

Preparing Belmont Mill for town office location could cost more than \$1m

The historic Belmont Mill, which is being considered as a possible location for the town offices, would cost more than a million dollars if the town decides to repair it and prepare it for that use.

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BELMONT — The historic Belmont Mill, which is being considered as a possible location for the town offices, would cost more than \$1 million if the town decides to repair it and prepare it for that use.

The mill currently houses community service partners, including a doctor's office, a senior center, a day care center, and a Lakes Region Community College program. But as town officials search for a new space for town offices, they are considering the possibility of using the mill.

“We are nowhere near making that decision, though,” Town Administrator Jeanne Beaudin said Tuesday. “The mill is just one possibility.”

Beaudin informed selectmen last week that engineers have estimated it will take \$1.4 million to repair the mill building. Many repairs are needed on the fourth floor, she said, and the building needs heating, air conditioning and other repairs.

Converting the old building into a town office building will require another \$2.7 million, Beaudin said.

The mill was renovated in the 1990s using a government grant that doesn't expire for another five years, Beaudin said. To make other use of the building before then “would require some work with the government, even if it could be done,” she said.

The selectmen are considering their options before bringing a plan to voters to alleviate the space problem at the present town office space.

“We have no space,” Beaudin said.

According to the town's heritage commission, the mill, formerly the center of the busy town, was mostly abandoned by the 1970s, and in 1992, it was damaged by a fire. In 1995, the mill was on the verge of demolition when citizens fought to explore re-use options.

After a charrette conducted by Plan New Hampshire, federal funding restored the mill's roof to its 1830s design, and helped rehabilitate its façade and interiors. In 1998, when renovations were complete, the commission began calling the mill a “Miracle on Main Street.”

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