

Wells County Commissioners

Regular Session April 18, 2022

The Wells County Commissioners met in regular session on Monday April 18, 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 was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to approve the minutes from April 4, 2022, regular session and April 4, 2022, Executive session. Motion carried 3-0.

Payroll and Claims: Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve Payroll #8 in the amount of \$259,840.08 and 193 claims totaling \$925,658.76. Motion carried 3-0.

Wells County Sheriff: Sheriff Holliday reported 88 inmates, 38 pretrial Superior, 24 pretrial Circuit, 8 F6 and 9 DOC. The renovation is ongoing and on schedule, pouring concrete and working on the administrative offices currently.

Wells County Highway: Shawn Bonar reported that 17,000 ton of stone has been put down on gravel roads. 2 maintainers are working the gravel roads. 2 pipe crews and 2 patch crews are working on repairs. Dust control applications are being taken until April 29th. Look out for crews on the roads, Bonar stressed. Conor Jackson gave an update on the Highway garage. Work is ongoing for the design; Jackson received a 50% set from the design team. Commissioner Stringer confirmed the next meeting date and requested a copy of the 50% set document.

Highway Engineer: Nate Rumschlag informed the Commissioners about ongoing projects. Bridge 121 should be open soon, guardrail work is scheduled to be completed this week. The Murray Stormwater project is progressing. The materials are on site and work is moving up Main Street in Murray. Rumschlag requested approval for engineering design services for Bridge 65 over Jeff Road. Nate brought a proposal from Butler Fairman & Seufert to the April 4th meeting, the Commissioners requested design fee proposals from other consultants. BF&S proposal is \$104,520, two other proposals came in at \$108,000 and \$149,910. Motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to approve the BF&S proposal for design services for Bridge 65 not to exceed \$104,520. Motion carried 3-0. Rumschlag is working with Engineering Resources on a scope of work for County Home Road and CR 300 S intersection. His request was to work with ERI to include improvements up to CR 250 N in the survey. Commissioner Gerber would like to look at the site for further clarification. Jerry Foust and Dan Avery were on hand to discuss a draft local road safety plan for Wells County. This document is a plan to improve safety on rural and local roadways. The plan assists in determining what the primary crash types in geographical areas are and where they are occurring. These determinations can then identify corrective actions to mitigate these in the future. 17% of crashes have involved deer. The number one instance of crashes in Wells County is running off the roadway. This plan will help to develop an action plan to reduce risk based on past data. The highway will use this document to implement standards that will reduce risk in the high-risk areas.

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

General Insurance Renewal: General Insurance presented a renewal proposal for the County Insurance. Selective Insurance covers the property and Inland Marine items, Bliss McKnight covers the multiclass liability, wrongful acts, and commercial auto. The County has had several claims on auto and some pending liability claims. The three-year loss ratio for the auto was 130.5%. The Cyber and Data coverage is seeing significant increases. The industry has seen significant claims and occurrences for municipalities. This premium is up from \$8,700/year to the renewal of \$14,639/year. This premium is based on implementing a multifactor authentication on corporate email, network, systems, and VPN's. The overall renewal is coming in at \$264,979/year which is a 14.05% increase in annual premium. Policies are effective 5/1/2022 – 5/1/2023. Motion made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to increase deductibles for wrongful employment and civil rights to \$5,000 per occurrence and approve the renewal proposals with General Insurance. 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. Commissioner Stringer would like to set a deadline of 30 days for action on the interlocal agreement.

PTABOA: Ordinance 2022-06 was passed by the Commissioners regarding the PTABOA board on March 21, 2022. This Ordinance states that the Commissioners, the appointing authority over two PTAOA 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. Notice of a meeting was sent to a board member prior to the current meeting. Attorney Andrews received notification that the letter was received by the affected board member on April 9, 2022. Motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to remove Larry McChesney from the Property Tax Board of Appeals, effective immediately and advertise for applications for that board. 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. Stringer proposed a 5PM meeting time. Motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to move the Commissioner meeting time to 5pm for both monthly meeting dates effective the June 6th meeting. Motion carried 3-0.

Ordinance 2022-07: An Ordinance amending the employee handbook was presented to the Commissioners for consideration. The ordinance would amend section 3.11 per IC 5-14-3 which mandates disclosure of certain information from political subdivisions. The updated section 3.11 states: Wells County will limit employment information given to outside sources to: (A) the name, compensation, job title, business address, business telephone number, job description, education and training background, previous work experience, or dates of first and last employment of present or former officers or employees of the agency; (B) information relating to the status of any formal charges against the employee; and (C) the factual basis for a disciplinary action in which final action has been taken and that resulted in the employee being suspended, demoted, or discharged. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve Ordinance 2022-07 amending the Wells County Employee handbook. Motion carried 3-0.

Ordinance 2022-08: An Ordinance of the Wells County Board of Commissioners regarding the Wells County ARP Coronavirus Fiscal Recovery plan and “Lost Revenue” was presented for comment. This ordinance would allow a one-time election of the standard allowance of up to Ten Million dollars to be included under “Revenue Loss” provisions of the American Rescue Plan. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve Ordinance 2022-08 allowing an election of lost revenue for the American Rescue plan funds. Motion carried 3-0.

Stop Sign Ordinances: Three Ordinances were presented to the Wells County Board of Commissioners. These Ordinances were for three stop sign placements in Murray. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve Ordinance 2022-09 for a stop sign at the intersection of 1000 N and 400 W in Murray, Ordinance 2022-10 for a stop sign at the intersection of Market Street and Main Street in Murray, and Ordinance 2022-11 for a stop sign at the intersection of Main Street and Garhard Street in Murray. Motion carried 3-0.

Public Comment: Dan Watson, Project Coordinator with Beam-Longest-Neff, introduced himself to the Commissioners. Matt Yergler asked the Commissioners if the report statistics in the Local Road Safety plan included why the various accidents happened, such as being impaired in any way. Yergler also commented on the power government might have in passing the plan regarding hazards on property owners’ residences. Rumschlag stated that no one could go on a property owners’ residence and remove trees or any other obstruction. If there is an issue in the right of way, it could be removed.

Adjourned: 10:49AM, motion 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