



Memorandum

October 19, 2023

To: Board of Trustees
From: Michael Stoddard, Executive Director
Greg Leclair, Director of Finance & Administration
Re: Request for Authorization to Seek Office Space

Summary

The Staff is requesting authorization from the Board of Trustees to seek office space in the Greater Westbrook/Portland/Falmouth area. The Trust seeks to secure up to 7,000 square feet of space that would replace existing office space in Westbrook currently straining to meet the organization's needs.

Background

The Trust has grown in the nine years since originally renting space in Westbrook. The Trust moved from a small satellite office space in Westbrook (1,000 sf) to a larger (3,500 sf) space in 2019 as the need for regular office and meeting space in southern Maine became more important. Our current Westbrook office is a base of operations for certain staff. But as the Staff has grown and more staffers work from the Westbrook office daily, it is more difficult to use the office to meet with vendors, customers, sub-contractors, or stakeholders.

While we may elect to remain in the current space, or add additional office space to the current location, there are certain shortcomings of the location, including regular overcrowding, too little meeting space, and a degree of inconvenience for visitors. We are interested in exploring other options that would provide space better suited to the Trust's growing needs.

The current Westbrook location also serves as a small-scale disaster recovery site for the Trust. The Trust's data is backed up to the Westbrook location, and in the event of a catastrophic event at the Augusta office, it would serve as a base of operations for senior management to convene and direct operations. The Staff anticipates that any new office space would play the same role.

Space Considerations and Potential Costs

1. The Staff anticipates that the new office space would be the primary base of operations for certain staff. Given the nature of the Trust's work "in the field", the office would ideally also have some flexible space to accommodate staffers who might normally work in Augusta but are conducting meetings or site visits more proximate to the southern office. The Staff seeks to locate office space that might include offices or cubicles that would be permanently assigned to some staffers, with additional flexible office space that could be used by other staffers as needed.
2. When not out in the field, Staff is often on phone- or video-calls with contractors or delivery teams. With that in mind, an emphasis would be placed on seeking office space with small

offices or phone call rooms so that calls could take place without interrupting shared office spaces.

3. Many of our teams are split between the Augusta and Westbrook offices and we have increasingly found the need for multiple, smaller conference room spaces for working sessions and smaller meetings. The Trust would seek a space that might include one or more collaborative workspaces or a formal conference or meeting room that might be divided as needed.
4. As described above, the office would continue to play a role as the Trust's disaster recovery and back-up hub.
5. Because the Trust has outgrown two office spaces in short succession, the hope would be to find an office space that could accommodate five- to ten-years of projected growth and enter into a longer-term lease.
6. The Trust's Westbrook location is within 20-miles of the majority of Staff. Staff would seek space in the same general area, and would extend the search to Portland and Falmouth.
7. Trust staff have begun researching options and reviewing commercial office space listings. At the moment, there are more commercial leases available in Portland than in Westbrook or Falmouth. Costs for office spaces range from \$15 to \$25 a square foot.

Proposed Motion

Move to authorize the Staff to search for an office space in Westbrook, Portland, or Falmouth for a workable space, not to exceed 7,000 sf and/or \$25 a square foot, and to enter into negotiations for rental property within this range.