

## Wells County Commissioners

### Regular Session November 1, 2021

The Wells County Commissioners met in regular session on Monday November 1, 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. Also, in attendance were County Attorney, Roy Johnson and County Auditor, Lisa McCormick.

**Minutes:** Motion made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the minutes from October 18, 2021, regular session. Motion carried 3-0.

**Payroll and Claims:** Motion made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve Payroll #22 in the amount of \$238,383.60 and 144 claims totaling \$598,371.16. Motion carried 3-0.

**Wells County Sheriff:** Sheriff Holliday reported 62 inmates, 20 pretrial Superior, 20 pretrial Circuit, 15 F6 DOC and 3 DOC. Construction begins on Tuesday, November 2<sup>nd</sup> on the Jail Renovation.

**Wells County Highway Supervisor:** Shawn Bonar updated the Commissioners on fall schedules. With the excess of rain, employees are maintaining the equipment. Equipment will be winter ready when the hauling for road conversions is complete.

**Highway Engineer:** Nate Rumschlag updated the Commissioners on current and future projects. Cost estimates for Bridge 72 & 76 should be presented to the Commissioners at the November 15<sup>th</sup> meeting. Applications open today for INDOT NOFA 2027 and Rumschlag would like to submit applications for Bridge 72 and/or Bridge 76. Financial commitment letters will be presented at the next meeting for those projects. The Transportation and Bridge Asset Management Plans have been submitted and accepted by LTAP. The Asset Management Plans are a requirement for Community Crossing Matching Grant eligibility. Rumschlag was requesting approval of the updated Transportation and Bridge Asset Management plans from the Commissioners. Motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the updated Transportation and Bridge Asset Management plans. Motion carried 3-0. Bridge inspections were completed on October 27<sup>th</sup> and no critical findings were reported. A meeting to review the results, verify priority projects and update the 5-year bridge plan will be in December. A request to change the financial commitment letter for Bridge 99 was brought before the Commissioners. Rumschlag updated the financial commitment letter for the local match to come from the Highway fund instead of LIT bridges. Motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the financial commitment letter for Bridge 99, local match to come from MVH funds. Motion carried 3-0. A contract was approved with Engineering Resources for Bridge 85 at the October 18<sup>th</sup> meeting, a contract was not available for signatures. This contract authorizes Engineering Resources to prepare the plan set for a cost of \$19,500. Blake Gerber signed the contract with Engineering Resources for Bridge 85 to be paid out of LIT Bridges. A Utility permit for underground cable north of Poneto was presented to the Commissioners for their approval. Motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the Utility permit. Motion carried 3-0.

**COVID Update:** Health Administrator, Marlene Hoag, updated the Commissioners on Wells County's COVID status. Wells County is designated as Yellow. There have been 88 deaths. Testing is done at the Health Department on Monday mornings and Thursday's, all day. The Moderna, Pfizer and Johnson and

Johnson vaccines are being administered at the Health Department on Monday afternoons and Wednesday's, all day. Boosters are now available for Pfizer and Moderna.

**EMA Grant Approval:** Rick Velasquez requested approval to apply for a reimbursable grant. This grant would replace outdated radio equipment. Attached to the application was a quote from Motorola Solutions for \$44,419.66 for the replacement cost of the equipment. Motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the grant application to update the outdated radio equipment that is no longer serviceable. Motion carried 3-0.

**Wells County Trails:** Mike Lautzenheiser Jr. requested funding regarding the engineering, permitting, and design work for the Vera Cruz Kayak launch project. Wells County Trails will hire Engineering Resources to do the work along with Three Rivers Wetland consulting, LLC, and Miller Land Surveying as the consultant team for the project. Engineering Resources was the lowest bidder for the project at \$20,525. Lautzenheiser was requesting a one-time grant from Wells County to Wells County Trails for \$20,525. Wells County Trails, Inc. is a subsidiary of Wells County Revitalization, Inc., which is a 501c3. Motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve a one-time grant of \$20,525 to be paid out of LIT Economic Development to Wells County Trails. Motion carried 3-0.

**County Home Road:** Courtney Pfister was on hand to discuss road changes for the proposed County Home Road curve correction federal aid project. Pfister owns 37.7 acres on the proposed route for the County Home Project. He stated that he has not been informed of any public meetings. Pfister stated that he had asked to be included into all correspondence. He stated that he has shared his cell phone number and email address for said correspondence. He is 100% opposed to this project. The proposed construction will cut through his farming property and leave a small section unfarmable, or nearly. Tinisha Weigelt from Butler, Fairman and Seufert, the county's consultant for the project, stated there would be more public comment this spring. Commissioner Blake Gerber stated that prior to the sale of land to Pfister, the former owners were absent. Gerber asked if Pfister knew about the project prior to his purchase of the farm. Pfister estimated that he was made aware of the project approximately two years ago. When Pfister was shown the plans, he stated he did not think it was plausible and did not think it would progress. Gerber asked Tinisha Weigelt and Nate Rumschlag if we had leeway in the timeframe for changes. Rumschlag did not believe there was enough leeway for the type of redesigns requested by Pfister. If Wells County requests an extension of time from INDOT, Wells County jeopardizes meeting the fiscal year that the grant funds were awarded. Nate Rumschlag stated that it is at the discretion of INDOT if Wells County would forfeit grant funds for not fulfilling our part of the agreement. Michael Vanover asked what issues were trying to be resolved when the discussion for the project started. The plan was designed to help in flood passageways and help with drainage issues in the area. This project design was developed in 2018 and Wells County was awarded federal funds in February of 2019. Motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Jeff Stringer to continue with the environmental study for the County Home Road Project with Butler, Fairman & Seufert. Motion carried 3-0.

**County Home Right of Way:** A right of way document was presented to the Commissioners for approval. This right of way document will deed from the Commissioners to the Commissioners a 60' right of way on the County Home property. This will allow a 30' right of way on the east side as well as 30' right of way on the west side. Motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the right of way. Motion carried 3-0. The real estate auction for the County Home farm is scheduled for November 9<sup>th</sup>. Attorney Johnson hopes to have the purchase agreement for the farm sale prior to the November 15<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**Ordinance 2021-22:** An ordinance of the Board of Commissioners of Wells County, Indiana establishing County Commissioner and County Council Districts for Wells County, Indiana was presented to the Commissioners for approval. The Commissioners informed Clerk, Beth Davis at the October 18<sup>th</sup> meeting that they would like to keep the current district boundaries for Wells County Commissioners as well as for Wells County Council. Attorney Roy Johnson prepared and presented the Ordinance for approval. Updated population maps with updated Elected Official listings for Commissioner districts and Council Districts are attached to the Ordinance. Motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve Ordinance 2021-22 establishing County Commissioner and County Council Districts for Wells County, Indiana. Motion carried 3-0.

**Adjourned:** Wells County Commissioners adjourned at 10:00AM. Motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Jeff Stringer.

**Wells County Commissioners**

\_\_\_\_\_  
President, Blake Gerber

\_\_\_\_\_  
Vice President, Michael K Vanover

\_\_\_\_\_  
Member, Jeff Stringer

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