

Wells County Commissioners

Regular Session June 15, 2026

The Wells County Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, June 15, 2026, at 5:00PM in the Commissioner's Room of the Wells County Carnegie Annex, Bluffton, IN. Those in attendance were Commissioners Jeff Stringer, Michael Vanover, and Blake Gerber, County Attorney Ted Storer and County Auditor Lisa McCormick.

Minutes: A motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Blake Gerber to approve the minutes from June 1, 2026, regular session. Motion carried 3-0.

Payroll and Claims: A motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Blake Gerber to approve Payroll #12 in the amount of \$322,476.97 and 159 claims totaling \$462,682.97. Motion carried 3-0.

Wells County Sheriff: Sheriff Holliday reported 49 inmates, 16 pretrial Superior, 24 pretrial Circuit, 0 F6 DOC and 7 DOC. Sheriff Holliday presented a School Resource Officer (SRO) Agreement for Commissioner approval. The agreement is with Northern Wells Community Schools and Wells County in conjunction with the Wells County Sheriff's Department (WCSD). The agreement covers the 26-27 and 27-28 school years with an annual cost of \$90,108.11. Southern Wells has also been presented with an agreement and that board has not approved the agreement to date. The Northern Wells School board has approved the agreement. A motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Blake Gerber to approve and sign the Northern Wells agreement and to approve the Southern Wells agreement contingent on Southern Wells School board approval. Motion carried 3-0.

Highway Supervisor: Highway Supervisor Matt Witt updated the Commissioners on current projects. Chip and seal season has begun; the highway hopes to complete 17.5 miles this week. Meridian Road mailbox approaches are in process. Highway crews are patching in preparation for chip and seal. Witt discussed a proposed Equine Power Vehicle Ordinance, the Commissioners questioned Witt on roads that are affected. Oblique Road and 800E are the most affected, Witt explained, the result is a rut or buggy troth. The fees and penalties will go into the highway fund for road repairs. Commissioner Vanover questioned if the proposed Ordinance would be too narrow and should address overweight vehicles or machinery that cause road deterioration. Witt explained that equipment is larger and heavier than in the past, so it could be an issue. Witt said deterioration is lessened when water is kept off the roadway, which is why the force feed loader was purchased. Attorney Storer stated that since the Ordinance will involve fees and penalties it will have to be advertised prior to the meeting that will grant approval. The four-post lift has been delivered and is being installed.

Highway Engineer: Highway Engineer Nate Whitacre informed the Commissioners that several utility permits are pending, awaiting bonds and permitting fees. The Liberty Center paving project is out for bid, with the bid opening on Wednesday July 1st at 1 PM. Bridge 71(200W over Rock Creek) reconstruction has begun. Bridge 54 is scheduled to get the deck poured tomorrow (6/16).

Annex Generator Quotes: Five generator quotes were received by the Health Department to replace the Annex Generator. Currently the single-phase generator operates all functions of the Annex except the elevator and HVAC. Of the five quotes received only one was for a three-phase system that would operate the elevator and HVAC. The Commissioners would like to have other quotes for a three-phase upgrade on the generator. The subject was tabled until three-phase quotes are received.

Covered Bridge Certification: The Annual Certification for Covered Bridges was presented to the Commissioners. Wells County has zero covered bridges. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to sign the Annual Certification for Covered Bridges. Motion carried 3-0.

Park Center Board Application: An application was received for consideration to the Park Center Board. A motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Blake Gerber to appoint Preston Wright to the Park Center Board for a three-year term. Motion carried 3-0. Commissioner Vanover requested that Wright present an update quarterly regarding Park Center.

Comments: LA Brown updated the Commissioners that billing will start in July for the Tocsin service area for the Regional Sewer District. Commissioner Gerber gave a shout out to Northern Wells Baseball on their amazing season that ended at the semi-state level, to Bluffton baseball who are moving on to the State competition, and E J Tackett who captured his fourth consecutive PBA World Championship. Attorney Storer spoke about the June 27th Rural Town Cleanup, he instructed anyone interested to watch the Solid Waste stream or minutes for more details.

Adjourned: Wells County Commissioners adjourned at 5:45PM, the motion was made by Michael Vanover, seconded by Blake Gerber. Motion carried 3-0.

Wells County Commissioners

President, Jeff Stringer

Vice President, Michael K Vanover

Member, Blake Gerber

Attest: _____
Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor