

**WELLS COUNTY COUNCIL
PUBLIC HEARINGS & REGULAR SESSION
September 8, 2026**

Wells County Council held Public Hearing(s) and a Regular Session on Tuesday, September 8, 2026, at 7PM in the Wells County Carnegie Annex meeting room, 223 W Washington St., Bluffton, IN. Present at the meeting were: Vicki Andrews, Todd Mahnensmith, Steve Huggins, Scott Elzey, Brian Lambert, Brandon Harnish, and Auditor Lisa McCormick. Seth Whicker was absent.

**PUBLIC HEARING:
Local Income Tax Ordinance**

Wells County Council held a public hearing regarding the proposed Ordinance for Local Income Tax imposed within Wells County. The proposed ordinance will redistribute the current local income tax allocations. Council Vice-President Vicki Andrews opened the floor for public comment, there were no public comments, the Public Hearing was closed.

**PUBLIC HEARING:
2027 Budgets**

Public Hearing on Wells County Solid Waste District: The 2027 Wells County Solid Waste District advertised budget estimate is \$274,931.

Public Hearing on Rock Creek Conservancy: The 2027 Rock Creek Conservancy advertised budget estimate is \$93,050.

Public Hearing on Wells County Budget: The 2027 Wells County advertised budget estimate is \$26,596,253.

Council Vice-President Vicki Andrews opened the floor for public comment, there were no public comments, the Public Hearing was closed.

REGULAR SESSION

Minutes: A motion was made by Brandon Harnish, seconded by Todd Mahnensmith to approve the minutes from August 4, 2026, regular session, August 20, 2026, budget session, and August 26, 2026, budget session. Motion carried 6-0.

Additional Appropriations: A motion was made by Brandon Harnish, seconded by Steve Huggins to approve the additional appropriation for Local Road & Street. Motion carried 6-0.

A motion was made by Steve Huggins, seconded by Brian Lambert to approve the additional appropriations in the Supp Adult Probation, Supp Juvenile Probation, and Court Interpreter Grant funds. Motion carried 6-0.

Jail Hiring Request/2027 Incentive Pay: Sheriff Elect Chip Swindell addressed the County Council regarding the hiring of a Jail Commander prior to the outgoing Jail Commander departure. He requested a 12-week training period beginning mid-October. No additional funding would be needed for the hire. A motion was made by Brandon Harnish, seconded by Scott Elzey, to approve the 12-week training period contingent upon a letter of resignation from the outgoing Jail Commander. Motion carried 6-0. Also presented was an updated job description for the Jail Commander. A motion was made by Steve Huggins, seconded by Brian Lambert to approve the job description for the Jail Commander. Motion carried 6-0. Swindell would like to implement incentive pay for the Sheriff Deputy that carries out field

work for the sex offender registry. The incentive pay would be 2% above the base rate for a Sheriff Deputy, \$1,998.78 annually, effective 2027. County Council would like to revisit the incentive pay discussion during their October meeting.

Ordinance 2026-11 Modifying Local Income Tax Rates for Wells County: Ordinance 2026-11 was presented to the County Council for approval. The proposed LIT Notice To Taxpayers will redirect the .11 LIT Rate from EMS to LIT Public Safety. Each credit has a value of \$93,654.15 in 2026 for a distribution amount of \$1,033,496. A motion was made by Todd Mahnensmith, seconded by Brian Lambert to approve Ordinance 2026-11 Modifying Local Income Tax Rates for Wells County. Motion carried 6-0.

2027 Budget Items: The Prosecutor had requested an increase in stipend for a legal assistant and IVD staff assistant. The current stipend is \$750 annually. A motion was made by Brandon Harnish, seconded by Brian Lambert to increase the stipend to \$1,000 annually. Motion was not carried 3-3.

Adjourned: 7:36 PM motion was made by Scott Elzey, seconded by Brandon Harnish to adjourn. Motion carried 6-0.

WELLS COUNTY COUNCIL

President, Seth Whicker

Vice President, Vicki Andrews

Attest: Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor