

**Wells County Commissioners**  
**Regular Session October 2, 2023**

The Wells County Commissioners met in regular session on Monday October 2, 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 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 September 5, 2023, regular session. Motion carried 3-0.

**Payroll and Claims:** A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve Payroll #19 in the amount of \$279,583.85 and Payroll #20 in the amount of \$281,264.79, 164 claims totaling \$929,732.23 and 135 claims totaling \$502,630.16. Motion carried 3-0.

**Wells County Sheriff:** Sheriff Holliday reported 62 inmates, 11 pretrial Superior, 25 pretrial Circuit, 5 F6 DOC and 15 DOC. A substantial completion certificate from Ameresco was presented to the Commissioners for approval and the President's signature. The certificate lists the contracted work that is substantially completed and the dates of completion. Also included in the certificate are the remaining punch list items. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the substantial completion certificate, and allow the president to sign. Motion carried 3-0. A jail renovation change order request (no. 5) was presented for Commissioner approval. The change was a scope of work change. There will be no replacement of AHU vibration isolators, a \$7,000 savings, and will add a reconfiguration of boiler control sequence at a cost of \$6,505 and add HVAC modification serving the medical office and medical examination room at a cost of \$495. The modifications result in no change in contract price. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve, and allow the president to sign the jail renovation change order no. 5. Motion carried 3-0.

**Wells County Highway Supervisor:** Shawn Bonar updated the Board of Commissioners on the current projects within the Highway Department. The road conversion on 700N is complete with the asphalt paving, chip sealing the remainder of the project will be complete by Tuesday. Craigville road repairs have been completed due to the conclusion of the Regional Sewer District project. October 19<sup>th</sup> the concrete structure on 900N west of 100W will be installed. The two-way radio repeater is installed and functional. All units will have radios installed within two weeks. The highway garage update included: exterior concrete is 70% complete, drywall in the office area is in process, interior truck bay walls are being installed, pallet racking and spill containment containers for the oil distribution tanks have been received.

**Highway Engineer:** Nate Rumschlag updated the Commissioners on ongoing projects. Rumschlag requested approval for the Commissioner president to sign the INDOT-LPA agreement from the state via DocuSign. The INDOT agreement mirrors the 2025-2028 Countywide Bridge Inspection contract that was approved by the Commissioners during the September 5<sup>th</sup> meeting. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to allow the president to sign via DocuSign the 2025-2028 Countywide Bridge Inspection contract with INDOT. Motion carried 3-0. A 5-year proposed ADA plan for updated sidewalk and ramps in Liberty Center was presented to the Commissioners to be included within the ADA plan. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve, and insert appendix D, the 5-year project plan, into the current ADA plan. Motion carried 3-0. Rumschlag presented a vision zero policy statement to be included in the Local Road Safety Plan. Federal funding

guidelines require the inclusion of a vision zero statement into the 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. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the vision zero policy statement to be included in the Local Road Safety plan. Motion carried 3-0. Rumschlag requested approval of the Bridge 106 project for letting by INDOT. The letting date is currently scheduled for April 10, 2024. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the Bridge 106 letting date by INDOT. Motion carried 3-0. The renovation of Bridge 85 is expected to start on October 9, 2023, with an end date of November 13, 2023. This will result in a full road closure of Hoosier Highway over Rockcreek north of 500S. Jeff Stringer recommended sending notices to area farmers.

**2024 Meeting Dates:** A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the 2024 Board of Commissioners meeting dates as presented. Motion carried 3-0.

**Wellness Plan Design:** The wellness plan design was discussed with the Commissioners. Employees on the health plan have biomarkers to assess points. Points not earned equal more premium that the employee is responsible for. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to keep the current plan design and biomarkers in place for the 2024 plan year. Motion carried 3-0.

**Right-of-Way:** 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.

**Public Comment:** Tom Jester spoke to the Commissioners about an easement that leads to Uniontown cemetery. A farmer has been planting crops in the easement which does not allow passage into the cemetery. A motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to allow the highway department to apply stone on the easement after crops are off. Motion carried 3-0. The Wells County Cemetery Board President Chris Pease and Vice President Bill Dowty came before the Commissioners about a property owner encroaching on the County owned old County Home cemetery property. Board member Jerri Lehman provided photos of the items that were located within the county property. The Commissioners instructed County Attorney Ted Storer to draft a letter to the property owner regarding the issue. Jefferson township trustee Larry Heckber came before the Commissioners stating that most township trustees don't know their responsibilities regarding township cemeteries. Heckber felt that many cemeteries have, or will, fall into disrepair if the trustees aren't aware of the statue responsibilities that come with their elected positions. Attorney Storer will create a friendly letter from the Commissioners to the elected trustees outlining the guidelines by statute.

**Adjourned:** A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to adjourn at 6:09PM. Motion carried 3-0.

### Wells County Commissioners

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President, Michael K Vanover

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Vice President, Blake Gerber

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Member, Jeff Stringer

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor