Wells County Commissioners

Regular Session July 21, 2025

The Wells County Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, July 21, 2025, at 5:00PM in the Commissioner's Room of the Wells County Carnegie Annex, Bluffton, IN. Present at the meeting were Commissioners, Jeff Stringer, Michael Vanover and Blake Gerber, County Attorney Ted Storer, and Auditor Lisa McCormick.

Minutes: A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve the minutes as presented from July 7, 2025, regular session. Motion carried 3-0.

Payroll and Claims: A motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Blake Gerber to approve Payroll #15 in the amount of $301,809.13 and 235 claims totaling $650,756.88. Motion carried 3-0.

Wells County Sheriff: Sheriff Holliday reported 66 inmates, 19 pretrial Superior, 37 pretrial Circuit, 0 F6 DOC and 9 DOC. No updates were presented regarding the kitchen repairs.

Highway Engineer: Nate Whitacre presented two utility permits for review and approval. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve one utility permit submitted by Mediacom. Motion carried 3-0. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve one utility permit submitted by Citizens. Motion carried 3-0. Whitacre updated the Commissioners on ongoing and upcoming projects. INDOT conducted a road safety audit this spring. The recommendation from INDOT is for an all-way stop at the US 224 and CR 300W intersection. Whitacre's concern is that eastbound traffic will be going through a horizontal curve immediately prior to approaching a stop light. The Commissioner's concern was three stopped intersections between Markle and Norwell High School. Whitacre stated that there is a crash history at that intersection. Suggested were strips to alert traffic to the intersection, in lieu of an all-way stop. INDOT is looking for concerns from Wells County but will revisit. Bridge 65, CCMG 2024-2, replacement has been pushed back with the road closure scheduled for July 28, completion date of October 24th. The Meridian Road overlay, CCMG 2025-1, road closure is scheduled for mid-August for approximately one week. Whitacre suggested creating a road closure permit to keep the highway informed when a closure is expected so they can inform EMA, Sheriff, and the area schools of the closures. The Commissioners suggested Whitacre work with the County Attorney on the road closure permit form. 2025 road conversions were discussed. Meridian Road has a one-mile section with 100% signed rights-of-way. Two additional miles are missing one or two properties' signed paperwork. Commissioner Stringer suggested passing along the required paperwork and landowner information to him so that follow-up would be completed to get three miles completed all at one time. Road conversions were tabled until the August 4th meeting. A quote was received from Tractor/Boom Mower FRQ at the June 16th meeting. Truland has submitted a quote that came under the lowest quote, which includes a trade, for a purchase price of $62,000. The highway will move ahead with that purchase. An agreement was presented for Commissioner approval for the employment of a County Highway Supervisor. The agreement is effective as of July 28, 2025, between the Board of Commissioners and Matthew Witt. A motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Blake Gerber to approve the agreement for employment of Matthew Witt as the County Highway Supervisor. Motion carried 3-0.

Community Corrections Advisory Board Recommendation for Director: Judge Andrew Antrim, Community Corrections Advisory board member, addressed the Commissioners regarding the Advisory Board's recommendation for Director. The recommendation, by vote of 8-2-1, was for Madison Hake to be named as the Community Corrections Director. A motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Blake Gerber to approve the recommendation of the Community Corrections Advisory Board to appoint Madison Hake as Community Corrections Director. Motion carried 3-0.

Bluffton City 911 Budget for 2026: 911 Director Mike Miller presented the proposed Bluffton City 911 budget to the Commissioners. Per the interlocal agreement for the universal 911 dispatch center, the proposed budget must be presented to the Wells County Commissioners and Wells County Council for review. The proposed budget for 2026 totals $1,405,747.30. The Commissioners noticed some inconsistencies in the supplied document and requested the matter be continued at the August 4th meeting for updated numbers.

Adjourned: Wells County Commissioners adjourned at 5:54 PM, the motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover. Motion carried 3-0.

Wells County Commissioners

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President, Jeff Stringer Vice President, Michael K Vanover

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Member, Blake Gerber

Attest: _____

Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor