

## Wells County Commissioners

### Regular Session November 20, 2023

The Wells County Commissioners met in regular session on Monday November 20, 2023, at 5:00PM in the Commissioner's Room of the Wells County Carnegie Annex, Bluffton, IN. In attendance were Commissioners, Blake Gerber, Jeff Stringer, County Attorney, Colin Andrews and County Auditor, Lisa McCormick. Commissioner Michael Vanover was absent.

**Minutes:** A motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to approve the minutes from the November 6, 2023, regular session. Motion carried 2-0.

**Payroll and Claims:** A motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to approve Payroll #23 in the amount of \$280,734.70 and 290 claims totaling \$460,137.86. Motion carried 2-0.

**Wells County Sheriff:** Sheriff Holliday reported 61 inmates, 20 pretrial Superior, 21 pretrial Circuit, 5 F6 DOC and 14 DOC. Closeout for the jail renovation should be completed by December.

**Wells County Highway Supervisor:** Supervisor Bonar updated the Commissioners on current projects. 1150N between W200W and E terminus has been re-established to access Union Township Cemetery. In preparation for winter months, berm stone has been added to several roads throughout the county. Work is continuing for the 450S road conversion. Final touches are wrapping up the 450E full depth reclamation ditch reshaping and the 200W road conversion. 50% of the seed sowing and final grade has been completed at the new highway garage site. Road striping is complete for the season. The highway garage update included: drywall is complete and painted in the office, interior truck bay walls are almost complete, main entry doors are installed, fencing is complete, gate is in process, power and gas is expected to be in service soon. Bonar had previously presented shop equipment bids for the new highway garage and requested authorization to proceed with the purchase. A motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to approve the purchase of a #56k mobile column lift, wide center adapters for lift, 20,000 lb. jack stands, an air powered wheel lift, light truck tire changer with Reliable Hydraulics for \$50,037 and the purchase with OTT Equipment for the heavy duty tire changes, light truck tire changer, light truck balancer, tire machine accessories, freight and training for \$54,715 for a total price of \$ 104,752.00. Motion carried 2-0.

**Highway Engineer:** Nate Rumschlag updated the Commissioners on ongoing projects. Rumschlag recommended authorization for the President of the Commissioners, Michael Vanover, to sign via DocuSign the CCMG 2023-02 for the reconstruction of CR 450E between 1000N and 1100N. A motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to approve, and allow Michael Vanover to sign the INDOT award for funds for CCMG 2023-02. Motion carried 2-0. Rumschlag reported that the Bridge 85 project is complete, and the road is open for traffic. Rumschlag requested approval for a construction letting contract for Bridge 51. A motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to approve, and sign the construction letting signature page for the Bridge 51 contract. Motion carried 2-0. Also requested was a contract with VS Engineering for a full-depth reclamation on Meridian Road between CR 250S and Hoosier Highway. The agreement has a lump sum fee of \$28,900 with allowable reimbursable expenses up to \$6,175, if necessary. A motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to approve, and allow the Commissioner President Michael Vanover sign the agreement with VS Engineering for Meridian Road rehabilitation. Motion carried 2-0. Rumschlag announced his resignation as Wells County Highway Engineer. He expressed being blessed to be part of the Wells

County community. To assist with the Highway Department transition regarding some of his work duties and review active projects and claims, Rumschlag will come to Wells County one time per week through the end of the year. He also offered to monitor the engineer's phone and email account through the end of the year. Commissioners Stringer and Gerber stated what an asset Rumschlag has been for Wells County.

**PHP:** A renewal for health coverage was presented to the commissioners with PHP. The PHP proposal included an 18% premium increase for the current plan which also included a \$14,550 wellness credit on the first billing of 2024. Claims are currently at 139% of premiums. PHP had alternate plan proposals which would increase deductibles while lowering the premium. Principal Vision and Life plans have a 0% increase for 2024, Dental has a 7% increase. A motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to approve the renewal with an 18% increase with PHP and keep the deductibles as they are currently. Motion carried 3-0.

**Paddlefish Road Use & Decommissioning Agreement and Resolution:** Discussion was tabled until December 4, 2023.

**Generator:** Custodian Bobbie Studebaker and IT Director Roger Richardson were requesting approval for the purchase of a generator. The purpose of the generator is to keep select systems running in case of a power outage. Much of the funding would come from the custodial budget. Another office has pledged additional funding if necessary. A motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to approve the proposal from Midstates Energy Solutions LLC for a total cost of \$21,431.30 with a \$100 annual maintenance fee. Motion carried 2-0.

**Amended Interlocal Agreement for Emergency Communications:** An amended and restated interlocal agreement for Emergency Communication Department was presented to the Commissioners for consideration. Wells County Council implemented a Local Income Tax for PSAP. The amended agreement allocates the LIT PSAP funding to be applied solely for the County portion of the 50% reimbursement to the City. Section 12 states: The 911 State Funds shall be used first to pay for the operating expenses for the Dispatch Center, subject to the provisions of paragraphs 13 and 15. After the application of the 911 State Funds, the County shall be responsible to the City for fifty percent (50%) of the remaining expenses for operation of the Dispatch Center and the City shall be responsible for fifty percent (50%) of the remaining expenses for operation of the Dispatch Center. The City shall invoice the County four times a year for the County's contribution for the Dispatch Center's expenses incurred during the quarter for which the invoice is applicable as follows: January 31st, April 30th, July 31st, and October 31st of each year. The County's responsibility shall be satisfied in whole or in part from any revenue the County receives from any Local Income Tax established by the County for the purpose of funding the public safety access point. To the extent that the PSAP LIT has generated excess funds beyond the County's obligation in any one year, the amount shall be retained by the County for its contribution in any future year. A motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to approve the amended and restated interlocal agreement for the Emergency Communication Department (Misc. 2023-10). Motion carried 2-0.

**Employee Health Premium:** Current health premiums for County Employees are: Single - \$51.00/month, Emp. + Child(ren) - \$155.00/month, Emp. + Spouse - \$200.00/month, and Family - \$309.00/month. Commissioner Stringer stressed that if the county portion of premiums continue to increase, the employee portion might have to increase as well. A motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to keep the current employee health premiums for 2024. Motion carried 2-0.

**500W Petition to Vacate:** A public hearing date of December 4, 2023, at 5pm was set for the public hearing regarding the 500W petition to vacate. Attorney Storer stated that the petitioner's attorney will have to refile the petition prior to advertising.

**Public Comment:** Jennifer Brink asked to address the Commissioners, stating her credentials as a respiratory therapist. Brink shared her disappointment with the Commissioners for not accepting Health First funding from the state. Wells County statistics were announced, 77.2 years is the life expectancy for Wells County citizens, 30% are obese, 66.6% of children are vaccinated, 6,000 smoke, 14.9% of deaths were suicide, Wells County is #3 out of 92 counties in infant mortality. Commissioner Gerber spoke of calls to the Governor for guidance on the matter and the health department structure currently. Stringer stressed the right decision was made for Wells County, maybe not the decision that was popular. Stringer commented that maybe she should apply for a board seat or be a liaison for the Health Department. The Commissioners want to spend taxpayer money wisely, with the taxpayers in mind.

Clarence Ostrander, 1533 W. Cherry St., came to the board regarding the County Highway property adjacent to the current highway garage. He stated that he has been caring for the property for 60 years. For some of that time he thought the property was owned by his family. He currently owns three lots on West Cherry street and Wells County owns three. Commissioner Gerber said a conversation regarding factors about the property need to occur and revisited at a later meeting.

**Rights-of-Way and Utility Permits:** Eighteen rights-of-way and two utility permits were presented to the Commissioners for approval. A motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to approve the eighteen rights-of-way and two utility permits. Motion carried 2-0.

**Adjourned:** Wells County Commissioners adjourned at 6:14PM, the motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber. Motion carried 2-0.

### 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