

WELLS COUNTY COUNCIL
REGULAR SESSION
July 07, 2026

Wells County Council met in regular session on Tuesday, July 7, 2026, at 7:00PM in the Wells County Carnegie Annex Building, 223 W Washington St., Bluffton, IN. Present at the meeting were Seth Whicker, Vicki Andrews, Steve Huggins, Scott Elzey, Todd Mahnensmith, Brandon Harnish, Brian Lambert, and Auditor Lisa McCormick.

Minutes: A motion was made by Brandon Harnish, seconded by Vicki Andrews to approve the minutes from June 2, 2026, regular session. Motion carried 7-0.

Additional Appropriations: A motion was made by Steve Huggins, seconded by Brian Lambert to approve the Additional Appropriation request for the Citizens Against Drug Abuse (CADA) fund. Motion carried 7-0. Heather Baumgartner, CADA President, updated County Council regarding CADA funds, see below.

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

A motion was made by Scott Elzey, seconded by Todd Mahnensmith to approve the Additional Appropriation request in the Reassessment fund. Motion carried 7-0.

A motion was made by Brandon Harnish, seconded by Vicki Andrews to approve the Additional Appropriation request in the Wells County CASA Grant Fund. Motion carried 7-0.

Appropriation Reduction: A motion was made by Brandon Harnish, seconded by Steve Huggins, to approve the Appropriation Reduction in the LIT Economic Development fund. Motion carried 7-0.

CADA Annual Report: CADA President Heather Baumgartner presented the 2026 grant distributions for Citizens Against Drug Abuse (CADA). Funds for the grants are collected through the "Drug Free Community Fund"; a total of \$20,114.61 was collected in 2025 for distribution in 2026. Total grant requests for the 2026 period were \$24,525.90. The grants are divided into four categories: Administration, Education/Prevention, Treatment/Intervention, and Judicial. \$5,028.65 being distributed for Other/Admin, \$5,028.65 being distributed to Education/Prevention, \$5,028.65 being distributed to Treatment/Intervention, and \$5,028.63 being distributed to Judicial.

Wells County Sheriff: Sheriff Holliday reported 54 inmates, 17 pretrial Superior, 26 pretrial Circuit, 0 F6 DOC and 6 DOC. The monthly Officer/Jail report and courthouse report for June were presented to Council Members. The Commissary Report was distributed for the period of January through June 2026. A review of the police pension was discussed with County Council. Currently the Sheriff's department has 6 active vested employees, 11 active employees who are not vested, 3 separated employees who are vested, and 14 current retirees. Also discussed were the pension liabilities, actuarial assumptions, asset invested, and benefits included in the plan. A memorandum of understanding was presented to County Council for discussion. The document has been approved by the Board of Commissioners, Sheriff Holliday wanted County Council to approve the use of training funds for the Norwell employee, Shane Neuenschwander, who will also assist with SRO duties when needed. A motion was made by Steve Huggins, seconded by Scott Elzey, to approve the use of appropriated training funds regarding SRO training and supplies for Norwell employee, Shane Neuenschwander. Motion carried 7-0.

Dual Role Employee: Highway Supervisor Witt addressed County Council regarding a dual role employee. The employee is currently a mechanic and would like to become an operator. The mechanic receives a larger hourly rate than an operator. The current operator pay is \$26.71 per hour. Witt's request was to keep the employee at his current rate of pay as a mechanic \$27.49, he could then do mechanic work when not doing operator duties. Witt would then be able to hire another mechanic and have essentially two and a half mechanics. Also mentioned was paying a combination of wage by tracking operator pay and mechanic pay, paying for each job. County Council would like to revisit the subject during the budgeting process.

2027 Budgets: The 2027 Budget worksheets, Council General Fund, the Cumulative Capital Development Fund, the Rainy Day Fund, the LIT Correction/Rehab Facility Fund, the LIT Dedicated to PSAP Fund, and the LIT Dedicated to EMS Fund, were presented to the County Council for review. Council President Seth Whicker compiled the data for the budget sheets. A motion was made by Brandon Harnish, seconded by Todd Mahnensmith to approve the 2027 budget worksheets as presented. Motion carried 7-0.

Amended 2026 Wells County Salary Ordinance: An updated 2026 Salary Ordinance was presented to the County Council for approval. The updates include an election pay resolution 2025-2 listing election pay, Veterans Service Officer training hours, removing Secretary 2 position from the Probation department and adding a Part-time position at \$21.90/hour, adding two crew leader positions and lead mechanic to the highway department, and paying the public health nurse out of grant funds for \$10,000 of the annual salary. A motion was made by Brandon Harnish, seconded by Vicki Andrews to approve Ordinance 2026-06, updated Wells County Salary Ordinance. Motion carried 7-0.

2027 LIT: A letter addressing potential Local Income Tax changes was drafted and presented to County Council for review. The memo stated that Wells County may consider changes to the Local Income Tax (LIT) rates and/or distributions during calendar year 2026. At this time, no formal action has been taken by Wells County Council. However, county officials are evaluating potential LIT modification that, if approved, would become effective on January 1, 2027. The letter will be distributed by August 1st to the DLGF and underlying units of government. A motion was made by Vicki Andrews, seconded by Brandon Harnish to approve and allow the President to sign the LIT letter of intent. Motion carried 7-0.

MUST Overview: Board President Whicker discussed the upcoming MUST meeting to be held in the Annex meeting room for all Wells County entities on August 25, 2026, at 6pm. The MUST taskforce provides an opportunity for the County Council representative and the fiscal officers of each city and town to review relevant financial and operational information.

Adjourned: An 8:22 PM motion was made by Steve Huggins, seconded by Vicki Andrews to adjourn. Motion carried 7-0.

WELLS COUNTY COUNCIL

President, Seth Whicker

Vice President, Vicki Andrews

Attest: Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor