

Minutes – No Quorum

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

Committee Members:

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, Director of Benton County Natural Areas, Parks and Events

Absent:

Jill Van Buren Scott McClure David Dobson

- I. **Introduction & Visitor Comments:** Meeting commenced at 4:45 PM. One guest introduced themselves as a guest, BA Berele, who was present to observe as an applicant to the committee. There was no quorum due to several member absences.
- II. **Agenda Review:** No changes or alterations were required to the agenda.
- III. **Benton County Facilities Staff Updates:**
 - Paul shared that Facilities enlisted a drone operator to provide footage of the Courthouse roof for the purpose of documenting its condition for the purpose of pricing a painting project with an overall goal of restoring the exterior of the Courthouse.
 - Levon shared that they decorated the Courthouse for the holidays.
- IV. **Administration:**
 - **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes:** There were no issues raised with the previous meeting minutes although they could not be approved due to the lack of a quorum present.
 - **Open Committee Positions & Vice Chair Position Openings:** The committee discussed the Vice-Chair vacancy created by Carol Chin's relocation to California. Adrienne encouraged members to consider serving in the role.
 - Paul Wallsinger reported that there are currently three open committee positions and encouraged members to promote the opportunity within the community. The group expressed interest in recruiting individuals with legal or financial expertise, such as attorneys, judges, or finance professionals.

- Paul agreed to assist with renewing Cornelia Levy-Bencheton’s membership, which expires at the end of December 2025. Paul reviewed remaining term lengths for current members, and Amelia Butler confirmed that committee officers are elected at the first meeting of each calendar year.

V. **Old Business:**

- **Oregon Heritage Grant & Funding for Feasibility Study:** Jesse Ott reported that Benton County did not receive the Oregon Heritage Grant applied for through NAPE. He explained that feedback from grant administrators indicated that funding was primarily awarded to “shovel-ready” projects. Staff plan to reapply with refinements informed by this experience.
- Jesse confirmed that, despite the grant denial, the feasibility study will proceed using funds previously authorized by the Courthouse Preservation Committee. Staff have met with Artspace and are finalizing contract terms and scheduling.
- Jennifer Brown, Benton County Sustainability Coordinator, will assist with stakeholder coordination between Artspace, Benton County, and the community. Jesse outlined plans to engage a core stakeholder group including representatives from the Historic Resources Commission (HRC), Corvallis Chamber of Commerce, local economic development partners, Business Oregon, and the arts, cultural, museum, education, real estate, and business communities. The intent is to involve six to eight key entities, primarily outside County government. Initial interviews are anticipated in early 2026, with a list of stakeholders likely finalized by the end of December 2025. Jesse noted that committee members are encouraged to propose additional names.
- The feasibility process will include site visits, community engagement, goal-setting, and timeline development. Smaller working groups may be formed around specific focus areas such as business development or arts and culture. Jesse emphasized that the overarching goal is to explore potential future uses of the Courthouse beyond its current function, while accounting for seismic upgrade requirements and associated costs.
- **Meeting Schedule:** The committee elected to move the next meeting to Thursday, January 15th, 2026, rather than occur quarterly.

VI. **New Business**

- Comments from Scott McClure: Amelia Butler read written comments submitted by Scott McClure in his absence and noted that his email would be forwarded to the committee with the meeting materials. Scott expressed concern regarding the selection of Artspace, noting that its arts-focused background could result in short-term solutions if reuse concepts are limited solely to arts functions. He emphasized interest in exploring uses tied to restorative justice and maintaining the Courthouse’s existing “town hall” role as a central civic gathering space.
- Committee members agreed with the importance of ensuring broad community relevance and discussed ways to maintain the Courthouse as an inclusive and meaningful public space.

VII. **Other Business & Questions:** No other business or questions.

Meeting Adjournment at: 6:06 PM

Next Meeting: January 15, 2026