NH LAND AND COMMUNITY HERITAGE INVESTMENT PROGRAM

Grant Round 19 (2020) Historic Resource Project

Grant Application

Applicant	Town of Jaffrey	Organization Type (Use arrow to select)	Municipality
Mailing Address	Town Office, 10 Goodnow Street, Jaffrey, NH	Taxpayer ID Number	02-6000435
Contact (Name/Title)	Robert Stephenson	Phone	603-532-6066 home
E-mail	rob@rs41.org	Project Type	Rehabilitation/Restoration
Project Name	Meetinghouse Tower	Date of Resource	1775
Municipality	Jaffrey	County CHESH	Grant Request $ 68,500
Property Location	15 Laban Ainsworth Way	Total Project Cost	$ 137,000
Who owns the resource?	Town of Jaffrey	Gross square footage	2,900

Is the resource listed, or determined eligible for listing, on the State or National Register of Historic Places?

	Listed	Determined Eligible
State Register		
National Register	✔	

Is the proposed project part of a larger, or phased, rehabilitation project? ☐ Yes ☑ No

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Provide a brief overview of the historic, architectural and community significance and uniqueness of the resource.

The Meetinghouse is Jaffrey's most significant historical, cultural and architectural resource. It is set on a grassy Common in what was the town's original center. It is the only meetinghouse in Cheshire County (and one of the few in New Hampshire) that retains its Second Period exterior: entrance doors on the south, pulpit window on the north. It has held a central place in Jaffrey history since 1775: meetinghouse, church, school, town office and place of assembly.

Describe the work to be undertaken.

The proposed project is focused entirely on the Tower which dates to 1822. The specific elements of the project are: 1) Scaffold the entire Tower allowing the ... 2) Repair and possibly the replacement of portions of the deteriorated upper railing and balusters of the Bell stage; 3) Conservation and restoration of the four clock faces and the re-gilding of the numerals, hands and digits (previously approved by LCHIP); 4) Repair and in some cases replacement of the Tower flooring and stairs to insure safer access to the clock and bell and upper stages; 5) Gallery level restoration including plaster repair; 6) Painting of the entire Tower and the western façade of the Meetinghouse. Also, the interior of the Gallery level.

The goal is to have the entire Tower, inside and out, brought to a high level of repair.

1. RESOURCE SIGNIFICANCE — 35 POINTS

Use information from the nomination form to the State or National Register of Historic Places – or the State Determination of Eligibility form – to answer questions **a** and **b** below.

a. Describe the significance or uniqueness of the resource.

The Meetinghouse was raised in 1775. The Jaffrey Center Historic District was entered in the National Register in 1975, 200 hundred years later. Nomination forms at that time were typically sparse in details compared to the nominations today. In the Statement of Significance, it reads "Its [the District] surviving structures, dating from the 1775 Colonial Meetinghouse represent the economic, political, cultural and social and the architectural heritage of Jaffrey through the 19th century." Add to this "Religious" as it [the Meetinghouse] served as church until 1823. Under Description, it reads: "Meetinghouse, raised 1775, 2 story, barn type, 7 bay front facade, 5 bay gable ends. Steeple added 1822."

The Jaffrey Meetinghouse is significant in part as the sole Second Period meetinghouse in Cheshire County. The exterior, including its wood roof, is largely as it was built in the 18th century.

The setting is an important ingredient in the significance of the Meetinghouse: It was the center of the town when raised and visually and structurally remains so today. [Continued in #8 Extra Space]

b. Level of significance as listed in form mentioned above: ☑ National ☐ State ☐ Local

c. Describe the resource's proximity to other historic, cultural or natural resources. Is the resource part of an historic area or district? If so, describe.

The Jaffrey Meetinghouse lies within the Jaffrey Center Historic District (both National Register and Local). See Attachment 4 and #1a above.

The Meetinghouse is the focal point of the village, the original settlement of the town, lying about two miles west of what is generally referred to as downtown Jaffrey. Other resources not mentioned elsewhere but located nearby the Meetinghouse and of significance include the Monadnock Inn, Melville Academy (now a local history museum) and extensive open spaces and landscape ("The Swale"—a water meadow, Cutter Park and Centennial Park, all protected and well maintained), some with views of Mt. Monadnock.

2. IMMINENCE OF THREAT — 10 POINTS

Describe the extent to which the property is endangered, noting structural problems. How did the structural problems come to be? Is it unusable, unused, or underused? Are changes to the property proposed or planned that would be detrimental to the historic integrity of the resource? Explain if any community changes threaten the resource.

The Meetinghouse itself and the Tower—the main subject of this project—are structurally sound having had extensive work done on the foundations of both in the early 1990s. The octagonal steeple (see Photo 7 and others, Attachment 3) which sit atop the Bell stage, was removed and replicated at that time and is thought to be in good condition (close inspection is not easily accomplished because of height and access).

Neither structure is presently subject to any external threat. The threats that do exist are two-fold: 1) the deterioration of the railings and balusters and perhaps the roof of the Bell stage; and 2) the unsafe condition of the stairs and the flooring within the Tower which presents a possible threat to fire fighters and to those serving the fire alarm system and the clock.

No proposed or planned changes to the property would be detrimental to the historic integrity of the resource.

3. CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE PROJECT — 5 POINTS

a. Complete the following estimated timeline, providing any clarifying details in the space provided.

Task	Month/Year	Additional Information
Fundraising Completed	August 2021	Ongoing from now and perhaps after completion.
LCHIP Due Diligence		This is for LCHIP to state
Work Begins	Sept 2021	
Work Completed	Oct 2021	
LCHIP final documentation		This is for LCHIP to state

b. Describe the capacity of project team to successfully manage the project. Note any previous experience with LCHIP or other similar grants.

Robert Stephenson, a member of the Meetinghouse Committee, has had a long association with the Meetinghouse going back to the early 1980s and has overseen most projects involving the building since the major renovation projects of the early 1990s including interior and exterior painting, floor refinishing, plumbing and electrical upgrades and repairs, fire alarm installation, lighting protection upgrades and several Certified Local Government grant projects including a full documentation of the Meetinghouse. During his career he has overseen numerous architecture and planning projects, mostly involving health and higher education facilities. He will oversee this project as well. [Continued in #8 Extra Space]

Adherence to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties

c. Select the predominant treatment approach that will be used on this project:

☑ Rehabilitation ☐ Restoration ☐ Preservation ☐ Reconstruction

d. List the National Park Service's *Preservation Briefs* that are relevant to the project.

9. The Repair of Historic Wooden Windows
10. Exterior Paint Problems on Historic Woodwork
16. The use of Substitute Materials on Historic Building Exteriors
21. Repairing Historic Flat Plaster—Walls and Ceilings
28. Painting of Historic Interiors

e. If the project involves ground disturbance, how will archaeological concerns be addressed?

N/A

4. STEWARDSHIP — 15 POINTS

a. What organization is responsible for the long-term care and maintenance of the property (the "steward")?

Town of Jaffrey (Meetinghouse Committee and Department of Public Works)

b. Describe the steward's past record of caring for the resource, the steward's capacity to care for and maintain the property into the future, and any unique or challenging stewardship concerns.

The Meetinghouse Committee, the Department of Public Works and other organizations, particularly the Village Improvement Society, have cared for the Meetinghouse on a continual basis back to at least 1923 when the resource was renovated to its current configuration and use. Major work, often by volunteers, has been undertaken over the years including structural improvements, roofing, window restoration, lightning protection, painting, etc.

c. Will the resource be maintained according to a cyclical maintenance plan? Is there a dedicated funding stream available for stewardship? If no, describe any efforts being made to develop a plan and funding.

There is no maintenance plan per se although the Meetinghouse Committee meets and discusses necessary maintenance for a two to three year cycle. Much of this is related to painting both interior and exterior and the occasional large project such as the one proposed here. [Continued in #8 Extra Space]

5. FUTURE ACTIVITIES — 10 POINTS

a. Describe any change in public use of the property that is expected when construction is completed. Include any educational/interpretive plans.

The only space in the Tower used by the public is the ground level which is one of the two public entrances to the building. The project includes no major work on the interior of this space. The project will not engender new economic activity or engage the community or change the role the Tower plays in the community, nor is it meant to. The project is directed to addressing deterioration and enhancing safety within non-public areas of the building.

b. Current number of annual visitors (estimate): 2,500 est. Attendance records not kept.

Anticipated number of annual visitors when construction is complete: No significant difference

6. COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND PLANNING — 5 POINTS

a. Describe how the project aligns with the community's Master Plan or the state's priorities, citing any relevant examples. If applicable, describe how the project involves cooperation between or among communities. Identify project partners and diverse user groups supporting the project.

The Meetinghouse and Town Clock are identified in the Jaffrey Master Plan as "significant historical resources." The Meetinghouse lies within the Jaffrey Center Historic District (both National Register and local). The Jaffrey Historic District Commission reviews any exterior changes to the Meetinghouse (the last review was prior to major work in the early 1990s). Other organizations that play a continuing role: Village Improvement Society, Jaffrey Historical Society.

b. For *municipal* projects only: Has the governing body of the municipality (Town Meeting or City or Town Council) voted to support this project or will it in the future? ☐ Yes ☑ No
If yes, describe.

The Town Manager and the Board of Selectmen have been briefed but no action has been sought or taken. Action is expected in the months ahead once additional project information and estimates have been developed.

7. FINANCIAL NEED — 5 POINTS

Explain why the project proponents need the money for this project. Can the funds be found from other sources? Describe efforts made or planned to obtain funding from other (non-LCHIP) sources. Identify any sources that were considered but not included, explaining why. Describe any contingency plan if LCHIP funds are not received.

The proposed project is estimated to cost well over $100,000. This sum is far larger than the Meetinghouse Committee and the Town can raise over several years much less a single year. The citizens of Jaffrey have always supported the Meetinghouse but this sum would be overly daunting given the many competing financial needs of the Town. The source of funds for work on the Meetinghouse generally are 1) an annual Town Meeting warrant article for the Meetinghouse Trust Fund (in recent years $3,000) and 2) fees from rentals of the Meetinghouse (seldom over $1,000 annually). For major projects such as this donations have been received from local non-profits and foundations, CLG and Mooseplate grants, and interested individuals. These sources will be solicited as this project progresses but the expected outcome will likely be far from sufficient to undertake the project as proposed.

8. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION — 5 POINTS

Describe any other important aspects of the project that have not already been addressed. Why does this place matter to the community? Are there interesting stories or people connected with the property? Is there anything else we should know?

Albert Annett, town historian and co-author of the 'History of Jaffrey' (1937), wrote of the Meetinghouse:

"In its plain exterior it is one of the few remaining examples of the early type known as the barn meeting-house. And yet it is prized in Jaffrey as the town's dearest possession; a barn if you will, but a barn glorified and sanctified by its uses and associations. Its rough posts exposed to view with the ax-marks of the hewers upon them the people of Jaffrey would not exchange for alabaster columns inlaid with mother-of-pearl. The old Meeting-house is treasured because of its associations with the heroic age in town and nation, with love of home and country and all that knits the human heart to its environment." (Vol. I, Pp.167-68)

Today, in 2020, it remains the "town's dearest possession."

Extra Space – If needed, use this space to further develop your response to a question earlier in the application. Identify with question number (i.e. 3d, 7 etc.)

From #1a: Among its surrounding enhancing elements—the Ainsworth Manse (first minister's parsonage), the Old Burying Ground, the Horse Sheds, the Little Red Schoolhouse, the former Cutter Tavern, the former Thorndike Store, the First Church (and parsonage), and, of course, the Common and Cutter Park. The setting and surroundings of the Meetinghouse remain largely intact with no serious intrusions, and the various spaces and buildings that compose this setting have the effect of highlighting the Meetinghouse. The Meetinghouse, in turn, has the effect of bringing together and unifying the various surrounding spaces and buildings. All are ingredients in the overall ensemble.

From #3b: The Town has retained Michael Petrovick, Architect, of Keene to assist the Town in all aspects of the project. (The 'Agreement' may be seen in Attachment 5c.) The Jaffrey Department of Public Works will assist with the project where and when needed.

From #4c: The Meetinghouse Trust Fund benefits annually at Town Meeting from an article which in recent years has totaled $3,000. It also retains rental fees for events which are now limited because of Covid-19.

From Additional Funding Sources, Attachment 1: Amos Fortune Forum ($1,000), Terra Nova Trust ($2,000), Individuals ($1,000).