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# Town of Shaftsbury

## Municipal Offices at Cole Hall

PO Box 409  
61 Buck Hill Road  
Shaftsbury, VT  
05262-0409  
(802) 442-4038

### Meeting Minutes

#### Community Center Development Committee

**Date of Meeting:** Thursday, January 16, 2025, in person at Cole Hall and remotely via Zoom

**Members Present,** Zoe Contros Kearn (presiding), Ben Benedict, Sarah Costin, Marie Watson, Naomi Miller (guest), and town administrator Paula Iken.

1. Call to Order

The meeting came to order at 5:00 PM.

2. Conflict of Interest Statement

No one reported a conflict of interest.

3. Minutes

Ms. Iken noted that, in the absence of a Zoning Administrator, the Select Board had tasked committee members with transcribing meeting minutes until someone else was found. She asked for volunteers. Ms. Costin volunteered. The committee thanked her. The minutes were approved with the following changes: 1/9/2024 changed to 1/9/2025; Bud Krawczyk's last name was corrected; added wording that hard copy records storage was required by Vermont state law: Ms. Benedict changed to Mr. Benedict.

4. Announcements

Ms. Iken said that she heard back from the Vermont Preservation Trust, and they were very interested in the plans for Cole Hall. Mr. Benedict explained that the Trust comes in with their own crew and helps the town set up a preservation trust. Ms. Miller noted that tax deductible donations can be made to the Trust. Ms. Iken said she had been upstairs at Cole Hall and confirmed that restoration is needed. She will connect with the Vermont Preservation Trust soon.

Ms. Costin said that she had visited the Vermont State Archives and Record Administration (VSARA) website to read the laws required for record retention. She found that the law requires that the state assist public agencies in maintaining their records. VSARA could be a resource for funding, or a connection to funding, for a new vault. Ms. Contros Kearn asked for a link to the area of the VSARA website.

5. Public Comments

None

6. Discussion of Cole Hall

In anticipation of questions about Cole Hall's future use, the committee was asked in the previous meeting to come up with answers. Ms. Iken confirmed that other than a mold inspection, no other work, except possibly ripping up the carpet, would be started on Cole Hall prior to the 2/11 meeting and vote. Ms. Miller stated that her goal for Cole Hall was to return it as close as possible to its original condition to make it a useful community gathering space. Ms. Costin provided a photo of the interior of Cole Hall in use for a Greens Show. The committee looked at the photo and noted that floor levels were very different from the present. Ms. Miller brought up accessibility issues that would need to be resolved as part of the restoration. Ms. Iken suggested that the committee put a call out to the community for more photos of Cole Hall's interior. After committee members shared their ideas for future uses of Cole Hall, Ms. Contros Kearn requested a formalized list of possible uses that could be shared at the 2/11 meeting. Ms. Miller brought up possible questions from the public about paying for the restoration, maintenance of Cole Hall before and during the

restoration, and plans for the rest of the land purchased by the town. Mr. Benedict said that his answer would be to establish a real town center and that Cole Hall has been the star of the town historically. Discussion branched out to the use of the town green. Ms. Contros Kearn asked about costs of maintaining Cole Hall, Mr. Benedict suggested taking a percentage of current costs, and Ms. Iken said she had access to those numbers. Mr. Benedict emphasized the importance of considering future needs when planning for work on both the new town office building and Cole Hall. Ms. Miller suggested a survey similar to ARPA to more involve the community in planning Cole Hall's future.

7. Discussion of 2/11 meeting

Members agreed that there could be heated statements from the public during the meeting and that listening to and acknowledging each person was important. Ms. Contros Kearn discussed preparing the structure of the 2/11, handouts to include the new building draft plan, and having concrete answers to budget questions. Ms. Watson will lead with the purpose of the CCDC, then Ms. Contros Kearn will talk about the process, followed by Mr. Benedict with the building details. Ms. Iken said that the 2/11 meeting will be on Zoom. Various ways of addressing questions on costs was discussed at length. Ms. Contros Kearn suggested that the committee lead with the certainties and answer questions about the uncertainties as possible. Circling back, the committee discussed ways to inform the public about the 2/11 meeting beyond published sources.

8. Discussion of medical building

Ms Iken said that the town had given its response to the medical building inspection and that upgrading the alarm was the only issue. The wiring is already there. The town will ask for estimates for upgrading the system. Environmental testing was completed on 1/14. The brown field, PCBs, and lead were tested. A mold test will be done on 1/21. The results for the medical building testing and the Cole Hall mold testing should be received before the 2/11 meeting. There was a discussion regarding offices in the medical building. Mr. Benedict will remove names from offices and assign numbers. Ms. Miller noted that the Select Board is creating a subcommittee to work with the town employees using the building so that all needs are met impartially.

9. Review of Action Items

Cole Hall: maintenance numbers

Cole Hall: interior photos

Cole Hall: list of uses

2/11 Meeting: structure outline

2/11 Meeting: presentations Marie and Zoe (Ben away)

2/11 Meeting: inform personal contacts to spread the word

View the Vermont Preservation Trust's website

10. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 6:10 PM