

Wells County Commissioners
September 5, 2023

Regular Session

The Wells County Commissioners met on Tuesday September 5, 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, Attorney, Ted Storer and County Auditor, Lisa McCormick.

Minutes: A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the minutes from the August 21, 2023, regular session. Motion carried 3-0.

Payroll and Claims: A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve Payroll #18 in the amount of \$279,774.10 and 92 claims totaling \$648,992.97. Motion carried 3-0.

Wells County Sheriff: Sheriff Holliday reported 58 inmates, 21 pretrial Superior, 20 pretrial Circuit, 4 F6 DOC and 8 DOC. Sheriff Holliday updated the Commissioners on the jail renovation; Ameresco will make a final walkthrough for the project this week. Flooring is being installed in the Administration side. Four showers remain to have epoxy applied; the shower remodel will then be complete.

Wells County Highway Supervisor: Shawn Bonar informed the Commissioners that the 700N road conversion will be asphalted on Thursday. The paving in Craigville will be completed on Friday. Mowing crews are still in full force. Bridge 147 has been repaired. The small structure replacement is complete. Bonar updated the Commissioners on the highway garage: 99% of the rough work is complete in the office area, electric is being roughed in, the front entrance is in process, the overhead doors are on-site and prep work for paving is in the beginning stage. Bonar presented an unofficial detour for SR116. SR116 will be closed over Markley Ditch for repairs, creating the need for a road detour. The proposed unofficial detour will be from SR116 to S 450E, to E 200S, to S 350E, returning to SR116. Wells County will be responsible for signing and any weight restrictions on the unofficial detour. The work is tentatively scheduled to begin in the spring of 2024. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the unofficial detour for SR116. Motion carried 3-0. Bonar presented a donation agreement between Kyle Lund and Wells County. The highway department will be performing maintenance and improvements to CR 700N. Lund would like to have asphalt applied for his section of road during the maintenance of the road. The agreement states that Lund will donate \$17,000 for those added improvements. If the County does not proceed with the project, the donation shall be returned. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the donation agreement between Wells County and Kyle Lund. Motion carried 3-0.

Highway Engineer: Nate Rumschlag informed the Commissioners of complaints on the CR 450E project between 1000N and 1200N. The complaints are regarding the downslope off the edge of the stone shoulder. Bonar and Rumschlag have been walking the roadway to identify final grade concerns and slopes. Shawn is working to address the farmer's concerns. Overall, Rumschlag felt the project was a success, the project was finished ahead of schedule and below budget. Rumschlag presented the 2025-2028 Countywide Bridge Inspection contract for Commissioner approval. The contract is with Butler, Fairman & Seifert. The contract has been reviewed and approved by INDOT. The total agreement is \$434,373.00. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the 2025-2028

countywide bridge inspection contract (Misc. 2023-08) with BF&S. Motion carried 3-0. Also presented was a contract amendment for Bridge 106. The update covers the latest project estimate as well as the letting dates of April 2024 for the project. A motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to approve the contract amendment for Bridge 106, contract #76027, and allow the president to sign the contract via DocuSign. Motion carried 3-0. Rumschlag discussed the Local Road Safety Plan and the inclusion of a vision zero policy statement. Federal funding guidelines require an inclusion of a vision zero statement in our Local Road Safety Plan. The policy statement presented outlines the general activities and priorities the county would encourage to promote safety and reduce the frequency of crashes. Rumschlag will revisit the discussion during the October meeting regarding the vision zero policy statement inclusion into the Local Road Safety Plan.

Letter of Support: Attorney Ted Storer presented a letter of support for the Upper Wabash River Basin Commission’s application for IDEM Section 319 funding. The funding would support development and implementation of the Wabash River Basin Watershed Management Plan and Implementation. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve, and sign the letter of support for the Upper Wabash River Basin. Motion carried 3-0.

Right to Life: Lucy Papaik, outreach coordinator for Right to Life of Northeast Indiana, requested permission to use the sidewalk on the east side of the Courthouse on June 22, 2024, for a Regional Rally for Life from 10-11AM. A motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to approve the Regional Rally for Life on the east side of the Courthouse sidewalk on June 22, 2024, from 10-11AM. Motion carried 3-0.

2024 Holiday Schedule: The 2024 Holiday schedule was presented to the Commissioners for their review and comment. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the 2024 Holiday Schedule. Motion carried 3-0.

Park Center Board Appointment: Jeff Stringer resigned his seat on the Park Center Board, effective immediately. A motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to appoint Taylor Vanover to the Park Center Board. Motion carried 2-0-1, Michael Vanover abstained.

Right-of-Way/Utility Permits: Five rights-of-way were presented to the Board of Commissioners for approval. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the five rights-of-way. Motion carried 3-0.

Adjourned: Wells County Commissioners adjourned at 5:28PM, the motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer. Motion carried 3-0.

Wells County Commissioners

President, Michael K Vanover

Vice President, Blake Gerber

Member, Jeff Stringer

Attest: _____
Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor