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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, March 26, 2026, in person at Cole Hall and remotely via Zoom.

**Members Present:** In person: Paula Iken- Co-Chair (presiding), Ben Benedict, Sarah Costin, Joan Dornhoefer, Marlene Hall (non-voting member), Zoe Kearl (Select Board representative), and Marie Watson.

1. Call to Order

The meeting came to order at approximately 5:00 PM.

2. Conflict of Interest Statement

No one reported a conflict of interest.

3. Minutes

The minutes were reviewed. There were no amendments. Ms. Watson moved to accept the minutes; Mr. Benedict seconded. Minutes were approved 5-0-2. Ms. Kearl and Ms. Hall abstained.

4. Announcements

Ms. Hall said that there was a tentative date for the vault move: April 6<sup>th</sup>. There was a brief discussion on moving the vault prior to the State Fire Inspector giving approval. Ms. Iken has been trying to contact him to get a date scheduled for the inspection and then ask the electrician what else needed to be done to pass the inspection. The electrician was basically finished, just chasing some wires. Mr. Benedict suggested that Ms. Iken leave a message with the fire inspector that included the April 6<sup>th</sup> date for the vault move.

5. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

6. Update on building renovations

Mr. Benedict said that Adam's Lock & Security has started their work, the electrician is almost finished, and the carpenters are finished except for a few finish details. The painter said he would have the vault ready by the end of next week (4/3). He will apply a primer and white finish coat throughout the building, except in the Town Clerk's office which will be painted "Jade Dragon" per Ms. Hall's wishes. Ms. Hall noted that the painter said he needed to be gone for 2 weeks. Mr. Benedict said he would check into that. The floors are in except for the moldings which can go in either before or after painting. Ms. Iken has been in contact with Bennington House of Tile about this. Mr. Benedict asked about the move in date, Ms. Iken answered that she has

contacted All Seasons Moving, which was the least expensive with more manpower. They have penciled in April 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. There was discussion about ordering a louvered door for the server room to allow for ventilation. Mr. Benedict said he would look into it. Ms. Iken suggested that the offices be moved with existing furnishings, then fine tune the new space when a bit settled, including the community space.

7. Discussion of Moving-in Date

See #6

8. Budget review

Ms. Kearl commented “we are going to run out of money”. Ms. Iken agreed and provided the current building costs tally. The original amount was \$178,486.08. As of 3/19/2026 \$164,371.07 has been spent leaving \$14,115.01 to complete the project. Still to be paid out are the final electric cost, moving cost, and other items- like the server closet door. The floor molding and most of the painting has already been paid. Ms. Iken suggested that the Town look into different funds. Ms. Hall suggested the restoration fund. It appears that the overage will be a very small percentage of the overall cost, and the overall cost is a very affordable option for new Town offices. Ms. Iken noted that almost all the work was done by companies/individuals located in or near Shaftsbury, keeping most of the money in the local economy. Ms. Kearl said that she was thinking procedurally about where the remaining amount needed would come from. Ms. Iken commented that we are at the end of the budget and the end of the work and that it has been only 1 year since the property was purchased.

9. Discussion of Priorities and Timeline

Most items were discussed in the building update. Ms. Kearl brought up quickly emptying Cole Hall as much as possible so that it can be brought into its next phase. There was discussion of what would go to the new offices, what would go to the dump, what would be stored. Ms. Hall brought up talking to the carpenters about moving the countertop from the Cole Hall basement to the new building for the researchers. Mr. Benedict said he would give her the carpenter’s contact information. There was further discussion of possible issues with doors. These are on the carpenter’s list to fix. The carpenter also has skylight repair on his list, for safety issues as well as to prevent leaks.

10. Discuss future of Cole Hall

Ms. Kearl opened the discussion with a reminder of the process during the past 2 years, including looking at different options to upgrade Cole Hall, build a new Community Center, and then purchase and renovation of the new Town Offices. She thought that Cole Hall could be made into a 3 seasons Community Center, not with complete restoration, but with making it watertight, upgrading the electrics where needed, removing offices and drop ceiling to open the interior, etc. She noted that the only way to do this will be with fundraising. She thought that the CCDC should coordinate with the Economic Development Committee. Ms. Iken said that in 2025 BCRC had completed a \$4000.00 grant funded economic study of Shaftsbury. All that data is available. Ms. Watson commented that the Recreation Committee had initiated a survey about Town Green usage that had many respondents. Mr. Kearl said that events on the Town Green could be used for fundraising. Ms. Costin brought up the possible use of some of the Town Green for a septic system. Ms. Kearl said that was unlikely to happen due to cost. Ms. Iken mentioned Habitat for Humanity as being a possible developer with a smaller

septic system. She noted that the Town's lack of a wastewater system is one of the key blocks to economic development. Ms. Kearl noted that Shaftsbury has restrictive covenants for businesses that do not allow for change. Ms. Hall said she thought that it made more sense to leave Cole Hall as it was, to use offices for medical clinics etc. It was noted that there was no water in the office area, which would be needed for a clinic and that it was not accessible. Mr. Benedict noted that the lift is illegal, meaning not ADA compliant. The easiest fix for accessibility would be to upgrade the front entrance. The first step is to empty Cole Hall, then get estimates to fix water and electrical issues. Next would be to remove the offices which will help with heat circulation since radiators are only in a couple of offices. Ms. Kearl then brought up the Vermont Historic Preservation Trust's interest in Cole Hall being taken back to an earlier version of itself and the possibility of getting a matching grant from them. Ms. Kearl said it's compelling "to make something old look old again".

11. Other Business

Ms. Kearl noted that the parking lot at the new building will not be paved, just patched and sealed.

12. Review of Action Items

Ms. Iken will continue to try contacting the State Fire Inspector

Ms. Dornhoefer will contact Rick Bennett from the Economic Development Committee

Mr. Benedict will talk to the painter, look into a louvered door for the server room, and send the carpenter's email to Ms. Hall

Pending from last meeting: Hot water tank discussion

13. Adjournment

Ms. Watson moved to adjourn. Mr. Benedict seconded. Motion passed 5-0-2. The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 PM.