

WELLS COUNTY COUNCIL
BUDGET SESSION August 26, 2026

The Wells County Council met in budget session Wednesday, August 26, 2026, at 6:00PM in the Wells County Carnegie Annex Building, 223 W Washington St., Bluffton, IN. Present at the meeting were: Seth Whicker, Vicki Andrews, Todd Mahnensmith, Steve Huggins, Scott Elzey, Brandon Harnish, Brian Lambert, and Auditor Lisa McCormick.

Council members had discussions on each department, going through the budget book by page and line.

Commissioners: The animal shelter line was reduced to \$0.00 from the requested \$150,000. The Animal Shelter funding of \$150,000 will be paid out of LIT Public Safety in 2027 and will need to be appropriated in 2027. No adjustments were made to the LIT Economic Development budget.

Solid Waste District: No adjustments were made to the Solid Waste budget.

Highway, LR&S, and Cumulative Bridge: No adjustments were made to the Highway budgets. LR&S had a negative operating balance of \$387,509, Whitacre explained that they are trying to rebuild the fleet. Council will cut \$400,000 out of the equipment line and suggest the Highway discuss, with the Commissioners, the possibility of appropriating out of the Cumulative Capital fund for highway equipment. No changes were made to the Cumulative Bridge budget.

Surveyor: Clerical Assistance of \$5,500 was removed from the Surveyors budget. No adjustments were made to the Drainage Board, or Surveyor's Corner Perpetuation budgets.

Health: No adjustments were made to the Health, the Local Health Maintenance fund, or the Local Health Department Trust Account fund. \$10,000 was reduced from the clerical line in the Local Public Health Services fund.

Assessor: No adjustments were made to the Assessor, Sales Disclosure Fee Fund, or the Reassessment Fund.

Recorder: No adjustments were made to the Recorder, the Identification Security Project budget, or the Recorders Perpetuation budget requests.

Treasurer: Office Supplies were reduced by \$1,000 in the Treasurer budget.

Court House: Deicer was reduced by \$2,000 in the Court House budget. Custodian Mark Double had requested overtime pay for after hour calls that require him to come back to the Courthouse. County Council agreed to add overtime pay for after-hour calls to the Salary Ordinance.

IT Department: No adjustments were made to the IT Department budget.

Coroner: No adjustments were made to the Coroner budget.

Extension Office: No adjustments were made to the Extension Office budget.

Veteran: No adjustments were made to the Veteran budget.

EMA: No adjustments were made to the EMA or LEPC budgets.

Area Plan & GIS: Several lines were eliminated from the Area Plan budget due to those items also being budgeted in the Building & Construction Related Fee Fund. Part-time Secretary was reduced by \$21,261, Office Supplies were reduced by \$1,400, Receipt Books/Permit Card was reduced by \$325, Software was reduced by \$8,600, Legal Ads & Notices was reduced by \$4,800, Area Plan Copier was reduced by \$2,900, and Signs was reduced by \$1,700 for a total of \$40,986. No adjustments were made to the GIS or Building & Construction Fees Funds.

Soil & Water: No adjustments were made to the Soil & Water budget.

Prosecuting Attorney: A reduction was made for the PT Investigator of \$23,868; Andrews is not filling the position currently but wants to keep the position open for the future.

Superior Court: No adjustments were made to the Superior Court budget.

Circuit Court: No reductions were made in the Circuit Court budget; two employees were moved to a different Matrix on the Salary Ordinance for 2027. Probation Secretary and Circuit Court Bailiff will have the same Matrix as the Circuit Court Administrator. Probation requested an increase for the PT Field Officer to \$26.50 from \$24.57, County Council opted for the 2.5% increase to \$25.18. No adjustments were made to the Supp Public Def Services budget, the Adult Probation Administrative budget, the Juvenile Probation Administrative budget, the Urinalysis fees budget, the Juvenile Probation budget, the Jury Pay budget, and the Substance/Indigent fund budget.

Community Corrections: No changes were made to the Community Corrections General Fund or Misdemeanant fund. The Community Corrections Grant I fund was reduced to \$147,758, changes made included Field Officer 1 & 2 were made into part-time positions, a reduction of \$60,934, Drug Testing Supplies were added for \$3,000, Indigent was removed for a reduction of \$6,000, Travel/Conference was added for \$3,000, Computer Equipment was added for \$3,000, and Official Bonds & Insurance added for \$136. Project Income was reduced in the Social Security, Retirement, and Group Health Insurance lines by \$20,518, Drug Testing Supplies were removed, Official Bonds & Insurance added for \$14.00, and Training and Seminars and Misc. Charges and Services were removed.

Sheriff: The Police Pension was reduced from \$707,771 to \$624,030; Service Contracts were reduced by \$18,000 in the Sheriff's budget. The Sheriff requested a rate of \$26/hr. for Courthouse Security; County Council will increase the current rate by 2.5% to \$25.62. The Jail budget was reduced by \$300,000 out of the Jail Matrix pay to be absorbed into LIT Public Safety after the start of 2027. No adjustments were made to the LIT Public Safety budget, or the Vehicle Inspection budget.

Clerk: No adjustments were made to the Clerks General fund budget, the Election Board General fund budget, or the Clerk's Records Perpetuation fund budget.

Statewide 911: No adjustments were made to the Statewide 911 budget.

Auditor: No adjustments were made to the Auditor's budget, the Auditors Ineligible Deduction fund, the Elected Official Training fund or the Plat Book fund.

Convention, Visitor and Tourism Fund: No adjustments were made to the Convention, Visitor, and Tourism Fund.

County Council: No adjustments were made to the County Council General fund budget, the Cumulative Capital Development budget, the Rainy Day budget, the LIT Correctional/Rehab Facility budget, the LIT – Dedicated to PSAP budget, or the LIT – Dedicated to EMS budget.

Council members discussed wages for Wells County full and part-time employees. County Council asked Auditor McCormick to increase all full and part-time employee wages by 2.5% for 2027. Council President Whicker asked Auditor McCormick to run the numbers and relay back to the County Council the operating balance, which they would like to see in the \$160,000 range.

Adjourned: County Council adjourned the budget meetings at 7:11. The motion was made by Vicki Andrews, seconded by Brandon Harnish. Motion carried 7-0.

WELLS COUNTY COUNCIL

President, Seth Whicker

Vice President, Vicki Andrews

Attest: Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor