

Wells County Commissioners

Regular Session October 16, 2023

The Wells County Commissioners met in regular session on Monday October 16, 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, 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 October 2, 2023, regular session and the October 2, 2023, Executive Session. Motion carried 3-0.

Payroll and Claims: A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve Payroll #21 in the amount of \$277,060.81 and 171 claims totaling \$449,841.33. Motion carried 3-0.

Wells County Sheriff: Sheriff Holliday reported 62 inmates, 12 pretrial Superior, 23 pretrial Circuit, 5 F6 DOC and 19 DOC. Holliday reported the renovation of the shower stalls is complete.

2024 Sheriff Salary Contract: The Sheriff Salary contract for 2024 was presented to the Commissioners for approval. Sheriff Holliday had already approved and signed the contract. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the 2024 Sheriff's salary contract (Misc. 2023-09), for \$116,913. Motion carried 3-0. This contract will be presented to the County Council on November 8, 2023.

Highway Supervisor: Highway Supervisor Shawn Bonar updated the Commissioners on current projects. The concrete structure on 900N west of 100W will be installed on October 19th. Radios are being installed on all equipment this week. Mowing is almost complete. Final touches on 500W, 450E, 700N and 200W will wrap up those projects. Two Wells County Highway employees competed in an LTAP Snowlympics. The employees in the competition were Chris Duncan and Kevin Gillum, they captured a second-place award. Twenty-seven teams competed in various obstacle course events. The Commissioners commended the highway department for their dedication, especially in the winter months. The highway garage update included: concrete is 90% complete, drywall in the office area is getting mudded, interior truck bay walls are nearly complete, garage doors are installed, man doors are on site soon to be installed, and fire protection is being installed. Bonar presented bid results to the Commissioners for a heavy-duty tire changer, air powered wheel lift, light truck tire changer and a light truck wheel balancer. The low bid for the heavy-duty tire changer, light truck tire changer, light truck balancer, tire machine accessories and set-up, freight, and training was with Reliable Hydraulics for a total combined cost of \$50,037. OTT equipment was the low bid for #56 mobile column lifts, wide center adapters for lift, 20,000 lb. jack stand, and air powered wheel lift for a combined price of \$54,715. The total combined cost of all bids presented is \$104,752.00. The Commissioners suggested taking the bid information to Mike Swan, the owner's representative, for his input. Shop equipment bids will be on the November agenda for further discussion.

Highway Engineer: Nate Rumschlag presented updates to the commissioners on ongoing projects. Work on Bridge 85 has started and Rumschlag hopes to stay on schedule and maintain the target end date. Rumschlag presented a construction inspection contract from Engineering Resources for Bridge 51. The estimate came in a bit over budget, the budget was \$142,500, the estimate is \$149,500. A motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to approve the construction inspection

contract from Engineering Resources for Bridge 51 in the amount of \$149,500. Motion carried 3-0. A construction inspection contract was presented to the Commissioners for a curve correction of County Home Road and CR 450 East. The contract is with Butler, Fairman & Seufert, Inc for a not to exceed amount of \$375,000. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the construction inspection contract with BF&S for \$375,000 for the curve correction of County Home Road and CR 450 East. Motion carried 3-0. Phase 2 of the 2021-2024 Countywide Bridge Inspection contract is underway. Phase 2 will be complete this month. The road asset management plan has been submitted to LTAP and approved. The bridge asset management plan has not been submitted. LTAP has not opened the link for submissions. A public informational meeting is scheduled for November 2, 2023, at 6pm at the Bluffton Public Library for the CR 200S project. This will allow property owners to ask questions and review the scope of the project. Rumschlag will inform the Commissioners of a rehabilitation project on Meridian road at the November 6th meeting. He will present a proposal from VS Engineering to develop a rehabilitation and ROW plan for Meridian Rd. between Hoosier Highway and CR 250S. Rumschlag updated the Commissioners on the Regional Sewer District. The district has reimbursed Wells County for the remaining line of credit, which was \$52,870.71. The district has also expended all of the ARPA funds following construction of the Craigville sewer project.

Grant Application Request: Clerk Beth Davis submitted a request for Commissioner approval to apply for the 2023 HAVA Election Security Local Grant. The amount requested in the application was \$213,710. A motion was made by Balke Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to allow the Clerk to apply for the 2023 HAVA Grant. Motion carried 3-0.

Rights of Way: One right-of-way document was presented to the Commissioners for approval. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the right-of-way document. Motion carried 3-0.

Vacate Road and Alley Petitions: Attorney Storer informed the Commissioners of a petition to vacate a twelve-foot alleyway in Petroleum. The Commissioners have 30 days from the date of the petition to hold a public hearing regarding the vacate petition. The Commissioners will hold a public hearing at the November 6th meeting at 5pm. The notice of public hearing will be advertised. The petitioners are the only landowners that have property adjacent to the alleyway, so no notices will need to be sent by mail. A petition to vacate a portion of the county's right-of-way on CR 500W between Ind. 124 and 100N was received by the Commissioners. Attorney Ted Storer had questions regarding the petition and has requested a revised petition. Members in the audience wished to express opinions on the petition. Commissioner Gerber spoke to the audience and stated that the matter will be taken under advisement. A public hearing will be held, and advertising of that hearing will come out ahead of time. Assessor Laura Roberts expressed concern about flooding, 500W is one of the only roads that are passable in a flooding event. Shane Richardson stated that 500W provides the quickest access for emergency vehicles to the residents. He had concerns for the elderly that live in the area as well as for any emergency. Shaun Donaghy's home would be positioned on the dead end of 500W if vacated. He was concerned about his home decreasing in value. Attorney Storer stressed that the area residents look at the agendas for more discussion opportunities on the 500W vacate petition.

Adjourned: Wells County Commissioners adjourned at 5:24PM, motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover. Motion carried 2-0.

Wells County Commissioners

President, Michael K Vanover

Vice President, Blake Gerber

Member, Jeff Stringer

Attest: _____
Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor