services Support Addendum with SRI. Motion carried 3-0.

Tax Bill: The Highway garage site that is currently being utilized by the Highway garage is owned by Mike and Shelley Mossburg. The highway department is working at the current site, 1600 W. Washington St., while the new Highway Garage is being constructed. The Mossburg's received a property tax bill for that property and would like Wells County to pay that property tax bill for 2023. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to pay the property tax bill total of \$3,138.12 for parcel 90-08-05-100-020.000-004, and \$794.84 for parcel 90-08-05-100-021.000-004 for 2023 and the 2024 tax bill for both parcels when they are generated. Motion carried 3-0.

Right of Way: Seven rights-of-way were presented for Commissioner approval. Motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to approve the seven rights-of-way. Motion carried 3-0.

Adjourned: 6:48PM, the motion was made by Blake Gerber to adjourn, seconded by Jeff Stringer. Motion carried 3-0.

Wells County Commissioners

President, Michael K Vanover

Vice President, Blake Gerber

Member, Jeff Stringer

Attest: _____
Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor