

Wells County Commissioners

Regular Session July 1, 2024

The Wells County Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, July 1, 2024, at 5:00PM in the Commissioner's Room of the Wells County Carnegie Annex, Bluffton, IN. Physically present at the meeting were Commissioners, Michael Vanover and Blake Gerber, County Attorney, Ted Storer and Auditor, Lisa McCormick. Commissioner Jeff Stringer participated in the meeting by electronic means of communication, Zoom, which allowed Stringer to simultaneously attend and observe the meeting. All votes taken during the meeting were taken by roll call vote.

Minutes: A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the minutes from the June 17, 2024, regular session. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

Payroll and Claims: A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve Payroll #13 in the amount of \$299,829.20 and 225 claims totaling \$883,809.10. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

Wells County Sheriff: Sheriff Holliday reported 81 inmates, 28 Pretrial Superior, 40 Pretrial Circuit, 2 F6 DOC and 12 DOC. Holliday reported that an industrial professional plumber was needed to investigate ongoing smells in the Jail. Pipe smoke testing was performed by Superior and hairline cracks in the piping were discovered. Two major elbow areas were discovered, and parts were ordered for repairs. The identified areas were all in the original part of the jail, the total cost is estimated at \$1,300 for repair and labor.

Highway Supervisor: Highway Supervisor, Shawn Bonar, was not in attendance. Commissioner Gerber postponed the road conversion spreadsheet until the July 15th meeting. Steve Kabel, 6651 N 700 W, Decatur, Indiana spoke on behalf of 800 E (Co. Line) US 224 to 750 N. 800 E is heavily traveled due to a livestock industry on the road. Commissioner Gerber stated that currently 800 E is not at the top of the list, the number of roads converted will depend on the amount of funding available.

Highway Engineer: Nate Whitacre updated the Commissioners on ongoing and future projects. CCMG 2024-02 call for projects opened today. Whitacre would like to submit an application for Bridge 65. Presented to the Commissioners was a letter of financial commitment for the project. The requested matching funds will come from Highway Fund (1176). A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve and sign the letter of financial commitment for CCMG 2024-02 for Bridge 65. Motion carried 3-0 by a roll call vote. The road was opened last week for Bridge 170. The contractor will be back to address final grading on stone and ditches before performing the final seeding. Discussion on two small structures in Nottingham is ongoing. The intent is to complete both structures prior to fall harvest. Whitacre suggested applying for a safety grant to update Railroad crossing signs. He thought the grant possibility would be in September. The Commissioners were supportive of the grant opportunity.

CADA Annual Report: Molly Hoag and Chris Walker presented the 2024 grant distributions for Citizens Against Drug Abuse (CADA). Funds for the grants are collected through the "Drug Free Community Fund"; a total of \$19,784.86 was collected in 2023 for distribution in 2024. Total grant requests for the 2024 period were \$19,333.21. The grants are divided within four categories: Administration, Education/Prevention, Treatment/Intervention, and Judicial. \$4,946.20 being distributed for

Other/Admin, \$4,946.22 being distributed to Education/Prevention, \$4,944.22 being distributed to Treatment/Intervention, and \$4,496.57 being distributed to Judicial. Hoag will go before the County Council for an appropriation request on July 2, 2024.

Bluffton City 911 Budget for 2025: 911 Director Mike Miller presented the proposed Bluffton City 911 budget to the Commissioners. Per the interlocal agreement for the universal 911 dispatch center, the proposed budget must be presented to the Wells County Commissioners and Wells County Council for review. The proposed budget for 2025 totals \$1,303,130.00. The City of Bluffton will have a final review of this budget during their budgeting process.

Wells County Historical Society: Jim Sturgeon and Lynn Elliott, representing the Wells County Historical Society, requested funding of \$16,500.00 for the 2025 budget year. This is an increase of \$4,000 over the current year's funding. Increased assessed value, utilities, and property insurance were some of the needs regarding the increase in funding request. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the request for \$16,500 in funding for the Wells County Historical Society in 2025. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

Rights-of-Way and Utility Permits: Two rights-of-way were presented to the Commissioners for approval. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the two rights-of-way. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

Statement of Salaries and Wages: The Commissioners were presented the Form 144, statement of salaries and wages for all Wells County departments for the 2025 budget cycle. Statutorily this is presented to the Commissioners at the July meeting for review and recommendations. Any Commissioner recommendations should be presented to the county fiscal body before August 20th.

Covered Bridge Certification: The Annual Certification for Covered Bridges was presented to the Commissioners. Wells County has zero covered bridges in our county. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to sign the Annual Certification for Covered Bridges. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

Adjourned: Wells County Commissioners adjourned at 5:39PM. The motion was made by Jeff Stinger, seconded by Blake Gerber. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

Wells County Commissioners

President, Jeff Stringer

Vice President, Michael K Vanover

Member, Blake Gerber

Attest: _____
Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor