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**AMPERAGE**

MARKETING & FUNDRAISING

MOVE THE NEEDLE

Grinnell Veterans  
Memorial Commission  
**IMPLEMENTATION STUDY**

August 2018

Submitted by  
Justin Tolan, CFRE, Senior Fundraising Adviser



August 2018

Grinnell Veterans Memorial Commission  
City of Grinnell  
520 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Grinnell, Iowa 50112

Dear Commission Members:

On behalf of AMPERAGE, thank you for the opportunity to conduct the Grinnell Veterans Memorial Commission implementation study. Interviewees from Grinnell and other communities were pleased to offer their candid opinions.

Objectives of this study were to ascertain:

- Awareness of the Veterans Memorial Building
- Image of the Grinnell Veterans Memorial Commission
- Perceived strengths and weaknesses of the building renovation
- Perceived strengths and weaknesses of the arts residency
- Reaction to the proposed plan
- Reaction to the financial goal
- Perceived likelihood of achieving the goal
- Reaction to specific parts of the proposed project
- Levels of giving for the project
- Availability of large gifts
- Availability of potential leadership for the campaign
- Overall readiness of the organization

Veterans Commission Members  
Page Two

Data for the study was gathered through individual interviews with area leaders whose judgment is highly respected. Findings from the interviews, compilation and analysis, and our recommendations are presented on the pages that follow.

It was a pleasure to speak with people in the Grinnell area and throughout the state. Their candid opinions enabled us to conduct a thorough study of your project.

We appreciate the work of the implementation study committee. In addition, volunteer Catherine Fields-Nelson did a wonderful job of coordinating study details. We thank her for her assistance.

Each of you plays a very important role in this process. Each of you has already made a commitment to this project and affirmed your belief in the mission of the Grinnell Veterans Memorial Commission. You have influenced the quality of life in your area. The following quote by Adlai Stevenson is worth keeping in mind:

*“The privilege and penalty of your education and the position you hold in your community is that over the coming decades, as in past decades, you will be pacesetters for the political and social thought in your community. You may not accept this responsibility, but it makes no difference. It is inescapable; for if you decide to forward no new ideas, to dream no dreams, you will still be pacesetters, you will simply decide there is no pace.”*

Thank you again for the opportunity to assist you with the Grinnell Veterans Memorial Commission implementation study.

Sincerely,

Justin Tolan, CFRE  
Senior Fundraising Adviser

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# **METHODOLOGY**

# Methodology

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An implementation study is a process to discover an organization's potential to raise funds for a project through a significant fundraising campaign. The process measures the awareness level of your organization and the willingness of the area to support the proposed \$2 million to \$3 million campaign. The study also provides an accurate assessment of factors that might affect success.

To assess the factors that would affect the fundraising campaign for the Grinnell Veterans Memorial Commission, AMPERAGE:

1. Conducted 30 in-depth interviews with 34 influential people.
2. Emailed to all and received surveys from 15 members of the Grinnell Veterans Memorial Commission, Grinnell Area Arts Council and implementation study committee.
3. Examined the organization's campaign readiness and conducted a SPOT (Strengths, Problems, Opportunities, Threats) analysis.

The substance of the interviews and surveys tested the:

1. Image of Grinnell Veterans Memorial Commission.
2. Perceived strengths and weaknesses of the building renovation.
3. Perceived strengths and weaknesses of the national arts residency.
4. Proposed \$2 million to \$3 million fundraising goal.
5. Perceived likelihood of achieving the goal.
6. Reaction to specific parts of the proposed project.
7. Levels of giving.
8. Availability of large gifts.

9. Availability of potential campaign leadership.

10. Organizational readiness.

Prior to the interviews, each participant received a preliminary case statement—a brief description of the project and its goals.

Justin Tolan, CFRE, senior fundraising adviser, Michele Brock, CFRE, MBA, director of fundraising, and Tyler Timko, MBA, regional fundraising adviser, all of the consultancy of AMPERAGE, conducted the interviews. The interviews were informal, and a promise of confidentiality allowed for an honest exchange of information.

Each participant was asked to comment on the image of the veterans commission's current leadership, the level of giving needed to reach the campaign goal, possible personal and/or corporate giving level and his or her interest in campaign leadership or involvement. To maintain confidentiality, actual interviews are anonymous. Representative responses and names of persons interviewed are included in this report.

The opinions of those interviewed and surveyed—community leaders, commission members, arts council members and implementation study committee members—were to provide a reasonable measure of the probability of success of the proposed project and serve as the basis for our evaluation.



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# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: FINDINGS**

# **Executive Summary: Findings**

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To present the findings in an orderly manner, the questions have been grouped into the following categories:

- Image
- Current leadership
- The proposed project
- Giving capacity
- Potential leadership

Each section will contain a brief generalization of the findings, selected comments of those interviewed and observations related to the findings.

## **Section 1. Image**

The first set of interview questions dealt with the awareness of the Veterans Memorial Building in Grinnell's Central Park, and the image of the Grinnell Veterans Memorial Commission.

### **1. How familiar are you with the Veterans Memorial Building in Grinnell's Central Park?**

Very	25
Yes	3
Somewhat	2
Not Familiar	4

### **2. How do you know about the Grinnell Veterans Memorial Building?**

### **3. Are you familiar with plans to renovate the Veterans Memorial Building?**

Yes	32
No	2

**If yes, how would you describe your receptivity to this?**

**4. Are you familiar with plans to create a national arts residency that would be housed in the Veterans Memorial Building?**

Yes	30
No	4

**If yes, how would you describe your receptivity to this?**

**5A. How do you perceive the image of the Grinnell Veterans Memorial Commission?**

Very Good	1
Good	12
Fair	8
Poor	2
Don't Know	10
Intransigent	1

**B. If you were the commission chair, what would you do, if anything, to present it differently to the community at large?**

## Observations

Over 82 percent of interviewees had very good or general familiarity with the Veterans Memorial Building. Several recalled attending school events, pancake breakfasts, reunions and rummage sales there. Some recalled attending political meetings or even voting inside the building.

A few study participants remarked about recent news regarding the building:

- *“I’ve been here eight years and I’ve heard a great deal about the plans in that time as well as the past history and usage of that building.”*
- *“I followed the discussions about purposes and structural soundness of the building.”*
- *“There was a push to tear it down and then a push to save it. It passed by 25 votes. Given the number who voted, that’s significant.”*

- *“From the time we came here 25 years ago, I noticed it was not the most attractive building on that square. It blocks the entryway to Central Park. It’s not an attractive way to honor their service.”*

A slightly higher number of interviewees – 32 vs. 30 – were familiar with plans to renovate the building than plans to create a national arts residency housed within it.

Interviewees were divided in describing their reception or opposition to the building plans. Participants in the former group said:

- *“Very positive. Definitely a needed renovation for the community and for veterans both.”*
- *“I’m OK about it. The idea to renovate it into attractive, prairie-style architecture is a wonderful, invigorating service to the community and vets and will heal the rift in our community.”*
- *“I’m receptive. It’s going to save the building.”*
- *“They look good. They are good. I would err toward a deeper, fuller restoration to make it as dynamic as it can be.”*
- *“In that last package was a very good rendering. They were put together by Tom Lacina and he is extremely well placed for this. Probably the person you’d expect to have the best ideas. I haven’t seen any other ideas. It’s a facility we could use.”*

A few of those positive about building renovations expressed reservations about sustainability. *“It’s too good a building to tear it down. It needs a viable plan to sustain it.”* *“The artist’s concept is innovative and interesting. It could be successful here. It was the first positive plan in talking about what to do with the building. It was intriguing. I don’t know about the sustainability.”* *“If it can be accomplished, it would be great. If they can sustain it.”* *“The idea seems interesting. I’m unclear whether they have resources to sustain it, let alone cover the upfront capital costs.”*

These interviewees opposed any plans to renovate the current building:

- *“The building has not kept up and the money to redo it could be used for something else. I think we can put something else there to remember our veterans.”*
- *“I don’t understand the strong feelings about why that particular structure needs to be saved. It’s not necessarily a functional building.”*

- *“I’m not in favor of it. I am in favor of a memorial located right there.”*
- *“We have looked at the drawings. I am not at all in favor.”*

A few interviewees were neutral or wanted more information, including one who said, *“If I’m opposed to anything, I don’t want to pay any more property tax. A lot of these Legions and VFWs have a bar to generate revenue.”* Another wondered, *“If it does turn out to be used for programs for veterans and rehab for vets with PTSD, I’m for it. If it’s just art, I’m opposed.”*

A little more than two-thirds mentioned that the arts residency would bring a positive benefit to Grinnell. *“Grinnell is an up and coming small city and could potentially draw more people and artists because of this.”* *“I’m wildly enthusiastic. When Tom started telling the possibilities, I thought this is a perfect idea. It has worked with Grinn City.”* *“It’s a really good idea. I like it.”*

One participant even noted a linkage in how he or she will be involved with the National Institute for Arts and Health in the Military’s event this fall in Des Moines.

Several of the interviewees reiterated the importance of sustainability for the proposed residency. *“I worry if there will be enough resources for it. I know there is a \$110,000 levy, but I worry if that will fully support it. I see two to ideally three full-time staff to manage events, equipment and custodial functions.”* *“Again, very skeptical. That would be a wonderful thing to have, but in some other location.”*

Others expressed strong reservations against the residency. *“The transportation idea didn’t go well, so it worries me this might go down the same path.”* *“The guy that proposed it had it at his farm. If it was so awesome, why isn’t he still doing it?”* *“I’m not sure how it’s going to bring in money. Most artists they’re going to bring in won’t have it, and someone has to foot the bill.”*

Although 13 study participants rated the image of the veterans commission as good or very good, 10 interviewees were unsure and 10 others rated its image as fair or poor. Among the first group, one interviewee noted, *“Looking at the people involved now, they can make this happen”* and another stated, *“Good leadership like Randy is stepping up. They are doing some homework.”* Among those who didn’t know what the commission’s image is, one said,

*“It’s starting to get better with the possibility of improving no matter what happens to the building. They are respected for serving.”*

Asked what they would do differently if they were the veterans commission chair, a handful had no ideas or didn’t know what they would do differently.

Several suggested doing more to invite and create a positive community presence, including these comments: *“I’d encourage various groups to have me come speak to them. Put a face on the commission and explain what they are recommending.”* *“Stating that they are open to this and their realization that the community has wanted there to be a change. An idea that addresses veterans and having artists there. Express appreciation to the community that we realize this has been a sore point and we’ve been stubborn, but now we have a good idea and plans.”*

A few interviewees offered financial suggestions: *“Clarifying the ultimate plan of attack and financing. Is it a community center or veterans arts residency? The ratio of vets would be a question. How is it marketed and to what groups?”* *“The economic side of it. Whether it will support itself. They need to push a solution that can support the arts residency.”* *“Explain why this is a need to the community. Create this as a need and why. It involves money and that’s hard to raise.”*

Other ideas crossed the gamut, including:

- *“Instead of couching it as an art project, couch it as a rehab project and community meeting space for veterans. The change in attitude to make it a replacement for Grin City has eliminated veterans. Again, I have a great deal of skepticism.”*
- *“Does the commission have the authority to kick out the artists residency or are they tied to it?”*
- *“I’d stress the history. I realize you have to have lighting for the art studio and things, but it looks like an awful lot is arts. I’d move studios all the way to the south and have more room for veterans meetings and displays.”*
- *“Perhaps involve vets. Have them talk about struggles, PTSD or drug and alcohol addictions. Showcase studies of vets who have benefited in other areas of the country.”*

## Section 2. Current Leadership

The next questions in the interview focused on current leadership's ability to promote the respective projects.

**6. How would you rate the ability of the following groups to promote the Grinnell Veterans Memorial Building project? And why or why not?**

A. Grinnell City Council

Very Good	6
Good	12
Fair to Good	2
Fair	7
Poor	1
Don't Know	6

B. Grinnell Veterans Memorial Commission

Very Good	6
Good	9
Fair to Good	1
Fair	7
Poor	3
Don't Know	8

C. Grinnell Area Arts Council

Very Good	14
Good	6
Fair to Good	1
Fair	4
Poor	0
Don't Know	9

**7. How would you rate the ability of the following groups to promote the project implementing the Prairie Star Artists Residency? And why or why not?**

A. Grinnell City Council

Very Good	4
Good	12
Fair	6
Poor	2
Don't Know	10

#### B. Grinnell Veterans Memorial Commission

Very Good	7
Good	7
Fair	8
Poor	3
Don't Know	9

#### C. Grinnell Area Arts Council

Very Good	15
Good	7
Fair	4
Poor	0
Don't Know	8

## Observations

The interviewees were asked to rate the ability of the Grinnell City Council, Grinnell Veterans Memorial Commission and Grinnell Area Arts Council to promote the building project as well as the arts residency.

The Grinnell Area Arts Council enjoyed the strongest percentage of good or very good answers to both questions – 59 percent to promote the building and 65 percent to promote the arts residency.

- *“The winners in ideas and mobility.”*
- *“The neutral arbiter who can sell this. They didn’t have a dog in some of the fights early on.”*
- *“They have done a very good job of coming up with this alternate solution. I’m not sure it’s the right solution, but it could have legs.”*

The Grinnell City Council received a slightly larger edge of good to very good answers over the Grinnell Veterans Memorial Commission for both answers – 53 percent to 44 percent for the building and 47 to 41 percent for the residency.

Regarding the council’s role in promoting the building project, some interviewees pointed out the need to have it involved in an important way. *“They need to be involved. Dan Agnew is good and has a lot of influence.”* *“They should be involved. It would be imperative for them to promote this.”*

One study participant pointed out the city manager’s strengths at securing public grants.

Conversely, a few participants expressed concern about a city role in promoting the Prairie Star Artists Residency. *“I don’t think they have a position on this piece. The city’s job is to preserve the building.”* *“That’s not their deal.”*

Several interviewees stressed the importance of the veterans commission’s involvement in promoting both projects, starting with the building. *“Veterans should be the lead on this so it matches what they want.”* *“They have the passion. In an effort to preserve, they’ve attacked dissenters. They need to repair some of those relationships.”*

One interviewee who was unsure about the commission’s ability raised another question: *“What happens to the money raised if the building can’t be saved? The commission controls it.”*

Although their ability to promote the residency did not rate as highly as the other groups, the importance of commissioners’ involvement was emphasized by a couple of interviewees: *“They need to promote it and show they are fully in support and 100 percent behind this for the long term. But with help of the Grinnell Arts Council—they are the experts.”* *“It’s important. A good opportunity for them. If the commission supports this, they need to jump in and support this residency too.”*

### **Section 3. The Proposed Project**

Next we judged the participants’ receptions to the proposed plan.

**8. Did you have any knowledge of the building project or arts residency prior to receiving the materials for this interview?**

A lot	9
Some	17
A Little	5
None	3

**9. How receptive are you to the proposed building project?**

Very	9
Receptive	8
Somewhat Receptive	2
Somewhat with Exceptions*	5
Neutral	1
Not Receptive	9
Not Sure	0

**10A. How receptive are you to the proposed arts residency?**

Very	11
Receptive	7
Somewhat Receptive	6
Somewhat with Exceptions*	5
Not Receptive	5
Not Sure	0

**\*What are the exceptions?**

**11A. Do you feel the scope of the project is correct, too large, or more should be included?**

Correct	16
Too Large	5
More Needed	1
Don't Know	11
Not Needed	1

**11B. Are there any components of the project you take exception with?**

## 12. How supportive do you think the community as a whole will be?

Very	2
Supportive	10
Somewhat Supportive	15
Not Supportive	3
Not Sure	4

### Why?

## Observations

Nine implementation study participants knew a lot about the proposed projects. Seventeen said they knew some, and five said they knew a little. Three said they knew nothing about it prior to receiving the statement of need for the interview. A few noted having read newspaper articles or having heard Tom Lacina discuss it. One interviewee noted, *“Awareness is better. Tom is bringing it along. This is a beautiful building in the proposal.”*

Seventeen participants, or 50 percent of those interviewed, were receptive or very receptive to the proposed building project. A slightly higher number of 18 participants were receptive or very receptive to the arts residency. *“This is a good way to respect and honor veterans.” “The concept is great. To have people whether they are veterans or artists is great.” “It’s creative. It makes sense.” “I think this is a better way to memorialize veterans.” “A wonderful way to bring different kinds of people – a broad spectrum – together and include visitors too. Bringing veteran artists here will be very important. It can’t be elitist.”*

Two interviewees were somewhat receptive to the building renovation and five were somewhat receptive with exceptions, which emphasized sustainability and a veterans orientation. Six interviewees were somewhat receptive to the arts plans and five were somewhat receptive with exceptions. These exceptions all emphasized veterans’ involvement, including these comments:

- *“I’m skeptical about the veterans’ involvement. If they are involved, it’s a home run.”*
- *“It’s an interesting idea. The building project and residency seem like very distinct concepts. I’m having trouble marrying them.”*

Nine study participants were not receptive to the building plans and their comments included the following:

- *“We voted to tear it down. I’m just not interested. It looks like a dog compared to the rest of the park there.”*
- *“I’m not a fan. Before they spend a bunch of money, they should have demolished it and built new.”*
- *“Not receptive. But that said, I would support some type of memorial.”*

Five interviewees were not receptive to the proposed arts residency and their comments included these:

- *“It’s astronomical to heat and cool that building, and now they are adding apartments. It’s a chunk of change. Tom had something similar, and everyone I’ve talked to says he wanted out of it due to the work and expense. That’s fine, but I don’t think taxpayers should have to take it on. We can show respect to our veterans for a lot less. How big of a building it is isn’t important. It’s the meaning behind it.”*
- *“A, you’ve got to have veterans come, and B, how long are they going to stay? Will it become empty again?”*

Of those with an opinion, 16 participants or half of all interviewees, felt the scope of the project is correct. *“Any smaller, it would not be effective.” “It fits the size of the facility.” “In order to accommodate the people they want to. I love the drawing and how it fits the other buildings in Central Park. The building as is was dated and ugly.” “What has been promoted is about right. I like that they aren’t trying to present a second floor or add on a wing.”*

Five interviewees felt the proposal is too large: *“It might be a little over the top. I’d like to see the building more versatile to provide for other events. Like a mini-theater. More functionality, but there are so many arts venues already in town. The high school, college and the arts center.” “They were using Bushong’s estimates. They are out of date in terms of costs. No cost estimator would pare it down to that. Saying you could do that for \$2 million, they are fooling themselves.”*

One interviewee would like to see more included in the project and stated, *“You could go bigger and have a gallery space. In the studios, it would be nice to have their own rest rooms. That has a dorm quality to it.”*

While 11 people did not take exception with any project components, a few expressed concerns regarding both the size and the memorial aspects:

- *“The size and scope of the building. Six apartments and five studios seems beyond expectation. Cut that in half. You can always grow larger over time.”*
- *“I hate to see reduction of a meeting place. If the first floor was available for meetings and public receptions, but it looks like that would be limited.”*
- *“More space for art than the memorial aspect.”*

Four interviewees reiterated their opposition to preserving the building itself, with one stating, *“I would prefer a veteran or war memorial. The building shuts the park off from downtown, creates a barrier. Park goers can’t use and enjoy the building.”*

Twenty-seven feasibility study participants (79 percent) felt the community as a whole would be supportive, somewhat supportive or very supportive of the proposed project. Their reasons for feeling this way varied greatly:

- *“That’s the big question. You’ve got leaders who are going to support it and that’s half the battle.”*
- *“I hope they will. The bond issue passed. The Mayflower personnel are responsive and they’re a key part of the community.”*
- *“On the first try the bond passed, so political support is strong. Financial support is weak. The college professors were the ones who wanted to take it down.”*
- *“The arts have this niche audience. It will never have the interest of a sports facility. With Grinnell City not open, the community is missing the artists’ profiles that were in the paper every week.”*
- *“I don’t have a great feel, but I would think they wouldn’t want a dead building in the park. For high dollar gifts you probably have to look beyond Grinnell—Des Moines and the rest of the region. The story needs to be told better. For example, will the artists’ work be shown in the building?”*
- *“My narrow perspective of not living there, but with the college and the Community Arts Center and with people from Grinnell City, there is a small but passionate group for arts in Grinnell with a history of promoting arts.”*

Four interviewees did not know how supportive the community would be and offered these insights:

- *“I still think there is a barrier between veterans and nonveterans.”*
- *“I don’t have a great pulse on that. I’m not sure what other facilities are available. Does the community see the need?”*
- *“There’s not a lot of enthusiasm in general, especially after the other work in Central Park. There’s giving fatigue. The Skatepark project is a challenge right now. It’s taken two-and-one-half years and a ton of work to get \$250,000 for Skatepark. There’s less enthusiasm for this.”*

Three said the community would not be supportive. One said, *“Just because of other things happening so soon. Six months ago, my answer would have been different.”* Another said, *“It will be divided.”*

## Section 4. Giving Capacity

The next questions were asked to determine if there is the necessary giving potential to conduct a \$2 million to \$3 million campaign and to assist in determining the level of support in the community.

**13A. Do you think the \$2 million to \$3 million goal is an amount that the steering committee of the Grinnell Veterans Memorial Commission can raise over a three- to five-year pledge period?**

Yes	16
No	7
Don’t Know	11

**13B. If YES, how would you rate the difficulty of raising the money, from 1 (very easy) to 10 (very difficult)?**

1	=	0
2	=	0
3	=	3
4	=	2
5	=	1
6	=	2
7	=	0
7 or 8	=	4

8 = 4  
9 = 0  
10 = 0

**13C. If NO or DON'T KNOW, how much do you think is realistic?**

**14. Are there any existing conditions or other fundraising campaigns in the area that would affect this campaign's success? If yes, what?**

Yes	21
No	6
Don't Know	7

**15. After reviewing the scale of giving required to raise \$2 million to \$3 million, do you feel there are individuals, foundations and companies who have the ability to make these kinds of gifts over a three- to five-year period?**

Yes	12
Maybe	7
No	8
Don't Know	7

**Why or why not?**

**16A. Who could be the individuals, foundations or companies most likely to make the top three to five gifts?**

Interviewees suggested 27 names, including six that were mentioned more than five times and five mentioned two to five times. In addition, five generic suggestions were mentioned: *banks, donors to Grinnell College, national veteran arts support groups, locally run companies like the one that makes pots and veteran-run companies.*

**16B. Are there others we should make sure we visit with about this project?**

Interviewees suggested 25 names, 12 of whom were mentioned in the previous question. Generic responses included *anyone with a veterans connection, Grinnell College professors, philanthropists who attended*

*Grinnell College, state and national political leaders, and potentially the general contractor selected, to name a few.*

**17. We are certainly not seeking a campaign commitment in this interview. That is not our role. However, under normal economic conditions, where would you see your gift (SHOW GIFT TABLE), considering that any outright gift commitment could be pledged over a three- to five-year pledge period? And/or your foundation/company's gift?**

Answers varied from six participants who indicated they would probably not give, to one interviewee who indicated a contribution of \$100,000 and another who indicated a leadership level gift of between \$15,000 and \$200,000, based on the top gift chart in Appendix B.

**Self-reported giving totaled between \$202,200 or more and \$418,200 or more**, as a number of people or organizations indicated a possible range for their gifts.

## **Observations**

Sixteen out of 34 interviewees (47 percent) believed the goal of \$2 million to \$3 million was realistic and attainable over a three- to five-year pledge period, and 11 (32 percent) didn't know. Another seven (21 percent) said it isn't attainable and realistic.

Those who think the \$2 million to \$3 million goal is possible rated difficulty of raising the money—on a scale of one to 10, with one being very easy and 10 being very difficult—at 6.0 on average.

Of the remaining respondents who didn't feel or know if the goal was attainable, four weren't sure what a realistic amount would be to raise. Of those who suggested amounts, answers ranged from "*low six figures*" to two people who suggested \$1 million to \$1.5 million. One added, "*Get that thought shoved aside. Raise enough to get a big building. \$1 million would shortcut it. The exterior is critical. Get a viable business renter inside.*"

Twenty-one interviewees (62 percent) said there are existing campaigns or conditions that would affect the Grinnell Veterans Memorial Commission

success in a campaign, with eight projects or concerns mentioned. A school bond issue and a separate campaign for sports facilities were the most frequently mentioned, while a number of interviewees noted that people are still paying on pledges toward the Central Park project. Two people pointed out the annual United Way campaign will be starting soon, and another interviewee noted falling grain prices.

After being shown the scales of giving required to raise \$2 million to \$3 million (appendix B), 12 interviewees (35 percent) felt there are individuals and companies with the ability to make these kinds of gifts.

An additional seven interviewees answered “*maybe*” and seven people did not know. The most common reason was that they felt the top leadership levels would be tough and perhaps did not have enough prospects. One participant noted, “*I think a lot would pledge if it were not a building. They’re for a memorial, not a building.*”

Eight did not think there were individuals or companies with the ability to make these kinds of gifts, with reasons such as not enough local capacity or interest. “*My gut feeling is no. There may be some folks passionate about veterans’ issues, but my feeling is they’re not going to get those big dollars. They aren’t going to get that amount on tip nights and bake sales.*” Another stated, “*Certainly not locally.*”

When asked to identify the people or businesses that could make the top three to five gifts, 27 specific possibilities were identified and five general categories were named, like *banks*. An important part of successfully receiving money from these sectors will rely on how contact is made, who makes the contact and who asks for the gifts.

Four interviewees said their gifts could fall in the leadership levels (appendix B) between \$15,000 and \$200,000 or \$300,000. Nine participants indicated their gifts could fall within the major category of \$1,000 to \$15,000. Five were in the general category of less than \$1,000.

Three interviewees were unsure of what their gift would be, stating a need for more information on the project, but would consider a gift. Six interviewees said they would probably not give, including one who said Grinnell was outside of their service area.

One participant would give to a memorial, not a building, and another would give *“under the condition the funds were directly spent toward renovation and primarily used for veterans.”* Another would probably make a small gift, but *“for a different project – a true memorial – I’d give more.”*

## Section 5. Potential Leadership

The following questions were asked about the availability of campaign leaders and volunteers.

### 18A. Would you endorse this campaign (i.e., would you say you are in favor of it if someone asks you publicly)? Why or why not?

Yes	19
Maybe	4
No	10
Don't Know	1

### 18B. Who must endorse the plan for the campaign to be successful?

Participants named five people and 17 entities as critical campaign endorsees. Six participants suggested veterans or veterans groups, while three participants suggested downtown retailers and the business community and one mentioned the local art community.

### 19. Who do you believe would be the top three people to lead this campaign?

There were 28 people cited as to who would be the best and most effective campaign leaders. Of the 28, eight were mentioned more than once. General suggestions mentioned were *a veteran respected and active in the community, a person with resources and access to resources and someone without baggage.*

### 20. Are there others who must be involved for this campaign to succeed?

Thirteen individual names or specific entities were mentioned for who must be involved, with Grinnell College and its staff as well as Mayor Dan Agnew receiving multiple mentions. Generic suggestions included

*someone with a passion for both vets and arts and a war hero. One interviewee said, “Look beyond the vets commission. One is new to the community and they don’t have the following you need.”*

**21A. Would you consider serving on a short-term committee to review names of potential donors?**

Yes	9
Maybe	0
No	23
Don’t Know	2

**Why or why not?**

**21B. Would you consider serving on a campaign committee in a leadership capacity?**

Yes	6
Maybe	3
No	24
Don’t Know	1

**Why or why not?**

**21C. Would you consider making any campaign calls if accompanied by a commission member or a member of the campaign steering committee?**

Yes	8
Maybe	3
No	21
Don’t Know	2

**Why or why not?**

## Observations

When asked if they would endorse the campaign, 19 people (56 percent) said, “yes,” the majority saying so because they think it will be a positive benefit for the community that will bring interesting programs and people to Grinnell. One interviewee even noted, “*We will donate early to send a positive message to the community.*” Other reasons given to endorse the campaign included:

- *“Partly for practicality. Personally and as a company, we support providing a public place and memorial for veterans.”*
- *“The main thing is that it will address a major rift in our community that has been unresolved for decades and create something wonderful out of it.”*
- *“My dad was a veteran and I saw the sacrifices he made for country and family.”*
- *“I believe we need to talk about solutions and be ready to carry out civil discourse and accommodate all the concerns we can. This is working towards a solution.”*
- *“I have great respect for Tom Lacina. He knows what he’s doing. There needs to be the burying of the hatchet. Crossways people need to shake hands and say this is good for everybody.”*
- *“Because of the mission behind it. To support art and support veterans in a community setting. For the mental health in our community.”*

Four participants answered they might endorse the campaign and one was unsure. Several noted they need more information, particularly about control of the building.

Ten interviewees would not endorse the campaign, citing location, viability and lack of interest.

Interviewees noted 22 other people or organizations who must endorse the campaign for it to be successful, with Grinnell College and its staff receiving the most mentions at 13.

Regarding volunteering in some capacity for a campaign, six interviewees would serve on a leadership committee and three said they might. Eight would help make campaign calls and three said they might. Nine would serve on a prospect evaluation committee. To be successful, the Grinnell Veterans Memorial Commission must be able to recruit some top community and



corporate leaders to serve on the campaign committee and take leadership roles. These people need to be educated and cultivated to get on board.  
**Recruiting fundraising volunteers will be one of your greatest challenges.**



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# **LEADERSHIP ASSESSMENTS**

# Leadership Assessments

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A pre-campaign assessment and survey was conducted in conjunction with the implementation study. The purpose was to measure the level of support from Grinnell Veterans Memorial Commission leadership, Grinnell Area Arts Council board members and implementation study committee members. Fifteen of a possible 23 questionnaires, or 65 percent, were completed and returned. AMPERAGE usually finds a 67 percent or higher response rate in campaigns that successfully move ahead.

## Section 1. Campaign Readiness

	<b>Please rank your perceptions of the Grinnell Veterans Memorial Commission’s readiness for a fundraising campaign using a scale of 1 – 5 (5 = the highest).</b>	<b>GVMC, GAAC, Implementation Committee Average</b>
A.	We have a strong and positive image and reputation, and our record of benefits to the region is above reproach.	<b>3.0</b>
B.	We have a solid history of fundraising success.	<b>2.3</b>
C.	Our constituency supports us in an exemplary manner.	<b>3.4</b>
D.	Our constituency understands and supports the cause.	<b>3.6</b>
E.	The \$2 million to \$3 million we seek in private funds is available in our region.	<b>3.0</b>
F.	Our constituency has responded favorably in the past to campaigns similar in size and scope.	<b>3.0</b>
G.	We have among our “inner circle” of friends and board members well-informed, influential and experienced leaders who are willing to work, lead and give in support of the project.	<b>3.3</b>
H.	In addition to this inner circle, we have available to us a substantial body of additional volunteers who are willing and able to work actively in support of the campaign.	<b>3.0</b>

I.	A comprehensive process of long-term planning has taken place, involving board members and staff, and the need is a logical outgrowth of that process.	<b>3.3</b>
J.	Credible documentation of the need has been prepared, which explains the details of the project and describes history and needs, but concentrates on positive outcomes and people served.	<b>3.4</b>
K.	A process is in place to address significant obstacles that may be uncovered prior to or during our campaign.	<b>3.2</b>
L.	Our organization is internally ready—we have in place experienced development staff, highly accurate and retrievable records, adequate support personnel and the financial resources to conduct a campaign of the needed duration.	<b>2.9</b>
	Respondents	<b>15/23</b>
	Percent Responding	<b>65%</b>

## Section 2. Profile

Survey responses were completed by five veterans commission members, five arts council members and eight implementation study committee members, including three respondents who are a part of two or more of these leadership teams. One preferred not to answer this question.

## Section 3. Administration and Involvement

When asked if they felt the veterans commission is working together and doing an effective job in setting policy and direction, seven respondents agreed. Six didn't know and two answered no, including one who said, *"They have not shown any indication so far to this end."*

Respondents rated the Grinnell City Council, Grinnell Veterans Memorial Commission and Grinnell Area Arts Council in terms of their respective abilities

to promote the building project. Answers are combined as follows by those who answered Extremely Able (EA), Very Able (VA), Somewhat Able (SA), Not So Able (NSA) or Not At All Able (NAAA), followed by representative comments. (Note: answers do not equal 15 because one respondent did not answer the question):

Grinnell City Council: 3 EA, 3 VA, 4 SA, 3 NSA, 1 NAAA.

- *"I believe the city council has begun to embrace the project."* (EA)
- *"The Mayor is interested in seeing this project succeed."* (VA)
- *"The ability is there if they choose to do so."* (VA)
- *"They are only involved by duress. They would prefer the building torn down."* (NSA)
- *"I do not have faith in the City to push projects like this forward. Plus the City seems afraid to commit to collaborating with other groups on this project."* (NSA)

Grinnell Veterans Memorial Commission: 5 EA, 2 VA, 5 SA, 1 NSA, 1 NAAA.

- *"The Commission is motivated to have this project proceed."* (EA)
- *"The ability is there as well if they choose to."* (SA)
- *"Minimal to no promotion so far."* (NSA)

Grinnell Area Arts Council: 6 EA, 2 VA, 5 SA, 1 NSA

- *"They have the experience in managing a residency program."* (EA)
- *"They have resources available but this may not be within the scope of their mission."* (SA)
- *"The ability is there as well if they choose to."* (SA)
- *"Minimal to no promotion so far."* (NSA)

## **Section 4. Project Proposal and Size of Goal**

When asked how receptive they are with plans to renovate the Veterans Memorial Building, 10 answered *"a great deal,"* three said *"a lot,"* and one each answered *"a moderate amount"* and *"a little."* When asked how receptive they are with plans to create a national arts residency that would be housed in the building, 10 answered *"a great deal,"* two said *"a lot,"* two said *"a moderate amount"* and one said *"a little."*

Seven of the respondents approved of the proposed fundraising campaign and four others approved with exceptions. The exceptions were, *"I don't know enough about the plan, but worry about feasibility in terms of longevity"* and *"I*

*would like to see the Veterans Commission be more open to other possible ways of honoring veterans.”*

Three respondents said they were not sure if they approve of the fundraising campaign, and one who does not approve answered, *“Seems super high for what we’re getting.”*

Only four respondents believed that people from the area would donate \$2 million to \$3 million over a three- to five-year pledge period to reach the goal. Three answered no and the rest did not know if this goal is achievable.

When asked how they would rate the difficulty of raising the money, with 1 being very easy and 10 being very difficult, the average of the 15 respondents was 6.9.

Twelve respondents would endorse the campaign, including these two answers:

- *“The building needs to be used in a positive and welcoming way, especially considering that it’s so centrally located and in our beautifully renovated park.”*
- *“The Vets deserve a building in their honor and the building now is an eyesore and a disgrace as it stands. Something needs to be done.”*

When asked if they would endorse the campaign, two respondents answered maybe, including one who added, *“The public cannot always see themselves benefiting from the presence of a Veterans Memorial Artist Residency in our Central Park and so it’s difficult to discuss the campaign when people seem to have made up their minds against it. Also, I would be more inclined to endorse this campaign if the City showed more support and a willingness to collaborate. They seem to be taking a backseat until fundraising is further along. However, their participation and support at this point would probably assist with fundraising. The City’s inaction makes a big statement to the public that they are not entirely interested in this plan moving forward.”*

One of the leadership members did not know if she or he would endorse a fundraising campaign, noting, *“Likely no, because it doesn’t make a bunch of sense. I think we would be better off with removing the building and constructing a proper memorial that would complement the park and provide an effective place to pay our respect.”*

When asked what obstacles stand in the way of the campaign’s success, one project leader noted, *“There is an unidentified group that wants to have an*

*unobstructed view from the bank to the depot.*” The respondents pointed out eight other areas of concern:

- Public understanding of the value and benefits of the project (2)
- Some say the building is dilapidated and beyond repair (2)
- Other projects in the community
- Too many “gatekeepers” in town are divided
- A solid plan on renovation of the building
- Running and maintaining the building
- Gaining national exposure
- Money and enthusiasm

## **Section 5. Giving Potential and Leadership**

Leadership members were asked for a level where they might see their giving over a three- to five-year pledge period. While two respondents did not answer this question, 13 others from the group indicated their gifts over a three- to five-year period would collectively range between \$10,000 and \$55,000.

A word of caution: **Funds cannot be raised at either the leadership level or the community level by simple mathematics.** One cannot take the goal and divide it by the number of leadership or the community at large. Everyone has a different giving potential. No one can be told what to give or how. Giving is personal and must be respected and appreciated by all. Critical to a campaign’s success is the financial commitment of **every member of the leadership.**

The Veterans Memorial Building “family”—leadership and volunteers—must show the community at large a 100-percent financial commitment to your campaign goal. Unanimous participation is essential **before** asking the community for support.

Working on the campaign is no less important than giving to the campaign. It is extremely important to have leadership involved in one way or another. One assessment respondent expressed interest in being a leader or serving on a campaign committee, while four said maybe. Five respondents said they would serve on a short-term committee to review names of donors and three said maybe. Two said they would make campaign calls and four said they might.

Members of the Veterans Memorial Building leadership teams don't have to lead or serve on a major campaign committee, but their abilities to do tasks that are appropriate for their skills and talents need not be overlooked.

The importance of the involvement and commitment of leadership in a campaign cannot be overstated. It is the **single most important criterion** of a campaign's success. Leadership sets the example. Their involvement will send a message to the prospects and the community. No one is going to care as much and no one is going to have to work any harder or longer. The training, organization and dedication of the leadership will see a campaign through to a successful completion.



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# **ORGANIZATIONAL READINESS**

# Organizational Readiness

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To gain a sense of the readiness of the Grinnell Veterans Memorial Commission for a fundraising campaign, we conducted an organizational assessment of the internal development function, programs and attributes.

## Section 1. Personnel and Involvement

The Grinnell Veterans Memorial Commission manages and controls the Memorial Building, making and establishing the rules and regulations for its use and management. The commission has five members and is led by Chair Leo Lease and Vice-chair Randall Hotchkin. The community influence and fundraising experience of each of the members of the commission will play vital roles in the success of the campaign.

The Prairie Star Residency name was selected by the commission for the artist residency space in the building and will operate as a program of the commission. However, the actual operating responsibility will be assumed by an outside organization under contract with the commission and the City of Grinnell.

The Grinnell Veterans Memorial Commission does not have a development director to manage ongoing fundraising efforts. However, contributions are administered through the Greater Poweshiek Community Foundation (GPCF) and are accepted both online at [greaterpcf.org](http://greaterpcf.org) or through a downloadable donation form.

Last February, the City Council approved the appointment of Tom Lacina as a volunteer liaison between the Grinnell Veterans Memorial Commission and the City of Grinnell. His important, stated goal is to facilitate a positive relationship and assist with communications.

## Section 2. Development Activities and Collateral

Founded in 1989, the Greater Poweshiek Community Foundation accepts gifts “on behalf of the Grinnell Veterans Memorial Commission.” Executive Director Nicole Brua-Behrens was the first GPCF staff member named in

2009. The GPCF is provided administrative and public relations help in partnership with the Claude W. & Dolly Ahrens Foundation. Brua-Behrens is willing to join commission members or Lacina on donor visits and also has staff members who specialize in gift planning.

GPCF, with over \$8 million in assets, maintains an impressive donor database of more than 11,000 names using a Financial Integrated Management System to report financial reports. The foundation currently fundraises in Alaska, Arizona, Delaware, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Maryland, Montana, Nebraska, South Dakota, Texas and Vermont – states that have significant pockets of Grinnell-Newburg School District alumni – and is planning to add Missouri and Minnesota. The financial reports are regularly audited.

In addition to its website presence, GPCF produces an annual report, maintains a Facebook page and does email blasts at least monthly. The Grinnell Veterans Memorial Commission maintains a positive Facebook page and regular reports on meeting progress and veterans activities, while Prairie Star Residency has a web presence that links to GPCF’s donation page. GPCF also has a fundraising brochure called “The Catalog for Giving 2018.” All of these items will be compelling mediums to utilize in securing support.

The GPCF has a gift acceptance policy, which is currently about two years old. A gift acceptance policy is essential during a capital campaign to determine—for example—how to value deferred gifts, including those made through life insurance or bequests; definition of gifts-in-kind acceptance; and the time frame to redeem gifts of stock.

Brua-Behrens and the GPCF belong to the Grinnell Chamber of Commerce, Iowa Council of Foundations and National Council of Foundations. The foundation has a strategic plan last updated in 2015 and is currently in the process of developing a new three-year plan.

### **Section 3. Volunteers**

Grinnell Veterans Memorial Commission does not currently have an extensive group of volunteers to raise funds for the organization. During a capital campaign, a much larger group of volunteers will be needed and called upon to assist in reaching a wider audience than ever before. An initial strategy would be to engage local veterans organizations and their auxiliaries for such assistance.



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# **SPOT ANALYSIS**

# SPOT Analysis

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1. **Strengths** of Grinnell Veterans Memorial Commission and Campaign
  - Respected veterans in the community
  - Facebook site regularly shares positive news and updates like the recent flag raising
  - High level of interest in being a campaign volunteer
  - Widely respected liaison between commission and city in Tom Lacina
  - Levy will largely support long-term sustainability (therefore there will not be direct annual asks of people for maintenance) with no additional reliance on property taxes
  - General feeling that the new building exterior drawings are attractive
  - Architect hired will bring continuity, being the same firm that did Central Park enhancements
  - Greater Poweshiek Community Foundation agreements in place to handle gift acknowledgements, pledge payments, etc., with eligibility to fundraise in many states
  - Gift acceptance policies in place
  - Website can accept online gifts
  - Grinnell is a giving community with a long and recent history of successful campaigns (pool, library, arts center and Central Park)
  
2. **Problems** Grinnell Veterans Memorial Commission and Campaign Face
  - Need for more detailed information regarding the building and residency:
    - cost
    - design
    - projected usage
    - need
    - long-term sustainability
  - Low level of endorsements
  - Concerns about sustainability, possible shortfalls
  - Need for administrative help to staff “Campaign Central”
  - No commission personnel dedicated to fundraising or PR
  - Commission members not well-known

- Limited donor and prospect base apart from Greater Poweshiek Community Foundation lists
- Campaign amount perceived as high for local giving goal
- Concern of mixing art with a veterans memorial and how the two relate
- Not all leaders sure of their support (plus some did not complete survey to know this)

**3. Opportunities** for Grinnell Veterans Memorial Commission and Campaign

- Unite the community with more messaging about:
  - Healing veterans through art therapies; show it visually and explain what other programming for youth and adults could look like in this area
  - What veterans memorial signage and displays will entail and look like
  - Similar projects in other areas and what they did for those communities
  - How art can tell the stories of veterans and educate those who have no context of veterans' sacrifices and accomplishments
- Start cultivating veterans who work at companies that will be asked for contributions
- Engage and educate younger veterans about the project, and ask for their help and support
- Seek state and national grants, both public and private, that support arts and/or veterans

**4. Threats** Grinnell Veterans Memorial Commission and Campaign Face

- Volunteer fatigue from other campaigns in the area
- Need not seen as critical; competing with school bond vote, local church campaign and payments on Central Park pledges
- Falling grain prices and economic concerns
- Concerns about tax deductibility of gifts



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# **FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

## Findings & Recommendations

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For the most part, the study conducted on behalf of the Grinnell Veterans Memorial Commission indicated good support for renovating the building and operating a unique national artist residency within it. Most of the people we interviewed were positive about the project. The study also revealed some misconceptions about the project, with a fair amount of concern expressed about the connections between arts and veterans and whether the proposed residency is sustainable.

The following summarizes our impressions of your fundraising capability:

- Forty-seven percent of all interviewees believed the \$2 million to \$3 million campaign goal was realistic and attainable over a three- to five-year pledge period. It should be noted that 32 percent answered that they did not know if the goal was achievable. In AMPERAGE studies where we consulted on completed campaigns, 84 percent of interviewees believed the goal was attainable in over-performing campaigns (raising at least 1.5 times their feasibility goal), followed by 64 percent for campaigns that met or slightly exceeded goal and 50 percent for those campaigns that had a slight decrease of the tested goal. As a whole, your group responses trended to our “slight decrease of tested goal” levels.
- Twenty-seven different names of individuals or businesses were mentioned as having the capacity to give at the top leadership gift levels. That is less than the average 40 names we usually hear in response to this question.
- Thirty-five percent of the interviewees believed the community at large would be very supportive or supportive of the proposed project. This lags behind our average response rates of 59 percent in over-performing campaigns, 47.5 percent in met/exceed campaigns and 38 percent in slight decrease campaigns. However, adding in “somewhat supportive” answers boosts the total supportive response to 79 percent.
- Fifty-six percent of interviewees would endorse the campaign and an additional 12 percent might endorse it. Average endorsement rates in AMPERAGE studies that successfully move forward are 71 percent who would and 12 percent who might.

- The average self-reported giving in feasibility studies for over-performing AMPERAGE campaigns is 33 percent of the campaign goal; the average of campaigns that met or slightly exceeded goal is 28 percent of the campaign goal; and the average of slight-decrease campaigns is 24 percent. We further examined the self-reported giving for the Veterans Memorial Building campaign from two perspectives:
  - Total self-reported giving from the interviewees ranged between **\$202,200 and \$418,200**. This represents 10.1 percent to 20.9 percent of a \$2 million campaign goal, or 6.7 to 13.9 percent of a \$3 million goal.
  - By adding the range of **\$10,000 and \$55,000** to this amount based on self-rated figures from the leadership and study committee respondents' self-assessments, this range increases to 10.6 percent to 23.7 percent of a \$2 million campaign goal, or 7.1 to 15.8 percent of a \$3 million goal.
- When asked if their personal and/or business gifts would fall into the leadership category (\$15,000-\$200,000 or \$300,000), four interviewees indicated their gifts would. Nine gifts fell into the major gift level (\$1,000-\$15,000). The other self-ratings were in the general category of less than \$1,000 or none at all. The challenge, then, is to get all of these people involved. Once involved, sights and gifts will be even higher. **The success of securing large gifts—and any gifts to the campaign—will depend on how well the case is articulated and who is involved.**
- Eighty percent of the leadership assessment survey respondents – or 12 out of 15 – were supportive of the project need and would endorse the campaign plan. The leadership must express unanimity, because one out-of-tune voice can kill the choir. Eight of the eligible respondents did not take the survey. Be sure to address any existing concerns considering this fact.
- Fourteen interviewees (41 percent) stated they would assist or might assist in making campaign calls or volunteering in other ways. Although this exceeds the average 29 percent response obtained in an AMPERAGE feasibility study, we are concerned about the possibility of volunteer fatigue in the area. The challenge will be to get others involved and increase their sights and gifts.

## Recommendations

The study benefited the Grinnell Veterans Memorial Commission in a variety of ways. Donors and leaders are cultivated. Participants develop ownership in the project by having the opportunity to voice their opinions. Being singled out as a noted community leader honors the potential donors and leaders of the Veterans Memorial Building campaign.

Additionally, the educational factor must not be overlooked as a valued outcome. Many learned about the proposed project in a thoughtful and concise manner.

As previously stated, the implementation study's purpose was to determine your ability to raise campaign funds for your project needs. **After analysis and thoughtful consideration of the information gathered from the interviews and the leadership assessment survey, we recommend you proceed with a campaign, emphasizing and setting a \$1.5 million goal. Although not the amount you may ultimately need, this fundraising goal – positioned as Phase I – will set you up for better success.**

Three main factors contribute to this.

First, the number of interviews slightly lagged behind the average of 41 that we usually do and base our benchmarks. We were disappointed that none of the identified past or present state and national leaders participated in the study. One of the larger area potential donors was too busy and disinterested to participate, and we did not interview many from the agricultural community.

Second, one donor indicating a large leadership gift gave a significant range—\$15,000 to \$200,000—so we are unsure of the extent or size it will ultimately be.

Third, a few participants expressed concern on what the renovations will ultimately cost, with many noting that the school bond and other issues are a higher priority.

We present the following recommendations as strategies for success.

**1. Promote the positive veterans-arts connection.**

- *“I’m very much concerned that we get this problem behind us by making some good decisions now and calling on the community to get some closure.”*
- *“There’s no one opposed to veterans. The campaign should be, ‘Can we agree on this?’”*
- *“The vote passed by a margin of about 20. There are still hard feelings. Iowans are nice to each other, but there is repair work to be done in order for this to be successful.”*

These three comments illustrate some of the concerns shared by study participants about the contentious nature of some of the discussions leading up to the vote last November. Raising \$1.5 million will take many, many pre-campaign, relationship-building and educational visits. To give to you, people need to be passionate about you, and to be passionate about you, they need to know you—and know you well.

Aristotle said, “Art imitates life” and we couldn’t agree more. Because there has not been a huge war requiring nationwide rationing and commitment in many years, younger people may not fully understand or see the sacrifice that veterans have made. It’s time to bury the hatchet and get past any and all rifts. What better way to explore the human condition and tell the story of these veterans than through the eyes of artists who are our best storytellers?

Not everyone will support or give to the building renovations and arts residency, but all still need to respect all opinions and move forward with civility. The community’s vote for the levy speaks volumes and set the stage to move forward in a positive way.

Public relations should continue to address the positive momentum. Like how the commission is now up to full strength. Or the flag raising ceremony and presentation to Isadore Berman on July 4. Talk about the benefits of joining forces with Prairie Star Residency to positively affect the lives and mental health of veterans. Address how this will impact tourism and enrich Grinnell and the region.

Be prepared to address the thought that this is really city infrastructure, so create talking points addressing cash flow projections and sustainability. Talk about how this will help beautify the city and Central Park in the long run.

Speak to the different constituencies through group meetings and presentations or one-on-one meetings. Invite targeted groups, like downtown business leaders, service clubs, VFW, etc., to presentations about your plans. Involve your current supporters; make sure they know about and understand your message and the need for your current plans. They can be some of your best ambassadors and champions.

The public relations effort must focus on the Veterans Memorial Building’s project impact—NOT THE CAMPAIGN. It is critical that the public phase of the campaign begin only after at least 50 percent of the goal has been reached and not before. Campaigns fail when the organization goes public by announcing the campaign too early. Timing is critical to avoid donors perceiving that the campaign has gone on too long. Momentum is lost and the campaign falters.

## **2. Prioritize and finalize building costs and floor plans.**

- *“Until somebody walks through it, I’m suspicious about the \$2 to \$3 million figure. That was only an estimate from Bushong. It may cost \$3.5 million.”*

As the interviewee noted above, people want more specifics on the economic side of the building and artist residency. One participant asked what will happen if the needed funds aren’t raised. Many wanted to know if any of the artists will pay tuition or rent.

Finalize floor plans, building costs and residency cash-flow projections. You’ll need to explain specifically what’s included in the project and specific costs, emphasizing which funds will go toward the building and what funds will launch the residency. People want to know that veterans will be remembered and honored in the renovated space, and that there will be opportunity to rent the building for public usage.

To build momentum and reach your goal faster, you may wish to consider phasing in the construction renovations—starting with housing for only

two or three artists at a time as the residency gets up and running and Prairie Star Residency programming begins.

When creating your final case for the campaign, be sure to include long-term projections for sustainability.

### **3. Think beyond Grinnell.**

The campaign will need to look beyond Grinnell for significant grant support. Enhance Iowa's Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT) Grant should be explored, noting that application timing hinges on first raising half of a project's cost. City and county support will be essential before approaching the Enhance Iowa Board.

Through very preliminary research, we know that regional and national grant possibilities include Americans for the Arts, Arts Midwest Touring Fund, National Endowment for the Arts and Red River Computer Foundation with its veterans focus. The American Legion's National Veterans Creative Arts Festival will be held in Des Moines Oct. 28 through Nov. 5 and would be an important resource for making personal connections with several such grantors.

### **4. Secure and promote endorsements from key players.**

Donors will want to know if area businesses, veterans organizations and other groups are behind your project. People look to Grinnell College in particular as the seal of approval for a project in your area. You will also want to identify veterans who own or are employed by these businesses and seek their endorsements.

Obtaining these organizations' endorsements and gifts will be critical. Leaders in the business community are key, as other donors often see them as a barometer of a worthy project. Note: An endorsement is the first step to securing a gift.

### **5. Cultivate, then recruit your volunteers.**

You will need a tremendous number of volunteers to make this happen, and you should look to engage some people who have not been involved in recent community campaigns. There must be a strategy developed as to how and who will be recruited for the campaign steering committee. The

committee will be composed of a combination of commission leadership, influential arts leaders and key community volunteers throughout the state. We suggest an honorary chair or co-chairs be appointed, putting a joint face on both veterans and arts leaders. Again, volunteers will be key to your fundraising success.

## **6. Cultivate lead donors.**

The Grinnell Veterans Memorial Commission should prepare to approach several prospects who have the potential to give five- and six-figure gifts over your pledge period. These individuals, companies, foundations or families need to be cultivated as early as they are identified, as gifts of this size do not happen overnight. Start the cultivation by sharing the implementation study summary with affluent individuals in private meetings. Securing advance gifts from a small, select group of people adds credibility and enthusiasm. It also sets a benchmark for other prospects. If you have the ability to secure more than half your goal before the campaign begins, you are well on your way to reaching the campaign goal. Remember to think about those executives at companies that employ veterans.

## **7. Organize campaign leadership and staff.**

The Grinnell Veterans Building leadership, together with the advice and direction of a campaign consultant, should organize a campaign steering committee as soon as the plans to conduct a campaign are approved.

The steering committee will work under the Grinnell Veterans Memorial Commission leadership, the campaign chair or co-chairs and the campaign consultant. The campaign steering committee will work as a liaison to the veterans commission and will recommend and implement the policies of the campaign. The committee's initial role includes directing the very important planning and pre-campaign stage. Strong leadership volunteers bolster the odds of success.

You are fortunate that you already have an agreement with the Greater Poweshiek Community Foundation, whose staff will already direct the gift acknowledgements and pledge tracking. However you will also need administrative help or what we call "Campaign Central" to:

- Coordinate volunteer/donor assignments

- Coordinate volunteer training
- Manage the rating and review procedure: secure lists, update donor records and create timely reports
- Coordinate campaign meetings

“Campaign Central” provides a secure, physical place from which the steering committee can manage campaign logistics. It will enable you to juggle many balls and keep up with the many campaign details.

Volunteers need to know that their requests for information or materials are handled in a timely and accurate manner. They need to be kept informed if and when their prospects give and be confident that their prospects’ gifts are properly acknowledged. Support staff allows your volunteers to do what is most important—ask for contributions—rather than getting sidetracked with campaign minutia.

Running a campaign is labor-intensive and cannot run efficiently and effectively without the right tools. You need to have good methods in place for tracking pledges, recording gifts, acknowledging contributions and creating donor records. This is important, because how you account for your funds impacts the campaign’s success. If an organization can’t adequately track pledges, the campaign will face a low pledge fulfillment rate. More importantly, it will not be able to correctly acknowledge gifts.

## **8. Solicit the “family” first.**

The “family” is comprised of members of Grinnell Veterans Memorial Commission members those in the community who are recognized as wanting to preserve the memorial building. Donors will look to how the family supports the project before they consider their gifts. If 100 percent of the organization’s family does not contribute to the campaign, how can we expect others to do so?

We recommend the family solicitation strategy begin soon after the leadership approves the campaign. The family campaign must be an organized effort and thoroughly planned. The campaign chairs should move quickly to appoint volunteer leaders for the volunteer drives. The leaders may decide to enlist helpers to accomplish the solicitation process in a timely manner.

## 9. Create campaign tools.

The Association of Fundraising Professionals defines the case statement as, “The centralization or documentation of all information describing the organization: needs, goals, objectives, strategies, tasks, facilities, budget, institutional plans, financial history, personnel and staff competence to serve the mission or the cause the organization presents.”

Naming opportunities for the project need to be created. Your case statement should include these donor recognition opportunities and how they will be promoted.

There is much work to be done before the case statement can be completed: key donors to further educate; campaign volunteers to recruit; family gifts to secure; naming levels to create. A case statement must inform, inspire and induce action. Successful completion of each of these steps lays the foundation for a successful campaign.

In addition to the case statement, you will need a campaign video. No other medium can tell your story as well as video. The combination of sight and sound creates an emotional experience for the potential donor. Giving decisions come from the heart as well as the head. A well-produced video can cover the details while creating that emotional bond between the organization and the donor.

## 10. Identify your leadership and major donors.

Begin building your donor and prospect list, based on past donations you’ve received, names mentioned from the implementation study and donors who have given to other campaigns in the area.

A donor prospect evaluation committee chair should be appointed as soon as the green light is given for the campaign. The chair should recruit five to seven individuals with the ability to determine an individual’s ability to give. The sole purpose of the committee is to identify the needed leadership and major gift donors who have the ability to give at those levels. **The leadership and major gift phases cannot begin until this work is completed.**

### **11. Retain fundraising counsel.**

The size of the undertaking and educational efforts regarding the need for the project, and other issues associated with the campaign, point to a partnership between your organization and outside fundraising counsel. You need to work with a partner who has been through the rigors of a campaign before and can coach you every step of the way.

### **12. Seek challenges and matches.**

Remember to utilize matching and challenge gift opportunities when seeking gifts from individuals. Matching gifts from employers can double or even triple donations given to the campaign.

### **13. A pre-campaign, campaign and celebration calendar should be developed.**

The calendar should be comprehensive and include all steps needed to complete the campaign goal to fund the renovation of the Veterans Memorial Building.

## **Checklist for a Successful Major Fundraising Campaign**

- ✓ Conduct a feasibility study
- Develop and implement the PR efforts promoting the positive veteran-arts connection
- Finalize the project plan and costs
- Set a reasonable goal
- Allow enough time to achieve the goal
- Set an adequate budget to fund campaign activities
- Establish strategies, schedules and campaign tools
- Secure endorsements
- Build an ample list of prospects to achieve the necessary leadership gifts; build and strengthen these relationships
- Strategically staff volunteer committees
- Train volunteers in lead and major gift solicitation techniques
- Excite and energize volunteers to solicit major/lead gifts
- Seek grants
- Secure one-half of the goal before going public
- Forge strong partnerships among volunteers
- Keep meticulous records
- Make the public believe your need is urgent
- Thank donors and volunteers seven times



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# **CAMPAIGN APPROACH**

# Campaign Approach

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## Preliminary Timeline of Campaign Activities

### Step 1

#### **As soon as possible**

- Educate community about the specific impact of the Veterans Memorial Building and your need for the project through PR efforts, including the veteran-art connection
- Finalize project costs and floor plan, establishing the most critical building needs first
- Approve campaign and allocate budget
- Host informational sessions for lead prospects
- Seek one-half of the goal in advance gifts
- Secure endorsements from key players
- Conduct prospect evaluation meetings
- Develop target list of state and national grant sources
- Create campaign theme

### Step 2—Pre-campaign Planning

#### **3-5 months**

- Organize campaign structure
- Recruit steering committee members
- Recruit campaign chair(s) and honorary chair(s)
- Develop case statement
- Create campaign video
- Identify key volunteers and recruit leadership gift committee members
- Develop and produce pledge materials
- Develop and produce volunteer training materials
- Seek lead gifts
- Recruit chairs for family campaigns of board and volunteers

### **Step 3—Silent Phase**

#### **4-6 months**

- Develop campaign public relations plan
- Conduct family campaigns of commission and other “family” members
- Seek and complete key volunteer gifts
- Train leadership campaign volunteers; assign prospects
- Begin leadership campaign solicitation
- Recruit major gift campaign chair and volunteers
- Seek grants

### **Step 4—Public Phase**

#### **6-8 months (or until the goal is raised)**

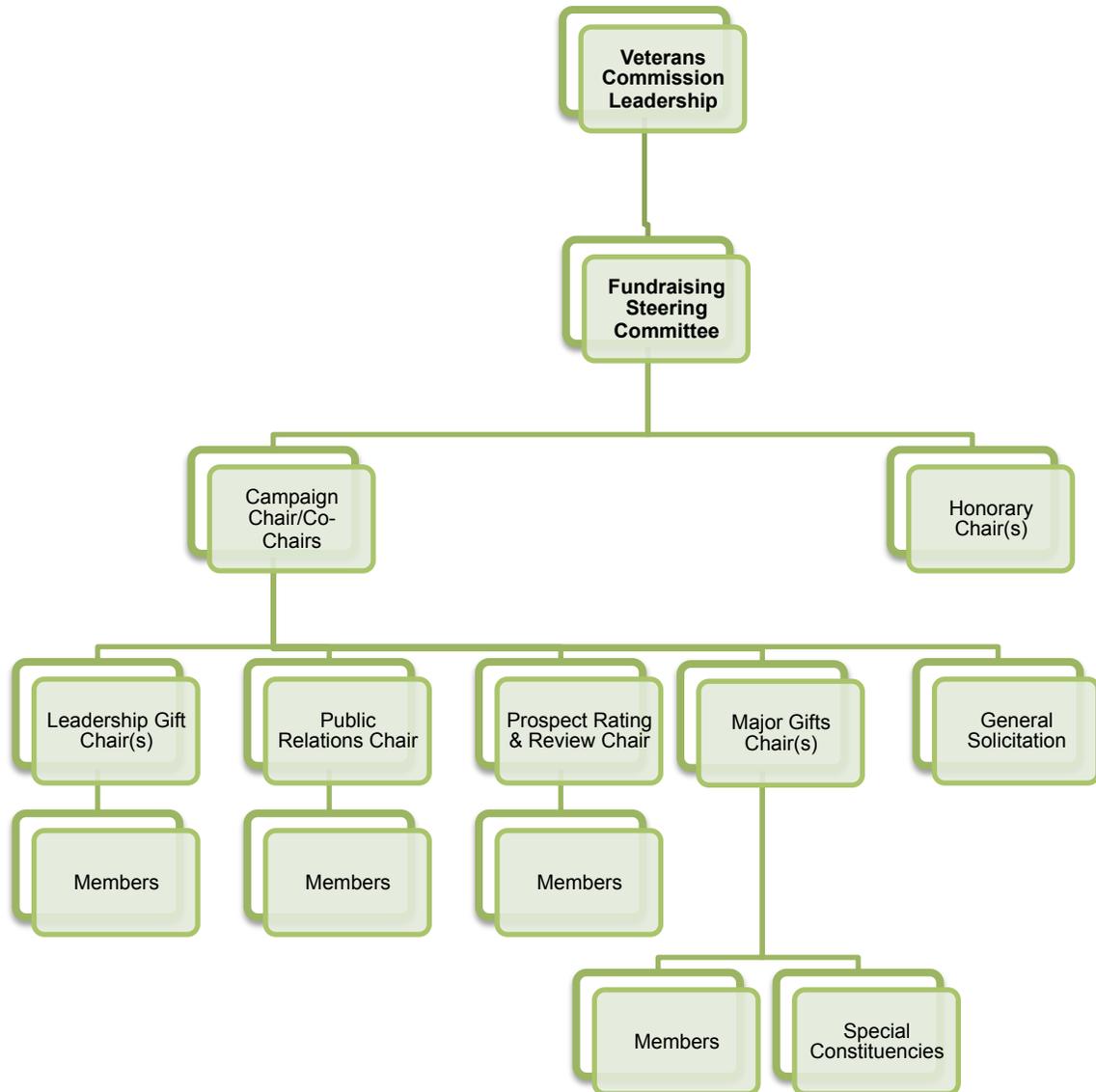
- Train major gift campaign volunteers; assign volunteers to prospects
- Begin major gift solicitation
- Implement campaign public relations plan
- Announce public phase of the campaign
- Develop direct mail materials for general solicitation
- Complete leadership and major gift solicitation
- Mail solicitation to general gift-level prospects
- Call prospects with final request
- Mail second, final solicitation to general gift-level and major gift prospects
- Realize 100 percent of campaign goal

### **Step 5—Campaign Evaluation**

#### **1-2 months**

- Celebrate!
- Review campaign evaluation

## Grinnell Veterans Memorial Building Campaign Structure





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# APPENDIX

## Appendix A

### Implementation Study Interview List

Dan Agnew	Raynard Kington
Barb Baker	John Krantz
Russ Behrens	Joe Lacina
Dan and Vicki Bunnell	Bill Lannom
Danny Carroll	Tom Latimer
Doug Caulkins	Skip Lowe
Jennifer Collins	Michael Mahaffey
Rich Dana	Kyle McCann
Sally Dix	Paul Pohlson
Doug Elliott	Howard and Suzy Raffety
John Engelbrecht	Rick and Sue Ramsey
Dick Gosselink	Royal Roland
Julie Gosselink	Don Schild
Patrick Hatting	Val Vetter
Austin and Addison Jones	Gary Wilson

## Appendix B

### Number of Gifts at Various Levels Required to Reach a Campaign Goal of \$2,000,000

	# Gifts In Range	# Gift Prospects	Gift Value	\$ Amount in Range	Cumulative Total
<b>Leadership</b>	1	6	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000
	1	6	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$350,000
	2	12	\$100,000	\$200,000	\$550,000
	3	18	\$75,000	\$225,000	\$775,000
	6	36	\$50,000	\$300,000	\$1,075,000
	8	40	\$25,000	\$200,000	\$1,275,000
	12	60	\$15,000	\$180,000	\$1,455,000
	<b>33</b>	<b>178</b>		<b>\$1,455,000</b>	
<b>Major</b>	20	80	\$10,000	\$200,000	\$1,655,000
	30	120	\$5,000	\$150,000	\$1,805,000
	40	160	\$2,500	\$100,000	\$1,905,000
	60	150	\$1,000	\$60,000	\$1,965,000
	<b>150</b>	<b>510</b>		<b>\$510,000</b>	
<b>General</b>	All Others	Below	\$1,000	<b>\$35,000</b>	<b>\$2,000,000</b>

### Number of Gifts at Various Levels Required to Reach a Campaign Goal of \$3,000,000

	# Gifts In Range	# Gift Prospects	Gift Value	\$ Amount in Range	Cumulative Total
<b>Leadership</b>	1	6	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000
	1	6	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$550,000
	2	12	\$150,000	\$300,000	\$850,000
	3	18	\$100,000	\$300,000	\$1,150,000
	4	24	\$75,000	\$300,000	\$1,450,000
	5	30	\$50,000	\$250,000	\$1,700,000
	8	40	\$25,000	\$200,000	\$1,900,000
	12	60	\$15,000	\$180,000	\$2,080,000
	<b>36</b>	<b>196</b>		<b>\$2,080,000</b>	
<b>Major</b>	20	80	\$10,000	\$200,000	\$2,280,000
	40	160	\$5,000	\$200,000	\$2,480,000
	80	240	\$2,500	\$200,000	\$2,680,000
	200	500	\$1,000	\$200,000	\$2,880,000
	<b>340</b>	<b>980</b>		<b>\$800,000</b>	
<b>General</b>	All Others	Below	\$1,000	<b>\$120,000</b>	<b>\$3,000,000</b>

## **Appendix C Statement of Need**

### **GRINNELL VETERANS MEMORIAL COMMISSION**

*“Honoring veterans and serving the community. A new look. A local and national purpose.”*  
— Vision Statement for the Grinnell Veterans Memorial Building

#### **Origins**

Motivated by long-term community vision, the Grinnell Veterans Memorial Commission is dedicated to the renovation of Grinnell’s Veterans Memorial Building – as well as the reinvention of its functionality and the increased benefits to the community at large.

In 1944, during World War II, citizens of Grinnell overwhelmingly voted in favor of erecting and equipping a memorial building to commemorate the services of military veterans of the United States. Permission to construct the building in the “Grinnell City Park” occurred in 1957, and the Veterans Memorial Building opened in 1959.

Today, the 60-year-old structure stands empty on a prestigious spot within Grinnell’s Central Park. The Grinnell Veterans Memorial Commission is charged with the project of revitalizing and sustaining the Veterans Memorial Building well into the future. The building is part of the Grinnell Historic Commercial District, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

A community center dedicated to veterans – past, present and future, is as important today as it was when it was constructed. Like many small communities across Iowa and the nation, Grinnell has a proud history of military service, and even boasts a recipient of the Medal of Honor, this country’s most prestigious military award.

That honor was bestowed upon Sgt. Norman Bates, Company E, 4<sup>th</sup> Iowa Cavalry, who captured an enemy flag and its bearer during a battle in Columbus, Georgia during The Civil War in 1865. Bates was from Grinnell and had been a Grinnell College student.

#### **Leadership**

Leadership is provided by the five members of the Grinnell Veterans Memorial Commission, led by chairman Leo Lease. The commission manages and controls the Memorial Building, making and establishing the rules and regulations for its use and management.

Grinnell Veterans Memorial Commission members are:

- Leo Lease (Chair)
- Randall Hotchkin (Vice-chair)
- Marie Andrews
- Gwen Rieck
- Terry Stringfellow

Additional leadership and advisory support for fundraising includes former Grinnell College President George Drake; local attorney and Arts Director for the Grinnell Area Arts Council, Tom Lacina; veteran and former Congressman, Leonard Boswell; Grinnell College alum and former Des Moines Social Club executive director, Pete DeKock; Bill Menner of The Bill

Menner Group and former Iowa director for the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development; Nicole Brua Behrens, executive director of the Greater Poweshiek Community Foundation; and veteran and former U.S. Senator Tom Harkin.

### **Where We Are Now**

The innovative vision for the revitalization of the Grinnell Veterans Memorial Building has two components. One is the renovation of the structure itself. The other is the development of a program to operate within the building – specifically a national artist residency.

The project seeks to visually match local prairie style architecture and create an anchor structure in Central Park. The keystone feature of the renovated building will be the Prairie Star Residency, which will be a program of the Veterans Memorial Commission but operated by a contracted external group. The residency will create opportunities for artists, academicians, curators and others to gather for a specific period of time to work in a space away from their usual environment and obligations.

The residency would accommodate both veteran and nonveteran artists.

Grinnell Community support for the project was substantiated by the Nov. 7, 2017 city election, when a property tax levy of 41 cents per thousand dollars of taxable valuation was approved to be used for the restoration and upkeep of the Veterans Memorial Building. The levy will provide about \$110,000 per year for 20 years (adjusted by changes in real property valuations) and will serve as the backbone for building operations.

The original proposal for the residency came from Grinnell resident Tom Lacina, who had experience building a successful artist residency, “Grin City Collective,” a residency program begun in 2006 on the Lacina family farm north of Grinnell. Its alumni have gone on to launch and operate art galleries, direct arts communities and musical collectives, and pursue careers in various fields within the arts.

A connection between the Veterans Building and the arts is not new. In fact, the building was initially designed in such a way that it could operate as a theatre, and the first production of the Grinnell Community Theater was held in the Veterans Building in 1972.

### **Economic and Cultural Impact**

The project will be an excellent and attractive complement to the planned improvements to Central Park and will be in high demand for community events and office space – all while serving and honoring veterans.

The Prairie Star Residency could serve up to several dozen artists per year – bringing talented artists from across the nation to reside and work in the building, helping foster a more vibrant downtown area, and creating a community amenity that would be a destination, due to the programming there.

Having the artists and their works in such a prominent place in Grinnell can also help foster an interest in the arts for young people in the community.

### **Where We Need to Go**

The cost of the Veterans Memorial Building renovation is estimated to be over \$2 million. A fundraising campaign goal of at least \$2 million has been identified, including both private and

public grants. The fund drive will occur at local, statewide, and potentially, national levels. The funds are necessary to not only complete the restoration, but also to launch funding for programming.

As conceived, the building will include six apartments and working art shops in the lower level and five private studios on the main floor to accommodate the residency. Also on the main floor there would be community and veteran meeting spaces and a balcony overlooking the newly renovated Central Park.

It is estimated that renovation work would commence in 2018 and be completed within one to two years. Costs include:

▪ General Requirements (fees, consulting, etc.)	\$425,000
▪ General Construction	\$1,276,700
▪ Mechanical	\$247,000
▪ Electrical	\$125,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,073,700</b>

### **Why We Need You**

The Grinnell Veterans Memorial Commission asked the consulting firm of AMPERAGE Fundraising Advisers to assess the implementation approach for generating funding for this project. Your insights regarding this project – and your perception of public support – are needed as the Grinnell Veterans Memorial Commission prepares to renovate and improve the veterans building, giving it multiple valuable purposes to the community and the nation. Working together, we can move this project from vision to reality in a way that honors veterans, sparks artistic creativity and provides residents with another valuable community amenity – all within an honored spot in Grinnell’s Central Park.

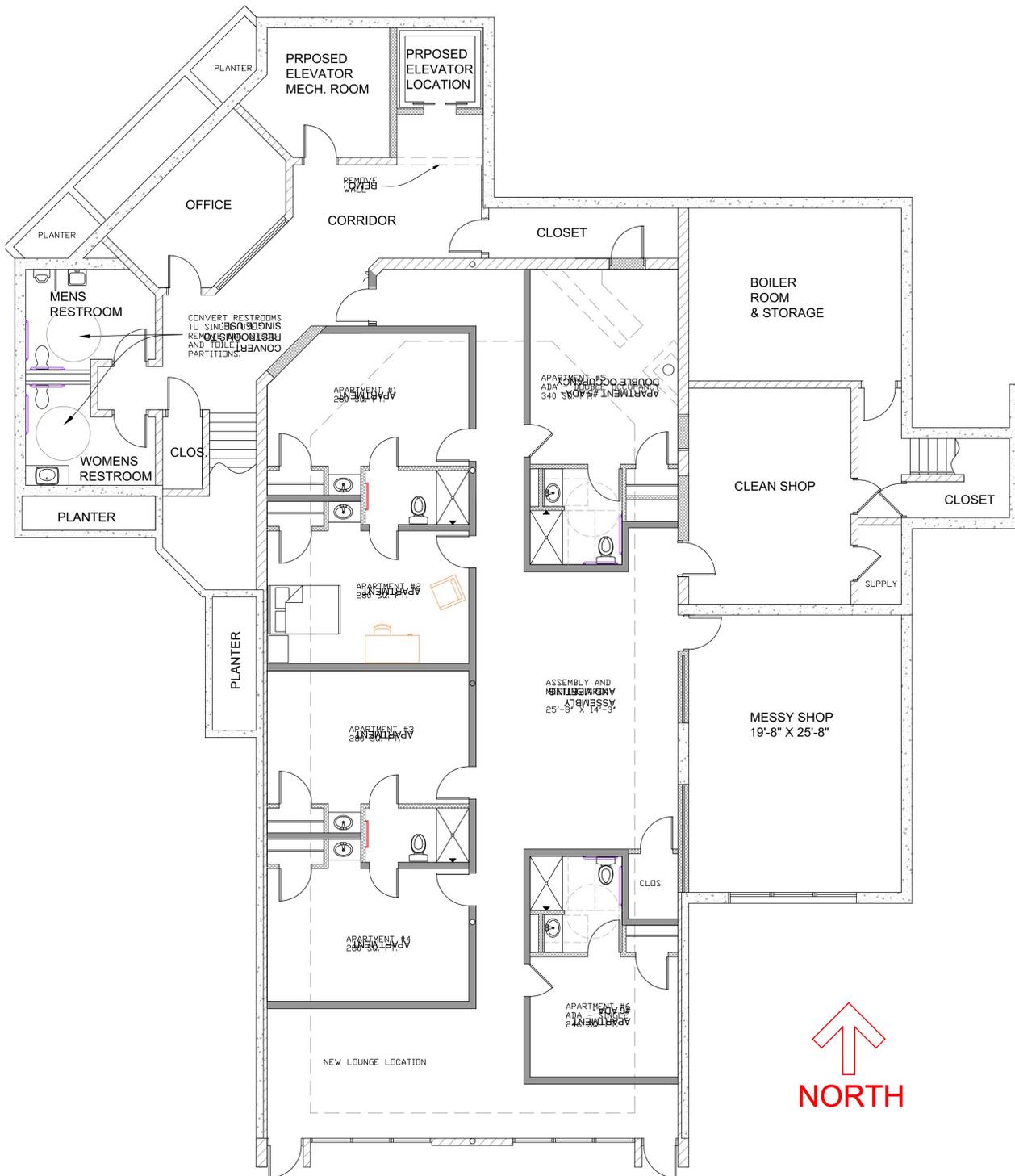
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Drawings/Images



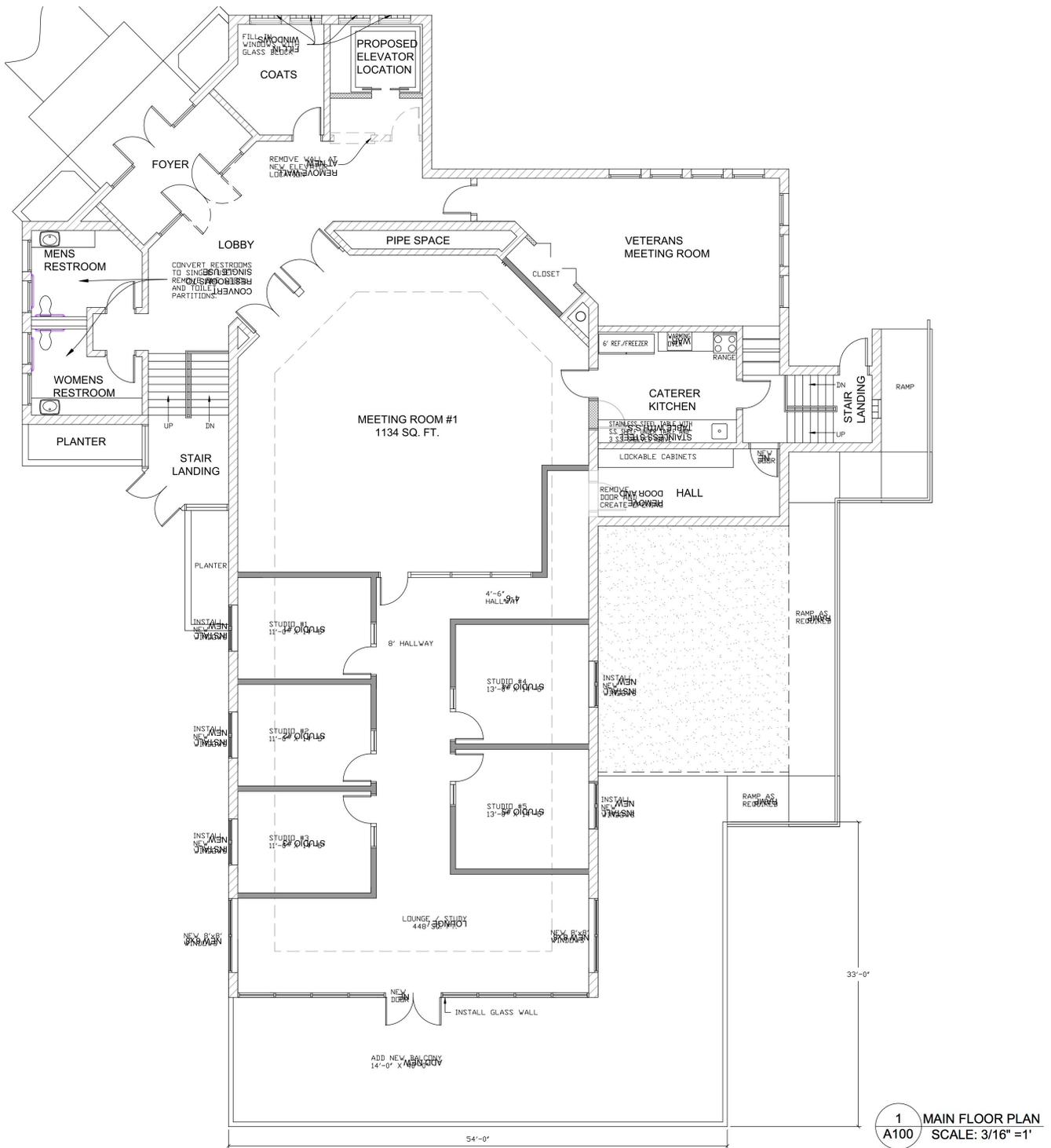
**Architect's view showing new look of the Grinnell Veterans Memorial Building. Front view is above. Back view, facing into Central Park, is below.**





1 BASEMENT REMODEL PLAN  
 A101 SCALE: 3/16" = 1'

**Basement Remodel Plan.**



**Main Floor Remodel Plan.**

