

WELLS COUNTY COUNCIL

REGULAR SESSION 2025 BUDGET ADOPTION October 8, 2024

The Wells County Council met for a regular session and the 2025 Budget Adoption on Tuesday, October 8, 2024, at 7PM in the Wells County Carnegie Annex Building, 223 W Washington St., Bluffton, IN. Present at the meeting were: Steve Huggins, Todd Mahnensmith, Scott Elzey, Brandon Harnish, Brian Lambert, and Auditor Lisa McCormick. Seth Whicker and Vicki Andrews were absent.

Minutes: A motion was made by Brandon Harnish, seconded by Todd Mahnensmith to approve the minutes from September 3, 2024, regular session/public hearing. Motion carried 5-0.

Transfers: A motion was made by Todd Mahnensmith, seconded by Brian Lambert to approve the transfers in the General fund for the Sheriff, Superior Court, and Jail. Motion carried 5-0.

Additional Appropriations: A motion was made by Todd Mahnensmith, seconded by Brandon Harnish to approve the Additional Appropriation requests in the General Fund for the Sheriff's Department, Circuit Court, and Jail, in the LIT Economic Development fund, LIT Public Safety fund, and the Innkeepers Tax Collection fund. Motion carried 5-0.

Wells County Sheriff: Sheriff Holliday updated the County Council on current and future events concerning his office. The monthly Officer/Jail report for September was presented to Council members. The Sheriff's office is down two deputies, one has been hired but will not go to the academy until January 2025. One of the deputies that resigned was the K9 officer. No other officers would like to take on the handler's responsibilities, so they sold K9 Letty to another entity. With his department being short staffed, the Sheriff expressed a need to possibly come back to Council with a request to pay out vacation and personal days that cannot be used prior to the employees losing them. Our current IT department has a staff member who dedicates two half days to the Sheriff's department to update and keep their systems functioning properly. That employee is terminating employment to work as an independent contractor and will be doing some work with Reliance. Reliance works with some of the same systems. The sheriff suggested partnering with Reliance until an IT employee is hired and trained on their equipment. Also discussed was a CHIRP grant opportunity that the Sheriff's Department has applied for and been approved for. The grant allows for monitoring roads for Operating While Intoxicated and School bus enforcement. This grant will allow the officers to work additional hours outside of their normal work hours monitoring roads for double pay. An Ordinance was passed by the Commissioners to allow for the double time payout for the period of October 2024 through September 2025.

2025 BUDGET ADOPTION

Wells County: 2025 Wells County Budget in the amount of \$26,062,030 "Ordinance No. 2024-13". Brandon Harnish made a remark expressing displeasure regarding the Community Corrections budget being part of the General fund. Harnish felt that Community Corrections should not have any portion of their budget included in the General fund. Corrections should be funded by their grant funds and

Project Income, which is fee based, he added. Harnish is on the Community Corrections board, and he hopes to bring something better for the 2026 budgeting session. A motion was made by Todd Mahnensmith, seconded by Brian Lambert to approve the 2025 Wells County Budget Ordinance No. 2024-13 for \$26,062,030. Motion carried 5-0.

Wells County Solid Waste District: 2025 Wells County Solid Waste District Budget in the amount of \$264,280 “Ordinance No. 2024-14”. A motion was made by Brandon Harnish, seconded by Brian Lambert to approve the 2025 Wells County Solid Waste Management Budget Ordinance No. 2024-14 for \$264,280. Motion carried 5-0.

Rock Creek Conservancy: 2025 Rock Creek Conservancy budget in the amount of \$90,950 “Ordinance No. 2024-15”. A motion was made by Brian Lambert, seconded by Todd Mahnensmith to approve the 2025 Rockcreek Conservancy Budget Ordinance No. 2024-15 for \$90,950. Motion carried 5-0.

Recorder Ordinance & Affidavit: Recorder Carolyn Bertsch presented an Ordinance and Affidavit for expending the part-time wage out of the Recorder’s Records Perpetuation Fund. The affidavit attached is signed by the Recorder stating that \$27,164 may be used to supplement the payment of payroll expenses for 2025 for part-time wages. A motion was made by Todd Mahnensmith, seconded by Brian Lambert to approve Ordinance 2024-16 approving the Wells County Recorder’s Request to partially fund Recorder’s office salaries from the Recorder’s Records Perpetuation fund for 2025. Motion carried 5-0.

2025 Meeting Dates: A motion was made by Brandon Harnish, seconded by Brian Lambert to approve the 2025 meeting dates for County Council as presented. Motion carried 5-0.

Adjourned: 7:57PM Motion was made by Scott Elzey, seconded by Todd Mahnensmith to adjourn. Motion carried 5-0.

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President, Seth Whicker

Vice President, Vicki Andrews

Attest: Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor