

Wells County Commissioners

Regular Session April 20, 2026

The Wells County Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, April 22, 2026, at 5:00PM in the Commissioner's Room of the Wells County Carnegie Annex, Bluffton, IN. Those in attendance were Commissioners Blake Gerber, and Michael Vanover, 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 April 6, 2026, regular session as presented. Motion carried 2-0.

Payroll and Claims: A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve Payroll #8 in the amount of \$324,358.47 and 250 claims totaling \$488,789.01. Motion carried 2-0.

Wells County Sheriff: Sheriff Holliday reported 57 inmates, 11 pretrial Superior, 26 pretrial Circuit, 0 F6 and 17 DOC. Holliday reported the repairs are complete on the damaged parking lot light pole. The kitchen hood is inspected and certified for the year.

Wells County Highway: Matt Witt reported on current projects. Notice of termination for the County Home Road project will be submitted to INDOT for closeout pending some small completion items. Witt stated that it could be 9 months for final closing. Grading on stone roads is 70.68% complete, stone has been placed on Meridian Rd. from 900N to Eight Mile Creek for compaction. The force feed loader has arrived, and employee training is occurring this week. Vehicle inspections and CDL training are scheduled for May. Four rights-of-way were presented to the Commissioners for approval. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve and sign the four rights-of-way. Motion carried 2-0. A modified winter operations SOP was distributed for Commissioner review. Commissioner Vanover requested an adjustment in wording for the Orange travel watch during the April 6th meeting. His request was to use the same wording as the red travel warning, which is, "Commissioner decision with data provided by consultation with EMA Director, Sheriff, and Highway". A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve of the winter operations SOP as presented. Motion carried 2-0.

Highway Engineer: Nate Whitacre presented the Highway annual report for 2025. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve and sign the Highway annual report for 2025. Motion carried 2-0. An interlocal agreement for CCMG 2026-01 Harrison 1059 was presented to the Commissioners for review. The purpose of the agreement is to provide joint funding for the local match portion of the funding for the replacement of Harrison 1059. As stated, the County shall incur all eligible expenses for the project, the City shall reimburse the County for fifty percent of eligible expenses. The eligible expenses are anticipated not to exceed \$50,000. The agreement will be additionally approved by the Wells County Council and City of Bluffton. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve the interlocal cooperation agreement for Harrison 1059. Motion carried 2-0. An unofficial detour reimbursement contract was presented to the Commissioners for review. The contract is between INDOT and Wells County. As stated, INDOT is required to restore the unofficial detour route to its pre-designation condition. INDOT and Wells County have agreed that INDOT shall reimburse Wells County an amount not to exceed \$137,454.80 for the restoration of the unofficial detour route to its pre-designation condition. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve and sign the unofficial detour reimbursement contract with INDOT. Motion

carried 2-0. An agreement for engineering professional services was presented to the Commissioners for review. The agreement is with Engineering Resources, Inc. for engineering services for Bridge 90 with a proposed fee of \$9,700. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover, to approve and sign the agreement with Engineering Resources, Inc., for engineering services for Bridge 90. Motion carried 2-0. Bridge 175 was closed today to address a scour issue; this should remove the bridge from the scour critical status. Bridge 54 is in process and on schedule, two change orders have been added to the bridge construction. Change order #1 for \$2,425 removes portions of the original bridge foundation. Change order #2 for \$1,677 is for updated signage to keep the detour in Wells County, instead of Blackford County.

Family Centered Services: Becky Ellis, Director of Family Centered Services, addressed the Commissioners regarding 2027 annual funding. Funding stays in Wells County, historically the Wells County donation has been used for youth serving programs. Commissioner Vanover tabled the discussion until the May 4th meeting when all Commissioners would be in attendance.

Health Department Ordinance: Ryan Bennett presented a Health Department Ordinance for food establishment and/or bed and breakfast establishment. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve Ordinance 2026-05 for food establishment and/or bed and breakfast establishment. Motion carried 2-0.

Adjourned: 5:25 PM, a motion was made by Blake Gerber to adjourn, seconded by Michael Vanover. Motion carried 2-0.

Wells County Commissioners

President, Jeff Stringer

Vice President, Michael K Vanover

Member, Blake Gerber

Attest: _____
Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor