

Vermont Historical Society

ARPA Capital Infrastructure

Department/Program Description

Through its rich collections, dynamic programming, effective outreach, and resolute leadership, the Vermont Historical Society preserves the past, informs the present, and promotes Vermont's shared legacy for future generations. We believe that an understanding of the past changes lives and builds better communities.

A unique collaboration – VHS and The State of Vermont:

- Chartered by the legislature in 1838, and thus the oldest cultural heritage organization in the state, VHS collects, preserves, and exhibits objects and documents related to Vermont's past (22 V.S.A., sections 281-285). The Vermont Historical Society is the only institution in Vermont that collects artifacts and documents that reflect the entire history of the state, every geographical area, and every chronological period, including the present.
- In the event of dissolution of VHS, management of its collection and related property will become the responsibility of the State (22 V.S.A., section 284).
- Employees of VHS are classified by the state classification system as if they were state employees and receive all general pay increases granted state employees (22 V.S.A., section 285).
- The State of Vermont provides access to the Vermont State Employee Retirement System to qualified employees of VHS, as well as group coverage for health, dental, and life insurance. The premium for this coverage is paid entirely by VHS and its employees.
- VHS is both tenant and a landlord of the State of Vermont. Fee for space is assessed annually to VHS for the area occupied by the Vermont History Museum in the Pavilion Building. The State of Vermont leases space in the Vermont History Center for the Vermont Archaeology Heritage Center and Vermont State Library.
- With the change in scope and purpose of the State Library, VHS has become the primary research library for study of our state's history. Much of the VHS collection is now available online, with more materials added daily.
- VHS provides secure, climate-controlled space and curatorial oversight for the state's collection of historic flags and other select holdings.
- VHS provides access to meeting rooms in both the Pavilion space and History Center without charge to state agencies.
- The Vermont History Center in Barre is delegated for use by state agencies as an alternative worksite in the event of natural disaster or other emergency.
- VHS has traditionally been afforded access to State Capital Bill funding and is considered in the same way judiciary is for these purposes.

- VHS education staff work closely with State House staff to coordinate field trips that include a tour of the State House and Vermont History Museum. VHS provides curriculum support and supplemental learning for students throughout Vermont.
- VHS supports approximately 200 local historical societies and museums throughout Vermont and advances their vitality in the communities they serve.

Executive Summary:

In the Winter of 2020 VHS engaged Criterium-Lalancette & Dudka Engineers of Rutland to perform a capital needs survey of the Vermont History Center, located at 60 Washington Street in Barre, Vermont. With an eye towards emerging pandemic impacts, systems life expectancies, increased efficiency, safety & security, and long-term budgetary impacts, the firm issued a capital needs assessment in Spring of 2021. Though identified capital needs totaled over \$3,000,000 spread out over the next ten years, the most urgent and pressing needs involve the building’s complex and aging HVAC system. Repairs and upgrades to this system, in our opinion, meet the criteria to access ARPA Capital Infrastructure funds. The proposed replacements and repairs to the system are outlined below. The humidification system (an oil-fired steam boiler that runs year-round) is currently non-functional and the proposed upgrade is an electric, injection system that is much more efficient and adaptable to specific space needs. We’ve listed this item last as it is scalable if needed.

HVAC System Component	
Chiller Replacement (has reached end of life)	\$125,000
Reengineer AHU 1-9 for increased CFM, upgrade air filters	\$75,000
Replace Boiler #2 and circulating pumps	\$50,000
Electric Humidification system to replace oil-fired steam system	\$200,000
Total	\$450,000

Capital needs survey, which includes estimates, as well as design and estimate documentation for humidification system are available at the committee’s request.