

Wells County Commissioners

Regular Session August 5, 2024

The Wells County Commissioners met in regular session on Monday August 5, 2024, at 5:00PM in the Commissioner's Room of the Wells County Carnegie Annex, Bluffton, IN. Those in attendance were Commissioners, Jeff Stringer, Michael Vanover, and Blake Gerber, County Auditor, Lisa McCormick, and Attorney, Andrew Heck.

Minutes: A motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Blake Gerber to approve the minutes from the July 15, 2024, regular session. Motion carried 3-0.

Payroll and Claims: A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve Payroll #15 in the amount of \$297,343.18 and Payroll #16 in the amount of \$296,754.23 and 272 claims totaling \$867,405.08. Motion carried 3-0.

Wells County Sheriff: Commissioner President Jeff Stringer reported jail statistics of 85 inmates, 19 pretrial Superior, 39 pretrial Circuit, 2 F6 DOC and 24 DOC.

Wells County Highway Supervisor: Shawn Bonar reported that the concrete deck on Bridge 105 has been poured and the estimated completion date is September 24th. Sight issues, due to crops, have been a problem at certain intersections. Bonar issued a plea to area farmers to cut back crops at intersections if they are obstructing sight distance. The highway employees are grading stone roads, doing tile repair, dura patching and brush cutting before chip and seal begins. There are a few punch list items for the highway garage that are in process; AC issues, outside door lights that short out, and a shower that does not drain properly. The issues are being handled; the Commissioners will be updated regularly on the progress. The Local Trax project was delayed for two weeks but is back on schedule. Completion for the Adams Street portion will be early November. Intersections 300 and 250 are closed and will be closed through the completion of the project. Bonar presented an unofficial detour for SR 218. The unofficial detour will be 100 E to 500 S to S 200 E then returning to SR 218. The work is anticipated to begin July of 2024. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve the unofficial detour for SR 218. Motion carried 3-0. Eight rights-of-way were presented to the Commissioners for approval. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve and sign the eight rights-of-way. Motion carried 3-0.

Highway Engineer: Nate Whitacre presented two unofficial detours for Commissioner review. SR 1 will be closed to replace a small structure. The work is anticipated to begin in spring of 2025. The proposed unofficial detour is E 1000 N to N 450 E to E 1050 N then returning to SR 1. US 224 will also be closed to replace a small structure. The work is anticipated to begin in spring of 2025. The proposed unofficial detour is CR 300 W to CR 600 N to CR 200 W then returning to US 224. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve the unofficial detours for SR 1 and US 224 as presented. Motion carried 3-0. RFP and CE services for Bridge 71 have been submitted to INDOT and are now advertised. Nottingham 1455 and 1457 small structure replacements on CR 1000 S have been ordered and should be delivered by September 13th. The road closure is anticipated to be approximately a week. Bridge 170 is complete, once we have paid the final invoice the close-out process will begin.

Council on Aging: Betsy Collier, Executive Director for the Council on Aging, presented three compliance letters and a third-party lease agreement for Commissioner review. The third-party lease agreement

added new vehicles and removed vehicles no longer in service. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve and allow President Jeff Stinger to sign the third-party lease agreement between Wells County Commissioners and Wells County Council on Aging. Motion carried 3-0. Disadvantaged business enterprise, INDOT required (4 Core) training, and technical capacity program management were the three compliance letters provided. A motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Blake Gerber to approve and allow President Jeff Stinger to sign the three compliance letters. Motion carried 3-0.

Opioid Settlement Reporting: The Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA) must submit an annual comprehensive report of the use of all opioid settlement funds, including funds received by the local units of government, to the Indiana General Assembly. All local units of government that received funds from the National Opioid Settlement are required to report any settlement funds spent between August 1, 2023, and June 30, 2024, to FSSA. This information will be included in a final report. Each entity is responsible to delegate one representative to complete the electronic form on behalf of their community. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to delegate the Auditor, Lisa McCormick, to complete the Opioid reporting. Motion carried 3-0.

Public Comment: Lisa Dan, Indiana Director on the Center for Energy Education, informed the Commissioners of two opportunities to attend ‘Let’s Talk Solar 101’ workshops. The first workshop is on Wednesday August 21, 2024, in Huntington, IN at Huntington University. The second workshop is on Thursday, August 22, 2024, in Bluffton, IN at the Wells County Library. The workshops are designed to provide information to public officials to better understand the current Indiana energy environment. Chase Fiechter, Rock Creek Quarry, inquired on the status of the quarry’s proposal to divert traffic from CR 500 W. Commissioner Stringer will reach out to County Attorney Storer for a status update and a possible meeting date.

Adjourned: Wells County Commissioners adjourned at 5:45PM. The motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover. Motion carried 3-0.

Wells County Commissioners

President, Jeff Stringer

Vice President, Michael K Vanover

Member, Blake Gerber

Attest: _____
Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor