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## John Dickey: Please support restoration work on Gilmanton's Old Town Hall

Mar 4, 2020

To The Daily Sun,

On Tuesday, March 10, Gilmanton voters will have an opportunity to approve funding to restore Gilmanton's beautiful Old Town Hall. I urge all voters to carefully consider this and vote yes on Article 31 on the town warrant.

The Old Town Hall was built in 1902 for the Odd Fellows organization. The town purchased the building from the Odd Fellows in 1926 for use as the town hall and it has remained in public ownership ever since. Amazingly, the building survived the terrible 1915 fire that destroyed much of the Iron Works village. It is listed on the New Hampshire State Register of Historic Places. It is irreplaceable and is still a major defining feature of the village. However, after town offices were moved to the Academy in 1989, much of the necessary maintenance on the building has been deferred and it is now in dire need of work.

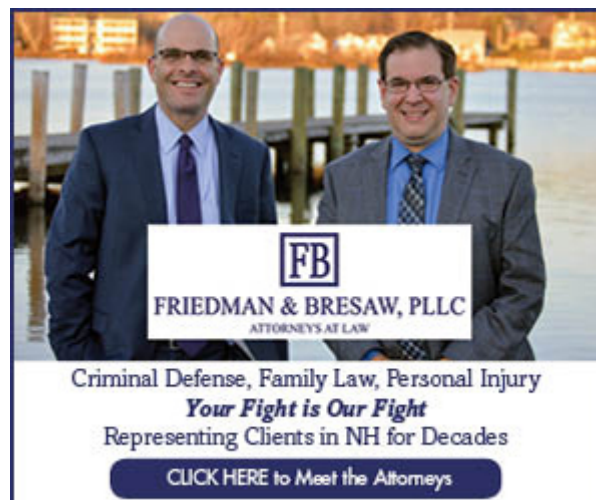
The auditorium in the building has excellent acoustics (far superior to that of the Academy) and is currently the only such space in the town that can be used for public and community meetings and events. For many years the Gilmanton Budget Committee held their meetings there because of the fine acoustics — it could be used that way again for public hearings and meetings. The Gilmanton Historical Society currently uses the lower level of the building for a museum that displays a large collection of items related to Gilmanton's history. The museum has many visitors.



A thorough condition assessment of the building has identified current needs and estimated the cost for repairs. The total cost of work has been placed at \$194,000. The warrant article asks for the town to appropriate half of that amount (\$97,000) with the balance coming from historic preservation grants. Please recognize the importance of the building and give it your support.

John Dickey, President.

Gilmanton Historical Society



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