



www.shaftsburyvt.gov

Town of Shaftsbury

Municipal Offices at Cole Hall

Meeting Minutes

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

Select Board & Water Board

Date of Meeting: September 23, 2024, 6 p.m., Cole Hall and remotely via Zoom

Members Present: Naomi Miller (chair), Mike Cichanowski, Brad Peacock, and Martha Cornwell. Also present were town administrator Paula Iken and operations manager Jen Holley.

Select Board

1. Call to Order

The meeting came to order at 6 p.m.

2. Conflict of Interest Statement

No one reported a conflict of interest with any item on the agenda.

3. Minutes

Mr. Cichanowski moved to approve the September 9 minutes. Ms. Miller noted typos on item 8. Mr. Peacock seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0.

4. Warrants

Ms. Miller noted that we don't have a payroll warrant yet. She will sign it when it is ready.

Warrant 25-0008, \$280,142.33. Mr. Cichanowski moved to approve the warrant. Mr. Peacock seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0.

5. Announcements

Ms. Holley said the cemetery committee recently sponsored a veterans' headstones cleaning event. Seventeen headstones were cleaned. She thanked all those who participated. The effort will continue, usually on the fourth Saturday of the month (but in October on the third Saturday). They'll continue as long as there is no snow on the ground and the weather is fine. They hope to finish cleaning all the veterans' headstones in the town's cemeteries by the time of the celebration of the nation's 250th anniversary.

Ms. Cornwell reminded folks of the meeting with VTrans to discuss the Sunderland culvert project, which if executed as planned would reroute Route 7 traffic onto Route 7A and through Shaftsbury. The meeting will be held on Monday September 30 at the elementary school at 6 p.m. She urged all to attend to make their concerns known to VTrans.

Ms. Miller said she received a notice that VTrans has approved the temporary limited access on Route 7 for the construction of Shaftsbury Solar.

Ms. Iken said the location of the Cole Hall septic system has been found. It is off the northeast corner of Cole Hall. We also learned we have a dry well. The underground fuel oil storage tank is also near that corner.

6. Public Comments

There were none.

7. Treasurer's Report

Melanie Dexter reported on the August cash flow. State highway aid came in all at once. The transfer station receipts were recorded. Disbursements included the usual, many of which are being paid now via ACH rather than with checks. She said Tiffany May, our bookkeeper, deserves a big pat on the back for effecting these changes. She said we might wait for a budget comparison until September, when we start getting tax payments. As an aside, she said we received more than \$500,000 in taxes in September to date.

Ms. Dexter urged citizens to review their tax bills immediately, especially to confirm their homestead exemption has been handled correctly. If it were not, they have until mid-October to rectify the error. It could make an enormous difference to their tax bill.

Ms. Cornwell asked about the "ARPA" designation in the reserve fund statement. It was explained that some funds had been set aside for last minute expenses from that account, such as taking down the house at 43 Buck Hill. The payment for that work has not yet

Ms. Dexter explained that the restoration fund is funded by fees paid to the Town Clerk, and that as best she knows those monies are used to maintain the records in the vault.

Ms. Dexter said the professional auditors were in for two days. The process went smoothly. She is waiting for any follow up.

8. Recreation Committee Update

Deena Ruege, chair of the committee, reported. She said the committee meets the fourth Friday of the month. Citizens are encouraged to attend. (Several responded to an appeal posted on the town website.) She said the soccer field and tennis court drainage work has been completed. A recreation grant has been applied for which would resurface the tennis courts, install pickleball courts on the tennis courts, and fund other activities. The Tilgner Trail has been upgraded. The committee collaborates with elementary school students, who provide "Art in the Park." Cub Scouts are camping the park this weekend. During that time, they'll clean up the horseshoe pits. The committee is replacing the Park sign on Buck Hill Road. Peckham Industries and Jonathan Kirk there has agreed to donate the sign. The sign will be made of concrete, and will feature a silhouette of the Green Mountains. The committee hopes to build a dog park and install animal refuse cans around the park. Bulletin boards and benches are also to be installed.

Ms. Cornwell wondered whether fellow teachers might be interested in sponsoring benches in honor of former committee member Barb Marino, recently deceased.

9. Economic Development Committee Update

Rick Bennett, chair of the committee, reported. The committee meets the second Tuesday of the month. He noted that the Regional Commission is exploring options for and inventorying economic activity in the Village. They should submit their report in a few weeks. He knows that they have identified eleven sites that have significant potential.

Mr. Bennett said Andrea Bacchi, co-chair, is working on a registry of town businesses, including home-based businesses. It could become a shop-local tool. The committee hopes to have it posted on the website by January.

He said the committee did a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats analysis and found that the town is like much of the rest of Vermont. It uncovered a question about how second-home owners could be a resource for our communities.

Mr. Bennett shared a presentation. He will put it on his Google drive and share the link with the Select Board.

He mentioned the southern Vermont economic development initiative. The group meets frequently.

He noted a Vermont Public piece on housing, and encouraged folks to check it out. He mentioned a project to increase the population of the state.

10. Request for Microsoft 365

Ms. Iken asked for permission to get Microsoft 365. It could be a time-saver, will offer better security, and let us be more efficient. She said they are negotiating with RCS Consulting regarding the cost. More to come. A vote will be held once final numbers are available.

11. Request for Cole Hall Trailer

Ms. Miller reminded the board that water and mold required the town to move basement staffers out of that space. Ms. Iken said she's looking into a 32' x 10' trailer at a cost of \$425/month, plus initial fees totaling about \$500. An ADA ramp will be installed on the trailer. A minimum of one-year rental is required. It would be located as close as possible to Cole Hall. She said none of these plans are ideal or convenient but they are temporary. A vote will be held once final numbers are available.

12. Enhanced Energy Plan Hearing #2

Ms. Miller introduced the hearing. She said that in the first hearing, an earlier version of the Plan was referenced. The main differences in the present version are 1) solar facilities are to be limited to a maximum of five acres (not twenty) and 2) no wind turbines are allowed that are larger than 100' in height (not 40'). She noted that potential placements for solar facilities are fairly limited by access to phase three power lines. (Sites such as the gravel pits, the school roof and others are not economically close enough to three phase energy.)

Ms. Miller noted that, as per recommendations in the Plan, an energy committee has been created and has begun to implement the actions noted in the Plan. They include creating EV charging stations at Cole Hall.

Mr. Cichanowski moved to adopt the Shaftsbury Enhanced Energy Plan. Mr. Peacock seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0.

13. Expenditure of remaining ARPA funds

Ms. Miller said there remains in the ARPA account about \$63,000. She said she and Ms. Iken have been talking about spending the funds on basement remediation and hiring a part-time grant writer for a year to help with the community center. Should that person be able to raise sufficient funds to extend that year-long contract, it could be extended. Ms. Iken said she did a little research, and found that a part-time grant writer could cost \$30-\$50K annually. Ms. Cornwell noted that federal and state grant writing could be an onerous task requiring extensive experience. Ms. Miller said grants will be required for the community wastewater system as well, and would require careful scheduling.

Ms. Miller suggested that at the next meeting we might have better information on the cost of the basement remediation and the grant writer. She noted that she'd received an estimate for the basement remediation of \$19,400. It included vinyl sheeting of the rock walls and an interior trench along the inside of the walls to collect water entering the basement, accompanied by a sump pump that would discharge the moisture to a site outside. MSK Engineers commented on the problem and indicated such an action might be an appropriate first step. Mr. Cichanowski said he thought most people attacked flooding of their basements from the outside. Ms. Miller said MSK Engineers agreed that such an approach would be extremely expensive.

Ms. Miller will let everyone know when she's arranged for a visit from a second contractor.

14. Other Business

There was none.

15. Review of Action Items

Send EEP to BCRC and Callie Fishburn.

Ms. Iken: Get information on a part time grant writer.

Ms. Miller: Arrange for a second basement remediation specialist to visit and secure a second Select Board member to join the inspection.

16. Adjournment

Mr. Cichanowski moved to adjourn at 7:45. Mr. Peacock seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0.

Water Board

1. Call to Order

Ms. Miller called the meeting to order.

2. Conflict of Interest Statement

No one had a conflict of interest.

3. Minutes

Mr. Cichanowski moved to approve the minutes. Mr. Peacock seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0.

4. Announcements

None.

5. Public Comments

There were none.

6. Other Business

There was none.

7. Review of Action Items

8. Executive Session

Mr. Cichanowski moved to enter executive session at 7:46 p.m. Mr. Peacock seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0.

On returning from executive session, Mr. Peacock moved to send a letter to the North Bennington water board via return receipt. Mr. Cichanowski seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0. The letter will also be sent to the Town Counsel. Everyone signed the letter.

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned by acclamation at 7:47 p.m.