

Wells County Commissioners

Regular Session December 5, 2022

The Wells County Commissioners met in regular session on Monday December 5, 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. Also, in attendance were 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 the November 21, 2022, regular session. Motion carried 3-0.

Payroll and Claims: Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve Payroll #24 in the amount of \$264,407.55 and 114 claims totaling \$926,407.55. Motion carried 3-0.

Wells County Sheriff: Sheriff Holliday was at conference; jail numbers were emailed in his absence. Commissioner Stringer reported 84 inmates, 28 pretrial Superior, 31 pretrial Circuit, 3 DOC and 15 F6 DOC.

Highway Supervisor: Shawn Bonar discussed projects within the Highway. Crews are currently working on berm repairs in advance of the winter weather. Crews are also cutting brush where there are sight issues. Bonar stated that his current chip spreader is 21 years old and in need of repairs. Repairs would total approximately \$96,000. Bonar obtained two quotes for new chip spreaders which came in at approximately \$400,000 each. A manufacturer has just had one come available at a cost of \$398,000. This spreader has more options than the two quotes he had previously received. Commissioner Stringer stated that a new machine was a need for eliminating road safety issues that arise with the current spreader. Attorney Andrews suggested a special purchasing letter to follow the statute for purchases regarding safety issues and emergency purchases, on Highway letterhead. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to move ahead with the purchase of the \$398,000 chip spreader and have Attorney Colin Andrews draft a letter of intent for that purchase. Motion carried 3-0. Shawn also explained situations within his department that have him concerned. He has lost 8 employees, from May of 2021 to the current date, to other area businesses due to higher pay. He suggested longevity pay as well as overall increases in his departments salaries to help keep personnel. The Permit Fee Ordinance was tabled until the December 19th meeting.

Highway Bids: The highway advertised for bids for Bituminous Dust Control Material Liquid, Stone/Aggregates, Bituminous Material Liquid, Fuel, Aluminum Box Culverts, Precast Concrete Arch Structures and Boxes, All Steel Bridge Packages Including Beam Span and Truss Structures, Bridge Decking Products, Treated Timber Bridge Products, Steel Pipe Products and Miscellaneous Pipe and Fittings. Bids for products were received from Stone Street Quarries, IMI, Rock Creek Stone Quarry, Klink Trucking, US Aggregates, Asphalt Materials, National Oil & Gas, St. Regis Culvert, American Timber Bridge and Civil Con. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to allow the highway department to bring recommendations to the December 19th meeting. Motion carried 3-0.

Highway Engineer: Nate Rumschlag updated the Commissioners on ongoing projects, Bridge 19 has been put on hold due to concrete delays. The small structure, Harrison 1059, will now require a load limit. This structure is located on River Road next to the pedestrian covered bridge. Rumschlag is consulting with design firms to present approach and availability to assist with design for a possible 2025

project. Eighteen rights-of-way were presented to the Commissioners for approval. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the rights-of-way. Motion carried 3-0.

Council on Aging (WOW): Betsy Collier, Executive Director, presented the 3rd Qtr. 2022 reports and invoice. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve, and allow President Michael Vanover to sign the 2022 3rd Quarter reimbursement paperwork for Wells on Wheels public transit program for an amount of \$154,953.00. Motion carried 3-0. Collier explained that the vehicle shortages are impacting the Council on Aging. Their fleet is aging, maintenance and repairs are becoming an ever-increasing expense. Collier presented a notification of De-obligation of Federal Transit administration and State transit funds for the Commissioner President to sign. \$73,120 that was awarded for the purchase of vehicles in 2020 and 2021 will be de-obligated and re-programed for other expenditures. Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve, and allow President Michael Vanover to sign the de-obligation of Federal Transit administration and State Transit funds. Motion carried 3-0. Sandra Bane, transportation director, went over some statistical comparison flow charts on trips and riders using the public transit system.

LIT Economic Development 3 Year Plan: Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the LIT Economic Development 3 Year Plan, Resolution 2022-12. Motion carried 3-0.

2023 Board Appointments: Motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to appoint Stephanie Tucker to the Wells County Solid Waste Management District Board. Motion carried 3-0. Motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to reappoint Nathan Schrock to the PTABOA Board for a 1-year term. Motion carried 3-0.

Motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Michael Vanover to appoint Blake Fiechter to the PTABOA Board effective immediately for 2022 and for an additional 1-year term ending December 31, 2023. Motion carried 2-0-1, Blake Gerber abstained.

Motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to reappoint Michael Vanover to the E911 Advisory Board for a 1-year term. Motion carried 3-0.

Michael Vanover thanked all who submitted applications for board appointments.

Comments: Commissioner Blake Gerber recommended Nate Rumschlag present a 4- or 5-year plan to look ahead at potential projects. Rumschlag will refer to the Bridge Asset Management plan.

Adjourned: Wells County Commissioners adjourned at 6:05PM

Wells County Commissioners

President, Michael K Vanover

Vice President, Blake Gerber

Member, Jeff Stringer

Attest: _____
Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor