

## **Wells County Commissioners**

### **Regular Session December 1, 2025**

The Wells County Commissioners met in regular session on Monday December 1, 2025, at 5:00PM in the Commissioner's Room of the Wells County Carnegie Annex, Bluffton, IN. Those physically in attendance were Commissioners, Michael Vanover, and Blake Gerber, County Attorney Ted Storer and County Auditor Lisa McCormick. Commissioner Jeff Stringer participated in the meeting by electronic means of communication, Zoom, which allowed the public 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 Jeff Stringer to approve the minutes from November 17, 2025, regular session. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

**Payroll and Claims:** A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve Payroll #24 in the amount of \$308,661.78 and 188 claims totaling \$566,018.93. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

**Wells County Sheriff:** Sheriff Holliday reported 60 inmates, 20 pretrial Superior, 31 pretrial Circuit, 6 DOC and 0 F6 DOC. Sheriff Holliday requested approval of days to be paid out to Sheriff personnel who are working additional hours and not able to use accumulated earned days. Staffing is limited due to current staffing shortages causing employees not to be able to use accumulated days by the end of the year. Carrying days over would prolong the inevitable. An Ordinance Amending the Wells County personnel policies regarding payout of paid time off to certain Sheriff personnel was presented to the Commissioners for approval. The payout is for up to three employees in December 2025. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve Ordinance 2025-15 amending policies regarding payout of paid time off to certain sheriff personnel. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote. A federal grant has been awarded to the Sheriff's department that would allow Sheriff Deputies who participate in the grant to be paid double the time in lieu of time and a half. The grant period is October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026. Attorney Storer presented a Resolution to allow for that compensation. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve Resolution 2025-10 for compensation of certain sheriff employees due to the special grant at double time. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

**Highway Supervisor:** Supervisor Witt said his crews are finishing projects. Two rounds of winter operations have been completed already for this season. Commissioner Vanover commended the highway department on their cleanup efforts in the past week. A Cintas rental agreement was presented to the Commissioners for review. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the Cintas rental agreement and allow the Presidents signature to be applied electronically. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

**Highway Engineer:** Eight utility permits were presented to the Commissioners for approval from Brightspeed. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the eight utility permits. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote. One utility permit was presented to the Commissioners for approval from Heartland REMC. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the utility permit from Heartland REMC. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote. An addendum to the 200 S Interlocal Cooperation Agreement between Wells County, the City of Bluffton, and the

Bluffton Redevelopment Commission was presented to the Commissioners for approval. The addendum extended the date of the original agreement. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve and allow Vice President Vanover to sign the addendum to interlocal cooperation agreement between Wells County, the City of Bluffton and the Bluffton Redevelopment Commission regarding the CR 200S Reconstruction and improvements. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote. Bid opening for the annual bid packages will be opened on December 5<sup>th</sup> at 1pm at the Highway Garage conference room. Bridge 54, 600 W over Salamonie River, was closed today with demo to start later this week. An agreement with INDOT related to Bridge 41 repairs will be forthcoming. INDOT has agreed to participate in costs associated with damage sustained during the detour of SR 3. USI will be gathering bid documents following approval of an agreement. Dyar and McNeal in Ossian has been paved and is complete.

**Zoning Ordinance Amendment:** Mike Lautzenheiser Jr. presented an APC unanimous recommended do pass amendment to the Wells County Zoning Ordinance. The requested zoning changes are from Agricultural-1 Zoned District to a Business-3 Zoned District. 17 acres located at 2750 N SR 1 is the proposed rezoning. The Commissioners opted for a restrictive covenant limiting the type of business allowed on the rezoned land. The Commissioners agree to approve the proposed rezoning subject to the current owner and the buyer agreeing to and recording a written commitment, in the form of Exhibit B. Exhibit B listed thirty prohibited uses for the rezoned real estate. A motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to approve Ordinance 2025-16, amending the Wells County Zoning Ordinance and Zone Maps, contingent on Exhibit B being approved and recorded by the owners. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

**Handbook Update:** During the November 17<sup>th</sup> meeting it was mentioned that an update on the Employee handbook was needed. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to allow Attorney Ted Storer to update the Employee handbook. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

**Pool Donation:** Commissioner Stringer stated that the City of Bluffton would like the approved pool donation to be paid out prior to the end of the year. The approved amount was \$800,000. The Commissioners will release the funds but added that the annual \$10,000 maintenance for the pool will cease. Stringer stated that the new facility needs to be self-sustaining.

**2026 Board Appointments:** A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to re-appoint Nathan Shrock to the PTABOA board for a three-year term, to re-appoint Jeffrey Prible to the Rockcreek Conservancy board for a four-year term, to re-appoint Laura Dalrymple, Shari Duncan, and Diana Collins to the Sick Bank Committee for a one-year term, and to re-appoint Douglas Sundling to the Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission for a two-year term. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to re-appoint Adia Yergler to the Alcoholic Beverage Board for a one-year term, to re-appoint Tyson Brooks and Tim Rohr to the Area Plan board for an annual term with Jeff Stringer as an alternate for Tyson Brooks and Blake Gerber as an alternate for Tim Rohr, to appoint John Robert Moon to the Cemetery Board for a 5-year term, to re-appoint Brianna Myers as the Mental Health member of the Community Corrections Advisory board for a four-year term, to appoint Preston Wright to the Tourism Commission board for a two-year term, to appoint Bobbie Studebaker as the ADA Coordinator, Michael Lautzenhieser Jr. as Area Plan Director, Ted Storer as County Attorney and Title VI Coordinator, Bobbie Studebaker as Courthouse Custodian, John Petro as EMA Director, Nate Whitacre as County Highway Engineer, Matt Witt as County Highway Supervisor, Roger Richardson as he County IT Director and Mike Miller as the 911 Director. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve

Resolution 2025-11 confirming the participation of Wells County in the Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

**Adjourned:** Wells County Commissioners adjourned at 5:48 PM, the motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer. Motion carried 3-0 by roll call vote.

**Wells County Commissioners**

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President, Jeff Stringer

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Vice President, Michael K Vanover

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Blake Gerber

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