

# Clinton School Repurposing Advisory Committee Final Report March 2026



## **Establishment and Purpose**

The Clinton Elementary School has served the Clinton community for eight decades and is set to retire from school service in June of 2026 with the transition to the new consolidated school in Benton. With the consolidation, the town of Clinton has an opportunity to acquire the property from MSAD #49 for free. In anticipation of this opportunity the Selectboard for the town of Clinton authorized the creation of an advisory committee known as the “School Repurposing Advisory Committee” in February of 2025. This Advisory Committee is a body of Clinton charged with exploring all options to repurpose the former Clinton Elementary School property and make a final recommendation to the Selectboard as to the future of the facility.

## **Board Members**

Chairperson - Anthony Barton

Vice Chairperson - Ken Paul

Board Members - Jessica Begin, Kim Wright, Joy Jandreau, April Paul, Terry Knowles, Justin Cote, Jeff Pierce, David Record

**Contact:** Anthony Barton at: [abarton@clinton-ME.gov](mailto:abarton@clinton-ME.gov) with any questions or concerns. Or comment on the Facebook live feed of the 3/24 Selectmen’s meeting where this report will be presented and a member of the Committee will respond after the meeting.

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## Considerations

1. The Committee was to determine whether the town should accept the building from the school district.
  - a. Determine current shape and usability of the building.
  - b. If the town does not accept the school, the school district will sell the property.
  - c. The town of Clinton will have no say or influence in what happens to the facility in the future.
  - d. If the town does not accept the school, there is potential for the town to lose the right of way access to the MARA athletic complex.
2. The Committee was to determine the future use of the building if accepted by the town.
  - a. Sell the property for profit.
  - b. Lease the property for profit.
  - c. Utilize the facility for town purposes.
3. The Committee was to approach action and decision making in line with the town of Clinton's Comprehensive Plan.
  - a. Preserve: Clinton's agrarian economy needs to be sustained.
  - b. Strengthen: build on the respect and care for all in the community. Commercial expansions should not be at the expense of the rural character of the town. Development of recreational opportunities.
  - c. Initiate: the village district needs to be redefined to include small shops, farmers markets, commercial/residential housing and the future use of the Clinton Elementary building.

## Action

The Committee has been meeting monthly for the last year and working diligently to explore all possible options for the facility. The Committee has met with many interested parties from those wishing to purchase the facility, to lease the facility, to rent a portion of the facility. The Committee has also had countless conversations with members of the public to gather as much feedback, thoughts and ideas on how the town can best leverage the facility.

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## Options Explored

The Committee has met, and had conversations, with many parties interested in the future of the facility. The interest was wide ranging; from outright purchase of the entire facility to those wishing to lease all/part of the facility, to those expressing needs within the community that could be provided by/at the facility. Ultimately, the vast majority of those the Committee engaged with were interested in utilizing the building for activities and resources the community lacks or current activities that would suffer if the school building were unavailable.

1. Selling. After accepting the property from the school district, the town of Clinton can sell the property while preserving right of way access to the MARA complex.
  - a. The property is +-5 acres, and the building remains useful in its current state. Major renovations to the building pose a challenge due to age and cost.
2. The community brought forth a host of suggested uses for the facility including (condensed): Senior Center, Café, event space, day care, charter school, before & after school care, farmers market, gym, fitness classes, bingo, office space, storage space, storm shelter, food events, business space, and sports space for the community.
  - a. The facility is large enough to accommodate many, diversified uses in its current form/state and presents the opportunity for the town to generate revenue through memberships, leases, and rentals.
  - b. The diversified uses provide recreational and social opportunities the community lacks or currently relies on the building to make possible.
3. Municipal usage potential and possibilities.

## Challenges

1. Selling the property poses no challenge beyond the administration of the sale but allows the town to realize immediate financial gains.
2. Retaining and maintaining the building poses the challenge of cost to the taxpayer.
3. Not retaining the building severely impacts both the current and future ability to provide the community with much needed services, recreation and social opportunities.

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## Past, Current, Ongoing Community Utilization

The school has been heavily used by kids' sports teams (PAL) for decades. Practices and games have been held in the gym nearly year-round to such a degree that it's difficult to find an opening in the schedule. Loss of the gym would mean Clinton PAL teams would have to find other facilities for practices and games.

The school is also the only suitable indoor space for Parks & Recreation in the town of Clinton. Over the past four years, Clinton Parks & Recreation has utilized the gym and classrooms for countless activities; sports, recreational, educational and social alike. Parks & Recreation used Clinton Elementary for: craft fairs, Lego nights, cribbage tournaments, dances, movie nights, basketball, boxing, crafts nights, Easter egg hunts, concerts, plant swaps, STEM events and yoga.

In December 2025 the school district had moved most of the Clinton students to the new school and were gracious enough to allow Parks & Recreation to utilize the now unused space for recreational opportunities. In the short three months Parks & Recreation has been managing the schedule they've created the following schedule of events hosted at Clinton Elementary:

- Cribbage tournaments weekly
- Boxing twice weekly
- Adult Pick-Up up basketball twice weekly
- Pickleball weekly
- Open Kids Gym weekly
- Adult craft night twice weekly
- Girl Scouts weekly
- Wildcats' baseball practice weekly
- Travel soccer practice weekly
- Field Hockey weekly
- AAU basketball weekly
- Lego and Family Game Night's monthly
- Kid's Craft Night monthly
- Teen dance February 21<sup>st</sup>
- The Frogtown Mountain Puppeteers on March 14<sup>th</sup>
- Plant Swap on March 14<sup>th</sup>
- Craft fair on March 21<sup>st</sup>

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- Dance Showcase March 28<sup>th</sup>
- Breakfast with the Easter Bunny and egg dyeing on April 4<sup>th</sup>
- Movie night in May
- Four birthday parties
- Kid's Kraft Expo in November

All these events and activities combined bring hundreds of participants to the school each week from not only Clinton, but the surrounding community as well. Currently only a small portion of the upper wing and the gym are being utilized; the opportunity to expand is great as is the ability to generate revenue from existing and future activities.

## **Committee Recommendations**

1. The Committee recommends the town of Clinton accept the Clinton Elementary School from MSAD#49 so that the town may determine the future of the property and realize any financial gain from the property.
2. The Committee recommends the town of Clinton maintain ownership of the building/property and it be utilized as the Clinton Community Enrichment Center offering recreational, social, business and educational opportunities for the community as well as serve as the towns storm/warming shelter in the event of emergencies.
  - a. The Committee also recommends the town of Clinton appropriate \$155,300 to fund the first year of operations, which will be offset by the revenues generated. It is the hope that this can become a self-sustaining but will need to be evaluated after some time in operation.
3. Recommended June 2026 ballot questions:
  - a. Do you want the town to accept ownership the Clinton Elementary School property from the school district at no cost to the town?
  - b. Do you want to appropriate \$155,300 to fund the first year of operations of the Clinton Community Enrichment Center to be created at the Clinton Elementary School?

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## Financials

The Committee utilized MSAD49's actual expenditures for the '24-'25 year to create a potential expense budget. Assuming ownership of the school and retaining it for use as a community enrichment center would cost the town of Clinton approximately \$155,300 annually to maintain an unstaffed building (not including capital expenditures).

Estimated Annual Expenditures	Expenditure	Annual Expense
	Water	\$ 2,000.00
	Sewerage	\$ 5,700.00
	Property Insurance	\$ 2,500.00
	Phone/Internet Service	\$ 2,600.00
	Electricity	\$ 35,000.00
	Oil	\$ 55,000.00
	Grounds & Fields (Mowing)	\$ 2,000.00
	Snow Removal & Sand	\$ 15,000.00
	Boiler Parts/Maintenance	
	Cleaning/Custodial	\$ 12,000.00
	Pest Management	
	Electrical	
	Security Systems	\$ 3,500.00
	Building Repairs/Maintenance	\$ 20,000.00
	<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 155,300.00</b>
	<b>Unstaffed Profitability</b>	<b>43%</b>
	<b>Staff Expense (1-Benefit Loaded)</b>	
	<b>Total Staffed Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 155,300.00</b>
	<b>Total Annual Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 66,150.00</b>
<b>Unstaffed Expense Margin</b>	<b>\$ (89,150.00)</b>	
<b>Unstaffed Profitability</b>	<b>43%</b>	

The Committee also created an estimate of the potential annual revenue based on current usage and community feedback. Conservatively the Committee believes the school can generate \$66,150 in its first full year of operation. These revenues applied to the expenses leaved a \$89,150 gap that would need to be covered by a combination of town funds, donations and grants.

Annual Revenue	Revenue Source	Annual Revenue	Details & Location
	Mike Leary	\$ 14,400.00	Boxing gym. Two classrooms end of upper wing
	Sr. Center	\$ 9,000.00	\$10/month membership, estimated 75 regular users. One classroom in upper wing
	Gymnasium Rental	\$ 3,750.00	\$25 per hour, estimated annual rental hours: 150
	Community/Meeting Room Rental	\$ 3,750.00	\$25 per hour, estimated annual rental hours: 150
	Pickleball Court Rental	\$ 7,500.00	\$25 per hour, estimated annual rental hours: 300
	Kitchen Rental	\$ 3,000.00	\$300/day, estimated annual rental days: 10
	PAL Gym Rental	\$ 6,000.00	Estimated based on current usage
	Pop up Business space	\$ 15,000.00	\$100/day, estimated annual rental days: 150
	Coworking Space	\$ 3,750.00	\$25/day, estimated annual rental days: 150
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There are many grant (and funding) opportunities to support a community enrichment center project in rural Maine — including construction, renovation, planning, equipment, or operational support. Most of these programs are available to nonprofit organizations, tribal entities, municipalities, or community-based groups serving rural areas (often defined as areas with populations under 20,000).

The town of Clinton has two active 501c3 organizations focused on serving the greater Clinton community with new/improved recreational facilities and opportunities. These two organizations have raised and provided over \$120,000 in funding for parks and recreation activities, upgrades to current facilities and new facilities in just the last four years (this funding is in addition to the town Parks and Recreation budget of \$220,000 over the same time period). These organizations have pledged their support in the way of grant writing, fund raising, donations and volunteerism to ensure this endeavor is a success.

## **Federal Grants**

1. USDA Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program
2. USDA Rural Business Development Grants (RBDG)

## **Maine-Specific & Regional Grants**

1. Maine Community Foundation – Community Building Grant Program
2. Rural Partnerships Grants – Elmina B. Sewall Foundation
3. The State of Maine Office of Business Development has several funding sources to support community enrichment center projects if they tie into recreation, tourism, or public access.
4. Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) – Funding for public outdoor recreation and associated facilities.

## **Local Community Foundations**

1. United Way of Kennebec Valley – Community Investment Grants
2. United Way DEI Micro-Grants (Kennebec County)
3. Many counties or regions in Maine have local philanthropic foundations (e.g., county community foundations) that award smaller grants to projects improving quality of life, including facility upgrades or programming. Example: Community Building grants from MaineCF (regional committees).

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## Potential Community Center Expenses and Revenues

Original by Ken Paul

Amended by Daniel Swain, Town Manager

2/19/2026

Does not include capital money for upgrades which could come from grants and other sources outside of the town

