

Cherryfield Narraguagus Historical Society

July 23, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Those in attendance: Kelley Wescott, Crystal Hitchings, Denise Lavoie, Rick Harter and Peter Duston. The meeting began at 6:20.

The meeting's main topic was to discuss forming a partnership with the Academy, leasing space from them to have some displays and move our records from the library . This would ultimately be the new location of the Cherryfield Narraguagus Historical Society, with the current CNHS building being sold at some point over the next 12 months.

Kelley opened the meeting to make this proposal, having previously met with the Academy board regarding this option. The Academy voted to accept a partnership, with details to be worked out, if the historical society officers and directors voted in favor. The large room to the right of the main open area in the Academy and the porch with the handicapped access would be the space requested. The reasons for wanting to pool our resources are as follows:

1. The current condition of the Harriman House, beginning with the foundation, is poor. No-one knows the exact amount that would be needed to fully repair and restore the house, but we do know that over the past 3 plus years, despite having replaced the house roof shingles, the bulkhead, some electrical work and basement work, we are still many years and tens of thousands of dollars away from having a functional museum.
2. The main purpose of the historical society is to collect, preserve and promote the rich history of Cherryfield. Between tight schedules and the need to constantly fundraise for repairs, there has been no time to focus on carrying out this mission.
3. The Academy, like ourselves, face the ever increasing cost of maintaining a historic building and has, over the last 17 years, invested a great deal into making the old school available for the entire community. Throughout the year they hold many events that would give our historical society exposure and an opportunity to share the stories and background of the town. In other words we could, in a matter of months, hit the road running in terms of availability and promotion.
4. Annual funds from the endowment are used to pay insurance and electricity on a building that we cannot, for the foreseeable future, be able to use. These same funds could be used to lease space, allowing us to focus on organizing and promoting the town's historical accounts.

Everyone present agreed that we needed to consider the option . The following ideas and suggestions were discussed.

- A. With the reduction of actual physical space, Crystal put forth an idea to have displays in other businesses in the town and have the leased space from the Academy be interchangeable every so often so that different artifacts and information could be seen.
- B. Rick asked Peter about a possible storage agreement to use the basement of the Legion Hall to hold the overage we would have, especially from the barn. We would purchase dehumidifiers to take care of the dampness and whatever other needs the basement might have.
- C. Peter welcomed the opportunity to form a partnership with the Historical Society as the Legion is in need of support. Details on how and when this would take place will be discussed at future meetings.
- D. Denise recommended that we find out how much places in the area charge per square foot to lease/rent space. Kelley said she would get that information. Denise also suggested that we get at least three realtors to look at the house so that we have a solid idea what it could sell for, keeping in mind that we don't want the house to sit for any length of time. When they do the walkthrough, we will ask them if there are any repairs we would need to make prior to the listing. The house will be sold AS IS . There is some concern that whoever purchases it might tear it down, so ideas were floated that perhaps the deed would include a caveat that says it must be restored. This will be discussed further in future meetings.
- E. Denise knows someone that can answer legal questions we might have.
- F. A fair lease amount was discussed. As of this date we were looking at somewhere between \$4000 and \$6000 per year. Once Kelley gets the square foot measurements and average Washington County rate, that will be revisited.
- G. Rick mentioned that the Wyman crew might be willing to help us move when the time comes. He also thought they might want to wait on putting the house on the market until late Spring of 27. This will also be revisited once we have spoken to the realtors.
- H. Rick made a motion to form the partnership with the Academy and the Legion. Crystal seconded it. The vote was unanimously in favor. (Sarah could not attend, but asked that her yes vote be entered into the minutes).
- I. Kelley will contact Lori Barbee to set up a combined meeting of both groups in August.
- J. Crystal will contact Sue Mooney (realtor) to set up a meeting at the museum.
- K. The memorial garden will be moved to the Academy grounds.
- L. We will need to go through all the contents of the house and barn, sorting things into keep, toss and sell categories.

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 PM