



Mohawk Valley Collective

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August 8, 2019

To the Editor,

Recently community members in both Fort Plain and Canajoharie have asked for updates on the Mohawk Valley Collective's progress on Unity Hall and West Hill School respectively, so in addition to responding to them directly, our board of directors felt it would be good to share those answers with the broader community via the Courier, on our social media (FaceBook) and the MVC website.

In late 2018, after several big successes with our grant writing efforts and extensive work on the bell tower of the West Hill School, we laid out ambitious goals for additional building work for 2019 on our properties, Unity Hall in Fort Plain and West Hill School (WHS) in Canajoharie. After the New Year we set about accomplishing those goals. We spent much of January working inside West Hill School shoring up the supports for the massive roof. Meanwhile, our architects Randy Crawford and Dan Wilson completed construction plans, got them approved by the State and went out to bid in the Spring for two construction projects (with notices in the Courier, Recorder and elsewhere); extensive foundation and first floor repairs at Unity Hall and major re-roofing and critical masonry repairs at West Hill School.

We received several competitive bids and are on-track to commence work in the next month or so at Unity Hall. Meanwhile we need to go back out-to-bid for West Hill School as we only received a single bid for that project. We believe this was due to the timing (as many contractors were already committed to do projects at schools while they were closed for the Summer) and hence they did not submit bids. [Note: If you are a roofing or general contractor with interest in submitting a bid for the WHS project, please reach out and we can share the bid package with you.]

However, another important piece in the success of the work we are doing is YOU in particular and public support in general. While a small yet dedicated group of MVC Board Members, Staff and volunteers have helped secure over \$1million in grants to renovate Unity Hall and West Hill School, we need your help to make this work happen. Why? While many people hear about a grant being received and think of it as a check or money in the bank, but that **is not** the case. Today most grants are "reimbursable," meaning that our organization needs to go out, find the money, and complete the building work **first**...only then after we submit documentation, including receipts, canceled checks, etc. will we receive the grant funds to repay our expenses. In addition, most grants require a 25% match, meaning that we need to raise a quarter of the funds for the work we do locally, in the community.

For this reason, we are asking for **your** help at this critical time. The Mohawk Valley Collective has worked tirelessly for over 8-years to see Unity Hall and West Hill School saved, restored and reused. We hope that hard work is evident. Now this small group needs the help of dedicated individuals like you with key tasks such as establishing a capital campaign, identifying potential donors, and fundraising to get us over the finish line.

...community buildings, building community

We are also very interested in speaking to bankers and investors looking to earn a modest return on their money to discuss loaning the MVC funds to help complete this work. Any loans would be drawn up by our Attorney Chuck Tallent and secured by a formal commitment of our grant funds once the work is complete.

In either case please reach out to us ASAP as time is of the essence with winter fast approaching. Thanks in advance for your support! We look forward to working with you! Phone us at 518-993-5506 or email info@mohawkvalleycollective.com to arrange a sit down discussion.

Sincerely,

Gerritt Platel
President of the Board
Mohawk Valley Collective, Inc.