

Williamstown Meetinghouse Preservation Fund: building needs

The First Congregational Church of Williamstown has identified needs that are critical to preserve our historic church building. Many of these needs are immediate: if not remedied they will cause further deterioration of the buildings key structural elements. The critical problems include the roof, steeple, and interior structures. Meetings with the fire chief and building inspector of Williamstown have clarified that any ongoing attempts to temporarily repair the structure will be inadequate and would not be approved. Without prompt replacement/major renovation this building is in jeopardy.

The congregation of the First Congregational Church of Williamstown undertook a building assessment in the fall of 2018 to identify deficiencies of our historic building. First Church has spent over \$300,000 to complete a fire suppression system for the entire building in 2021. This required 5 years from its limited budget to fund. The church was aware of some critical building problems but needed to identify all important needs. This assessment not only identified critical needs over the next 5-10 years but also outlined the order and timing of repairs as well as approximate costs. Centerline Architects of Bennington Vermont did this assessment. The findings, including updates since the original assessment, are noted below. A summary of the document will be attached to this filing with the CPA

Please note that the cost estimates were created to include both the hard costs of construction and the soft costs of design, contingency, permitting, etc. However, these estimates may change based on the design choices, unforeseen problems, and timing of construction. Also note that these cost estimates should be increased by 3-4% each year to account for inflation. The plan is to complete all of these projects with this campaign. This will reduce inflation costs and allow the ability to sequence work to maximize efficiency.

1. **ROOF REPLACEMENT:** The entire roof needs replacement. Over the last 11 years the church has spent over \$42,000 to repair, replace, or maintain the slate roof due to leaks. Despite that work we still have ongoing leaks.
 - a. There is significant deterioration of the oldest slate which dates back to the original construction in 1864. There is also leakage at transitions between different aged roof segments. The flat rubber membrane roof (done 1980) also needs replacement.
 - b. Flashing needs to be assessed and possibly replaced where there are roof penetrations or joints. Recurrent leaks have occurred near chimney penetrations.

Total Cost: \$350,000-\$400,00

2. **STEEPLE RESTORATION:** The steeple needs significant restoration and is a site of significant water infiltration and damage to the finished areas below. The good news is that the steeple metalwork and wood structure is sound.
 - a. The open louvers of the two bell tower levels need to be removed and replaced. Significant water leakage is coming through these louvers. The new louvers need to be designed to prevent significant water or snow infiltration.
 - b. Floors at the two bell tower levels need assessment and repair due to water damage. The asphalt covering on the upper-level floors needs to be removed and replaced with an exterior grade EPDM (rubber) covering that is waterproof.

- c. Weathervane needs restoration
- d. Top Balustrade needs to be rebuilt
- e. Metal Roofing seams need EPDM cover tape, drops and kicks are needed on all drip edges and the roof flashing needs to be replaced
- f. Both plaster and wood details are degrading and need restoration before painting
- g. Spire is covered with siding which is not watertight. There is flashing below that is draining accumulated water. Further assessment is needed to ensure that water is not collecting beneath the siding.
- h. Lead Paint Precautions are necessary when working on the painted areas of the steeple



Total Cost: \$550,000-\$600,000

3. BUILDING COMPLIANCE/ACCESSIBILITY:

- a. Egress from building is not to code (both interior egress doors and lighting).
- b. Bathrooms are not compliant
- c. Handicapped seating in sanctuary is insufficient
- d. Drinking fountains need replacement
- e. A compliant Handicapped accessible ramp is needed

- f. Elevator is needed to allow access to basement, first floor and second floor (as yet unfinished space).
- g. Concrete stairs by rear west entrance need repair.

Total Cost: \$530,000-\$575,000

4. SUSTAINABILITY: Creation of an office wing will allow improved access for community services and income generating rentals. This will provide the opportunity for an income stream to fund future building maintenance. Any historic building that is over 250 years old will have problems arise over time. The addition of assessable space will also provide more opportunities to house organizations that positively impact our community.
- a. Update the back offices and basement offices to create a 2-story office/rental space that can help defray future building expenses.
 - b. Build the elevator shaft with the ability to add a third stop if finishing the 4,000+ square foot of attic above the first floor is desired in the future.

Total Cost: \$300,000

5. SITE DRAINAGE:

- a. Some window wells need replacement
- b. Current drainage slopes toward building and needs to be regraded

Total Cost: \$65,000-\$70,000

6. INTERIOR RENOVATION OF HISTORIC AREAS: Interior walls need plaster repair and painting due to years of roof and steeple leaks. Lighting upgrades are needed to improve energy efficiency.
- Total Cost: \$55,000-\$60,000

7. EXTERIOR RENOVATION: Exterior walls need repainting (sections that are without siding)

Total Cost: \$115,000-\$225,000

8. VENTILATION:

- a. The building has no ventilation system and relies on outside air (through windows) for ventilation. The sanctuary is heated with forced hot air with return air coming from the sanctuary. There is a need for adequate ventilation systems that circulate outside air and allow for filtration and disinfection of circulating air. This is especially important given the risks of our current and/or future pandemics.
- b. The kitchen fan does not circulate outside air and is underpowered. It needs replacement and creation of makeup air from outside.

Total Cost: \$200,000-\$250,000

9. BOILER REPLACEMENT

- a. The boiler is aging and will need replacement. Replacement will improve energy efficiency.

Total Cost: \$40,000-\$45,000

GRAND TOTAL: \$2,205,000-\$2,525,000