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Town of Shaftsbury

Municipal Offices at Cole Hall

Meeting Minutes

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Community Center Development Committee

Date of Meeting: Thursday, January 9, 2024, in person at Cole Hall and remotely via Zoom

Members Present, Marlene Hall, Zoe Contros Kearnl, Marie Watson, Sarah Costin, Ben Benedict, Joan Dornhoefer (Zoom), and town administrator, Paula Iken (presiding).

1. Call to Order

The meeting came to order at 5:20PM.

2. Conflict of Interest Statement

No one reported a conflict of interest.

3. Minutes

Tabled.

4. Announcements

Ms. Iken said she had information on the many inspections that have been done at the medical building. She thanked Mr. Benedict for sending her important data on the cost of utilities on the building. Ms. Hall announced that the Special Town Meeting has been warned for February 11th, at 5:30PM, at the elementary school.

5. Public Comments

Mr. Bud Krawczyk offered his support for the Town's purchasing of the medical building and said it is a good idea, and it's well set up for town offices.

6. Discussion of various inspections of medical building

Ms. Iken shared that the State Fire Inspector has done an inspection, and the only thing he found is that the alarm system needs to be updated. She contacted Dave Woodward, at Alarms Unlimited, who met her and Dr. King at the building, and they explained the fire/burglar alarm system. Mr. Woodward did an official alarm inspection that morning and let the Town know what is needed to get it to where it should be. Ms. Iken will be meeting Hathaway Electric at the building, the next day, at 1pm, to check for any red flags. She is getting as many eyes on the place as she can. The environmental inspection will be on January 14th, and the Selectboard will need to respond to the earlier building inspection by end of day on January 15th. All Out Waste will repeat their septic inspection, this time with cameras.

7. Review of Timing and Action of Vote

Ms. Hall reiterated that the Special Town Meeting will be February 11th at 5:30PM at the elementary school. There will be an information session, which the CCDC will do, then Tom Daly will moderate the town meeting and floor vote. Ms. Contros Kearnl, Ms. Watson, and Mr. Benedict will do the presentation. There will be visual aids, and the meeting will be on Zoom as well, although one must be in person to vote.

In discussion of possible renovation costs, vault construction will need to be over a concrete slab. Ms. Contros Kearnl discussed the purchase price of \$375K, and the vault would likely be \$110K, and then there would be

incidentals like flooring, painting, and some demo. Ms. Iken noted that the funds available of approximately \$178K, after purchase, will not quite be enough for the entire project. Mr. Benedict commented that the costs will not be incidental anymore, and this will be a financial consideration for the Selectboard and perhaps some kind of sub-prime loan that is available for municipalities. Ms. Contros Kearn and Mr. Benedict commented that a complete total of \$750K would not be unreasonable, as a new build would be more than \$1.5M. We are still only at \$170 sq.ft.

Ms. Iken asked Ms. Hall if we could digitize files, to consider a smaller vault. Ms. Hall explained that anything in digital form needs to have a hard copy stored as well, as per Vermont State law. Mr. Benedict discussed propane and electric bills for the building, as he has looked at the history of a few years. He estimates \$10K a year for propane and \$6500 a year for electricity. Ms. Contros Kearn offered information on energy rebates and how fast the green energy initiatives are moving. Ms. Iken suggests the Town do everything they can, on the front end, to use energy-saving measures. Ms. Contros Kearn states that we will be looking for funding in various places.

Ms. Iken reminded the committee that we need to have an answer for what to do with Cole Hall. Ms. Contros Kearn stated that the likely 5-year plan is to turn this into a community center, and we will fundraise to start. Ms. Iken has contacted the Preservation Trust of Vermont, to see about their program for historic buildings. Their concept is for the Town to set up a preservation trust, to restore an historic structure. To return it to its former and more appropriate use would make this a restoration project. Grants and fundraising will be how to accomplish this.

8. Review of Action Items

Ms. Iken asked the committee to do more imagining and to bring ideas to the next meeting with regards to the potential uses of Cole Hall. Mr. Benedict says to also think about the presentation that the committee will be making.

9. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 6:02PM