The Story
In 1813, the town of Belgrade required a formal place for its town meetings which, until that time, had been held in private residences. As a result, officials raised $200 dollars to construct a “town house” next to the burying ground (now known as the Woodside Cemetery.) Built in 1814 and first used in 1815, the Old Town House is one of Belgrade’s oldest buildings. Annual meetings were held in the single-story, post-and-beam structure from 1815 until 1872, as was the 1819 vote to separate from Massachusetts. After the building was used as a quarantine site during a smallpox epidemic, meetings were moved to the local masonic hall. From 1873 to 1918 the building was used by the Woodside Cemetery. Pursuant to the wishes of Belgrade’s citizens, the Town of Belgrade recently entered into an agreement with the Belgrade Historical Society to allow the society to preserve and restore the Old Town House and use it for display and meeting space.

The Threat
An assessment of the structure by the Belgrade Historical Society identified several critical issues, most significantly that the building’s frame is infested with wood beetles and there is dangerous water infiltration.

The Solution
The Belgrade Historical Society, understanding the significance of this building to the community, has launched a $200,000 capital campaign to restore the old meetinghouse and has already raised over $75,000 toward this goal. Meeting the full campaign goal means the society can protect this local landmark and transform it into a useful space for current and future generations.