

## WELLS COUNTY COUNCIL

### BUDGET SESSION September 3, 2025

The Wells County Council met in budget session Wednesday, September 3, 2025, at 6:00PM in the Wells County Carnegie Annex Building, 223 W Washington St., Bluffton, IN. Present at the meeting were: Seth Whicker, Vicki Andrews, Todd Mahnensmith, Steve Huggins, Scott Elzey, Brandon Harnish, Brian Lambert, and Auditor Lisa McCormick.

Council members had discussions on each department, going through the budget book by page and line.

**Commissioners:** Two items were reduced by County Council in the Commissioner budget. The public defender line was reduced to \$200,000 from the requested \$225,000. The animal shelter line was reduced to \$40,000 from the requested \$140,000. No adjustments were made to the LIT Economic Development budget.

**Solid Waste District:** No adjustments were made to the Solid Waste budget.

**Highway, LR&S, and Cumulative Bridge:** No adjustments were made to the Highway budgets. Nate Whitacre proposed additional in grade multipliers for Operators of 2%, Sign Tech of 2%, Mechanics of 2%, and Road Foreman of 6%, of which the County Council will approve when approving all budgets. There were no adjustments in the LR&S or Cumulative Bridge budgets.

**Surveyor:** No adjustments were made to the Surveyor, Drainage Board, or Surveyor's Corner Perpetuation budgets.

**Health:** No adjustments were made to the Health, Local Public Health Services, the Local Health Maintenance fund, or the Local Health Department Trust Account fund.

**Recorder:** No adjustments were made to the Recorder, the Identification Security Project budget, or the Recorders Perpetuation budget requests.

**Treasurer:** No adjustments were made to the Treasurer budget.

**Court House:** No adjustments were made to the Court House budget.

**IT Department:** No adjustments were made to the IT Department budget.

**Coroner:** No adjustments were made to the Coroner budget. Coroner Cliff Thomas had requested an increase to the on-call rate for each run and autopsy to \$200 per call. County Council will approve that request when approving all budgets.

**Extension Office:** No adjustments were made to the Extension Office budget.

**Veteran:** No adjustments were made to the Veteran budget.

**EMA:** Six items were reduced in the EMA budget. Other Supplies were reduced from \$3,000 to \$2,500, Travel, Lodging & Conf Fees were reduced to \$5,000 from \$12,500, Repairs & Maintenance was reduced to \$2,000 from \$2,500, Misc Charges or Services was reduced to \$5,000 from \$10,000, Machinery/Equipment was reduced to \$2,500 from \$10,000, and the Vehicle line was reduced to zero from \$80,000.

**Area Plan & GIS:** No adjustments were made to the Area Plan budget. The GIS training line was reduced to \$3,000 from \$6,000.

**Soil & Water:** No adjustments were made to the Soil & Water budget.

**Prosecuting Attorney:** The Prosecuting Attorney had requested moving one IV-D employee, who is being paid half of their wages from IV-D incentive, to being paid wholly out of the general fund. The County Council will approve that request when approving all budgets. Andrews requested an increase in a stipend for two of his employees, the requested increase was from \$750 to \$2,500 annually. The County Council did not grant the increase.

**Superior Court:** No adjustments were made to the Superior Court budget.

**Circuit Court:** A reduction was made to the Circuit Court budget in the Juvenile Public Defender line to \$100,000 from \$128,000. No adjustments were made to the Supp Public Def Services budget, the Urinalysis fees budget, the Juvenile Probation budget, the Jury Pay budget, and the Substance/Indigent fund budget.

**Community Corrections:** The Community Corrections general fund budget was increased to \$99,996 from \$97,523 with changes being made in the Director wage to \$75,000, removing PPE Supplies, adding Drug Testing Supplies for \$6,236, adding Preventative Supplies for \$1,998, removing Travel, Lodging & Conf fees, adding Insurance for \$150, removing Official bonds, adding Conferences for \$2,000, and adding Service contract for \$4,382. Project Income was reduced to \$134,428 with changes made to Social Security being reduced to \$12,500 from \$16,000, Longevity pay was removed, Retirement was reduced to \$18,100 from \$25,000, Group Health was reduced to \$45,000 from \$61,242, Monitoring fees increased to \$39,000 from \$26,000, Drug Testing supplies were removed, and Advanced Imaging was added for \$52. No changes were made to the Misdemeanant fund. The Community Corrections Grant II fund was reduced to \$155,535 with changes made to the CMT 2 line which was removed, drug testing supplies were removed, Monitoring Fees were removed, Maintenance Agreement was reduced to \$5,268, and service contract was removed. County Council will approve the budget that is approved by the Community Corrections Advisory Board on September 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Sheriff:** The Police Pension was reduced from \$591,583 to \$518,526; Service Contracts were reduced from \$51,350 to \$45,350, and Service Contract ERS was reduced from \$8,000 to \$1,500 in the Sheriff's budget. The County Council will allow Courthouse Security to be paid a \$25 hourly rate in 2026. The Jail budget was reduced \$250,000 out of the Jail Matrix pay to be absorbed into LIT Public Safety after the start of 2026, and Training & Seminars were reduced to \$1,000 from \$3,500. No adjustments were made to the LIT Public Safety budget, or the Vehicle Inspection budget. The County Council will honor wages that were proposed for 2026 in Resolution 2025-05, to be approved when approving all budgets.

**Clerk:** No adjustments were made to the Clerks General fund budget, the Election Board General fund budget, or the Clerk's Records Perpetuation fund budget. The County Council did not elect to increase the Election Board Secretary pay to \$5,000, it will remain at \$4,500 annually.

**Statewide 911:** No adjustments were made to the Statewide 911 budget.

**Auditor:** No adjustments were made to the Auditor's budget, the Auditors Ineligible Deduction fund, or the Elected Official Training fund. Professional Services were reduced to \$4,000 from \$5,000 in the Plat Book fund.

**Innkeepers Tax Collection Fund:** No adjustments were made in the Innkeepers Tax Collection Fund.

**County Council:** No adjustments were made to the County Council General fund budget, the Cumulative Capital Development budget, the Rainy Day budget, the LIT Correctional/Rehab Facility budget, the LIT – Dedicated to PSAP budget, or the LIT – Dedicated to EMS budget.

Council members discussed wages for Wells County full and part-time employees. County Council asked Auditor McCormick to increase all full and part-time employee wages by 3% for 2026. The Sheriff, Jail and Highway will have increases more than 3% in most instances. All boards will continue to earn \$65 per meeting. Council President Whicker asked Auditor McCormick to run the numbers and relay back to the County Council the operating balance, which they would like to see in the \$150,000 range.

**Adjourned:** County Council adjourned the budget meetings at 7:17. The motion was made by Vicki Andrews, seconded by Scott Elzey. Motion carried 7-0.

WELLS COUNTY COUNCIL

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President, Seth Whicker

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Vice President, Vicki Andrews

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Attest: Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor