

Wells County Commissioners

Regular Session July 18, 2022

The Wells County Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, July 18, 2022, 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, Colin Andrews 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: Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the minutes from the July 5, 2022, regular session and the July 5, 2022, executive session. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

Payroll and Claims: Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve Payroll #14 in the amount of \$256,125.65 and 149 claims totaling \$1,431,878.73. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

Wells County Sheriff: Sheriff Holliday reported 84 inmates, 34 pretrial Superior, 19 pretrial Circuit, 16 F6 DOC and 6 DOC. Sheriff Holliday provided an update on the jail renovation. Outside brickwork is complete, duct work, plumbing and electrical is being installed on the interior. The outdoor recreational area is enclosed and being converted into video/program rooms, storage and chapel area.

Wells County Highway Supervisor: Shawn Bonar informed the Commissioners that his crew is in full force with chip seal. 35 miles to the South have been completed to date. Crews will be starting North and are approximately 2 weeks from completion. Bonar reiterated that farmers need to cut back corn so there are clear views at all intersections. His personnel are stepping up and taking up the slack due to a currently reduced staff. Conor Jackson informed the Commissioners that an informational pre bid session for contractors is Thursday, July 21 at 9AM in the Annex meeting room. Highway garage bids will be received and opened on August 4th at 4PM in the Annex meeting room.

Highway Engineer: Nate Rumschlag updated the Commissioners on ongoing and upcoming projects. Road conversion petitions were presented for Commissioner review. Rumschlag requested approval to prepare right of way documents for the remaining roads with 100% petition participation. Also requested were issuance of right of way packets to all property owners who have not responded. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the preparation of right of way documents for roads with 100% petition participation. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote. The Drainage Board approved a bid for drainage work on Hoosier Highway at the Drainage Board meeting prior to the Commissioner meeting. The accepted bid was from Jarin Tucker Drainage for \$96,941.00. Additional tile work will need to be completed, Rumschlag suggested approval of \$110,000 to be appropriated for payout. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve payment for the drainage work to be paid from the SR 301 Road Transfer fund not to exceed \$110,000. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

Zoning Ordinance Amendment: Mike Lautzenheiser presented a recommended APC do pass amendment to the Wells County zoning ordinance. The recommended zoning changes are from Suburban-1 Zoned District to a Residential-2 Zoned District. The property is located at Timber Ridge,

2330E 250N, Bluffton, IN 46714. Motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to approve Ordinance 2022-14 amending Wells County zoning ordinance and zone maps. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

Zoning Ordinance Amendment: Mike Lautzenheiser presented a recommended APC do pass amendment to the Wells County zoning ordinance. The recommended zoning changes are from Agriculture-1 Zoned District to a Business-3 Zoned District. The property is located at 11044 N. Marzane Rd., Markle, IN 46770. The property previously was used as a home-based business. The current owners do not occupy the home, therefore does not fall under the current zoning regulation. Bruce Jonson spoke against the rezoning request. Jonson submitted a list of reasons why he did not agree with the request as well as a petition with 43 signatures against the proposed rezoning request. Motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve Ordinance 2022-15 amending Wells County zoning ordinance and zone maps. Motion carried 2-1 by roll call vote, Blake Gerber voted no, his concern regarded spot zoning.

Audience Participation: Robert Park referenced an article from the News Banner about a study the Commissioners had approved at the July 5th meeting. The article stated that the study was regarding the Ossian bypass. The Commissioners clarified that the News Banner was mistaken, it is a study for the SR1 expansion and available options. The Commissioners suggested Mr. Park address questions to Chad Kline and the committee in charge of the study.

Adjourned: Wells County Commissioners adjourned at 5:40PM, motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

Wells County Commissioners

President, Michael K Vanover

Vice President, Blake Gerber

Jeff Stringer

Attest: _____
Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor