Economic Development
7 Court Street, Room 213
Belmont, New York 14813
Phone: 585-268-7471

Press Release
October 26, 2026

For Release: Immediately
Contact: Ashley Smith, Director of Economic Development
Office Phone: 585-268-7471

Allegany County Receives $250,000 Grant to Explore Future of Old Belmont School

BELMONT, NY — Allegany County is taking an important first step toward determining the future of the Old Belmont School following the award of **$250,000 from the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation** to support a feasibility study of the historic property.

For years, the **Belmont Betterment Association** has worked to maintain and care for the former school building, helping preserve an important piece of Belmont's history and keeping the property positioned for future use. Through a partnership with the Association, Allegany County is now evaluating whether the property could serve a broader community purpose, with the intent to pursue acquisition if the feasibility study determines that redevelopment is viable.

The study will examine the building's structural condition and suitability for redevelopment, along with the scope and potential cost of improvements. It will also consider whether the property could accommodate shared space, leasable office space, tourism initiatives and select public-use spaces that could benefit organizations, businesses, residents and visitors throughout Allegany County.

"This is an important first step," said Ashley Smith, Allegany County Director of Economic Development. "Before we determine what this building can become, we need to understand what is possible. This study gives us the opportunity to look at the building objectively, understand the investment that may be required, and begin conversations about how the space could best serve Allegany County. This would not be possible without the support of our County Legislators and leadership, and we are grateful for their willingness to explore this opportunity."

The County is preparing to receive **Request for Proposals (RFP)** seeking a qualified firm to conduct the feasibility study. No firm has been selected or awarded the study at this time. Following the appropriate procurement process, the selected firm will assess the property and provide recommendations to help inform the County's next steps.

In parallel, the County will begin conversations with potential partner agencies and organizations to better understand community needs and identify potential opportunities for collaboration within

the building. These conversations will help inform the feasibility process and ensure that potential uses are considered with the needs of the community and prospective partners in mind.

Allegany County is grateful to the **Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation** for its investment in this opportunity and its support of the County as it considers a new future for the property.

“We are incredibly thankful to the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation for believing in the potential of this work and providing the resources to take this first step,” said Smith. “We hope this is the beginning of a long and meaningful partnership. Their support allows us to take a thoughtful look at what may be possible, and we look forward to building on that relationship as this work moves forward.”

The County also recognizes the Belmont Betterment Association for its years of stewardship of the property, as they have put years of time, effort and care into this building. Their commitment has helped preserve the Old Belmont School and kept the doors open for a future opportunity. We are grateful for their partnership as we consider how the building could take on a new purpose that benefits Belmont and communities throughout Allegany County.

While no specific use has been determined, the effort could ultimately create a shared space where organizations, businesses and community partners can work together, while providing opportunities for public and tourism-related uses. For now, the focus is on understanding the building, listening to potential partners, and determining whether a sustainable redevelopment plan is possible.

The acceptance of the grant award remains subject to the appropriate **Allegany County legislative process**. The County will proceed with the RFP consistent with applicable procurement requirements, with the feasibility study contract to be awarded following that process.

More information about the study, partnerships, and opportunities will be shared as the process moves forward.

###