

**RFP # 58-24**  
**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**City of Portsmouth, New Hampshire**

**SOUTH MEETING HOUSE REUSE**  
**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND**

The City of Portsmouth, New Hampshire (City) is pleased to issue this Request for Proposals (RFP) for the repair, lease and occupancy of the National Register of Historic Places-listed South Meeting House in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. The City is the owner of the South Meeting House, located at 280 Marcy Street. The South Meeting House is currently vacant, and the City seeks a tenant with both creative vision and financial capacity to repair, renovate and incorporate public functionality into the space.

The City seeks proposals from qualified entities, alone or in partnership with other firms, with demonstrable background in the renovation and fit-up of historic structures and a long-term occupancy compatible with the site and neighborhood. The City is prepared to work with firms seeking to partner with or obtain funding assistance from non-profit organizations, local, state or federal agencies.

Interested proposers are encouraged to attend a tour of the property. Tours will be on Wednesday June 26<sup>th</sup> from 9-11 am and July 1<sup>st</sup> from 1-3 pm.

Sealed proposals plainly marked “RFP #58-24, “South Meeting House Reuse” on the outside of the mailing envelope, addressed to the Finance/Purchasing Department, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, City Hall, 1 Junkins Avenue, Portsmouth, NH 03801 will be accepted until 12:00 pm on Wednesday, July 17, 2024.

Specifications for this project may be obtained from the City’s web site:

[www.cityofportsmouth.com/finance/purchasing-bids-and-proposals](http://www.cityofportsmouth.com/finance/purchasing-bids-and-proposals) under the project heading. Questions regarding this project shall be directed to [purchasing@cityofportsmouth.com](mailto:purchasing@cityofportsmouth.com). The deadline for questions to be submitted is July 9, 2024, at 12:00 p.m. Addenda to this RFP, including any written answers to questions, will be posted on the City of Portsmouth webpage under the project heading no later than July 12, 2024, at 1:00 p.m. Addenda will not be provided directly to proposers.

The City of Portsmouth reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to waive technical or legal deficiencies, and to accept and negotiate the terms of any proposal that may be in the best interest of the City.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY**

The South Meeting House, located at 280 Marcy Street, was first constructed in 1731 for the South Parish Church, which occupied it until 1826. The building enjoyed various uses until 1863, when it was bought by the City and raised to make a new structure. Beginning with its completion in 1866, South Meeting House was used as a ward hall, a school, polling place,

multi-purpose assembly hall, home to the first African American church in Portsmouth, and annual celebration of the Emancipation Proclamation.

In more recent times, the South Meeting House continued its tradition as a prime location for civic and community engagement. The City leased the building to the Disabled American Veterans (1960-1962) and Strawberry Banke (1963-1979). The 1980s ushered in an era of renewed interest in preserving the South Meeting House. The City expended funds to repair and restore the building, and community organizations assisted with applying to get the South Meeting House placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983. From 1980 through 2008, the Children’s Museum occupied the South Meeting House. After the Children’s Museum relocated to larger space in the mid-aughts, Portsmouth Public Media (PPMtv) moved into the building in 2011 and was its most recent occupant.

With the recent relocation of PPMtv, the City seeks a new leasee for the South Meeting House excited by the opportunity to shepherd this special part of Portsmouth History into the future.

## **SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

Respondents should carefully follow the format and instructions outlined below. Questions must be submitted in writing to [purchasing@cityofportsmouth.com](mailto:purchasing@cityofportsmouth.com) **no later than 12:00 pm on July 9, 2024. Respondents should note that the City anticipates answering questions on a rolling basis, therefore Respondents are encouraged to submit questions prior to the deadline and to check the City’s website for updates prior to submitting questions.**

Addenda to this proposal, if any, including written answers to questions, will be posted on the City of Portsmouth website under the project heading.

### **A. Cover Page**

1. Title of Response
2. Respondent Organization Name
  - i. Corporate Status
  - ii. Business Address
  - iii. Business Phone
  - iv. Website
  - v. Contact Name and Information (email and telephone number) for this Response

### **B. Letter of Interest**

The City seeks a Letter of Interest, not to exceed ten (10) pages, outlining Respondent’s qualifications and experience occupying, maintaining and caretaking for historic structures, or for a statement detailing the Respondent’s plan for making capital improvements to this historic structure in exchange for a long-term lease. Respondents should also detail how they plan to occupy the South Meeting House in the long term, incorporating a use or uses which are in the public benefit.

**C. Team and Organization**

State the number of employees of your organization, key members of your team, management company, architect, planners, engineers, contractors, and financial partners.

**D. Submission Deadline**

**Sealed envelopes, plainly marked “REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS #58-24 For South Meeting House Reuse” on the outside of the mailing envelope**, addressed to the Finance/Purchasing Department, City Hall, 1 Junkins Avenue, Portsmouth, NH 03801 will be accepted **no later than 12 pm on July 17, 2024** . Late submissions will not be accepted.

1. In total, three (3) copies of the submission, including attachments, are required. Two (2) of the copies shall be hard copy. One (1) copy should be unbound and single-sided to facilitate document reproduction if necessary.
2. Pages shall be no larger than letter-size (8 1/2 x 11 inches) or, if folded to that dimension, twice letter size (11 by 17 inches). It is acceptable for the two (2) hard copies to be double-sided.

**E.** The City reserves the right to request financial references and current bonding limits.

**F. Please be advised that once submitted, the entire submission and all the information contained within it, becomes a government record and will immediately be posted on the City of Portsmouth website. Explicitly excepted from this provision are any financial records submitted at the request of the City.**

**DESCRIPTION OF THE SELECTION PROCESS**

Proposals will be evaluated by a selection committee. The selection committee may request additional information and may conduct interviews with prospective proposers.

The selection committee anticipates identifying the 3 to 5 most-qualified Respondents and conducting interviews, however all rights are reserved as set forth below. The selection committee may conduct interviews of Respondents at any phase in the procurement process. The selection committee may make recommendations only, with any final decision on whether to proceed with a particular Respondent to be made by the City Council.

**SELECTION CRITERIA**

Proposals will be reviewed and evaluated by the selection committee based on the following criteria:

1. Experience with projects of similar size, complexity and historical significance;

2. Proposed long term tenancy and use of the building and its fit within in the character of neighborhood and
3. Demonstrated ability to meet the long-term, ongoing maintenance needs of the building;

### **RESERVATION OF RIGHTS**

The City reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to waive technical or legal deficiencies, to proceed or not to proceed with any subsequent process, or to negotiate without further process any contract as may be in the best interest of the City.

The City further reserves the right to undertake to investigate as it deems necessary to evaluate the qualifications of the Respondent and to evaluate its proposal. Firms may be asked to submit releases as part of the investigation and review of qualifications. Failure to provide a release if requested will result in disqualification. All concepts, designs, information and cost-savings ideas that may be generated during the selection process shall become the property of the City of Portsmouth.

### **CITY ROLE**

The City does not anticipate funding capital improvements or repairs to the structure, but would review plans and coordinate its utility and other services.

**PRESS RELEASE**  
**City of Portsmouth, New Hampshire**  
**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS #58-24**  
**South Meeting House Reuse**

**INVITATION**

The City of Portsmouth, New Hampshire (“the City”) seeks proposals from firms interested in occupying the municipal property known as the South Meeting House, located at 280 Marcy Street.

The reuse of the South Meeting House will be subject to negotiation, but the City seeks a tenant or tenants to occupy the South Meeting House, to make capital and other improvements to the structure, and to otherwise put the South Meeting House to a use within the public interest. Respondents are encouraged to submit proposals that demonstrate their experience with innovative approaches reusing historic structures to public benefit, as well as caretaking for historic structures on an ongoing basis.

Interested proposers are encouraged to attend a tour of the property. Tours will be on Wednesday June 26<sup>th</sup> from 9-11 am and July 1<sup>st</sup> from 1-3 pm.

Submission requirements may be obtained from the City’s website at [www.cityofportsmouth.com](http://www.cityofportsmouth.com). Addenda to this proposal, if any, including written answers to questions, will be posted on the City of Portsmouth website under the project heading. Questions may be addressed to the Purchasing Coordinator at [purchasing@cityofportsmouth.com](mailto:purchasing@cityofportsmouth.com).

**Sealed Proposals, plainly marked “REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS #58-24 South Meeting House Reuse” on the outside of the mailing envelope**, addressed to the Finance/Purchasing Department, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, City Hall, 1 Junkins Avenue, Portsmouth, NH 03801 will be accepted **no later than 12:00 pm on July 17, 2024**. Late submissions will not be accepted.

The City of Portsmouth reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to waive technical or legal deficiencies, to request financial references and current bonding limits at a future time, to proceed or not to proceed with any subsequent proposal process, or to negotiate without further process any contract as may be in the best interest of the City.