

WELLS COUNTY COUNCIL

REGULAR SESSION December 2, 2025

The Wells County Council met in regular session Tuesday, December 2, 2025, at 7PM in the Wells County Carnegie Annex, 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.

Minutes: A motion was made by Todd Mahnensmith, seconded by Vicki Andrews to approve the minutes from November 4, 2025, regular session. Motion carried 7-0.

Additional Appropriations: A motion was made by Seth Whicker, seconded by Steve Huggins to deny the Additional Appropriation in the General Fund for the Coroner. Motion carried 7-0.

A motion was made by Brandon Harnish, seconded by Todd Mahnensmith to approve the Additional Appropriation in the General Fund for Superior Court. Motion carried 7-0.

A motion was made by Brandon Harnish, seconded by Vicki Andrews to approve the Additional Appropriation in the Community Transition Program fund. Motion carried 7-0.

A motion was made by Steve Huggins, seconded by Vicki Andrews to approve the Additional Appropriation in the Convention, Visitor and Tourism fund. Motion carried 7-0.

A motion was made by Todd Mahnensmith, seconded by Brian Lambert to approve the Additional Appropriation in the LIT Public Safety fund. Motion carried 7-0.

A motion was made by Brian Lambert, seconded by Vicki Andrews to approve the Additional Appropriation in the LOIT Special Distribution fund. Motion carried 7-0.

A motion was made by Steve Huggins, seconded by Todd Mahnensmith to approve the Additional Appropriation in the Local Trax Grant 20.205 fund. Motion carried 7-0.

Transfers: A motion was made by Todd Mahnensmith, seconded by Steve Huggins to approve the transfer in the General fund for the Clerk. Motion carried 7-0.

A motion was made by Vicki Andrews, seconded by Brian Lambert to approve the transfer in the General fund for the Surveyor. Motion carried 7-0.

A motion was made by Vicki Andrews, seconded by Brian Lambert to approve the transfer in the General fund for the County Extension. Motion carried 7-0.

A motion was made by Brandon Harnish, seconded by Brian Lambert to approve the transfers in Community Corrections Project Income and Community Corrections Grant I fund. Motion carried 7-0.

EMS Annual Report: Trent Bucher and Rick Piepenbrink presented an EMS annual update. Bucher stated that the EMS averages 8.7 runs per day of which roughly 2/3 are chargeable. Non chargeable runs are runs that don't result in a transport, a chargeable run is one that results in a transport. Medicare and Medicaid patients have significant discounts that are mandated, which historically are 65% of their runs. EMS collects 33% of what is charged. Three locations are maintained to provide timely responses to all areas of the county. The average response time is 7:50 per run, the goal is 13 minutes in the County and 9 minutes in the city. EMS wages have increased due to the labor market hence the Foundation balance is decreasing; increased County assistance will help defer total depletion. The projected depletion date is 4 years with the current level of County assistance.

Innkeepers Tax Update: Audry Dudley updated the County Council on Innkeepers Tax. January through September collections totaled \$57,306.39. Dudley estimates that year over year, year to date revenues

have decreased by 30%. Dudley spoke on funding challenges that had depleted some of the resources. Advertising on social media for events were completed for Bluffton NOW!, Music On the Plaza, Markle Chamber of Commerce Summer Sounds, Creative Arts Council Anne of Green Gables, Ossian Parks & Recreation Summer Concert Series, Wells County 4-H Fair, Wells County Trails, and the Bluffton Parks Department Chicks Run. The Tourism board is planning conservatively with a \$70,000 total budget for 2026.

Purdue Extension Contracted Employee Agreement: The annual Extension Contractual Services Agreement between Purdue University and Wells County was presented to Council. The contracted amount of \$131,335.00 listed in the agreement has been approved by County Council in the Extension budget for 2026. A motion was made by Scott Elzey, seconded by Vicki Andrews to approve the Extension contractual services agreement between Purdue University and the Government of Wells County, Indiana for 2026. Motion carried 7-0.

2026 Surveyor Compensation Ordinance: A motion was made by Steve Huggins, seconded by Todd Mahnensmith to approve Ordinance 2025-17 fixing the compensation of the County Surveyor for 2026. Motion carried 7-0. The beginning salary for the surveyor in 2026 is that of a registered surveyor.

2026 Board Appointments: A motion was made by Steve Huggins, seconded by Brandon Harnish to re-appoint Tony Garton to the Alcoholic Beverage Commission for an annual appointment. Motion carried 7-0. A motion was made by Todd Mahnensmith, seconded by Vicki Andrews to appoint Scott Elzey as an alternate for Vicki Andrews to the Area Plan Commission for an annual appointment. Motion carried 7-0. A motion was made by Brandon Harnish, seconded by Steve Huggins to appoint Christopher Esterling to the Health Department Board as a lay member for a four-year term. Motion carried 7-0. A motion was made by Scott Elzey, seconded by Vicki Andrews to re-appoint Stephanie Tucker to the Ossian Economic Development Commission for an annual appointment. Motion carried 7-0. A motion was made by Vicki Andrews, seconded by Todd Mahnensmith to re-appoint Scott Elzey to the Tourism Commission for a two-year appointment. Motion carried 7-0. A motion was made by Scott Elzey, seconded by Brandon Harnish to re-appoint Zane Herr to the Tourism Commission for a two-year appointment. Motion carried 7-0.

Adjourned: 7:36PM motion was made by Vicki Andrews, seconded by Steve Huggins to adjourn.

WELLS COUNTY COUNCIL

President, Seth Whicker

Vice President, Vicki Andrews

Attest: Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor