



# FAIRLEE NEWSLETTER

SPECIAL EDITION June 2015

## SELECTBOARD NOTES

Welcome to the first issue of a newsletter from the Fairlee Selectboard. The purpose of this inaugural special edition is to bring residents up to date on the renovation and restoration of one of the Town's most valuable assets, our Town Hall.

## FAIRLEE TOWN HALL

More than 100 years old and the centerpiece of the Village Historic District, the Fairlee Town Hall was named to the National Register of Historic Places in



February 2014. Its second floor—which in the past hosted *The Fireman's Follies*, movies, town meetings, and school plays—is a classic New England meeting room with a stage, and home to the Town's restored theater curtain. The second floor can legally accommodate more than 250, but because it requires renovations for safety, it is used only occasionally and for carefully selected activities. For the time being, the portion of the Town Hall that was intended to be public space and used frequently by residents is no longer public.

Our central public community gathering space is no longer public.

We seek to return the second floor to the public, address Town Hall structural, fire safety, and

handicapped accessibility needs, and spread their costs through **phasing**. For the first phase—addressing repair and maintenance that had been deferred since an attic fire in 1948—the Town has contracted with Leet Ware, a Fairlee resident and owner of Leet Ware Construction, to serve as construction manager.



To reinforce and stabilize the roof, the Leet Ware team craned twelve 30+ foot long laminated wood beams into the attic, installed steel c-channels to stiffen the exterior walls, added an 800 pound steel beam over the stage to support the new hip beams and purlins, and threaded a steel cable and two metal rods from eave to eave through the first floor ceiling below. Input from Vermont Historic Preservation Trust helped prompt us to retain the important historical aspects of the space. Missing tin ceiling tiles are being replaced by authentic copies and fresh trim will match old trim. Removing the bulky concrete projection booth from the balcony revealed a hidden window, which now spreads sunlight from the east and brightens the entire auditorium.

## ON TIME, ON BUDGET

Over the course of two town meetings, voters approved \$125,000 in the capital budget for repair of the Town Hall, and the Town was awarded a \$20,000 grant from Vermont Historic Preservation Trust, for a total Phase I budget of \$145,000.

Even with add-ons to the project, including removing unforeseen asbestos and repairing roof leaks, thoughtful planning and effective workers have kept



Renovating the second floor of the Fairlee Town Hall will fuel new business development in the Town Center.

the project within budget. Leet Ware is confident that all work will be completed by the end of June.

## NEXT STEPS

The objective of Phase II is to strengthen the balcony and stage, add a handicapped-accessible restroom, construct a welcoming handicapped-accessible entry way and an elevator on the south side of the building, make a small concessions area, and bring the building up-to-date in fire, safety and ADA codes. The outcome—a renovated second floor—will gather the community for theatre performances, music, big screen movies, town meetings, workshops, art exhibits, bingo, potlucks, rummage sales, and Zumba, whatever residents suggest. It will also provide Fairlee with a convenient, in-town emergency shelter.

More so, we believe that when the second floor is used frequently, it will bring more traffic into the Town Center—which in turn **will benefit local businesses and fuel new business development in the Town Center.**

If the renovation of the Town Hall and its outcomes are important to Fairlee—both for what we want and can pay for today as well as for what we want and can pay for in the future—we can afford Phase II with additional capital monies, grants, borrowing, and private philanthropy. (While the official private fundraising campaign is just beginning, the Friends of the Fairlee Town Hall have already raised over \$40,000.)

## CELEBRATE

On Friday, July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6:00 to 8:00 PM, please visit the Second Floor to celebrate the completion of Phase I. Jay Barrett will be on hand to discuss and answer question. **Please join us!**

PHASE I: Apr '15-Jun '15  
Deferred roof maintenance from 1948 and repair

PHASE II: Jul '15-Dec '17  
Second floor safety, accessibility, and availability to the community

### Comments or questions?

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**JOIN US ON JULY 3<sup>RD</sup>, 2015**

FOR A FUN EVENING OF MUSIC, FOOD, KIDS GAMES AND MORE!

6:00 PM TO 9:30 PM

ON THE FAIRLEE TOWN COMMON

FAIRLEE, VT

Fairlee Selectboard  
Fairlee, VT 05045-0095