

DATE: October 22, 2024

TO: Bowdoinham Select Board

FROM: Community Development Advisory Committee

RE: **Request for approval of TIF funds to enable public art project in the village**

Dear Select Board,

Thank you for entertaining our previous request for TIF revenues for a public art mural at the FHC pottery barn on September 10. The board brought up many concerns regarding the placement on a privately owned building. We acknowledge these challenges and would like to propose an alternative project on the Maily Bathhouse. We believe this is a more suitable location which addresses the concerns you brought to our attention.

1. The building is owned and operated by the Town. As a result, this will not require the Town to enter into any agreement with a private owner who may sell the property or look to make changes in the location of the mural. The Town will have authority to maintain and preserve the art as it desires.
2. The building is in good condition and there is no infrastructure on the sides of the building being considered that would impact the longevity of the installation.



Due to the uneven surface of the cinderblocks used to construct the side walls of the bathhouse, we would anticipate having the mural painted on aluminum panels affixed to the building covering the entire east and west sides. Each wall measures 16'w x 7.5'h, or 120 square feet.

Aluminum paneling and fasteners to cover this area is estimated at approximately \$2,000 with an additional \$2,000 of in-kind staff time of the Dir. of Planning & Development to manage the project and Public Works staff to install the art.

Based on information we have received from local artists the going rate for murals is \$20-35/sq foot. Further, it has been mentioned that given the amount of work that is required for an artist to come up with a concept they are willing to submit the project costs will need to cover part of that time to make it worth their while to submit. While we asked for \$15,000 in our last proposal, that was for one continuous piece of art. Whereas this project is now two separate pieces, although a smaller total area. We would like to request up to \$22,000 which would include the \$2,000 in materials and \$20,000 for the artist to complete the two murals.

We would still be looking to partner with the Merrymeeting Arts Center to manage the mural project with the key activities outlined below:

1. Develop a call for submissions to share with interested artists/muralists in Maine and beyond. We have chosen to open the pool of applicants to beyond the boundary of Bowdoinham based on input we had with local artists who believe there might not be enough artists in the area who would take on this type of project creating an uncompetitive process. We are open to working with the Selectboard on the scoring mechanism for choosing finalists to give additional points to local artists.
2. Form a jury of Bowdoinham citizens to review submissions, selecting the top 2-4 to be put before the Town
3. Residents would then vote on the final proposal, potentially at Town Meeting
4. Liaise with the awarded artist/muralist on execution of the mural painting/installation

Our goal is for this to be the first in a series of murals capturing some of the spirit of Bowdoinham. Additional locations that could be included in the future planning of the pavilion, Old Town Hall, new Merrymeeting Trail bathhouse(s) and/or the Yellow Building to name a few. Depending on the timing, we could potentially have a public unveiling of the mural during Celebrate Bowdoinham in 2025.

We appreciate your consideration of this important project that we believe will strengthen the collective identity of Bowdoinham while beautifying our village in way that attracts further economic investment in our town.

Sincerely,

Community Development Advisory Committee
Jean de Bellefeuille, Chair
Laleah Parker
John Scribner, Vice Chair
Ian McConnell, Secretary