

Wells County Commissioners

Regular Session June 17, 2024

The Wells County Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday June 17, 2024, at 5:00PM in the Commissioner's Room of the Wells County Carnegie Annex, Bluffton, IN. Those in attendance were Commissioners Blake Gerber, and Michael Vanover, County Attorney Ted Storer and County Auditor Lisa McCormick. Commissioner Jeff Stringer was absent.

Minutes: A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve the minutes from the June 3, 2024, regular session. Motion carried 2-0.

Payroll and Claims: A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve Payroll #12 in the amount of \$289,539.04 and 218 claims totaling \$1,193,656.06. Motion carried 2-0.

Wells County Sheriff: Sheriff Holliday reported 82 inmates, 25 pretrial Superior, 40 pretrial Circuit, 1 F6 DOC and 5 DOC. The Sheriff reported that there is still an ongoing sewer smell in the building, he is having Havel investigate.

Wells County Highway Supervisor: Shawn Bonar informed the Commissioners that mowing the side ditches has taken more time this year due to the spring rains. An open house was held for the Highway Garage and Bonar reported that it was a success. The dust control application is complete. The 2023 road conversions will be ready for chip seal this season. HVAC training is complete, relocation of the pressure washer is in process, repair of the wash bay concrete has begun, and landscaping is 95% complete. Bonar presented an unofficial detour for State Road 124. The work is anticipated to begin as early as spring of 2025. The unofficial detour will be Meridian Road to E 100 S and then to S. Adams Street. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve the unofficial detour for State Road 124. Motion carried 2-0.

Highway Engineer: Highway Engineer Nate Whitacre updated the Commissioners on current projects. ERC training courses have been completed and Whitacre has obtained his ERC certificate. He has requested that INDOT transfer ERC responsibilities from Shawn to himself. CCMG 2024-02 call for projects opens July 1, 2024. Nate suggested that Bridge 65 is the most viable option for submittal, 90% of the application package is complete. Bridge 170 is ready for HMA paving which is scheduled for next week. The road should be open by the end of next week. Whitacre proposed two small structure replacements. Nottingham 1455 and Nottingham 1457 are in proximity and Whitacre thought there would be cost savings to do them at the same time.

Veterans Office 2023 Activity Report: Veterans Officer Dewey Randall presented 2023 statistics for local veterans. The Service Officer activity report included 731 walk-ins, 702 incoming calls, 465 outgoing calls, 228 claims filed, 401 questions, 81 new POA, and 43 Veteran deaths. Randall discussed area veteran population stats and funding that is provided by the US department of Veterans affairs to local entities.

Rock Creek Stone Quarry: Attorney Jon Bomberger and Chase Fiechter addressed the Commissioners regarding a proposed road relocation for CR 500 W, which is South of 100 W. The current road is proposed to be relocated from its current location to a new location which would be to the west of the current location. Bomberger stated that the relocation would preserve the ability to go from CR 100 N

to SR 124 via CR 500 W despite the partial vacation of CR 500 W. The petitioner will be responsible for the costs to relocate the road. The petitioner will be responsible for constructing the road to Wells County standards for the construction of the public right of way. Completion of the project is estimated to be December 31, 2025. Attorney Bomberger will prepare an Ordinance as an outline with written commitments included for Commissioner review. The Commissioners suggested taking the topic under advisement for 30 – 45 days so the Highway Engineer can get up to speed on the proposal.

Right-of-Way and Utility Permits: Two right-of-way documents were presented to the Commissioners for approval. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve, and sign the two rights-of-way. Motion carried 2-0.

Certificate of Substantial Completion: Highway Garage Project Manager Conor Jackson presented a certificate of substantial completion for the Highway Garage. Substantially complete means that the space is being used for its intended purpose, Conor explained. Punch list items are in process and should not affect the certificate. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve and allow the Highway Supervisor to sign the Certificate of Substantial Completion. Motion carried 2-0.

2025 Budgets: The 2025 Budget worksheets, Commissioner General Fund and LIT Economic Development, were completed by Commissioner Stringer and presented to the Board of Commissioners for review. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve the 2025 Commissioner General Fund and LIT Economic Development budget worksheets as presented. Motion carried 2-0.

Right to Life: Right to Life requested permission to hold a rally on the east side of the Courthouse on June 22, 2024, from 10am – 11am. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve the Right to Life rally on June 22, 2024. Motion carried 2-0.

Adjourned: Wells County Commissioners adjourned at 5:40PM, motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover. Motion carried 2-0.

Wells County Commissioners

President, Jeff Stringer

Vice President, Michael Vanover

Member, Blake Gerber

Attest: _____
Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor