

Wells County Commissioners

Regular Session October 4, 2021

The Wells County Commissioners met in regular session on Monday October 4, 2021, at 9:00AM in the Commissioner's Room of the Wells County Carnegie Annex, Bluffton, IN. Those in attendance were Commissioners, Blake Gerber, Michael Vanover, and Jeff Stringer, County Attorney, Roy Johnson and County Auditor, Lisa McCormick.

PUBLIC HEARING

The Board of Commissioners of Wells County, Indiana (the "Board") held a public hearing on a proposed lease to be entered into between the Wells County, Indiana Building Corporation (the "Corporation"), as lessor, and Wells County, Indiana (the "County"), as lessee (the "Lease") with respect to the financing of all or any portion of the acquisition of land, construction, installation, and equipping of a new county highway garage facility and other improvements, facilities and projects related thereto (the "Project"). The leased premises (the "Premises") under the proposed lease consists of the real estate upon which the Project will be constructed, located at the southwest corner of County Road 200 South and Adams Street in Harrison Township, Wells County, Indiana, together with the improvements, equipment, and appurtenances to be constructed or installed thereon as part of the Project. The maximum proposed lease will be 20 years with a proposed annual lease payment of \$1,053,000. The maximum bond amount will not exceed \$15,000,000. Josh Barkley wanted the Lessor and Lessee explained. Bradley Bingham, Wells County Bond Counsel, stated that the Lessor is the Wells County Indiana Building Corporation, a non-profit corporation that was created by the County. The Lessee is Wells County. The building corporation was formed to assist the County in large projects such as the Highway Garage. The building corporation is the issuer of the debt. There are lease rental payments over the 20 years, at that time the bonds will be paid off and the building corporation will transfer the title to the Premises back to the County. With no further comments the public hearing was adjourned at 9:25.

Commissioner Board: Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to appoint Michael Vanover as Vice-president of the Commissioners. Motion carried 3-0.

Minutes: Motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the minutes from September 7, 2021, regular session. Motion carried 3-0.

Payroll and Claims: Motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve Payroll #19 in the amount of \$240,195.42 and Payroll #20 in the amount of \$241,354.59 and 198 claims totaling \$636,691.28 and 133 claims totaling \$235,494.98. Motion carried 3-0.

Wells County Sheriff: Sheriff Holliday reported 69 inmates, 26 pretrial Superior, 21 pretrial Circuit, 13 F6 DOC and 5 DOC. Holliday updated the Commissioners on the jail reconstruction status. Contractors will start setting up materials late October and construction will start in November. HVAC and lighting should be completed in 2021. All construction should be completed by August 2022.

2022 Sheriff Salary Contract: The Sheriff Salary contract for 2022 was presented to the commissioners for approval. Sheriff Holliday has approved and signed the contract. Motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve the 2022 Sheriff's Salary contract, \$105,570 (Misc. 2021-11). Motion carried 3-0. This contract will go to Council for approval on October 5, 2021.

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. Pipe crossings are taking place in the north half of the county and will be starting south. Please watch media outlets for road closures. Closures will last 2-3 days at the most. Emergency personnel are notified of all closures. Hand patching crew will be working north. Road striping will start next week. Shawn requested an additional 30 day extended medical leave for a highway employee. Motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Jeff Stringer to extend the medical leave for the highway employee for 30 days. Motion carried 3-0.

Highway Engineer: Nate Rumschlag updated the Commissioners on ongoing projects as well as potential projects. Possible upcoming projects for the latest call would be Bridge #72, and Bridge #76. Rumschlag stated that if we apply for and are awarded this new call for projects the current Cumulative Bridge fund rate will not sustain the funding. Ultimately the rate will have to be increased, the current rate is .025 cents per \$100 assessed value. The Cumulative Bridge fund is within the Levy, which also includes the General, Reassessment, 4-H and Health funds. Rumschlag presented an engineering consulting contract for Bridge #71 carrying CR 200W over Rock Creek. This contract is with Butler, Fairman & Seufert, Inc. with a cost of \$168,830.00. Motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the contract with Butler, Fairman & Seufert, Inc. (Misc. 2021-13). Motion carried 3-0. Rumschlag presented a construction inspection contract for Bridge #106 carrying CR 100N over Rock Creek. This contract is with USI Consultants Inc. with a not to exceed cost of \$175,000.00. Motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the contract with USI Consultants Inc. (Misc. 2021-14). Motion carried 3-0. Nate Rumschlag presented a consulting contract for CR 200S Phase 1 reconstruction between Adams Street and Ellingham Pike including a Railroad Overpass. This consulting contract is with USI Consultants, Inc with a not to exceed price of \$614,425.00. Motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the consulting contract with USI Consultants Inc. (Misc. 2021-15). Motion carried 3-0. Rumschlag presented a document from Butler, Fairman, & Seufert with additional alternatives for County Home Road. The current option cost is \$3,059,900. Option 1 is lesser expensive, \$2,637,700, but does not provide a safe roadway. Option A has additional cost, \$3,916,100, and expands upon Option 1, including CR 200S and County Home road south approach improvements. Option 2 is again less in price, \$2,207,300, this option is like Option 1, but this alignment would provide a safer roadway. However, this option will require a relocation and will delay the schedule and jeopardize the federal funding. Option 3, \$521,200, includes a realignment of the cul-de-sac from the current layout. The Murray SRF Grant application was awarded to Wells County for state funds for stormwater improvement for the Town of Murray. Nate presented a draft design agreement with Choice One engineering for the work. The design contract is for \$78,500. The state funds awarded for the project is \$855,563 with a minimum local match from Wells County of \$126,750.00. More information will follow at a future meeting. The Wells County Regional Sewer District was awarded \$5,000,000 from the Indiana Finance Authority from the State Water Infrastructure Fund. These funds will be for the design and construction of the second phase of projects. The second phase include Tocsin, Craigville, and Ossian. Fifteen rights-of-way were presented to the commissioners for approval. Motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the fifteen rights-of-way. Motion carried 3-0.

Election Board: Beth Davis came before the Commissioners regarding Precinct changes due to updated Census numbers. Davis presented a proposed order that the Commissioners would delegate their authority for determining precinct boundaries to the Wells County Election board. There are three annexations currently that would require moving precinct boundaries. Motion was made by Michael

Vanover, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the Order Delegating Authority to the Wells County Election Board. Motion carried 3-0.

Tourism Proposal: Chad Kline and Audrey Dudley presented a proposal to the Commissioners for start-up funding for promoting tourism. The proposal brought to the Commissioners was a not to exceed amount of \$30,000 paid out over two years. This funding would promote cohesive branding, printed materials, tourism website, photography and video work and future promotional items. Also mentioned was instituting an Innkeepers tax for additional funding as well as creating a tourism commission. Motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Jeff Stringer to use LIT Economic Development funds of \$15,000 for 2021 and \$15,000 for 2022 to support promoting tourism in Wells County. Motion carried 3-0.

Resolution 2021-20: A resolution of the Board of Commissioners approving the issuance of general obligation bonds for financing the Jail renovation project was presented for approval. The Wells County Council as well as the Board of Commissioners have given consideration to the construction, renovation, improvement, expansion and equipping projects at the Wells County Jail facility. This project will use a combination of general obligation bonds and Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery funds. Motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve a Resolution of the Board of Commissioners of Wells County, Indiana approving the issuance of General Obligation bonds of the County and related Matters, Resolution 2021-20. Motion carried 3-0.

Ordinance 2021-16: An Ordinance approving the sale of the Wells County Farm, determining a minimum bid for the property based on the appraisals and the Commissioners' knowledge of the property, and setting forth the terms and conditions of the sale, including the minimum bid, was presented to the Commissioners for approval. The Wells County Farm will be offered for sale as three tracts or in combination, whichever is greater. The minimum bid for Tract 1 is \$800,506 for 116.57 acres, the minimum bid for Tract 2 is \$796,454 for 115.98 acres, and the minimum bid for Tract 3 is \$8,000 for 2.83 acres. The sale of the Wells County Farm is subject to the approval of the Wells County Council. Motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve Ordinance 2021-16 approving the sale of the Wells County Farm by the Board of Commissioners of County of Wells, determining a minimum bid for the property based on the appraisals and the Commissioners' knowledge of the property, and setting forth the terms and conditions of the sale, including the minimum bid. Motion carried 3-0.

County Home Cemetery: A Quit-Claim Deed was presented to the Commissioners. This deed is for releasing and quit-claiming to the Board of Commissioners for the purpose of a public or private cemetery the cemetery located on the County Farm and is a 1.7-acre tract. The Commissioners will deed from the Commissioners to the Commissioners the 1.7-acre tract. The Cemetery Commission will add that tract into their inventory. Motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the Quit-Claim Deed. Motion carried 3-0.

County Farm Highway Right of Way: Commissioners will deed from the Commissioners to the Commissioners an easement and highway right of way 30 feet along any part of the county farm parcels that are contiguous to a County highway. Motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Jeff Stringer to deed the 30 feet right of way from the Commissioners to the Commissioners. Motion carried 3-0.

Resolution 2021-21: A resolution of the Board of Commissioners was presented for approval of the execution of a lease for the County Highway Garage. The board has previously examined and approved a form of lease with the Building Corporation for the financing of the project. Lease rentals shall be payable solely from the revenues of an *ad valorem* tax levied by the County on all taxable property in the County. A copy of the proposed lease was included in the proposed resolution. Motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve Resolution 2021-21 approving the execution of a lease for certain county highway garage facilities and related matters. Motion carried 3-0.

2022 Holiday Schedule: The 2022 Holiday schedule was presented to the Commissioners for their approval, Juneteenth has been added to the Federal Holiday list. Two holiday schedules were presented, one with Juneteenth and one without. Motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the 2022 Holiday schedule with Juneteenth added. Motion carried 3-0.

2022 Meeting Dates: Motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the 2022 Board of Commissioners meeting dates as presented. Motion carried 3-0.

Southern Wells Sign: Commissioner Vanover revisited a subject regarding a flashing crossing sign for Southern Wells Schools. In the name of public safety, he felt the Commissioners were obligated to furnish a sign for the county road bordering the School. Motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Jeff Stringer to pay for the safety sign for Southern Wells Schools, not to exceed \$3,500. Motion carried 2-0-1 with Blake Gerber abstaining.

Public Comment: President Blake Gerber asked the audience if there were any comments. Brandon Harnish asked for each Commissioner's view on the Vaccine Mandate both public and private and Second Amendment rights. Blake Gerber stated that the State is between the Federal government and local government and believes in individual choice and discretion. Common sense should motivate everyone. Michael Vanover concurred with Commissioner Gerber, the Second amendment is in place for a reason, and he took an oath to uphold and protect that right. Jeff Stringer does not agree with the vaccination passport. Josh Barkley stated that he is in favor of the new Highway Garage but the language in the RFP eliminates local contractors that do not have previous experience building a highway garage.

Adjourned: Motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Jeff Stringer to adjourn at 11:00AM. Motion carried 3-0.

Wells County Commissioners

President, Blake Gerber

Vice President, Michael K Vanover

Commissioner, Jeff Stringer

Attest: _____
Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor