

\$200K boosts arts center



RYAN HUTTON/Staff photo

Artist Debbie Shirley works on a painting in one of the upstairs classrooms of the Cogswell School building in Bradford, which is being transformed into a community arts center.

Group expects to transform old Haverhill school in 2020

By MIKE LABELLA
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Haverhill — The effort to transform the Cogswell School building into a community arts center has gotten a boost in the form of a \$200,000 grant from the state.

This means the Creative Haverhill organization has reached a significant milestone in the capital campaign “Reinvent Cogswell.”

With the addition of the \$200,000 grant, Creative Haverhill has so far raised more than 80% of its \$2.5 million goal, and the purchase of the building will happen this month, organizers of the arts center said. Creative Haverhill hopes to complete the campaign by the end of the year and begin renovations to the building at the start of 2020.

“Haverhill should be extremely proud that this is the

first Haverhill-based organization to be selected in the history of the fund,” said Creative Haverhill board chair Danielle Smida.

Because the \$200,000 from the Massachusetts Cultural Council for the arts center is a matching grant, Creative Haverhill must raise an additional \$200,000 in order to get that state money, Smida said.

The city is selling the old school building to Creative

Haverhill for \$175,000, said Erin Padilla, project manager for the Reinvent Cogswell campaign. The campaign is being run by Creative Haverhill, a nonprofit arts group.

Padilla said the goal is to preserve the school, which was built in 1891, and retain as much of its historic character as possible. The plans are to update the building’s HVAC, fire suppression, plumbing

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