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## **Agenda**

**June 12, 2025  
4:45 PM**

### **Committee Members:**

Judy Juntunen      Jill Van Buren      Scott McClure  
Adrienne Fritze      Carol Chin      Cornelia Levy-Bencheton      David Dodson      Roz Keeney

### **Staff Members:**

Paul Wallsinger, Benton County Facilities Manager  
Levon Atwood, Benton County Facilities Technician, Courthouse Maintenance  
Amelia Butler, Benton County Facilities Administrative Specialist (Recorder)

#### **I. Introduction & Visitor Comments**

#### **II. Agenda Review**

#### **III. Benton County Facilities Staff Updates**

#### **IV. Administration:**

- Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

#### **V. Old Business:**

- Discuss the 2016 Benton County Courthouse Owner-Directed Facility Seismic Evaluation report from Miller Consulting Engineers

#### **VI. New Business**

#### **VII. Other Business & Questions**

Meeting Adjournment

Next Meeting Scheduled For: July 2025

## **Minutes**

**June 12, 2025  
4:45 PM**

### **Committee Members:**

Jill Van Buren      Scott McClure  
Carol Chin    Cornelia Levy-Bencheton    David Dodson      Roz Keeney

### **Staff Members:**

Paul Wallsinger, Benton County Facilities Manager  
Levon Atwood, Benton County Facilities Technician, Courthouse Maintenance  
Amelia Butler, Benton County Facilities Administrative Specialist (Recorder)

### **Absent:**

Judy Juntunen      Adrienne Fritze

- I. **Introduction & Visitor Comments:** Meeting commenced 4:54 PM. Jesse Ott, the director of Natural Areas, Parks and Events was a visitor at the meeting. The group proceeded with normal member introductions.
- II. **Agenda Review:** All agenda items were correct.
- III. **Benton County Facilities Staff Updates:**
  - **Updates from Paul Wallsinger:** Paul reported that the Oregon Historic Preservation Office has granted permission for the repainting of the courthouse roof. He noted that additional approvals will be requested from the Corvallis and Benton County Historic Resource Commissions. This project, scheduled for summer 2026, was chosen as an alternative to a full roof replacement due to cost constraints. Carol inquired about jurisdiction for permitting oversight, and Paul clarified that Benton County has internal permitting authority under an existing Memorandum of Understanding for its own properties. A formal permit may not be necessary, but the project details will still be shared as a courtesy.
  - **Updates from Jesse Ott:** Jesse shared that staff may soon request funding from the Board of Commissioners (BOC) for consulting services related to courthouse reuse, though ongoing county budget shortfalls may delay this. He described efforts to balance economic development with historic preservation, with potential reuses focused on generating revenue. Jesse noted that preservation consultants are working to develop a cost estimate for repurposing the courthouse, including non-governmental uses. Discussions are on hold pending resolution of the Coffin Butte Conditional Use Permit petition, after which courthouse reuse planning can resume as part of broader civic campus planning.

- **Continued:** Jill asked whether continued government use would avoid triggering seismic retrofitting requirements; Paul confirmed this had been investigated and the retrofit may not be required in that instance. Jill also mentioned the idea of restorative justice as a possible use, one of the reuse options proposed in the reuse report.
- Roz asked whether the BOC had formally adopted the report. Jesse responded that while the BOC accepted the report, it was not formally adopted, as the report was intended to present options rather than recommendations. He anticipates further BOC direction, possibly including a new committee with cross-membership from other groups. Jill clarified that the report focused on economically self-sustaining options. Jesse stated that funding sources remain uncertain and that community needs—such as mediation or restorative justice—would require further assessment and possibly partnership with the State of Oregon.
- **Initial Discussion of Facility Seismic Evaluation Report, Continued in Item V below:** Considering Jesse's input, Cornelia stated that the report left unclear how extensive the work would need to be, from her review. Carol noted the report included immediately actionable items like securing heavy furnishings. Jill inquired about the ongoing crack monitoring project to which Levon confirmed he had completed a recent report showing no changes to the cracks. Cornelia asked about the jail's seismic stability due to its attachment to the courthouse and Paul said the jail is more stable, having been built later, but any future retrofits may require structural separation or connection to improve performance during seismic activity.
- **Continued:** Cornelia emphasized addressing seismic issues sooner rather than later. Paul noted that obtaining an engineering review would require funding from CPC's budget. Jesse inquired about whether a phased retrofit plan would be possible and Paul confirmed this approach was feasible. Jill recounted a past tour with fire officials who warned that in the event of fire or earthquake, smoke and heat would rise quickly, and the courthouse bell could become a major hazard due to its height and location.

#### IV. Administration:

- **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes:** There were some corrections needed for the previous minutes such as: David's name was spelled incorrectly and the Swick House, referenced in the new courthouse update, was identified in the minutes as being on the historic register but it is not. Amelia made notes to correct these changes. Roz moved to approve the minutes with corrections; Cornelia seconded. The motion carried.

#### V. Old Business:

- **Discuss the 2016 Benton County Courthouse Owner-Directed Facility Seismic Evaluation report from Miller Consulting Engineers:** The group continued discussing the 2016 report. Jill raised the importance of identifying the highest-priority retrofit needs. Carol and Roz agreed. Paul noted that many lower-level recommendations may have already been addressed during normal facility upgrades and operations. Roz asked if Facilities could confirm this and go through the report and identify all changes already made. Paul declined, indicating that Facilities would not be involved in verifying the report as Facilities' focus is maintaining daily County operations. He suggested the committee review the document and identify items to address case-by-case. Jill asked about alternative funding sources, which Paul said were not available. It was agreed that Paul

and Levon will complete a cursory review the 2016 report to determine what has been completed and prioritize remaining items for future action.

- **HVAC and Infrastructure Updates:** Scott asked about HVAC system for the building. Paul explained there is no central HVAC system—air conditioning is localized, while heating is provided via a building-wide boiler system. The boiler’s life is nearing its end. Scott asked if there’s funding for replacement and Paul said funding discussions have occurred multiple times, but nothing has materialized. Paul identified a few other areas of the building that may require upgrades in the event of a change of use: Plumbing systems also need upgrades; the fire system is functional; the electrical system is adequate, though outdated in many areas. Carol inquired about an evacuation plan. Paul confirmed that one exists and is posted in visible, high-traffic areas.

## VI. New Business

- **Community Outreach – “Friends of the Courthouse” Idea:** Scott proposed forming a “Friends of the Courthouse” group or initiative to raise public interest. Suggestions included a webpage or flyer. Roz supported this and suggested exploring a social media presence. Paul suggested working with the county’s Public Information Office (PIO) to produce a County-coordinated outreach. Jill asked about involvement from the Corvallis Downtown Association (CDA) although Roz suggested keeping the group separate from CDA. Cornelia shared reflections from her time in France, where historic sites receive community attention and support through public events. She described a chateau that hosted a light projection history event that attracted community interest. The group discussed possibilities for similar events at the courthouse to draw attention to its history and future. Carol suggested showcasing different eras of the building’s story. Cornelia proposed recalling historical events during which the courthouse played a role, as a way to connect the public to its legacy.

## VII. Other Business & Questions:

- **Tour of the Courthouse:** The committee plans to organize a tour of the courthouse, led by Jill. Paul will coordinate with the District Attorney’s Office and State Courts for access. Timing will depend on Jill’s upcoming surgery. Jill clarified that meeting dates can be flexible based on members’ availability. Paul noted that security restrictions (e.g., criminal justice access) may limit which areas can be included in the tour and Levon asked for clarification on how in-depth the tour should be and what sensitive areas might need to be avoided so that he and building staff can plan for visitors. Jill noted that previous tours were initiated to build community interest in the courthouse and encouraged the committee to share information with local groups. The group agreed to set a date for a tour at a future meeting.

Meeting Adjournment at: 5:51 PM

Next Meeting Scheduled For: July 2025