Wells County Commissioners

Regular Session January 3, 2023

The Wells County Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, January 3, 2023, at 5:00 PM in the Commissioner's Room of the Wells County Carnegie Annex, Bluffton, IN. Those in attendance were Commissioners, Michael Vanover, Blake Gerber, and Jeff Stringer, Attorney, Colin Andrews and County Auditor, Lisa McCormick.

Re-organization of Board: Auditor Lisa McCormick asked for nominations for the Board of Commissioners for 2023. Motion was made by Blake Gerber to appoint Commissioner Jeff Stringer as Commissioner President, there was not a second to that motion. Motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to appoint Commissioner Michael Vanover as Commissioner President and to appoint Commissioner Blake Gerber as Commissioner Vice-President. Motion carried 3-0.

Minutes: Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the minutes from the December 19, 2022, regular session. Motion carried 3-0.

Payroll and Claims: Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve Payroll #26 in the amount of $261,123.82. Motion carried 3-0. Motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to approve 125 claims totaling $459,756.63. Motion carried 3-0.

Wells County Sheriff: Sheriff Holliday reported 71 inmates, 24 pretrial Superior, 26 pretrial Circuit, 15 F6 DOC and 0 DOC. Holliday reported that the jail renovation is ready to cross the finish line. The completion of small projects is what is left of the renovation. Sheriff Holliday stated that the communication during the snow event was good between all departments.

Highway Supervisor: Supervisor Shawn Bonar updated the Commissioners on the recent snow event. Bonar thanked the other departments and organizations that made the snow event run as smoothly as possible. Thanks were given to the Uniondale Fire department, Bluffton Dispatch, Sheriff Holliday and his officers, and Freeman's towing service for coming together to keep the community safe. He stated that he was unable to secure a staging area in the southern part of the county, despite Commissioner Vanover's valiant efforts. Bonar updated the Commissioners on the Highway garage progress. The cold storage building sustained some damage from recent windy conditions. The damage has been repaired. The Salt Storage building is in process and the main building structure has been delivered.

Highway Engineer: Nate Rumschlag updated the commissioners on ongoing and future projects. Rumschlag presented the 12-month inspection report from BF&S. BF&S recommended submitting an application for Bridge Preventive Maintenance using Bridge 200 and/or Bridge 107. Nate will bring letters of financial commitment for those bridges to the January 17th meeting for Commissioner consideration. He stated that maintenance on the structures can increase the service life an additional 10 years. Community Crossing Matching Grant 2023-01 is open for applications. Suggested projects were Bridge 170, Bridge 85, and Bridge 402. Rumschlag will have letters of financial commitment at the January 17th meeting for Commissioner consideration. An updated letter of financial commitment will be presented for the Local Trax project on January 17th, the funding will need to come out of the SR301 Transfer fund instead of the LIT Economic Development fund. Three right-of-way documents were presented to the Commissioners for approval, motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the three right-of-way documents. Motion carried 3-0.

Economic Development 2023 Agreement: Economic Development Director Chad Kline presented the 2023 Economic Development Agreement for Commissioner review. Motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to approve the 2023 agreement for performance of Economic Development Services for $100,000 (Misc. 2023-02). Motion carried 3-0. Jeff Stringer suggested more detail in the reporting concerning what economic services Wells County contributions are attributed to.

Annual Nepotism Policy: The Annual Certification Regarding Disclosure of County Contracts with the Business Interests of Relatives was presented to the Commissioners for their signatures.

2023 Solid Waste Salary Contract: Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer to approve the 2023 Solid Waste Contract (Misc. 2023-01). Motion carried 3-0.

2023 Board Appointment: Motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer appoint Laura Dalrymple to the Community Corrections Advisory board as the Victim Advocate. Motion carried 3-0. Motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to hire LeAnn Gibbs as the Public Information Officer. Motion carried 3-0. Motion was made by Jeff Stringer, seconded by Blake Gerber to appoint Ted Storer, Beers/Mallers law firm, as the County Attorney for 2023. Motion carried 3-0. The Commissioners expressed appreciation to all the highly qualified applicants. The Commissioners also congratulated Attorney Colin Andrews on being elected the Wells County Prosecutor and thanked him for his service as County Attorney the past year.

Adjourned: Wells County Commissioners adjourned at 5:38 PM, motion was made by Blake Gerber, seconded by Jeff Stringer. Motion carried 3-0.

Wells County Commissioners

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President, Michael K Vanover Vice President, Blake Gerber

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Member, Jeff Stringer

Attest: _____

Lisa McCormick, Wells County Auditor