



www.shaftsburyvt.gov

Town of Shaftsbury

Municipal Offices at Cole Hall

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Open Meeting Policy

Purpose: Ensuring that public meetings remain open and accessible is the governing value that prompts the creation of this policy. In keeping with Vermont's Open Meeting Law with Act 133 (S.55), which was updated on July 1, 2024, The Shaftsbury Select Board recognizes that hybrid and remote access to meetings can strengthen civic engagement and support transparent, efficient decision-making. This Policy will ensure that public meetings are open and accessible for all Shaftsbury citizens. This policy also promotes transparency and uniformity in public access.

Scope: This policy applies to all public meetings held by the Town of Shaftsbury's Boards and Committees, including both "nonadvisory" and "advisory" bodies.

Meeting Accessibility: Except in the event of exigent circumstances, all meetings of Boards and Committees will be held at the designated public location of Cole hall, in the second-floor meeting room. Virtual attendance options, like Zoom, will be available for all said meetings, along with public access to the web link for such.

Notification Requirements: Public meeting warning notices will, as always, be provided in advance of meetings. They will be posted on the Town's website, at Cole Hall, and at the Shaftsbury and North Bennington Post Offices. They will also be emailed to various Town Officials and *The Bennington Banner*, in the spirit of public awareness.

Recording and Documentation: All Meetings will be recorded on the virtual site, and will be then posted on the Town's website. Virtual platform links to our recorded public meetings are in compliance with Act 133 (S.55) of the Vermont Open Meeting Law. These platform links will be available for at least 30 days. Minutes will be approved and posted promptly, usually at the same time as the recording. However, we may post the recording first.

Accessibility Measures: The Selectboard will work to ensure that Cole Hall remains accessible for individuals with disabilities and will provide necessary accommodations for in-person and virtual attendance, including closed captioning.

Emergency Provisions: Building on accommodations from the Covid-19 pandemic, in the event of an emergency we will allow entirely remote meetings, in order to ensure public access to pertinent information. If there is an equipment failure on our end, all scheduled meetings will proceed, and we will repair or replace said equipment as soon as possible. The scheduled meeting will not be canceled.

Policy Review and Updates: There will be regular review and updates to this policy, as needed, to ensure alignment with further updates to Act 133 (S.55) of Vermont's Open Meeting Law.

For more detailed information, refer to the Vermont Open Meeting Law.

<https://sos.vermont.gov/municipal-division/open-meetings/>

The foregoing policy is hereby adopted by the Selectboard of the Town of Shaftsbury, Vermont, this 19th day of August, 2024, and is effective as of this date until amended or repealed.

SHAFTSBURY SELECTBOARD

Chair

Vice Chair
