



Mt. Blue Regional School District

Holman Mission House Purchase Proposal

District Hearing
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Presentation Points

- Why the Holman House now?
- How was the Holman Mission House chosen as the best option for RSU 9?
- What is the cost to RSU 9 taxpayers?
- What does the District Office do and what are its space needs?
- Are district safety needs well served in the current space?
- Why not use other school building space within RSU 9?
- How will district-wide Special Ed program needs be helped?
- Will turning the house into office space change the historical nature of the building?
- Questions?



Why the Holman House now?

- The most important “why” for this purchase is that:
 - **Student programming needs continue to grow at Mt. Blue Campus and the current RSU 9 District Office space is needed for student programming.**
 - Foster Career & Technical Center has added important programs over the last decade and is now increasing its focus on outreach programming (apprenticeships & pre-apprenticeships):
 - Which are important to:
 - Student success after high school
 - Business & community sustainability.
 - More space is required to grow these offerings (*CTE space costs reimbursed by the State of ME*)
 - Mt. Blue High School has also added programming and has needs for Alternative Education and Special Education programming space for students with varied instructional needs.
- Increasing this student space need makes moving the District Office away from Mt. Blue Campus imperative.
 - Aligns with one of the RSU #9 Strategic Plan Goals developed using community input, "ensure adequate programming space for our students”.



How was the Holman Mission House chosen as the best option?

- Board members, community members, and administrative staff spent the past two years exploring a variety of plans to relocate the District Office to free-up more student space.
- When the Holman Mission House was put up for sale, we looked at it because it:
 - Provided adequate space
 - Is centrally located
 - Would improve confidentiality for district business
 - Would give easy access to parents and community members
 - Provided needed storage space, freeing up additional school building space for student needs
 - Was offered at a price that looked affordable, until building upgrades were added in, and our Federal ESSER Funds were not then available.



Holman Mission House best option? Cont. 1

- Over the last 18 months we continued to investigate properties for purchase or rent.
 - Purchasing any other properties of similar size would have cost twice as much:
 - Would have still required added upgrades and renovation costs to meet our needs.
 - Rental options involved additional long-term costs:
 - Started out at approximately \$80,000 - \$90,000 on average per year, including utilities
 - Would not be supplemented by Federal ESSER Funding past August 2024 **and would need to come from the local budget.**



Holman Mission House best option? Cont. 2

- This past summer we revisited the Holman House when we determined that a portion of RSU 9's Federal ESSER funds, made available in 2021, would not be spent as originally planned.
 - Why?
 - Some projects originally scheduled proved to be more costly than expected
 - Some projects couldn't be completed by the required timeframe (September 30, 2024).
 - We currently have approximately \$550,000 to be used for:
 - The purchase price of \$400,000
 - With the remaining \$150,000 to be used for electrical, heating, roof, technology upgrades and asbestos abatement identified in the building inspection.



Holman Mission House best option? Cont. 3

- **We have the necessary state level approvals to use these funds for the purchase and upgrades to increase space for MBC student use at no additional start-up costs to RSU 9 taxpayers.**
- If not used, we will be forced to return these funds back to the federal government as they cannot be designated for new projects or go to other RSU 9 district costs.
 - There is also potential for other RSU 9 ESSER funds which came to RSU 9 in 2021 to become available for further work on the Holman House thereby reducing possible long-range costs even further.



What is the cost to RSU 9 taxpayers?

- The use of ESSER funds to complete this project means RSU 9 will not be taking on long-term expense/debt to the district.
- The building purchase along with upgrades can be done without costing district taxpayers additional funds.
- **ESSER funds need to be spent prior to Sept. 2024 or they are required to be returned to the federal government.**
- This purchase through federal funding allows the district to:
 - Return space to student instructional use at MBC for no start-up costs
 - Locate the District Office in a central location for limited start-up costs
 - Move the District Office without impacting or using student space at any of our other schools.
- Long-term additional costs to the district will be for utilities, insurance, heating, plowing etc.
 - We estimate these to be approximately \$20,000 in year one with custodial and maintenance needs being taken care of by current district staff.

(this purchase does not remove revenue from the tax base, currently owned by a church)



What does the District Office do and what are its space needs?

- The need for the RSU 9 District Office to have a permanent location has been recognized for years.
 - It has moved multiple times throughout the last 25 years to different RSU 9 schools
 - These moves and changes have not been inexpensive for the district.
- RSU 9 serves:
 - Varied instructional needs for 2300 students as a learning organization/business within Franklin County.
 - As the second largest employer in Franklin County with over 500 employees and 70 vehicles.
- The RSU 9 District Office has 18 staff, which direct and manage RSU 9.
 - Their responsibilities include: Finance/ Business, Curriculum/ Professional Development, Human Resources, School Nutrition, Special Education Services, and State and Federal Reporting, District Operations, Communications, Strategic Planning, Policies & Procedures and Community Relations.



What does the District Office do/space needs? Cont. 1

- An organization of this size and complexity requires centralized district facilities to provide staff, parents, students, and the community the best support possible.
- The present location does not include adequate work/meeting space to meet office and confidentiality needs.
- Records and program leadership are spread around MBC and RSU 9 reducing efficiencies, sometimes delaying completion of district business.
- Presently, the RSU 9 District Office must use MBC student space for meetings involving four or more people, and that space is not always easily available.



What does the District Office do/space needs? Cont. 2

- The RSU 9 District Office's last move to MBC was meant to be for five years:
 - To allow for time to develop a plan for relocating to a permanent location
 - It is in its ninth year at MBC, as budget needs prevented a move from happening.
- All involved in the creation of the RSU 9 Strategic plan, including staff, families and community members named this move as a priority given the need for increased student programming space at Mt. Blue Campus.



Are district safety needs well served in the current space?

- At the current location, if Mt. Blue Campus (MBC) goes into lock down, the possibility of the RSU 9 District Office being cut off from law enforcement and other outside agencies, as well as the district's Leadership Team, is a very real possibility.
- Cell phone connectivity makes communication at times impossible, potentially leaving the district vulnerable to delays at critical times.
- The current location on the 2nd floor of MBC in the middle of a busy student hub makes it challenging to provide secure and confidential meeting locations for parents and the public.



Why not use other school building space within RSU 9?

- There is no adequate space to be found in RSU 9 that can't be taken out of student programming to provide space for all the functions of the RSU 9 District Office.
 - The one building that has space with remodeling potential has no parking or land available to add parking
 - Using this space could put us in the same place with unknown future student needs
 - Major remodeling would be needed and would be much more expensive than the cost of moving the RSU 9 District Office to the Holman Mission House.



How will district-wide Special Ed program needs be helped?

- The RSU 9 Special Education Dept. needs a central, secure space to improve coordination, communication, and program oversight.
- Present space is adjacent to busy MBC School corridors making it difficult to maintain confidentiality, while respecting the personal needs of our students and their families.
- No dedicated conference room space makes scheduling of IEP or parent/guardian meetings difficult:
 - Space must be “borrowed” from student space and options at MBC which is not easily available.



Will turning the Holman Mission House into office space change the historical nature of the building?

- We intend to maintain the beauty and integrity of the building so this historical community treasure will not be spoiled:
 - One of the attractions of the Holman House is that it meets our needs with minimal changes.
- RSU 9 strives to be an active and supportive presence within our communities:
 - Having the RSU 9 District Office at the Holman House will allow for additional outreach
 - It provides easy access for community members
 - Events, such as Summerfest, 4th of July celebrations such as when Strawberry Shortcake was served from its porch along with other outside, community events will be something we would look at participating in to help keep the Holman House traditions alive.



A final thought...

- For approximately 2/3rds of the space available at the Holman House we are building, thanks to the generous donation of the Bjorn Foundation, a 4,000 + square foot facility at Mt. Blue Middle School.
- The cost of this facility is approximately 2.8 million dollars.
- **For about 1/5th of the cost (from Federal ESSER funds) we will return 3,000 square feet to student use in RSU 9.**

Exterior View of Bjorn Addition





Next Steps?

- Preparations for moving in based on the lease agreement are being made.
- Contracts have been signed for work upgrades to be started.
- Nov 7th Election will determine if it is a lease or a purchase by RSU 9.
- Move in could begin during the upcoming Thanksgiving Break.



Questions?