

Minutes

**January 15, 2026
4:45 PM**

Committee Members:

Jill Van Buren Scott McClure Adrienne Fritze
Cornelia Levy-Bencheton 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)
Anne Thwaits, Benton County Public Information Officer

Absent:

David Dodson

I. **Introduction & Visitor Comments:** Meeting commenced at 4:45 PM. BA Beierle attended as an applicant to the committee and was formally welcomed. Anne Thwaits, Benton County Public Information Officer, attended to gather information regarding the committee's work as part of an outreach initiative highlighting County advisory committees. Introductions were made among committee members and guests.

II. **Agenda Review:** No alterations to the agenda were needed.

III. **Benton County Facilities Staff Updates**

1. **Paul**

Committee Appointment: Paul announced the official appointment of BA Bierle to the Preservation Committee. The appointment will be formally recognized at the January 20, 2026 Board of Commissioners meeting.

Courthouse Operations: Paul reported no major updates aside from ongoing maintenance, progress toward the exterior painting project, and removal of holiday decorations.

Future of the Benton County Jail: Scott McClure inquired about plans for the Benton County Jail once the new Courthouse is constructed. Paul explained that the Jail will continue normal operations as usual aside from the existing pass-through connection between the current Courthouse and the Jail will no longer be used. The Benton County Sheriff's Office will transport adults in custody (AICs) to the new Courthouse, which will

include appropriate holding facilities. Paul noted that the Jail continues to face space and maintenance challenges

2. Anne

Public Information Initiative – Advisory Committee Website Updates: Anne shared that the Benton County Public Information Office is conducting outreach to all public advisory committees to better communicate their purpose, highlight projects, and improve recruitment efforts. The PIO team is updating advisory committee webpages to clearly identify vacancies and streamline the application process. Future outreach may include interviews with committee members and expanded social media engagement to highlight committee work and preservation efforts.

3. Amelia

Recording of Meeting: Amelia shared that she will be taking a long-term absence from being the in-person recorder to attend to some ongoing family matters. Given her anticipated temporary absence from future meetings, a motion was made to record meetings for minute-taking purposes. Roz Keeney moved to have the meetings recorded moving forward; Adrienne Fritze seconded. Motion carried. Amelia will dictate the minutes from a meeting recording.

IV. Administration:

1. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes:

- **September 2025 Minutes:** Cornelia Levy-Bencheton moved to approve; Roz Keeney seconded. Motion carried.
- **December 2025 Minutes:** Cornelia Levy-Bencheton moved to approve; Roz Keeney seconded. Motion carried.

2. Election of Officers: Roz Keeney nominated Adrienne Fritze to continue serving as Committee Chair. Jill Van Buren seconded. Motion carried. Adrienne will continue as Chair. Cornelia Levy-Bencheton volunteered to serve as Vice-Chair. Jill Van Buren moved to nominate Cornelia; Roz Keeney seconded. Motion carried. Cornelia will serve as Vice-Chair.

V. Old Business:

1. Artspace & Feasibility Study: Adrienne reported on a follow-up meeting held with Artspace regarding the proposed feasibility study for Courthouse reuse. After discussion and further evaluation, Adrienne, Cornelia and Jesse Ott determined that Artspace did not provide sufficiently comparable examples of historic courthouse reuse projects and lacked experience directly aligned with the project's needs. While the committee acknowledged Artspace's strengths, members expressed concern that the Courthouse project could become exploratory in nature rather than grounded in proven experience. As a result, the committee agreed not to proceed with Artspace and to instead pursue a formal Request for Proposals (RFP) process to identify a qualified consultant.

- **Continued:** Adrienne noted that materials previously developed- including the OSU student-led reuse study- were reviewed during this process. It was observed that prior studies did not account for required seismic retrofitting costs or long-term funding considerations. Discussion followed regarding potential reuse concepts, including restorative justice functions, arts and culture space, and hybrid multi-use models. Members emphasized the importance of developing a reuse strategy that reflects broad community needs and the Courthouse's central civic role.

- Adrienne highlighted the importance of engaging Oregon State University and local stakeholders, including downtown property owners, as potential partners in revitalization efforts. Former Corvallis Mayor Julie Manning was identified as a potential advisor given her history of strengthening collaboration between the City and OSU. Members agreed that OSU involvement could provide valuable momentum.
2. **Rescinding Prior Funding Motion:** In light of the decision not to proceed with Artspace, Cornelia Levy-Bencheton moved to rescind the prior motion authorizing expenditure of funds for the feasibility study under the Artspace proposal. Roz Keeney seconded. Motion carried.
 3. **RFP Development:** Discussion followed regarding development of a clear project narrative and scope of work for the RFP. Paul clarified that the narrative should provide an overview of the project vision, while the scope of work must detail specific services and deliverables required from a consultant.
 - Paul offered to provide examples of prior County RFPs and the County template. Adrienne agreed to share the committee's compiled reuse materials database. Roz Keeney moved to form a subcommittee, consisting of all present members, to draft the project narrative and scope of work for the RFP. Cornelia Levy-Bencheton and Scott McClure seconded. Motion carried.
 4. **Meeting Schedule:** Roz Keeney moved to return the meeting to a monthly meeting schedule. Jill Van Buren seconded. Motion carried.

II. **New Business:** No new business was introduced.

III. **Other Business & Questions:** No additional items or questions were raised.

Meeting Adjournment at 6:00 PM

Next Meeting Date: February 12, 2026