

Wells County Commissioners

Regular Session December 20,2021

The Wells County Commissioners met in regular session on Monday December 20, 2021, at 9:30AM in the Commissioner's Room of the Wells County Carnegie Annex, Bluffton, IN. Physically in attendance were Commissioners, Blake Gerber, and Jeff Stringer, County Attorney, Roy Johnson and County Auditor, Lisa McCormick. Commissioner Michael Vanover participated in the meeting by electronic means of communication, Zoom, which allowed the public to simultaneously attend and observe the meeting. All votes taken during the meeting were taken by roll call vote.

Minutes: Motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve the minutes from December 6, 2021, regular session, December 13, 2021, Executive Session and December 15, 2021, Executive Session. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

Payroll And Claims: Motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve Payroll #25 in the amount of \$234,527.86 and 273 claims totaling \$1,195,036.68. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

Wells County Sheriff: Sheriff Holliday reported 76 inmates, 29 pre-trial Superior, 24 pre-trial Circuit, 8 F6 DOC and 8 DOC.

Ordinance 2021-23: Sheriff Holliday requested approval of days to be paid out to Sheriff Deputies and Jailer staff who are working additional hours and not able to use accumulated earned days. Staffing is limited due to quarantining and staffing shortages. Employees are not able to use their accumulated days by the end of the year, carrying those days over would prolong the inevitable. Holliday requested County Council approval for the payout of those funds. Commissioners approve the policy for the payout. An Ordinance Amending the Wells County personnel policies handbook regarding payout of Sheriff Deputies and Jail staff was presented to the Commissioners for their approval. This would allow the Sheriff to pay out days that cannot be used in the calendar year of 2021. The payout will be in January 2022 of approximately \$15,500. Motion made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve Ordinance 2021-23 to allow the payout of 2021 accumulated days not used in 2021. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

Wells County Highway Supervisor: Shawn Bonar updated the commissioners on projects. The highway department has been getting gravel roads ready for winter months. Salt and sand are stocked for snow. Trucks and tractors are serviced for winter. Crews will be cutting brush and they will continue cutting brush when they are not plowing snow. Broken tiles have been identified in ditch lines and will be repaired as weather allows. Commissioner Springer inquired about 700N off Marzane Rd, he had asked that it be swept to distribute stone evenly on the road at the last meeting. Bonar stated that it had been swept and he was going to the location for inspection.

Highway Engineer: Nate Rumschlag updated the Board of Commissioners on ongoing projects. A contract extension for the Regional Sewer District's Phase 1 project will be extended to March 31, 2022. Availability of pumps, pipe and control equipment has forced that extension. Bridge 99 has had the final striping applied to the road. The next call for Community Crossing Matching Grant 2022-01 projects will open in January 2022, Nate will work on applications for the projects. A public hearing will be held at the Public Library tonight, December 20th, for the Bridge 106 project. Nate will attend and will update

the Commissioners. One right-of way document on 200W was presented to the Commissioners for their approval. Motion made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Michael Vanover to accept, and sign the right-of-way document. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

Extended Medical Leave: Prosecutor Andrew Carnall has an employee on extended medical leave. The current leave will expire on December 24, 2021. Carnall was requesting additional extended medical leave for his employee from the Commissioners. The expected return date for the employee is January 5, 2022. Motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Michael Vanover to extend the medical leave. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

Ossian Rescue Truck: Ben Fenstermaker provided additional information to the Commissioners regarding a rescue truck for Ossian. The demo that he was originally interested in has sold. There is a Spartan Hoosier Fire demo that is ready to go for \$496,000. He would need to add some additional features for a total cost of \$516,000. He can put a 10 day hold on the truck; the truck could then be brought to Ossian. He could inspect the truck physically and make sure it would fit in the space available at the fire house. Motion was made by Jeff stringer, seconded by Michael Vanover to allow the 10-day hold for the truck. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote. Commissioner Stringer questioned the wait time on a truck to be built, Fenstermaker stated from 180 days to one year. Fenstermaker stated that after the inspection of the Spartan truck, and if it is an acceptable truck, an intent to purchase can be put on the truck and that will allow 90 days to secure financing. Republic First is the financing company that is used by Hoosier Fire. Commissioner Gerber suggested looking at financing through our current Liberty Center Rescue truck leasing company as well as other local options.

Health Department Update: Health Administrator Marlene Hoag presented an update for the Commissioners. 111 deaths have been attributed to COVID in Wells County. Wells County is designated as Orange. 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 available for Pfizer and Moderna, 70% of vaccinations administered have been the booster. Testing will just be Monday this week due to the Holiday schedule. 17,000 In Wells County have been tested. 429 have been hospitalized and 953 have been in the Emergency room.

Turn Around Don't Drown (TADD): Rodney Renkenberger, Chris Morris and Jarrod Hahn were on hand to present flood awareness signs for 400 E and Rose Road, two for each road. 10 additional signs will also be distributed in 6 surrounding counties. 6 inches of fast-moving water can knock a person off their feet. 12-24 inches of fast-moving water will take a vehicle off the road. Safety matters, so turn around don't drown.

Interlocal Engineering Services: Attorney Roy Johnson stated that the agreement is currently in the City's hands.

Interlocal Agreement for Emergency Communications Department: Attorney Roy Johnson stated that this document is in the amendment stage. The result of the document will be a better system that functions more efficiently.

Opioid Settlement Registration: A class action suit that Wells County is involved in requires registration. Wells county must register prior to the deadline of January 1, 2022, to participate in the settlement. Motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Michael Vanover to allow the 2022 County

Attorney, Colin Andrews register Wells County for the opioid settlement. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

Tax Sale Unsold Property: Attorney Roy Johnson stated that there is an unsold tax sale property that has been on the tax sale list several years. The current delinquent amount is over \$9,000 as stated by Treasurer Kathy Peeper. Johnson stated he would recommend that the Commissioners issue a tax sale certificate. Then go through the steps resulting in a tax sale deed to the Commissioners. The Commissioners then own it and can make the decision how to sell the property. The property is a garage that had been split off the adjoining property from the house. It is currently a rental property; the current owner is not the owner of the garage. Motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Michael Vanover to proceed to obtain the tax sale certificate and to obtain the property through the tax sale statute. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote. Notice will be given to the record owner.

County Highway Garage: Motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Michael Vanover to employ PCI as the architect for the County Highway Garage based off the Committee recommendation. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

County Farm: Attorney Roy Johnson stated that closings are today for the County Farm sale. Johnson prepared a deed for Tract 3 from the Commissioners to the Commissioners for a lot of record for Tract 3. Motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Michael Vanover approve and sign the closing documents and approve and authorize the President to sign the deed of record for Tract 3. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

2022 Appointments for Department Heads: Motion made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Michael Vanover to re-appoint; Bobbie Studebaker as the Courthouse Custodian, Rick Velasquez as the EMA Director, Nate Rumschlag as the County Engineer, Shawn Bonar as the Highway Superintendent, Roger Richardson as the I.T. Director, Dewey Randall as the Veteran's Officer and Mike Miller as the 911 Director for calendar year 2022. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

2022 Board Appointments: Motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Michael Vanover to reappoint Janessee Kline to the Alcoholic Beverage Commission. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

Motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Michael Vanover to reappoint Tim Rohr and Tyson Brooks to the Area Plan Commission. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

Motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Michael Vanover to reappoint Jerri Lehman to the Cemetery Board for a 5-year term. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

Motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Michael Vanover to reappoint Kari Adams and Mary Porata to the Community Corrections Advisory Board for 4-year terms. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

Motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Michael Vanover to reappoint Doug Sundling to the Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission for a 2-year term; approve and sign Resolution 2021-27 confirming the participation of Wells County in the Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

Commissioner Appointment: Motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Michael Vanover to reappoint Blake Gerber to the EMS Board for 2022. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

County Attorney Appointment: Motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Michael Vanover to appoint Attorney Colin Andrews as the County Attorney and Title VI Coordinator for 2022. Motion

carried 3-0 by roll call vote. The ADA Transition plan will be amended to list Andrews as the Title VI Coordinator.

January 2022 Board Appointments: The Huntington City/Town Public Library, Property Tax Board of Appeals and the Health Department Board appointments will be revisited in the January 3rd meeting. County Commissioner held seats; Chamber of Commerce, EMA Board and Economic Development, will be revisited at the January 3rd meeting.

Public Comment: Council member Chuck King was in attendance and inquired about the anticipated “turn dirt” date. Commissioner Stringer stated that 2022 would be that date and that we are in the parameters of our agreement with Mike and Shelley Mossburg. Other comments were well wishes from most in attendance for County Attorney Roy Johnson who did not wish to be reappointed as County Attorney for 2022.

Adjourned: Wells County Commissioners adjourned at 10:55AM, motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Michael Vanover. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

Wells County Commissioners

President

Vice President

Member

Attest: _____
Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor