

WELLS COUNTY COUNCIL

REGULAR SESSION January 7, 2025

The Wells County Council met on Tuesday, January 7, 2025, at 7PM in the Wells County Carnegie Annex, 223 W Washington St., Bluffton, IN. Present at the meeting were: Seth Whicker, Vicki Andrews, Todd Mahnensmith, Scott Elzey, Brandon Harnish, Brian Lambert, and County Auditor Lisa McCormick. Council member Steve Huggins was absent.

Re-organization of Board: A motion was made by Vicki Andrews, seconded by Todd Mahnensmith to re-appoint Seth Whicker as Council President for 2025. Motion carried 6-0.

A motion was made by Brandon Harnish, seconded by Scott Elzey to re-appoint Vicki Andrews as Council Vice-President for 2025. Motion carried 6-0.

Minutes: A motion was made by Vicki Andrews, seconded by Brandon Harnish to approve the minutes from December 23, 2024, Regular Session. Motion carried 5-0-1. Todd Mahnensmith abstained.

Wells County Sheriff: Sheriff Holliday reported 76 inmates, 19 pretrial Superior, 39 pretrial Circuit, 1 F6 DOC and 17 DOC. Sheriff Holliday provided his monthly and annual reports including the report of Officer Activity for December 2024, the Commissary Fund report, and the 2024 Courthouse Security report. Holliday mentioned shortages in staffing in the Sheriff's department. He will bring the topic up for discussion, possibly at budget time.

Pool Funding: Scott Mentzer, City Council, and Brandi Feichter, Parks Department, addressed the County Council regarding pool funding. The City of Bluffton will be constructing a new community pool. The existing pool was built in 1972, repairs are not an option. Mentzer asked if it was appropriate for the community pool to be solely paid for on the backs of the Bluffton City taxpayers? The total estimated cost for the project is \$6.5 million. The City of Bluffton has applied for a REDI 2 grant, if approved it will provide \$1.3 million of funding. The remaining \$5.2 million will come from local funding sources. Funding that would be received from Wells County would enable additional amenities that are not currently included in the \$6.5 million project costs. Council President Whicker inquired about a deadline on a decision regarding a Wells County funding obligation. If Wells County is offering funding, Mentzer stated, it would be good to know before the project scope is determined and the City begins working with a contractor. Mentzer commented that if Wells County participates, the citizens will get a better pool. The city plans to begin construction at the conclusion of the 2025 pool season and open the new pool at the start of the 2026 season.

2025 Solid Waste Salary Contract: A motion was made by Todd Mahnensmith, seconded by Brian Lambert to approve the Solid Waste Salary contract for 2025 (Misc. 2025-01). Motion carried 6-0.

Annual Disclosure Certification: A motion was made by Brandon Harnish, seconded by Brian Lambert to sign the annual certification regarding the disclosure of county contracts with the business interests of relatives. Motion carried 6-0.

Encumbrance: An Encumbrance summary was presented to the Council for review. A motion was made by Brandon Harnish, seconded by Vicki Andrews to approve, and sign the Encumbrance summary. Motion carried 6-0.

Adjourned: 8:24 PM motion was made by Scott Elzey, seconded by Brandon Harnish to adjourn. Motion carried 6-0.

WELLS COUNTY COUNCIL

President, Seth Whicker

Vice President, Vicki Andrews

Attest: Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor