

## Minutes

**September 11, 2025  
4:45 PM**

### **Committee Members:**

Jill Van Buren      Scott McClure      Adrienne Fritze  
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)  
Jesse Ott, Benton County Natural Areas, Parks and Events

### **Absent:**

Scott McClure

- I. **Introduction & Visitor Comments:** Meeting commenced at 4:49 PM. There were no visitors.
- II. **Agenda Review:** There were no changes or additions to the agenda.
- III. **Benton County Facilities Staff Updates:**
  - **Grant Funding and Courthouse Reuse Planning:** Jesse Ott discussed next steps toward securing grant funding to support reuse strategies for the historic Courthouse following the opening of the new facility. He emphasized that a pre-development feasibility study would be an important first step in positioning the County for major grant opportunities. Jesse reported that staff identified Art Space, a consulting group with a strong record of revitalizing historic structures on the West Coast, as a potential partner. The firm's work would include:
    - A comprehensive feasibility study assessing reuse options, funding sources, and implementation strategies.
    - Community engagement efforts, including input from local stakeholders and businesses.
    - A physical and contextual evaluation of the Courthouse and surrounding area.
    - A final report and budget proposal outlining viable reuse options.
  - **Art Space:** The group discussed that the agency's expertise lies in integrating arts, culture, and community into historic preservation projects. Jesse noted that similar studies have helped other counties successfully repurpose civic buildings. Adrienne noted that Art Space is familiar with local needs and could help identify national and private grant funding opportunities beyond local or state options. The committee agreed

the project must generate strong community interest to justify major funding requests. Jesse referenced the Kaplan Building project in Seattle, restored after earthquake damage, as an example of Art Space's successful approach.

- **Funding Options:** The study's estimated cost is \$35,000. Jesse and Adrienne discussed pursuing an Oregon Heritage Grant through the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for up to \$20,000. The remaining funds could come from the committee's Louisa B. DuBosch Endowment if the grant does not cover the full cost.
- **Motion:** David moved that the committee request authorization from the Board of Commissioners (BOC) to spend \$17,500 (50%) from the endowment to match potential SHPO grant funds for the feasibility study. If the grant is not awarded, the committee requests authority to fund the entire \$35,000 from the endowment. Roz seconded. Motion carried unanimously. The committee agreed that Jesse and Morgan Driggs (Community Development) would complete the grant application with support letters and the Art Space proposal.

#### IV. Administration:

- **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes:** Cornelia moved to approve the previous meeting minutes; Roz seconded. Motion carried.
- **Review Bylaws for Formal Approval by BOC:** Paul distributed copies of the updated bylaws for final committee review. Once approved by the group, they will be submitted to the Board of Commissioners for formal adoption. Discussion followed regarding non-resident member eligibility. Jill, who is not a Benton County resident, was identified as serving in a subcommittee capacity. Paul will confirm with the BOC whether a formal policy applies.
- **Committee Membership Updates:** Adrienne announced that Vice-Chair Carol Chin has accepted employment out of state and will step down from the committee. Members were encouraged to consider filling the vice-chair position. The committee also noted the departure of long-time Chair Judy Juntunen, who recently retired. Paul and members agreed to send a thank-you card recognizing Judy's years of service. There is already an existing opening in the committee that the BOC is pursuing recruitment for, bringing the open positions in the committee to three.

#### V. Old Business: In light of the grant proposal and feasibility study planning, the committee tabled further discussion of:

- Courthouse Tour
- 2016 *Benton County Courthouse Owner-Directed Facility Seismic Evaluation Report*
- Community Outreach Goals

#### VI. New Business

- **New Meeting Schedule:** The committee agreed to continue meeting quarterly rather than monthly due to limited relevant activities occurring in the County. If the grant is awarded, meetings may return to occur monthly. The next meeting will be held in December 2025.
- **Endowment and Funds:** The Louisa B. DuBosch Endowment will serve as the primary financial source for the feasibility study match or full funding, depending on grant outcomes.

- **Historical Examples Spreadsheet:** The committee will continue compiling a reference list of comparable historical reuse projects nationwide.
- **Fundraising and Community Engagement:** Adrienne and Jesse discussed local fundraising options. Roz suggested revisiting the idea of forming a “Friends of the Courthouse” group, originally proposed by Scott, to build local support and attract small donors. Jill asked about working through an existing County foundation; Jesse confirmed that a local foundation partnership could serve as a fiscal sponsor if pursued. David recommended waiting until the grant determination before committing to sponsorship arrangements. The group also discussed providing donations to fund, should one come to be.
- **Possible Small Group Meetings:** The committee may schedule smaller planning sessions between quarterly meetings as needed.

VII. **Other Business & Questions:** No additional items were raised.

Meeting Adjournment at 6:05 PM

Next Meeting Scheduled For: December 2025