

Wells County Commissioners

Regular Session October 3, 2022

The Wells County Commissioners met in regular session on Monday October 3, 2022, 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, Colin Andrews and County Auditor, Lisa McCormick.

Minutes: Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the minutes from September 6, 2022, regular session, September 15, 2022, Special Session and the September 28, 2022, Executive Session. Motion carried 3-0.

Payroll and Claims: Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve Payroll #19 in the amount of \$259,982.27 and Payroll #20 in the amount of \$253,108.81, 222 claims totaling \$1,152,031.25 and 103 claims totaling \$429,124.81. Motion carried 3-0.

Wells County Sheriff: Sheriff Holliday reported 91 inmates, 31 pretrial Superior, 30 pretrial Circuit, 18 F6 DOC and 7 DOC. Holliday updated the Commissioners on the jail reconstruction status and requested approval for change orders. Ameresco recently discovered that the fire dampers in the old section of the jail need to be replaced to be up to code. Ameresco will absorb the cost for the new construction, but Wells County will be responsible for updating the outdated fire dampers in the old section. Wells County's portion would not exceed \$170,351. Currently, there is a credit of \$125,000 in construction costs. In a prior meeting Holliday requested upgrades in three areas: public lobby new finishes, kitchen vestibule and corridor finishes totaling \$102,413. All proposed expenditures total \$272,764, minus the \$125,000 credit, leaves out of pocket expense of \$147,764. Holliday requested approval to use LIT Public Safety funds for those expenditures. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to allow the change orders for the fire dampers, public lobby new finishes, kitchen vestibule and corridor finishes to be funded out of LIT Public Safety. Motion carried 3-0. Holliday said supply chain delays have pushed out the project's original finishing date of October, to possibly December.

Wells County Highway Supervisor: Shawn Bonar updated the Board of Commissioners on the current projects within the Highway Department. Crews are on their final round of mowing for the season. The conversion on 800E, surface is complete and will finish back slopes when crops come off. Two additional chip and seal projects are in the works. A request for an unofficial detour was presented to the Commissioners for approval. The unofficial detour is for a curve correction project on SR 116. The anticipated date the work will begin is April 1, 2023. The unofficial detour will be from SR 116/CR 600 E, south on CR 600 E, east on CR 350 S, north on 700 E, northeast on Church Road, ending at SR 116/Church Road. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the Unofficial Detour for SR 116. Motion carried 3-0. Shawn requested a 30-day extended medical leave for a highway employee. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to extend the medical leave for the highway employee for 30 days. Motion carried 3-0. Conor Jackson updated the Commissioners on the Highway Garage project. Cold storage pads are complete, they are 3 weeks away from the concrete pour for the highway garage and salt storage building. Jackson will have Bonar update the Commissioners on progress of the project from this point on. Rumschlag and Bonar suggested implementing fees for oversized loads, road damage and reimbursement for gravel requests. No fees are collected for damages or personal requests for gravel or dirt. Bonar supplied a spreadsheet

of fees that are collected by surrounding counties for comparison. The Commissioners requested Bonar and Rumschlag return with figures on supplies and time that the County has spent on those requests.

Highway Engineer: Nate Rumschlag updated the Commissioners on ongoing projects. The final application date for the Federal Rail Elimination grant is October 11th. INDOT and DLZ have been an asset in getting the reporting completed. Bridge and Transportation Asset Management plans have been submitted to LTAP and have been approved. Bridge 106 right of way purchases will be sent to owners soon. Right of way parcels have been secured for Bridge 105. Right of way purchases will be going out soon for the County Home Road project. Three utility permits were presented to the Commissioners for approval. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the three utility permits. Motion carried 3-0. One right-of-way was presented to the Commissioners for approval. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the one right-of-way. Motion carried 3-0.

Poka-Bache Resolution: A proposed resolution to include Wells County in the Poka-Bache Coalition was presented to the Commissioners at the September 6th meeting. This Coalition is formed by local governments: Wells, Allen, Dekalb, and Steuben Counties and the cities and towns within each county. As stated in the proposed Resolution, the Poka-Bache Connector Trail will, when completed, result in the enhancement of the Northeast Indiana region by supporting the regions health and wellness, spurring economic growth, improving access to the natural environment, and attracting additional tourism. Michael Lautzenheiser was on hand to revisit the resolution. Commissioner Stringer stated that he didn't want this commitment to be a burden to taxpayers. Lautzenheiser stated that the coalitions' goal is to bring an economic benefit to the communities, not a financial burden. Wells County will not need to contribute to any portion of the trail outside of the county, Lautzenheiser stressed. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve Resolution 2022-07 approving a form of interlocal agreement pursuant to IC 36-1-7-1 for the Poka-Bache Connector Trail. Motion carried 3-0.

Wells County Vision 2035 Comprehensive Plan: Area Plan Director, Michael Lautzenheiser Jr. presented the Wells County Vision 2035 Comprehensive Plan for Commissioner review. The vision for the proposed plan is that it will steer the future of Wells County for years to come. Lautzenheiser is requesting approval from the Wells County Area Plan Commission, Wells County Commissioners, City of Bluffton, Town of Ossian, Town of Zanesville Town of Uniondale, Town of Vera Cruz, and the Town of Poneto. Motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to approve the Wells County Vision 2035, Resolution 2022-08. Motion carried 3-0.

Cell Phone Policy: Attorney Colin Andrews discussed various aspects of creating a policy with an option of a stipend for reimbursement for a personal cell phone. An example of a policy that bases the reimbursement on the usage was presented to the Commissioners. Such as, an elected official is eligible for a \$50 stipend for their personal cell phone, in lieu of a county owned cell phone. The official would have to validate each interaction of cell phone usage for that reimbursement. For each minute of use the official would be reimbursed 40 cents up to \$50 dollars for the month. Commissioner Gerber stated that he would prefer to issue a cell phone and not consider a stipend. The Commissioners requested the County Attorney prepare example policies and present at the October 17th meeting.

911 Interlocal Agreement: An interlocal agreement for the emergency communications department was presented to the Commissioners for approval. The interlocal agreement is between Wells County and the City of Bluffton. The agreement is effective January 1, 2023. This agreement outlines an

advisory board which will consist of the fire chief, county sheriff, an EMS representative, an appointed representative from Bluffton's Board of Public Works and Safety, a representative from the Wells County Board of Commissioners, a representative from Wells County Council, a member of Bluffton Common Council, a representative from a volunteer fire department in the county, Bluffton's chief of police, Bluffton's mayor or appointed representative, one representative from each Markle and Ossian. Two committees will be compromised within the board, one for policy and one for budgeting. The 911 Director shall also serve on the Board but not subject to the one-year term limit and not a voting member except to break a deadlocked vote. The county shall be responsible for fifty percent of the final approved budget for operation of the Dispatch Center and likewise the city shall be responsible for fifty percent of the final approved budget for operation of the Dispatch Center. A phase out of the use of PSAP funds paid out by the county to the city for personnel expenses will be implemented beginning in 2024. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the Interlocal Agreement for Emergency Communications Department (Misc. 2022-13). Motion carried 3-0.

2023 Meeting Dates: Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the 2023 Board of Commissioners meeting dates with an alteration to July 2023. Meeting dates in July will be on the second and fourth Mondays, July 10th and July 24th. 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 monthly. Motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to keep the current plan design and biomarkers in place for the 2023 plan year. Motion carried 3-0.

Code of Ordinances: American Legal Publishing presented a range of \$500.00-\$900.00 to update the County Code of Ordinances. The updates include Ordinances passed in 2021. The S-5 Supplement is then updated into all the Wells County Code of Ordinance books. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the range presented to update the Code of Ordinances. Motion carried 3-0.

United Way: The United Way presented Denim for a Difference/Plaid for a purpose week proposal for County employees. The weeks of October 17-21 and November 14-18, employees can wear denim or plaid for a \$2.00 per day donation to the United Way. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve of Denim for a Difference week. Motion carried 3-0.

Adjourned: Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to adjourn at 6:10PM. Motion carried 3-0.

Wells County Commissioners

President, Michael K Vanover

Vice President, Blake Gerber

Member, Jeff Stringer

Attest: _____
Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor