

Wells County Commissioners

Regular Session May 3, 2021

The Wells County Commissioners met in regular session on Monday May 3, 2021 at 9:00AM in the Commissioner's Room of the Wells County Carnegie Annex, Bluffton, IN. Those in attendance were Commissioners, Blake Gerber and Kevin Woodward. Commissioner Michael Vanover was absent. Also, in attendance were County Attorney, Roy Johnson and County Auditor, Lisa McCormick.

Minutes: Motion made by Kevin Woodward, seconded by Blake Gerber to approve the minutes from April 19, 2021 regular session. Motion carried 2-0.

Payroll and Claims: Motion made by Kevin Woodward, seconded by Blake Gerber to approve Payroll #9 in the amount of \$237,644.74 and 181 claims totaling \$280,043.58. Motion carried 2-0.

Wells County Sheriff: Sheriff Holliday reported 75 inmates, 22 pretrial Superior, 20 pretrial Circuit, 16 F6 DOC and 8 DOC.

Wells County Highway: Nate Rumschlag updated the Commissioners that crews are working on the hand patching and backhoe notes, weather permitting. The 4 10-hour day schedule has started and will go through the fall. Rumschlag and the Road Foreman are updating the seal coating schedule and will commence with a 5- or 6-year rotation. The first application of dust control will be applied the second week of May. 130 residents submitted applications, which is up from 2020.

Highway Engineer: Nate Rumschlag updated the Commissioners on ongoing projects. Wells County was awarded one of two CCMG 2021-01 project applications. The award is for \$589,907.65 toward the construction of the Bridge 99 project on Hoosier Highway south of Bluffton and north of the intersection of Ash Road. The second project application, for the approach to the south of Bridge 99, was not awarded. A request on behalf of the Regional Sewer District was presented to the Commissioners. The RSD would like permission to purchase a cell phone using Wells County's Verizon plan. The billing and payment would come from the Regional Sewer District and would be at no cost to Wells County. Motion made by Kevin Woodward, seconded by Blake Gerber to allow the RSD to purchase a cell phone on Wells County's Verizon policy and for the Commissioners to pay for that billing from May 2021 through May 2022. That will allow the RSD to start billing customers before they incur costs for the cell phone. Motion carried 2-0. Two driveway culverts for property owners need replacement. Rumschlag has reached out to them and has not received a response. The roadway is scheduled for sealcoating in 2022 and the needed repairs should be completed beforehand. Rumschlag had suggested reaching out again and if no response within 30 days to proceed with the labor and materials for replacement of the damaged pipes. The cost would then be forwarded to the property owners. Attorney Roy Johnson offered his opinion that the cost should be forwarded to the property owners. Nate Rumschlag presented an invoice for Geotech for soil borings for the proposed Highway garage site. The invoice was for \$3,700.00. Rumschlag was questioning which budget to pay the invoice. Motion made by Kevin Woodward, seconded by Blake Gerber to pay the Geotech invoice of \$3,700.00 from the LIT Economic Development Fund. Motion carried 2-0. The Commissioners received three Utility Location Permits from Citizens Telephone for approval. Motion made by Kevin Woodward, seconded by Blake Gerber to approve the three Utility Location Permits. Motion carried 2-0. Two Rights of Way were presented for

Commissioner approval. Motion made by Kevin Woodward, seconded by Blake Gerber to accept the two rights of way. Motion carried 2-0.

Constitutional Rights Sanctuary: A request from John Senac was presented to the Commissioners to make Wells County a Constitutional Rights Sanctuary. Senac presented a map which indicated 1,188 counties across the United States that are "Second Amendment sanctuaries." Also presented were approved resolutions from other counties. The Wells County proposed resolution encourages and requests that all agencies, departments, and officers of the County:

- (a.) continue to uphold their oaths and take due care at all times not to infringe upon the rights and liberties of the persons and individuals in Wells County as stated in the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Indiana;
- (b.) review, and change if necessary, their rules, regulations, orders, policies, practices, and all governmental documents of legal force for conformity to said Constitutions; and,
- (c.) adopt resolutions, proclamations, or commitments similar to this Resolution for the protection of the Constitutional rights and liberties of the persons and individuals in Wells County.
- (d.) the ordinances of the County shall be reviewed by the Board for compliance under the Constitutions.
- (e.) the ordinances of the County shall be reduced where possible and prudent to eliminate unnecessary regulations.

Motion made by Kevin Woodward, seconded by Blake Gerber to approve, and sign Resolution 2021-06 regarding the protection of rights under the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Indiana. Motion carried 2-0.

Washington Commons: The American Legion was requesting permission to use the Washington Street Commons Monday, May 31, 2021 from 8-11AM for a Memorial Day service. Approval has already been given by the Bluffton City Board of Works. Motion made by Kevin Woodward, seconded by Blake Gerber to allow use of the Washington Commons on May 31, 2021 from 8-11AM. Motion carried 2-0.

Highway Garage: There was discussion on the proposed county highway garage location. Motion made by Kevin Woodward, seconded by Blake Gerber to direct Attorney Roy Johnson to draft a notice of election of option to notify Michael and Shelley Mossburg that the Wells County Commissioners have elected to exercise the option to purchase the real estate pursuant to the option agreement made last December. Motion carried 2-0.

County Farm: Motion made by Kevin Woodward, seconded by Blake Gerber to schedule a public hearing on May 17, 2021 at 9:30am regarding the sale of the county farm. Motion carried 2-0.

Health Update: Marlene Hoag updated the Commissioners on COVID-19. Wells County is currently designated as Blue. A total number of 6848 citizens have been fully vaccinated.

Audience Participation: Two citizens in the audience offered differing opinions on the sale of the county farm. The first citizen wanted the Commissioners to take into consideration holding off on the sale to see if land prices will go up in the future. The second citizen did not feel that government should be in the real estate rental business and applauded the sale of the county farm.

Adjourned: Kevin Woodward motioned; Blake Gerber seconded to adjourn at 9:36AM.

Wells County Commissioners

President, Blake Gerber

Vice President, Kevin Woodward

Michael K Vanover

Attest: _____
Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor