

Wells County Commissioners

Regular Session August 4, 2025

The Wells County Commissioners met in regular session on Monday August 4, 2025, at 5:00PM in the Commissioner's Room of the Wells County Carnegie Annex, Bluffton, IN. Physically in attendance were Commissioners, Jeff Stringer, and Blake Gerber, County Attorney Ted Storer and County Auditor Lisa McCormick. Commissioner Michael Vanover participated in the meeting by electronic means of communication, Zoom, which allowed Vanover to simultaneously attend and observe the meeting. All votes taken during the meeting were taken by roll call vote.

Minutes: A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve the minutes from July 21, 2025, regular session. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

Payroll and Claims: A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve Payroll #16 in the amount of \$299,526.13 and 149 claims totaling \$716,143.24. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

Wells County Sheriff: Sheriff Holliday reported jail statistics of 63 inmates, 19 pretrial Superior, 31 pretrial Circuit, 0 F6 DOC and 13 DOC. Holliday addressed the Commissioners regarding updating equipment for Courthouse Security. The items requested for updating included a metal detector, gun cabinet safe, metal lockers, and a locked key storage box. The total expense for the upgrades is \$4,823.64, he asked if the expense could come out of Commissioner funds. A motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Blake Gerber to approve the purchase for Courthouse Security upgrades of \$4,823.64 to be paid out of Commissioner funds. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote. Holliday also discussed service animals in the Courthouse. He stated that animals will no longer be allowed in the Wells County Courts unless they are a Service Animal according to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Emotional support animals do not qualify. Holliday said signage will be posted in the Courthouse but asked if signage should be posted at all Wells County buildings. Attorney Storer will review policy guidelines and follow up.

Wells County Highway Supervisor: Highway Supervisor Matt Witt updated the Commissioners on current projects. 39-40 miles of chip seal have been completed in the last two weeks. Base material is being applied for road conversions, CR 650N, CR 700E, and CR 800E. Crews are completing prep work for the Durable Pavement Marking grant. Corn is up and has caused some concerns, but calls are fewer than in previous years. Witt discussed efficiencies that he can implement for more effective operations within the highway department.

Wells County Historical Society Donative Agreement: The Wells Historical Society Board President, Jim Sturgeon, addressed the Commissioners regarding a 2026 donative contribution from the Commissioners. The request is for \$15,000 for 2026, reduced from \$16,500 in 2025. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve the agreement for services amount of \$15,000 for 2026 for the Wells County Historical Society. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

Grant Application Request: EMA Director John Petro requested permission to fill out an application for two FEMA grants. Petro was fairly certain there are no matching funds required for either grant. The motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to allow permission to apply for two

FEMA grants and allow the Commissioner President to sign the grant application request form. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

Poka-Bache Task Force Donative Agreement: Poka-Bache board member Michael Lautzenheiser Jr. addressed the Commissioners regarding a donation of \$1,784 for the Poka-Bache Task force. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve the donative agreement with the Poka-Bache Task force for \$1,784. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

Opioid Funding Requests: Six organizations addressed the Commissioners regarding funding from the Opioid Restricted funds. Christine Walker, representing Community Care of Northeast Indiana, requested \$158,000. Andrew Enderle, representing an at-risk boys' program, requested \$36,245. Heather Baumgartner, CADA Board President, requested \$4,054.06 for CADA. Kylie Tomlin, representing Helping Hands, requested \$50,000. Lisa Antrim, Interim CEO of Family Centered Services, requested \$22,000 for Family Centered Services. Vicki Bell, Executive Director of the Boys and Girls Club, requested \$14,300 for the Boys and Girls Club. In total \$284,599.06 was requested of the Opioid Restricted funds. The Commissioners took the requests under advisement and plan to revisit the requests at the August 18th meeting.

Northeast Indiana Regional Development Authority Reappointment Resolution: A Resolution approving the reappointment of the Regional Development Authority board members was presented to the Commissioners for consideration. Adams, Allen, DeKalb, Huntington, Kosciusko, LaGrange, Noble, Steuben, Wabash, Wells, and Whitley counties each individually adopted ordinances pursuant to IC 36-7.6-2-3 establishing the Northeast Indiana Regional Development Authority. The four-year terms of the appointed board members are expiring. Upon passage of the proposed resolution, the Wells County Board of Commissioners reappoint and authorize the following individuals to serve as board members of the Development Board of the Authority: James Khan, Jeff Turner, Bob Marshall, Andrew Briggs, and Gene Donaghy to an additional four-year term. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve Resolution 2025-06 approving the reappointment of the Regional Development Authority board members. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

Library Board Appointment: A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to reappoint Matt Yergler to the Wells County Library board for a four-year term commencing on August 16, 2025 – August 15, 2029, and allow the President to sign the Certificate of Appointment. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

Opioid Settlement Reporting: The Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA) must submit an annual comprehensive report of the use of all opioid settlement funds, including funds received by the local units of government, to the Indiana General Assembly. All local government units that received funds from the National Opioid Settlement are required to report any settlement funds spent between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025, to FSSA. This information will be included in the final report. Each entity is responsible for delegating one representative to complete the electronic form on behalf of their community. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to delegate Auditor, Lisa McCormick, to complete the Opioid reporting. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

Public Comment: Ben Renkenberger, representing the United Way of Wells County, offered to assist Wells County in the Opioid application and reporting processes for the Opioid funds.

Adjourned: Wells County Commissioners adjourned at 6:20 PM.

Wells County Commissioners

President, Jeff Stringer

Vice President, Michael K Vanover

Member, Blake Gerber

Attest: _____
Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor