



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 and Water Board

**Date of Meeting:** October 21, 2024 in person at Cole Hall and remotely via Zoom

**Members Present:** Martha Cornwell (presiding), Brad Peacock, Mike Cichanowski, Joshua Brace (water superintendent), Melanie Dexter (treasurer), Jen Holley (operations manager), and Paula Iken (town administrator)

#### Water Board

1. Call to Order

The meeting came to order at 6 p.m.

2. Conflict of Interest Statement

No one reported a conflict.

3. Announcements

There were none.

4. Public Comments

There were none.

5. Discussion of Water Allocation Request and discrepancy in allocation amount

Mr. Brace said that, according to the latest state sanitary survey (conducted every three years by State Division of Water), Shaftsbury ratepayers use about 60,000 gallons per day (gpd). However, our agreement with North Bennington allows us to charge our ratepayers for only 44,000 gpd, meaning the Shaftsbury system pays North Bennington for the larger amount but only recovers the cost of the smaller amount. This discrepancy has been an issue for several years. Mr. Brace thinks we are losing water somewhere but can't say where the leaks might be. He said he thought the first phase of the water line replacement will help lessen that gap.

Mr. Brace said he had suggested to the former town administrator that meters be replaced on a rolling basis, about 100 meters per each phase of the water line reconstruction. He hopes to acquire web-connected meters that can report issues immediately. On a question from Ms. Dexter, he said some folks in the Village will probably face sticker shock when their meters are replaced as many are old and function somewhat unreliably. He couldn't say which neighborhoods might be affected most. He couldn't say whether Shaftsbury's actual usage is typical. He said he thought North Bennington has old meters too.

While the discrepancy is old, it is only this year the state has begun to threaten to fine Shaftsbury for it. He has not been given a deadline by the State for addressing the discrepancy.

Ms. Iken requested from North Bennington an increase in water allocation to 75,000 gpd. The system responded with additional questions. Mr. Brace will help answer them.

Mr. Cichanowski, Ms. Cornwell, and Ms. Iken will attend the North Bennington Water Board meeting on November 6 to talk about the water allocation.

6. Other Business

There was none.

7. Review of Action Items

- Reach out to confirm that Shaftsbury is on the Nov. 6 North Bennington Water Board agenda

8. Adjournment

Mr. Cichanowski moved to adjourn the water board meeting. Mr. Peacock seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

### Select Board

1. Call to Order

The meeting came to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. Conflict of Interest Statement

There were none reported.

3. Minutes

Mr. Cichanowski moved to approve the October 7 2024 minutes. Mr. Peacock seconded the motion, which passed 3-0-0.

Mr. Cichanowski moved to approve the October 15 2024 special meeting minutes. It was noted that Mr. Peacock was indeed present at that meeting, contrary to the published minutes. Mr. Cichanowski moved to approve the amended minutes. Mr. Peacock seconded the motion, which passed 3-0-0.

4. Warrants

Check warrant 25-010, \$35,924.36. Mr. Cichanowski moved to approve the warrant. Mr. Peacock seconded the motion, which passed 3-0-0.

5. Announcements

Ms. Cornwell reported that the first Shaftsbury newsletter has been posted. She urged all to sign up on the town website should they wish to get it.

Ms. Holley reported that come springtime, the cleaning of veterans' headstones will resume.

6. Public Comments

There were none.

7. Treasurer's Report

Cash flow report: tax due date is November 12. She recommended for those paying online that they use the less costly E-check option. Tax payments are coming in.

Reserves: some water bill payments have come in.

The date to claim homestead exemptions has passed. She received seven last-minute exemption requests.

Ms. Dexter said the Town Clerk is looking into how we can account for the loss of taxes on 43 Buck Hill Road (which the town bought and demolished). We know of no category to which an “abatement” might be assigned.

#### 8. Solar Project Update

Dave **xXX** of Shaftsbury Solar reported on progress:

- The Vtrans permit for temporary access on Route 7 has been received.
- They are continuing to secure infrastructure items.
- They are near completion on the agreement with the North Bennington Water Board and the design of the new water line.
- The company anticipates receiving PUC approval by the end of the year.
- The substation design is underway.

He said they have not finalized plans for the EV stations.

He said the company will attend a Select Board meeting on December 2.

#### 9. Zoning Administrator Posting

Mr. Peacock moved to authorize Ms. Iken to post the position announcement. Mr. Cichanowski seconded the motion, which passed 3-0-0.

#### 10. Discussion of Stonemason quote

Ms. Iken said a stonemason visited. He said the building is in fine shape, but the mortar needs patching and the masonry needs waterproofing. A preservationist affiliated with Shelburne Museum said the stonemason’s quote was wildly low and that the waterproofing was inappropriate. Ms. Iken has initiated contact with the masonry expert at the State’s Historic Preservation office.

Ms. Iken has two RFPs ready to issue for demolition work on the basement and electric work on both downstairs and upstairs with a bid date of November 15. Mr. Cichanowski moved to issue the RFPs. Mr. Peacock seconded the motion, which passed.

Ms. Iken will also draft an RFP for the windows downstairs.

#### 11. Budget Subcommittee

Ms. Iken hopes to start the process next week. She inherited a template for the process from the former administrator, but it can’t be adopted whole cloth as the Town has different needs now. Ms. Cornwell said it might make sense to have Ms. Cornwell, Ms. Miller and Ms. Iken act as the committee with Mr. Cichanowski and Mr. Krulikowski on call.

#### 12. Other Business

Ms. Cornwell asked about an RFP for a grant writer. Ms. Iken responded that she’d spoken at length with Katie Buckley at VLCT, their ARPA coordinator. She suggested that, rather than hire someone, the Town should work with freelancers on a grant by grant basis. It would be more cost effective (e.g. no benefits would have to be paid). Ms. Buckley also noted that VLCT could be of help with their “Meet a Project Pro” program. The Town could apply for a municipal planning grant that could help organize the grant-seeking process. Ms. Iken will pursue this possibility.

Ms. Cornwell suggested that Ms. Iken get advice from our Town counsel as to whether donations to the Town from private citizens are tax-deductible or if a non-profit must be formed to accept those gifts.

Ms. Holley shared a proposal from Monument Electric to rewire the upstairs to the highest “category 6,” bring the server upstairs, and wire the temporary trailer at a cost of \$5000. Mr. Cichanowski moved to accept the bid. Mr. Peacock seconded the motion, which passed 3-0-0.

#### 13. Review of Action Items

- ZA posting will go out.
- RFPs for demolition work will go out.
- Ms. Iken will follow up with State Historic Preservation.
- Ms. Miller, Ms. Cornwell, and Ms. Iken will begin budget discussions.
- The abatement issue on 43 Buck Hill will be researched further.
- Ms. Iken will follow up with VLCT re grant writing.
- Ms. Iken will check with our Town counsel re tax-deductible donating.

#### 14. Adjournment

Mr. Cichanowski moved to adjourn at 7:50 p.m. Mr. Peacock seconded the motion, which passed 3-0-0.