

At the request of the Parish Board, a group of individuals was brought together in 2024 to form FRS's Capital Campaign Planning Team.

Members of the team are: Reverend Rebecca Bryan; Tina Benik; Joanna Fernandez; Barbara Garnis; Doug Latham; Lark Madden, Lisa Mead and Jim Supple.

The group has met regularly over the past several months to consider the results of the Congregational and Community Insight sessions and to form a plan for a capital campaign to begin in 2025.

The Insight Sessions clearly indicated that there was a high level of interest and support for renovation and upgrading the Parish Hall, as well as for other FRS initiatives including worship services, communication, social justice and environmental conservation. Of these areas, interest in the Parish Hall was the most frequently mentioned among participants.

This information led to the planning team beginning a series of conversations with three architectural services firms. One firm is well known to FRS as it was the primary designer of the Lower Meeting House. Two other firms, one in Portsmouth, NH, and one in Boston were chosen because, in addition to being highly qualified and experienced in this type of potential project, these firms are women owned.

The team hosted each of the three firms at the Parish Hall and requested that they prepare a preliminary proposal for architectural services including proposed fees, timeline, cost per square foot and multiple options for the scale of the proposed work.

In each meeting there was a comprehensive discussion about the aspirations of the FRS with respect to the future uses of the building and the programmatic and community focused nature of expected activities in the renovated space.

After reviewing the proposals, the team decided to move forward with two of the three firms. We prepared a series of follow-up questions for each firm and are evaluating their responses.

We plan to meet again with the two firms and afterwards to decide as to which firm we will engage for the first phase of the process.

The first phase of the process will include analysis of the existing building and its systems, to produce a preliminary set of drawings and cost estimates for alternative renovation schemes. And to produce aspirational drawings/models showing the alternative approaches.

We plan on engaging the congregation in the evaluation of these alternative schemes to ascertain which has the most support. The team will also evaluate FRS capacity for funding the project.