

Wells County Commissioners

Regular Session August 7, 2023

The Wells County Commissioners met in regular session on Monday August 7, 2023, at 5:00PM in the Commissioner's Room of the Wells County Carnegie Annex, Bluffton, IN. Those in attendance were Commissioners, Michael Vanover, Blake Gerber, and Jeff Stringer, County Auditor, Lisa McCormick, and County Attorney, Ted Storer.

Minutes: A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the minutes from the July 24, 2023, regular session. Motion carried 3-0.

Payroll and Claims: A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve Payroll #16 in the amount of \$280,108.81 and 110 claims totaling \$243,858.01. Motion carried 3-0.

Wells County Sheriff: The Sheriff's department reported 65 inmates, 21 pretrial Superior, 19 pretrial Circuit, 7 F6 DOC and 16 DOC. The epoxy renovation on 4 shower stalls has been completed, with 7 more to go. A new outbuilding was delivered today to replace an existing structure.

Wells County Highway Supervisor: Shawn Bonar reported that chip and seal is 50% complete. Bonar made a plea for farmers to please help keep our community safe and cut back corn at intersections. The updates on the Highway Garage were, water is on in the building, masonry walls are painted, bollards are being set in the truck bays, studs are being erected in the office areas and re-bar is being assembled for the pad in material storage.

Highway Engineer: Nate Rumschlag presented updates for current and future projects. Work has started on CR 450E between 1100N and 1200N, only local traffic is permitted. Letters will be issued in October with right-of-way packets for 2023 gravel road conversions. Design exceptions have been signed by Nate to date for any design alteration characteristics in contracts. Rumschlag was informing the Commissioners of this to see if they thought there needed to be a resolution to allow for his signature or if they would like to sign. Attorney Storer would be glad to investigate it, the Commissioners do not have a problem with Nate signing since they would ultimately have to default to him. Commissioner Gerber asked for an update on VTF, the contractor handling Regional Sewer District installations in Craigville. Nate stated that the grinder stations are in place, they are working with the electricians on power. The coordination of the electricians is slowing down the project but still moving ahead.

Rock Creek Stone Quarry: Chase and Dave Fiechter discussed the possibility of vacating a portion of CR 500W, just south of CR 100N. Chase Feichter explained that truck traffic has increased through Rockford going to and from the quarry. The concern is about young children and families playing outside. The road closure would eliminate that danger, they thought. Attorney Storer explained the process to vacate a road. Initially a petition to vacate would have to be presented to the Commissioners. Adjoining property owners would be notified, and a public hearing held. After the public hearing the Commissioners would decide if they would allow or deny the petition. An Ordinance would be presented for Commissioner approval. Attorney Storer will investigate 500W for any obstacles that might prevent the vacate.

Timber Ridge Subdivision: Michael Lautzenheiser Jr. came to the Commissioners requesting approval of a secondary plat for Timber Ridge subdivision. The subdivision will include 17 parcels. The City of Bluffton has granted approval for sewer and water service. The subdivision has been granted approval from the Area Plan Commission but also required approval from the Wells County Commissioners. A motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to accept a secondary plat for the Timber Ridge subdivision. Motion carried 3-0.

Solid Waste Salary Contract Amendment 2023: An amended Solid Waste salary contract was presented to the Commissioners for review. The amendment included a wage modification for the Supervisor due to an approved matrix for all county employees effective July 1, 2023. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the amendment to the 2023 Solid Waste Salary Contract (Misc. 2023-07) that modifies the Supervisor rate to include the Matrix. Motion carried 3-0.

Right-of-Way and Utility: One right-of-way document and three utility permits were presented to the Board of Commissioners for their approval. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the one right-of-way and 3 utility permits. Motion carried 3-0.

Health Board: Commissioner Michael Vanover conveyed his intent to replace an appointed health board member with a Commissioner. The Health Department has had some employment vacancies that have led to deficiencies in the department. Marlene Hoag, acting as interim administrator, is helping with the transition. Commissioner Jeff Stringer felt that some of the board members have not shown responsibility. County Attorney Ted Storer advised statutory restrictions regarding removing a board member. Storer stated he would research the statute for the Health board and report back with more information. The Commissioners have an option to not reappoint any board member that they felt was not performing up to the responsibilities of the appointment, Storer also stated. Commissioner Gerber would like to see more instruction on the responsibilities that are expected of each board and member.

Public Comment: R. Todd Zeplin, 8162 N. Meridian Rd., Uniondale, addressed the Commissioners concerning road conversion for his road. He produced the ROW petitions for all residents on his road except for one landowner. The holdout landowner does not live in the area, the land is farm ground, not a home. Nate Rumschlag took possession of the paperwork.

Adjourned: Wells County Commissioners adjourned at 5:49PM. The motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber. Motion carried 3-0.

Wells County Commissioners

President, Michael K Vanover

Vice President, Blake Gerber

Jeff Stringer

Attest: _____
Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor