



"Where Our Past Meets Our Future"

Bath High School Preservation

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For immediate release

Proposed State Budget Includes Funds for Restoration of Historic Bath High School Auditorium

In the 2021-2023 budget proposed on Wednesday (March 24, 2021), Gov. Roy Cooper included \$280,000 in funds to continue the preservation and renovation of the historic Bath High School building.

Similar funding was included, both in the budget Cooper proposed two years ago as well as the budget bill the General Assembly passed in 2019. Due to un-related differences between the governor and legislature, the budget bill was never enacted into law and funds for the preservation efforts were not provided.

"There was clear agreement two years ago that funding the preservation of the structure and restoration of the associated community services was widely regarded as worthwhile. We're most appreciative that the governor has, again, included this worthy effort in his budget." said Mike Godley, president of the Bath High School Preservation.

"We will once again work with members of the legislature, who by their previous action have shown support for our efforts, to be sure the funding is included in the final enacted state budget." he said.

The centennial of the former high school structure will be celebrated this year. Its preservation reflects the cooperative efforts of Bath High School Preservation, the Historic Bath Foundation and local officials. Today the structure houses the welcome center and exhibit space for the Historic Bath State Historic Site staffed by N.C. Department of Cultural and Natural Resources, a branch of the Beaufort-Hyde-Martin Regional Library, and the Pirate Hall gallery for small public meetings and events. The Town of Bath offices are located in an adjacent building.

This month the latest major construction effort -- installation of an elevator -- was completed. The new elevator provides access to other parts of the building, enabling further restoration efforts -- including planned renovation of the auditorium.

The governor's budget proposed would provide \$280,000 of state funds that must be matched by an equal amount of non-state funds raised by Bath High School Preservation. The total of those funds corresponds to the amount planned to renovate the auditorium of the former school into a multipurpose public assembly, theater and meeting space.

"Prior to the potential for funding raised by the 2019 legislation, Bath High School Preservation would have been challenged to raise the necessary matching funds. Motivated by that earlier potential, BHSP has worked with potential funders that we are confident will respond positively to our applications and appeals to provide the match and balance of funds needed for the auditorium project. It is this support from our partners, cooperators and donors enable our efforts to provide Bath and Beaufort County with a facility that reflects our historic heritage and continues in use as an important community resource." Godley said.

Details can be found in Gov. Roy Cooper's budget, item 19 on page 207. It is available online at:
https://files.nc.gov/ncosbm/documents/files/BudgetBook_web_2021-2023.pdf

For further information on Bath High School Preservation, please visit www.bhspreservation.org or contact BHSP President Mike Godley at president@bhspreservation.org.

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