

Common School Restoration Feasibility Project

Fairfield Selectboard Update 5/11/26

Open House/Public Meeting: On March 18, 2026, the Common School Working Group held an Open House at the Common School to present and get feedback on draft plans for a potential restoration of the Common School. The meeting was well attended with 15 community members, in addition to Working Group members and a Selectboard member. In general, there was support and enthusiasm for the project. There was a good community discussion, which highlighted some of the tough questions that the working group continues to focus on. These include the viability and compatibility of the potential second floor income-generating uses and the effort it will take to raise the necessary funds to complete the restoration. Since the Open House, new members have joined the Working Group and there is positive momentum to continue working on the project.

Survey: The Working Group is advertising a survey during the month of May to document feedback on the uses that are being considered for the building. Survey responses will help the Working Group document support and adjust as plans are refined. Please share!

Septic Feasibility Work: A grant includes a septic system capacity assessment as a deliverable, and it includes \$3,000 for this work. Bernard and Gervais prepared a proposal to complete soil analysis at the Common School to determine potential septic capacity. The proposal is for \$1,000 plus the cost of an excavator. The Selectboard will need to authorize moving forward with this work.

Architect Budget: The final invoice from the architect came in substantially over budget. While the working group has been happy with the level of effort and deliverables; this was not communicated in advance nor was it expected. The contract is written as “not to exceed” unless an increase in budget or scope is approved in advance. The Town Administrator has coordinated with GVV and NRPC on this issue.

Next Steps:

- Review an outline of next steps and funding opportunities from NRPC.
- Review and report community survey results.
- Complete septic soil analysis.
- Continue to refine the plan for use of the Common School.
- Conduct a detailed review of the cost estimate and consider project phasing options.