

**Wells County Commissioners**  
**Regular Session October 6, 2025**

The Wells County Commissioners met in regular session on Monday October 6, 2025, at 5:00PM in the Commissioner's Room of the Wells County Carnegie Annex, Bluffton, IN. Those in attendance were Commissioners, Jeff Stringer and Michael Vanover, County Attorney Ted Storer and County Auditor Lisa McCormick. Commissioner Blake Gerber was absent.

**Minutes:** A motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the minutes from the September 2, 2025, regular session. Motion carried 2-0.

**Payroll and Claims:** A motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve Payroll #19 in the amount of \$291,469.09 and Payroll #20 in the amount of \$300,203.93, 212 claims totaling \$614,405.45 and 223 claims totaling \$1,868,250.89. Motion carried 2-0.

**Wells County Sheriff:** Sheriff Holliday reported 60 inmates, 24 pretrial Superior, 27 pretrial Circuit, 0 F6 DOC and 5 DOC. \$154,425 in delinquent DOC payments have been received. Drain repairs in the kitchen area of the jail started on September 29. Meal prep is being done off site during the renovation. The 2026 CHIRP grant has been awarded beginning October 1, 2025. The Sheriff's department uses these funds for operation pullover, OWI, and stop arm enforcement. The grant reimburses double overtime for the deputies that participate. Resolution 2024-07 allows for double overtime compensation for the current grant which expired on September 30, 2025. Attorney Storer offered two options for renewal of the grant. The Commissioners could make an oral amendment to the Resolution or create a new Resolution. A motion was made by Michael Vaonover, seconded by Jeff Stringer to verbally amend Resolution 2024-07 to include the period of October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026. Motion carried 2-0. Sheriff Holliday stated that he is currently down two deputies, and two deputies on light duty. Holliday might be requesting his staff be paid out for PDO that cannot be used before the end of the year.

**Wells County Highway Supervisor:** Matt Witt updated the Board of Commissioners on current projects within the Highway Department. A pre final meeting was held for the Hoosier Highway project. Punch list items were identified and are being completed. Temporary white striping was placed on County Home Road; yellow center lines are complete. Bridge 106 is near completion, estimated to be completed by November 1<sup>st</sup>. Patching continues north and prep for the Meridian road conversions. 64 total miles of roads will be completed in 2026 with chip seal and/or conversions. Witt is prepping the drivers for winter work by sending them out for a trial run of their routes. This will pin down a time frame of how long it takes to get all county roads cleared during the winter months. He would like to have all routes complete within 6 hours. Witt has a Cintas contract that he is reviewing and would like to discuss further during the October 20<sup>th</sup> meeting. Six rights-of-way were presented to the Commissioners from the Highway department for review. A motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the six rights-of-way. Motion carried 2-0. Two rights-of-way were presented to the Commissioners from Area Plan for review. A motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the two rights-of-way. Motion carried 2-0.

**Highway Engineer:** Two utility permits were presented for Commissioner review. A motion was made by Michael Vaonver, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the Citizen and Frontier utility permits. Motion carried 2-0. Whitacre updated the Commissioners on current and future projects. A supplemental agreement for a noise analysis for CR 200 S project was presented to the Commissioners

for review. The supplemental agreement would add \$10,000 to the project for a total contract cost of \$624,425. A motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the Supplemental Agreement No. 1 for \$10,000 with USI Consultants for CR 200S. Motion carried 2-0. An LPA Consulting Contract with USI Consultants and Wells County for construction inspection for the Durable Pavement Markings grant was presented for Commissioner review. The contract price is \$82,100. A motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the consulting contract with USI for the Durable Pavement Markings grant and sign the coversheet. Motion carried 2-0. Whitacre requested paving quotes for an Ossian project from three vendors, two quotes were received. Whitacre recommended the lowest quote from Greens Asphalt Paving and Maintenance be accepted for \$72,698.32. A motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the paving quote from Greens Asphalt Paving and Maintenance for \$72,698.32. Motion carried 2-0. Project updates included the Meridian Road Overlay project has been completed under budget, CR 500W (Rock Creek) is underway, and Bridge 65 replacement is getting prepped for asphalt.

**Imagine Early Update and Funding Request:** Executive Director Ashleigh King presented the annual Imagine Early update to the Commissioners. One goal for King was to expand enrollment in early childhood programs. Currently Wells County has one licensed childcare center, 2 registered ministries and 4 local educational agencies. She spoke on state level voucher cuts and the impact on Wells County and expected outcomes with county funding. King presented a donative agreement requesting \$25,000 for 2026, 2027, & 2028 for Imagine Early. A motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve and sign the donative agreement for \$25,000 for 2026. Motion carried 2-0. The Commissioners would like to approve the funding each year when King presents her annual update.

**ADA Coordinator Update:** ADA Coordinator, Bobbie Studebaker, updated the Commissioners on ADA projects. Annually the Commissioners budget \$10,000 for ADA projects. She informed the Commissioners that she will be using the 2025 and 2026 ADA funds for an update to the third-floor jury room restroom to make it ADA accessible. A tentative start date is mid-December 2025 to be completed mid-January 2026. The project was approved by the Commissioners on June 2, 2025.

**Opioid Advisory Committee:** Commissioner Vanover updated the Commissioners regarding appointments for the Opioid Advisory Committee. Advisory board members suggested were Andy Yergler (recovery), Quinton Greer (Sheriff representative), Madison Hake (Prosecutor representative), Stephen Pastore (Probation representative), Michael Vanover, and Dr. Bart Hott (Community representative). A motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Michael Vanover to appoint Andy Yergler, Quinton Greer, Madison Hake, Dr. Bart Hott, and Stephen Pastore as members of the Opioid Advisory committee with Stephen Pastore acting as President of that committee until they meet and can vote. Motion carried 2-0. Commissioner Vanover has extended a request to another committee member but has not received a response. The requested person, Jinny Broderick, was in the audience and accepted the request. A motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Michael Vanover to add Jinny Broderick to the Opioid Advisory Committee as the County Council President appointment. Motion carried 2-0, subject to the County Council President approval.

**Park Center Mental Health Board:** Commissioner Vanover stated that the Park Center Mental Health board appointment by the Commissioners, Taylor Vanover, was resigning from that board. Vanover recommended Dr. Bart Hott as the Commissioner appointment to the Park Center Mental Health board to complete Vanover's term. A motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Michael Vanover to appoint Dr. Bart Hott to the Park Center Mental Health board for the remaining term. Motion carried 2-0.

**Animal Shelter:** Commissioner Stringer spoke about a meeting with the Mayor of Bluffton, Scott Mentzer. The intention of the Commissioners is not to defund the Animal Shelter, but to get value from what we fund the Animal Shelter. Commissioner Gerber was not in attendance and would like to be included in the conversation. The subject was tabled until October 20<sup>th</sup>.

**2026 Meeting Dates:** A motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the 2026 Board of Commissioners meeting dates as presented. Motion carried 2-0.

**Wellness Plan Design:** The current wellness plan design was discussed with the Commissioners. Employees on the health plan have biomarkers to assess points. Points not earned equal additional premium for the employees' portion of the monthly health premium. A motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the current plan design, biomarkers and funding amounts for the 2026 plan year. Motion carried 2-0.

**Upper Wabash River Basin Commission Budget:** The Upper Wabash River Basin Commission finalized and approved their budget for 2026. They submitted that budget to the Commissioners for review and reference during their meeting. The document was reviewed by the Commissioners.

**Public Comment:** Jinny Broderick, Park Center, and Ben Renkenberger, Wells County United Way, spoke to the Commissioners regarding Opioid funds and the makeup of the Committee. Renkenberger presented forms for applications and reporting.

**Adjourned:** The meeting was adjourned at 7:14 PM.

#### **Wells County Commissioners**

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President, Jeff Stringer

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Vice President, Michael K Vanover

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Member, Blake Gerber

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor