

Wells County Commissioners
Regular Session August 3, 2026

The Wells County Commissioners met in regular session on Monday August 3, 2026, at 5:00PM in the Commissioner's Room of the Wells County Carnegie Annex, Bluffton, IN. 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 Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve the minutes from July 20, 2026, regular session and July 28, 2026, joint executive session. Motion carried 3-0.

Payroll and Claims: A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve Payroll #16 in the amount of \$324,863.80 and 198 claims totaling \$379,819.01. Motion carried 3-0.

Wells County Sheriff: Sheriff Holliday reported jail statistics of 55 inmates, 16 pretrial Superior, 23 pretrial Circuit, 0 F6 DOC and 12 DOC. Holliday stated that he has reviewed the proposed Ordinance to update speed limits and expressed his support.

Wells County Highway Supervisor: Highway Supervisor Matt Witt updated the Commissioners on current projects. Twelve miles of chip and seal are left to be completed, not including the current road conversions. Planned chip and seal for the Meridian road conversion is next week. The new distributor has arrived; training and calibration are scheduled for Tuesday. Truck 50 and truck 5 have mechanical problems, truck 5 is at Selking for repair and truck 50 will be repaired when needed. An ICE student will start on October 12th and work approximately 15 hours per week. One right-of-way was presented for Commissioner approval. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve and sign the one right-of-way. Motion carried 3-0. One utility permit was presented for Commissioner approval. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve and sign the utility permit. Motion carried 3-0. Also presented was an unofficial detour for State Road 1 over Six Mile Creek for a thin deck overlay. The work is anticipated to begin as early as spring 2027. The unofficial detour will be 900 S to 500 E to 750 S. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve and sign the unofficial detour for SR1. Motion carried 3-0. An Ordinance to amend chapter 71 of the Wells County code to update schedule I speed limits was presented to the Commissioners for approval. The purpose of the Ordinance is to adopt the revised schedule which is attached to the Ordinance. The Wells County Highway department shall mark the roadways in accordance with the Ordinance by placement of appropriate signage. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve Ordinance 2026-08 to amend chapter 71 of the Wells County code to update schedule I speed limits. Motion carried 3-0. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to waive the second reading of Ordinance 2026-08. Motion carried 3-0. The durable pavement markings project is near completion. Some areas of concern are being addressed with the contractor to remedy several locations. Bridge 71, the contractor is increasing hours to meet the scheduled opening date. Bridge 54 is on schedule.

Imagine Early Donative Agreement: Imagine Early Director, Ashleigh King, addressed the Commissioners with an update and a 2027 donative contribution from the Commissioners. King reported that reliable childcare is an essential community infrastructure. When families cannot find or afford care, employers experience absenteeism and turnover. Imagine Early's local role is to help providers access technical assistance, managed services, and grant opportunities. The requested 2027 contribution from Wells County of \$25,000 will support local coordination, employer engagements,

provider assistance, reporting, and program administration. The County funding also sustains the local coordination that makes participation and continued growth possible, King stated. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve the 2027 agreement for services with Imagine Early for \$25,000. Motion carried 3-0.

2027 Proposed 911 Budget: E911 Director Mike Miller presented the 2027 911 budget for the City of Bluffton. Following the interlocal agreement the proposed 911 budget has been approved by the budget committee which is also the 911 board. The budget total is \$1,296,862.91 for 2027. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve the 2027 911 budget with the City of Bluffton. Motion carried 3-0.

EMS Contract: Presented to the Commissioners was a ratification and amendment to the Emergency Services Agreement. On or about January 16, 2016, an Emergency Services Agreement was entered into between the Wells County Commissioners, the Wells County Health Services Foundation, Inc., and the Wells County EMS, Inc. to provide emergency medical service system throughout Wells County. The amendment to the agreement states that the EMS Agreement may be terminated without cause by any of the parties by providing written notice no less than ninety days prior to the date of the termination. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to approve the ratification and amendment to the emergency services agreement and allow the President to sign. Motion carried 3-0.

Opioid Committee Update: Michael Vanover updated the Commissioners on Opioid funds. To date there is a balance in the Opioid Restricted funds of \$31,419.96, Unrestricted funds are \$65,089.32. The Committee will meet in August to finalize recommendations for this year's funding cycle. The cycle will open in the fall and close in December. The committee will make formal recommendations to the Commissioners later in 2026 or early 2027. The 2025 recipients will be required to comply with reporting requirements. There is a board member opening, applications will be accepted to fill that vacancy.

Cancellation of 2nd Meeting in September: Streets are shut down around the Annex Building for the Bluffton Street Fair September 21-26, 2026. Consequently, parking is a problem. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover to cancel the September 21, 2026, regularly scheduled Commissioner meeting. Motion carried 3-0.

Public Comment: Ted Claghorn addressed the Commissioners as a follow-up regarding a proposed CFO in the southern part of Wells County. He spoke in opposition to the proposed CFO. He asked the Commissioners to set a limit on the number of Holsteins allowed for a CFO or CAFO operation.

Adjourned: Wells County Commissioners adjourned at 5:48 PM. A motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Michael Vanover. Motion carried 3-0.

Wells County Commissioners

President, Jeff Stringer

Vice President, Michael K Vanover

Member, Blake Gerber

Attest: _____
Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor