

## **Wells County Commissioners**

**Public Hearing May 17, 2021**

**Regular Session May 17, 2021**

The Wells County Commissioners met in a public hearing and regular session on Monday, May 17, 2021 at 9:30AM in the Commissioner's Room of the Wells County Carnegie Annex, Bluffton, IN. Those in attendance were Commissioners, Blake Gerber, Kevin Woodward, and Michael Vanover. Also, in attendance were County Attorney, Roy Johnson and County Auditor, Lisa McCormick.

### **Public Hearing**

9:30

Re: Sale of Real Estate

Wells County Farm, which is located approximately on County Home Road and 350 South, in Sections 22 and 23, of Township 26 North, Range 12 East, Harrison Township, Wells County, State of Indiana, estimated to contain 229.54 acres.

The Wells County Commissioners held a public hearing concerning the sale of the county farm. Kent Sprunger expressed concern about land prices and the need to postpone the sale until land prices increase. He stated that the cash rent could be used to pay a portion of the bond payment. Caleb Geiser felt the land, if not sold, might serve a purpose for future options. Commissioner Blake Gerber confirmed that the county farm was previously looked at for the future highway garage but running water and sanitary sewage out to the property was not a viable option. Leon Berning conveyed that local government should not own farm ground and was in support of the sale. Commissioner Kevin Woodward believed the Commissioners should move the ball forward. Many years of talk have led them, the Commissioners, to this point and he felt they need to move ahead. Motion made by Kevin Woodward, seconded by Michael Vanover to adjourn the public hearing at 10:10. Motion carried 3-0.

### **Regular Session**

**Minutes:** Motion made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Kevin Woodward to approve the minutes from May 3, 2021 regular session and the May 6, 2021 executive session minutes with alterations. Motion carried 3-0.

**Payroll and Claims:** Motion made by Kevin Woodward, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve Payroll #10 in the amount of \$246,037.03 and 180 claims totaling \$414,754.73. Motion carried 3-0.

**Wells County Sheriff:** Sheriff Holliday reported 65 inmates, 20 pretrial Superior, 18 pretrial Circuit, 14 F6 and 5 DOC.

**Highway Engineer:** Nate Rumschlag gave updates on ongoing projects. Rumschlag will be issuing letters of interest for scoring on Bridge 71 and CR 200 S and overpass. RQAW is drafting design plans for the proposed highway garage. Road conversion petitions for 2021 will close on June 1. Rumschlag presented the Highway Annual report for Commissioner approval. Motion made by Kevin Woodward, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve the Highway Annual report. Motion carried 3-0. Also presented was a contract for Bridge 99, CCMG 2020-01. The grant amount is for \$587,907.65 which is 75% of the eligible costs of the project. Motion made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Kevin

Woodward to approve the INDOT contract for CCMG 2020-01, Bridge 99. Motion carried 3-0. Rumschlag was requesting approval of a utility permit for United REMC. Motion made by Kevin Woodward, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve the United REMC utility permit. Motion carried 3-0.

**Council on Aging (WOW):** Betsy Collier went over some statistical comparison flow charts on trips and riders using the public transit system. Ridership is still rebounding from the pandemic. Bonnie Valind presented the 2022 Rural Public Transit grant application for approval with the Commissioner President's signature. Motion made by Kevin Woodward, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve, and sign the 2022 Rural Public Transit grant application, Resolution 2021-09. Motion carried 3-0.

**Wells County ARP Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Plan:** Council President Steve Huggins was on hand to discuss the Wells County ARP Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery plan. Huggins suggested the creation of an ARP committee to spearhead suggestions on different ways to capitalize on the use of the ARP funds that will come to Wells County. Huggins suggested having a 7-to-9-member board made up of: 1 Commissioner, 2 or 3 Council members, 1 businessperson, 1 member from Economic Development, 1 from the City, 1 from schools and possibly the Highway engineer. Kevin Woodward asked Michael Vanover if he would be willing to be on the committee for the Commissioners, Vanover stated that he would.

**Courthouse Plaza Request:** Bluffton Free Street Fair submitted a request to use the Courthouse Plaza from Sunday, September 21 through Sunday, September 26, 2021. Motion made by Kevin Woodward, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve the request for the use of the Courthouse plaza. Motion carried 3-0.

**E-911 Advisory Board:** Commissioner Michael Vanover introduced the idea of creating an E-911 advisory board. This board would be comprised of first responders and leadership individuals. That board would report back to the commissioners and assess strategies. Motion made by Kevin Woodward, seconded by Michael Vanover to allow Attorney Roy Johnson to draft a resolution to create an E-911 advisory board. Motion carried 3-0.

**Highway Supervisor:** Motion made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Kevin Woodward to approve, and sign a letter of intent and an agreement for employment for Shawn Bonar as the Highway Supervisor. Motion carried 3-0.

**County Farm:** Motion made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Kevin Woodward to proceed with the sale of the County farm and to appoint appraisers, Neal Warden and Rita Gabriel. Motion carried 3-0.

**Adjourned:** Wells County Commissioners adjourned at 10:45AM. Motion made by Kevin Woodward, seconded by Michael Vanover. Motion carried 3-0.

### **Wells County Commissioners**

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President, Blake Gerber

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Vice President, Kevin Woodward

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Michael K Vanover

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