

Wells County Commissioners

Regular Session August 18, 2025

The Wells County Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, August 18, 2025, at 5:00PM in the Commissioner's Room of the Wells County Carnegie Annex, Bluffton, IN. Those in attendance were Commissioners, Michael Vanover, Blake Gerber, County Attorney Ted Storer and County Auditor Lisa McCormick. Commissioner Jeff Stringer was absent.

Minutes: A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve the minutes from August 4, 2025, regular session. Motion carried 2-0.

Payroll and Claims: A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve Payroll #17 in the amount of \$299,742.21 and 153 claims totaling \$563,960.42. Motion carried 2-0.

Helms Tile Project: Three bids were received for the Helms Tile Project, \$14,800 was the lowest bid. Surveyor Jarrod Hahn was requesting those funds come from the Commissioners and allow 10% over the bid amount for unknown expenses or change orders. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve a not to exceed amount of \$16,500 for the Helms tile project to be paid out of the LIT Economic Development fund. Motion carried 2-0.

Wells County Sheriff: Sheriff Holliday reported 63 inmates, 21 pretrial Superior, 32 pretrial Circuit, 0 F6 DOC and 9 DOC. Holliday did not have an update on the plumbing issues but expects an onsite visit within the week. Both parking lots have recently been resealed and striped. Spillman, a county wide records management system, is up for renewal. The sheriff will be presenting the Spillman contract for maintenance fees for review via the Auditor.

Wells County Highway Supervisor: Matt Witt updated the Commissioners on projects. Hoosier Highway has reached substantial completion, next is reflectivity testing and underdrain inspection followed by pre-final inspection. County Home Road has been seeded; asphalt paving is scheduled to begin on August 18th. Paving should be complete by August 29th with right-of-way markers and survey monuments installed after paving completion. Road conversion updates included: the third layer of chip has been applied on CR 650N, 700E. and 800E. Prep work is in process for the striping contract. The recently purchased boom mower is being used to cut brush around county bridges.

Highway Engineer: Nate Whitacre presented two utility permits for approval. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve two utility permits. Motion carried 2-0. Whitacre also presented ADA and Title VI updated documents. Included were: standard U.S. DOT Title VI assurances, non-discrimination notice, Title VI discrimination complaint form, responsibilities of the Title VI Coordinator, Wells County discrimination complaint procedure, a resolution of the Wells County Council adopting the Americans with Disabilities Act - ADA Coordinator and Procedures, a resolution of the Board of Commissioners adopting the Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility guidelines for standards for accessible design and guidelines for pedestrian facilities in the public right-of-way, and the Wells County nondiscrimination statement of policy. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve Resolution 2025-07 adopting the Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility guidelines for standards for accessible design and guidelines for pedestrian facilities in the public right-of-way. Motion carried 2-0. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve and sign the remaining updated documents. Motion carried 2-0. Whitacre

presented a consulting contract for CR 200S with USI Consultants. The contract is for right-of-way plan development and services for a not to exceed price of \$205,150.00. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve the consulting contract with USI for \$205,150.00. Motion carried 2-0. Bridge 41 carrying 1200S over Prairie Creek was closed Saturday evening. An overweight load damaged the structure and fractured the deck boards. Whitacre stated that Butler Fairman & Seufert will investigate the damage and offer guidance. Meridian Road between 300S and Hoosier Highway is anticipated to be closed for two weeks for overlay. Bridge 65 replacement has begun. A paving quote is being compiled by Choice One for a Kingsland project, of which Whitacre would like to share some of the cost with the Regional Sewer District. The Commissioners would like to have further discussion at the September 2nd meeting.

Library Update: Library board members Matt Yergler and Joe McFarren updated the Commissioners on library events. Usage and circulation numbers were trending upward in all key areas. Registered in the 2025 Summer Reading Program were 1,464 children, 281 teens, and 588 adults. Kids listened to 489,420 minutes, teens read 711,309 pages, and adults read 1,399,918 pages. The library was able to donate 116 books to Kate's Kart. Tuesday, October 11th is the start of the Children's Book Festival. Yergler thanked the Wells County Foundation through the Virginia Gene Neuenschwander Youth Fund, The Wabash Endowment, Local School PTO's, Gay Saunders, and the Friends of the Library for their support with program funding.

Council on Aging: Betsy Collier presented the 2nd Quarter 2025 claim for reimbursement. The claim totaled \$129,229.00. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve, and allow the Vice-President to sign the 2nd Quarter 2025 reimbursement claim. Motion carried 2-0. The 2025, to date, Wells on Wheels stats were presented to the Commissioners by Terri Stacey. Collier reported that the 2023-2024 audit report had no findings. The complete report will be emailed to the Commissioners for review. Their fleet is currently down four vehicles due to a recall.

Zoning Ordinance Amendment: Mike Lautzenheiser Jr. presented a recommended APC do pass amendment to the Wells County zoning ordinance. The requested zoning changes were from Residential-1 Zoned District to Suburban-1 Zoned District located at the NW corner of SR1 and Wood Creek Drive, Ossian, IN. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve Ordinance 2025-08 allowing the rezoning request from R-1 zoned district to S-1 zoned district. Motion carried 2-0.

Opioid Committee: A discussion regarding the formation of an Opioid Advisory Committee was discussed by the Commissioners. Commissioner Gerber was in favor of creating a five- or seven-member board to evaluate Opioid Unrestricted fund donation requests. The proposed board would bring their recommendations to the Board of Commissioners for review. Mentioned was having the advisory members made up of Wells County offices such as: Probation, Prosecutor, Community Corrections, Sheriff, Health, a Commissioner, and a Council member. Vanover thought that a seven-member board would be a reasonable number. The discussion will be continued at the September 2nd Commissioner meeting.

2026 Holiday Schedule: The 2026 Holiday schedule was presented to the Commissioners for their review and comment. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve the 2026 Holiday Schedule as presented. Motion carried 2-0.

Holiday Closings: Auditor Lisa McCormick requested approval for closure of Wells County offices (Courthouse, Annex and County Extension) from Noon – 2 PM for a Thanksgiving luncheon for Wells County employees at the 4-H park on Tuesday, November 25th. Also requested was to close Wells County Offices (Courthouse, Annex and County Extension) at 2 PM on Friday, December 23rd for a Holiday gathering on the 3rd floor of the Courthouse for employees. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to allow the Noon – 2pm Thanksgiving luncheon and the 2pm Christmas gathering and dismiss following the gathering with pay. Motion carried 2-0.

Cancellation of 2nd Meeting in September: Streets are shut down around the Annex Building for the Bluffton Street Fair September 15-20, 2025. Consequently, parking is a problem. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to cancel the September 15, 2025, regularly scheduled Commissioner meeting. Motion carried 2-0.

Adjourned: Wells County Commissioners adjourned at 5:37PM. The motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to adjourn. Motion carried 2-0.

Wells County Commissioners

President, Jeff Stringer

Vice President, Michael K Vanover

Member, Blake Gerber

Attest: _____
Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor