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Town of Shaftsbury

Municipal Offices at Cole Hall

Meeting Minutes

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Town of Shaftsbury Select Board Meeting

Date of Meeting: Monday, December 8, 2025, at 6:30 PM, in person at Cole Hall and remotely via Zoom.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by Chair Zoe Contros Kearn. Present were selectpersons Zoe Contros Kearn (Chair), Naomi Miller (Vice-Chair), Michael Cichanowski, and Brad Peacock. Also present were Town Administrator, Paula Iken, and the Chairs of the Sewer Feasibility Committee and Planning Commission, David Mance and Tim Scoggins.

Dufresne group Project Engineer, Christina Haskins, was present to provide a wastewater system 60% Report.

2. Conflict of Interest Statement

No conflicts of interest were identified with any item on the agenda.

3. Minutes

Ms. Contros Kearn requested a motion to approve the minutes from the December 1, 2025 Select Board meeting. They were reviewed and approved.

4. Announcements and Updates

No significant announcements were presented outside of scheduled agenda items.

5. Presentation: Wastewater Feasibility Study 60% Report (Dufresne Group)

Engineer, Christina Haskins, presented a detailed assessment of wastewater conditions and feasibility for a community septic system on town-owned property. The presentation included regulatory requirements, environmental considerations, system design constraints, and cost-benefit scenarios.

Key Points from the Presentation:

a. Existing Conditions & Regulatory Context

- Much of the area under review contains older septic systems that do not meet current environmental protection rules, though they remain grandfathered unless a property owner seeks expansion or significant modification.

- The site is not within a municipal well isolation zone, which is favorable for system siting, but environmental concerns remain, including the potential for aging systems to discharge to surface waters during storm events.

b. Replacement Area Requirements

- State rules require that wastewater systems under 6,500 gallons per day have a 100% replacement area.
- Only certain locations on the town parcel can accommodate both the primary leach field and the full replacement area, placing constraints on total allowable system capacity.

c. System Capacity & Layout

- A conceptual design shows the largest possible system that could be sited on town property under current regulations.
- The square footage of the leach field directly determines system capacity; minor increases in flow (e.g., 10 gallons/day) can cause significant jumps in construction cost due to rule thresholds.

d. Cost Considerations

- Small changes in design can double construction costs, due to regulatory thresholds and required pretreatment.
- Life-cycle cost estimates were provided, illustrating that while pretreatment can increase system efficiency, it is not always cost-effective for individual homeowners compared with traditional systems.

e. Service Area & Eligibility

- Discussion covered which properties could logically tie into a municipal system, assuming one were constructed.
- Haskins emphasized that system sizing, property proximity, and environmental impacts all affect the number of eligible connections.

Board Discussion / Q&A

Board members asked clarifying questions regarding:

- Cost thresholds and why small flow increases create major cost impacts.
- Whether pretreatment systems would be required for residential users (answer: usually not cost-effective).
- How reserve capacity would be managed and whether expansion would be possible in future regulatory cycles.
- Long-term environmental risks associated with existing grandfathered systems.

Haskins indicated that the feasibility study would continue to refine capacity scenarios, cost models, and potential funding avenues.

6. Public Comments

No public comments were offered.

11. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:00 PM.