

Wells County Commissioners

Regular Session November 18, 2024

The Wells County Commissioners met in regular session on Monday November 18, 2024, at 5:00PM in the Commissioner's Room of the Wells County Carnegie Annex, Bluffton, IN. In attendance were Commissioners, Jeff Stringer, Michael Vanover, Blake Gerber, County Attorney, Ted Storer and County Auditor, Lisa McCormick.

Minutes: A motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Blake Gerber to approve the minutes from November 4, 2024, regular session and November 12, 2024, special session. Motion carried 3-0.

Payroll and Claims: A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve Payroll #23 in the amount of \$293,644.61 and 255 claims totaling \$1,082,275.84. Motion carried 3-0.

Economic Development Director: Jessica Beste, Economic Development Director, gave the Commissioners a status update. Beste has been in the position for three weeks. Her first week was spent at conference networking and getting acclimated to the position. She has made updates to the Economic Development webpage. The Make My Move landing page for Wells County is almost complete, she is excited to be a part of the process.

Wells County Sheriff: Sheriff Holliday reported 78 inmates, 26 pretrial Superior, 37 pretrial Circuit, 2 F6 DOC and 13 DOC. Superior will be performing smoke testing for cracked pipes within the next week. Ameresco will be present for the December 2nd meeting for an update on outstanding items regarding the jail renovation. Commissioner Stringer would like solutions from Ameresco not just an update.

Wells County Highway Supervisor: Supervisor Bonar updated the Commissioners on current projects. Mowing the side ditches is complete for the year. Road conversions are in process until the weather prevents it. The Local Trax update included Gradex removing 14" of dirt and replacing it with aggregate. Gradex plans on having the subgrade complete and asphalt binder on before Thanksgiving. Bonar estimates that the Local Trax project will be completed in May or June of 2025. Commissioner Stringer instructed Bonar to request E&B in writing that E&B will place a warranty on the asphalt binder. The highway garage update included garage door improvements to eliminate water from coming into the garage, minor leak in the roof, and HVAC in the IT room is excessively hot. Bonar is working with Conor Jackson on the resolution of the outstanding issues. Bonar had solicited bids for a 20-ton tag trailer. New and used pricing was submitted for Commissioner review. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve the purchase of a 2015 Trail King trailer from Ramseyer excavating for \$17,000. Motion carried 3-0. Bonar submitted pricing for the annual building inspections and fire and alarm monitoring. Koorsen was the lowest overall bid. Attorney Storer asked that the agreement be altered to list Wells County as the agreement holder and to have the address updated to the Auditor address for correspondence and the Highway address for billing. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve the agreement with Koorsen Fire & Security contingent on the updated name and address. Motion carried 3-0. Five rights-of-way were presented to the Commissioners for approval. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve the five rights-of-way. Motion carried 3-0.

Highway Engineer: Nate Whitacre updated the Commissioners on projects. Four utility permits were presented to the Commissioners for approval. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by

Michael Vanover to approve the four utility permits. Motion carried 3-0. An Unofficial Detour was presented for review. The detour is for SR 218 over Elm Creek and is anticipated to begin April 2025. Des. 2002076 is the unofficial detour, which will be SR 218 to CR 100W to CR 700S to Meridian Road then returning to SR 218. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve the unofficial detour for SR 218. Motion carried 3-0. A letter of financial commitment was presented for review to the Commissioners for Bridge 72. Bridge 72 carries CR 300W over Sites Ditch. The federal grant application closes on December 6, 2024. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve and sign the letter of financial commitment for Bridge 72. Motion carried 3-0. A small structure inspection agreement with USI was presented to the Commissioners for review. The agreement is for 2025 through 2028 with a not to exceed fee for service of \$92,800. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve the 2025-2028 Wells County small structure inspection agreement with USI (Misc. 2024-05). Motion carried 3-0.

Agreement for Services: An agreement for services was presented for Commissioner review. The proposed agreement will be between the Wells County Board of Commissioners and providers that request appropriations from Wells County for services. The agreement can be modified for each request. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve the agreement for services. Motion carried 3-0.

Emergency Closure Resolution: A resolution for compensation of county employees due to certain emergency conditions was presented to the Commissioners. The Courthouse was closed at noon due to a water emergency on Wednesday, November 13, 2024. The proposed resolution will allow for the employees to be paid for the afternoon of the closure. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve Resolution 2024-08 to approve compensation for county employees due to certain emergency conditions. Motion carried 3-0.

Certificate Sale: Attorney Storer discussed options for properties that did not sell at the most recent tax sale. Options for the Commissioners include doing nothing and keeping the property(s) on the tax roll, transferring the property to another municipality, or conducting a Commissioners certificate sale. Auditor McCormick will reach out to SRI to be present at the December 2nd meeting for further information.

ARPA Update: All ARPA funds have been expended, \$2,000,000 has been given to the Regional Sewer District, \$2,745,714 was used for the jail renovation, \$71,614.87 was used for new police vehicles, and \$678,837.13 was used to run utilities to the highway garage. In total \$5,496,166 was expended. Attorney Storer presented an updated ARPA plan reflecting the final expenditures. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve the updated ARPA Plan (Misc. 2024-06). Motion carried 3-0.

Economic Development Agreement: Commissioner Stringer stated that an Interlocal Agreement regarding the Economic Director wage is still in process. He will continue to update the Commissioners on the progress.

Adjourned: Wells County Commissioners adjourned at 5:48PM, the motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Blake Gerber. Motion carried 3-0.

Wells County Commissioners

President, Jeff Stringer

Vice President, Michael Vanover

Member, Blake Gerber

Attest: _____
Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor