

**A Funding Proposal By Jonah Community Inc.  
to the  
Williamson County  
Community Recreational Facility Fund**

**18 December 2013**

**Mission Statement**

The mission of of Jonah Community Inc. is to preserve and maintain the historically significant Jonah School building as a community center so it can continue to be a hub of learning and interaction for the citizens and friends of East Central Williamson County, Texas,as it has for ninety plus years.

**Contact Information**

Carolyn Endsley, President  
Jonah Community Inc.  
260 Old Highway 29  
Georgetown, Texas 78626  
512-863-4916

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Architect	Voelter Associates Inc., Georgetown, TX
Mech/Elec. Engineer	AYS Engineering, Round Rock, TX
Estimating Services	ATC Contractors, Georgetown, TX
JCI Board President	Carolyn Endsley, Georgetown, TX

## PROPOSAL OVERVIEW

Jonah Community, Inc, a 501©4 non-profit organization (see Appendix A, page 19), is applying to receive \$165,000 from the Williamson County Community Recreational Facility Fund to begin the much needed renovation of the Jonah Community Center located at the intersection of CR 126 and HWY 29 East, Georgetown.

The physical building was originally the Jonah School and was designed by Hugo Franz Kuehne, founder of the University of Texas School of Architecture. Opened in January 1923 it served as the area school until 1971, when it was deeded by the Georgetown School District to Jonah Community, Inc. for use as a community center. It has since served Jonah and the surrounding area of eastern Williamson County quite well as the location for a myriad of educational and fund raising activities; 4-H and extension service meetings and demonstrations, CPR classes, rabies clinics, senior lunches and games days, reunions, public meetings, church services, chili suppers, wedding and funeral receptions and was a county polling location for many years.

The building itself has “good bones” but is badly in need of major renovations and improvements. Funds raised by Jonah Community, Inc. have been used to maintain the building as described herein, including replacing original windows 20-30 years ago which are again in need of replacement, painting the auditorium, upgrading some of the HVAC and in 2010 a new roof which was critical in protecting the interior from deterioration. Last year Williamson County Master Gardeners installed xeriscape plantings, the parking was upgraded and this year the Scouts have been upgrading various outside areas. (See pages 14 and 15).

Now more substantial funding is needed in six major areas highlighted on page 7. New ADA and code compliant bathroom facilities are much needed to replace those now existing and major improvements are required if food service is to play a major role in the use of the building as it has in the past. Other areas need upgrading to meet accessibility requirements as well. Specifics of these six improvements for which funding is requested may be found on pages 2 and 3, and in the architectural renderings pages 8-13.

Once the six priority areas are taken care of, other less urgent repairs can be addressed in a timely manner. The ultimate goal is to expand educational offerings such as ESL, GED, and nutrition instruction and social opportunities at the Community Center in a safer more accessible environment to visitors of all ages. Being so close to the new Blackland Heritage Park on east HWY 29, its planned historical exhibits will present the opportunity to offer use of the Center as an adjunct destination for school tours learning about the history of our county.

Jonah and surrounding areas have shown signs of new growth and we want to be ready to serve the needs and interests of all new families as well as those who are already here. It is hoped this building that has been the hub of activities for east central Williamson County, can continue to do so well into its second century.

## DESCRIPTION OF ORIGINAL BUILDING CONSTRUCTION

### FOUNDATION

Exterior walls rest on concrete perimeter footings, and interior footings are brick or cedar post resting on concrete spread footings.

### EXTERIOR WALLS

Masonry exterior walls are constructed of 9 inches of common brick with face brick veneer with parapet extending above roof line. The walls originally incorporated brick flues for furnaces, but the flues have been removed above the roof line.

### FLOOR FRAMING

Floor construction is 2"X 12" joists @ 16" o.c. with bridging spaced 7 feet or less. Sill beams generally consist of 5-2"X12" 's.

### ROOF FRAMING / SURFACE

Conventional wood trusses were constructed to allow roof to drain to downspouts at perimeter. The original roof was shown to be "Composition Roof with Metal Flashing". A new 60 mil white TPO roof, mechanically fastened over 1/2" separator board with seams lapped 3", heat-welded in the field, was installed in 2010.

### WINDOWS

Double-hung wood, 9 over 9 lite, in original construction. In 1990's the windows were replaced with a standard size window that left a space to fill in at the top.

# PROJECT CONCEPT

## OVERALL PLAN

The intention is to continue to use the property for the same purposes for which it has been used in the past but with improvements that will make it more resistant to the effects of nature, more convenient to use, more usable by those who have problems with mobility, and with a greater degree of comfort in inclement weather. The upgrades we envision will allow the building to be used by more people, more often. Organizations of various types and private individuals from a larger area will be able to have functions in Jonah.

## FOUNDATION

One of the first items on the list of projects will be to make repairs to the foundation by replacing or repairing footings and the floor framing. The process will include leveling the floor where it has been weakened by deterioration.

## EXTERIOR WALLS

Except for the windows and a few areas that need attention, the exterior masonry walls are in reasonably good condition. Some tuck-pointing of the masonry joints will be required.

## FLOOR FRAMING

Replacing rotten floor joists and flooring will be part of the foundation repair.

## ROOF FRAMING / SURFACE

The roof, being new, will only need modification where new plumbing vents and kitchen equipment penetrations are required.

## WINDOWS

The goal is to restore the original double-hung wood, 9 over 9 lite, original window configuration. In the absence of funds to do a complete replacement, the existing windows will be repaired and/or replaced as required.



EARLY ACTIVITY AT JONAH SCHOOL—COMPLETED ca. 1923



FRONT OF SCHOOL ca. 1938

ENTRANCE FAÇADE ca. 1960





EXISTING VIEW INSIDE ENTRANCE



VIEW DOWN CORRIDOR



AREA OF WEAK FOUNDATION



VIEW OF EXTERIOR REPAIRS NEEDED

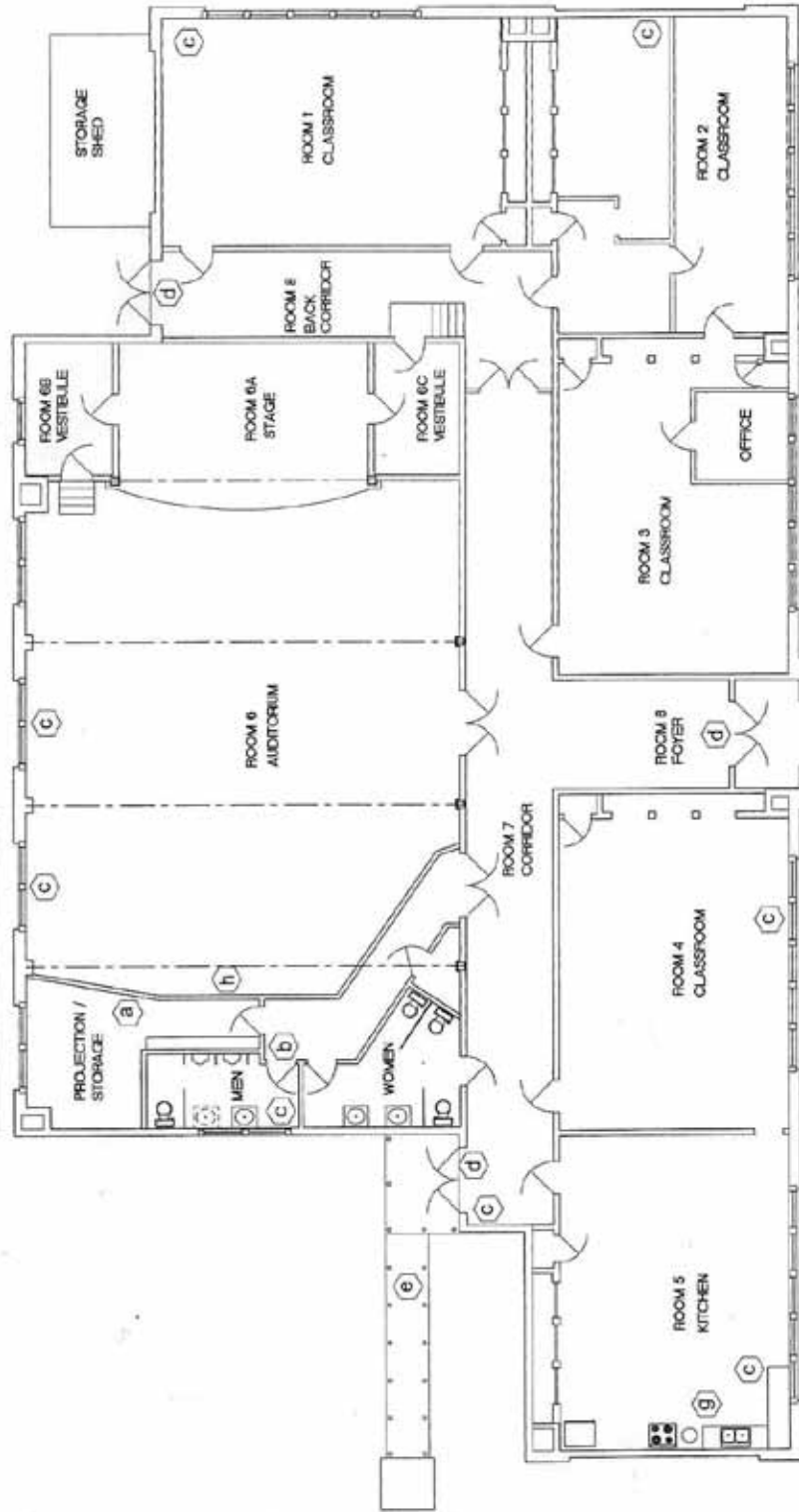
## RENOVATION COST ESTIMATES

Demolition including fence *	\$ 5,425.00
Structural masonry repairs (Allowance) *	12,000.00
Structural repairs (floor joists and others) carpentry (Allowance) *	40,000.00
Window restoration (Allowance) *	29,000.00
Plumbing *	54,000.00
Electrical including \$1,800 for 2 hall, 8 kitchen lights *	19,904.00
Asphalt paving 110,000 s/f including striping	107,000.00
Concrete landings with cover at west side	11,000.00
Exterior masonry cleaning	5,600.00
Doors/hardware	13,245.00
Drywall/insulation	35,822.00
Painting	45,698.00
Sealants	3,500.00
Roof repairs (Allowance)	2,500.00
Floor finishes (Allowance)	32,890.00
HVAC single phase, 4-3 ton & 4-5 ton units	51,054.00
Stove hood including fire wrap	20,558.00
Specialties (sound system allowance)	30,000.00
Wheelchair lift equipment and installation	18,000.00
Drinking fountains equipment and installation	3,500.00
Kitchen equipment installation	85,000.00
Sub-Total	<b>\$625,696.00</b>
General Conditions 7%	43,800.00
Overhead 6%	40,170.00
Profit 10%	70,967.00
Total Construction Cost	<b>\$780,633.00</b>
Architectural/Engineering Services 9%	70,257.00
<b>TOTAL PROJECT COST</b>	<b>\$850,890.00</b>

Asterisks (\*) denote tasks identified by Jonah Community, Incorporated as top priority repairs or replacements necessary to do before all others on the Project Estimate Sheet.

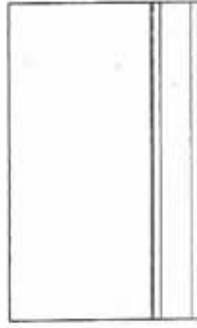
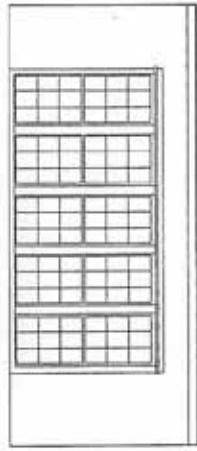
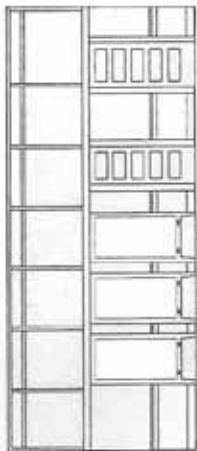
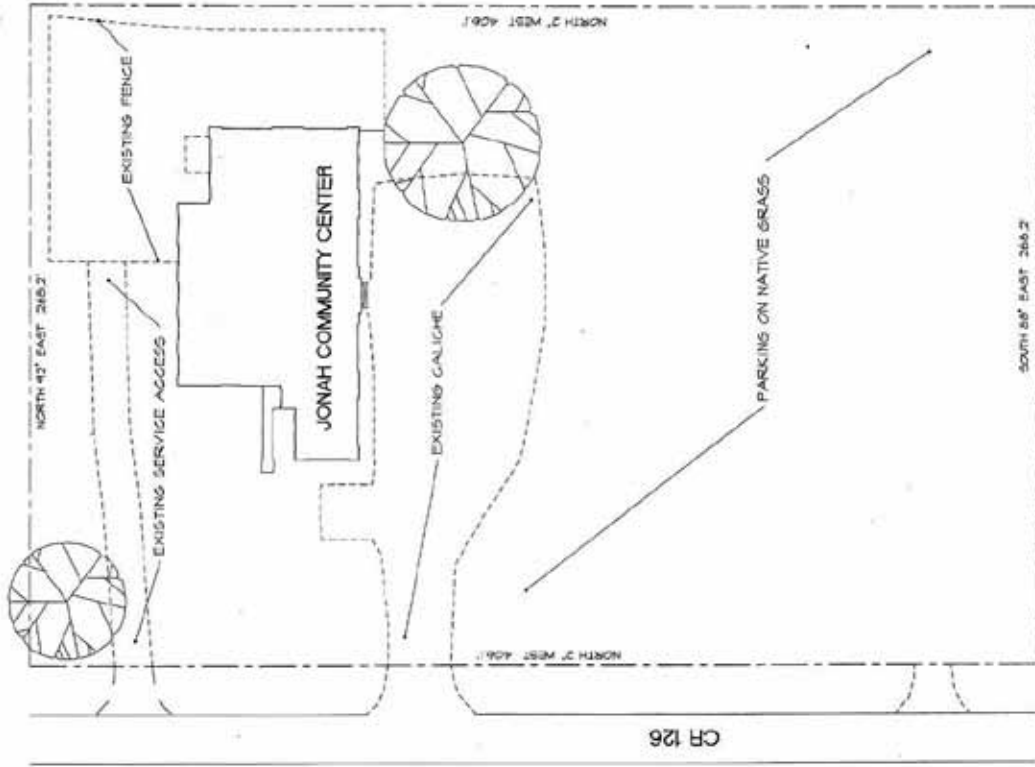
Estimates above were provided in October, 2012 to Jonah Community, Inc, by Voelter Associates Inc., Georgetown, TX (Architect), AYS Engineering, Round Rock, TX (Mech/Elec Engineer), and ATC Contractors, Georgetown, TX (Estimating Services).

- AREAS OF CONCERN (Overlaid with ⓐ)**
- a. Existing electrical not code compliant.
  - b. Egress are inadequate and not handicap compliant.
  - c. Existing floor is not level.
  - d. Exterior doors are deteriorated and in need of repair or replacement.
  - e. Ramp not handicap compliant.
  - f. Parking not paved and/or graded to drain properly.
  - g. Kitchen equipment in need of upgrade.
  - h. More tables needed in auditorium.

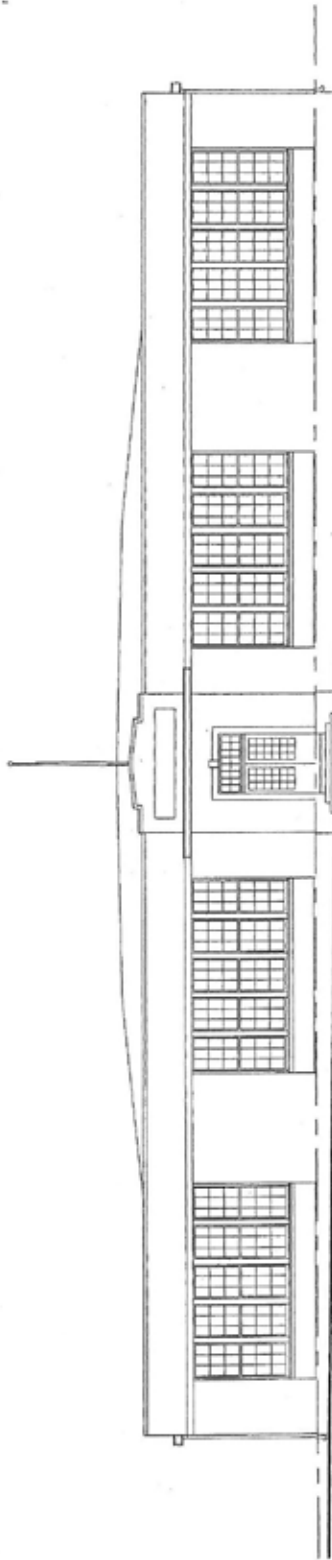


**EXISTING FLOOR PLAN**





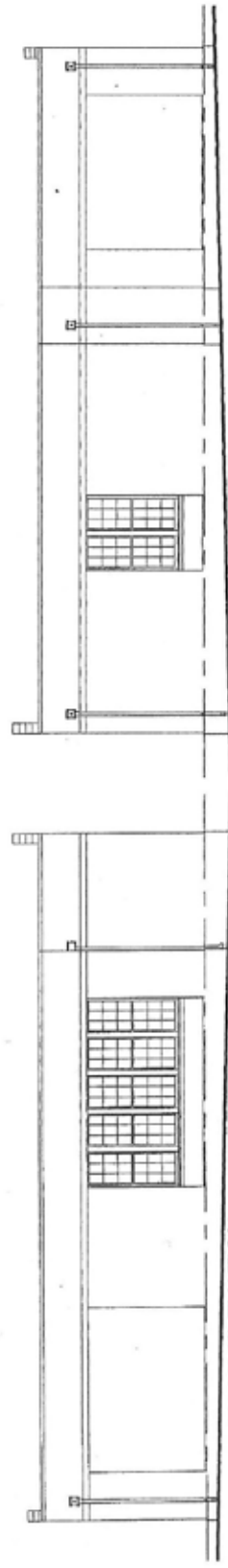
TYPICAL CLASSROOM INTERIOR ELEVATIONS  
ROOM 5 PER ORIGINAL DRAWINGS  
NOT TO SCALE



FRONT ELEVATION--(SOUTH)



REAR ELEVATION--(NORTH)  
EXTERIOR ELEVATIONS PER ORIGINAL DRAWINGS  
NOT TO SCALE



WEST ELEVATION  
EXTERIOR ELEVATIONS PER ORIGINAL DRAWINGS  
NOT TO SCALE

EAST ELEVATION

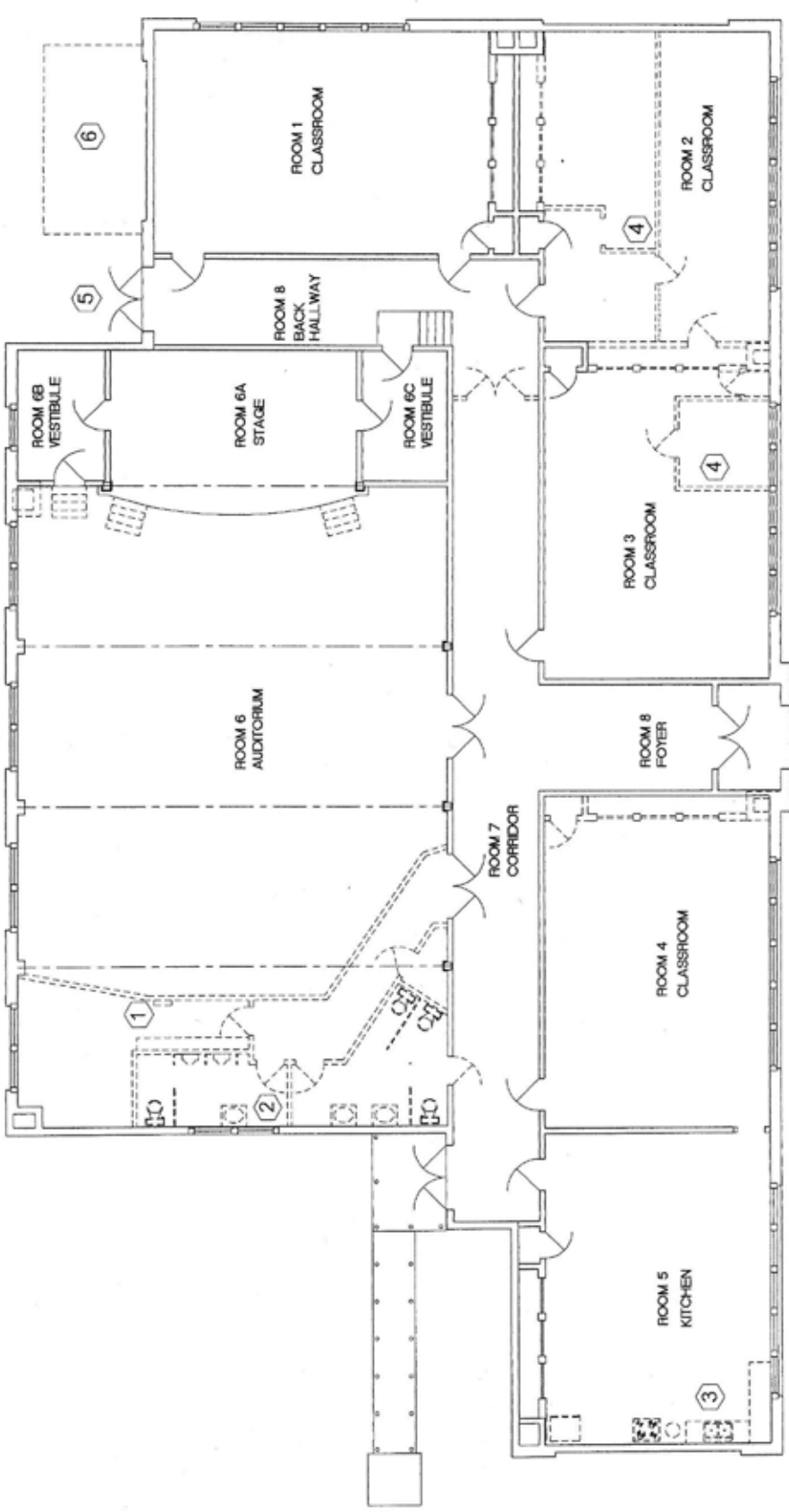
**KEYED NOTES (Demolished with):**

1. Remove electrical panel and associated wiring and accessories.
2. Remove partition enclosing restrooms and all associated plumbing and fixtures.
3. Remove existing sink and kitchen cabinets.
4. Remove existing partitions that were added.
5. Prepare area for installation of new landing and steps.
6. Remove existing metal storage shed.

**GENERAL NOTES:**

7. Remove partitions to make space for new tables.

a. Proceed with demolition work shown dotted as it is required for new work to commence.  
 b. Remove from site all chain-link fencing and items not required for new work.  
 c. Remove all building items where required for the installation of new work.



**PROPOSED DEMOLITION PLAN**  
 GRAPHIC SCALE IN FEET 0 5 10 20 30  
 N

**KEYED NOTES (Denoted with ○):**

**PHASE A**

1. Upgrade electrical service to building.
2. New electrical panel location.
3. Build landing and steps for new exit.
4. Upgrade existing ramp to be compliant with current accessibility standards.

**PHASE B**

1. Install new commercial-grade sinks and equipment in kitchen.
2. Construct partitions for new compliant men's and women's restrooms.
3. Repair front entrance doors and replace other exterior doors.
4. Enlarge door covering and install new or reused 3 foot door.
5. Install new H<sub>2</sub>O drinking fountains.

**GENERAL NOTES:**

**PHASE A**

- a. Replace deteriorated floor framing.
- b. Replace floor coverings, remove damaged plaster, other original finishes where possible, and ceiling tiles.
- c. Where upgrades are made, maintain an appearance as close as possible to original historic fabric.
- d. Preserve hallway graphics as determined by governing board and repaint building.

**PHASE B**

- a. Install new central HVAC.
- b. Upgrade lighting; provide separate switches for two hallways.
- c. Install new sound system.
- d. Repaint interior and exterior.

**PHASE C**

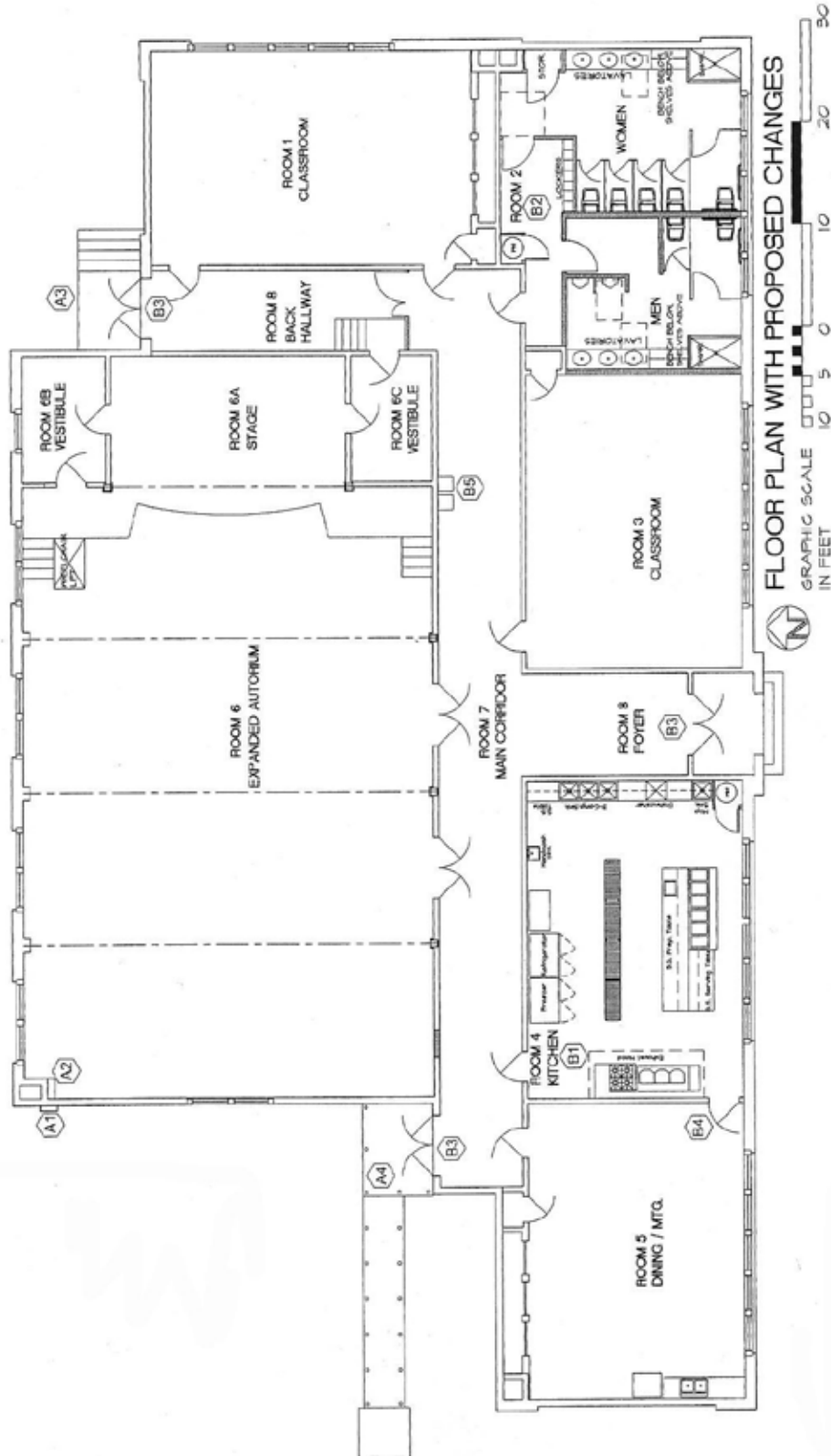
- a. Replace all windows and trim to match original condition.
- b. Complete site development per Proposed Site Plan.

**PHASE B**

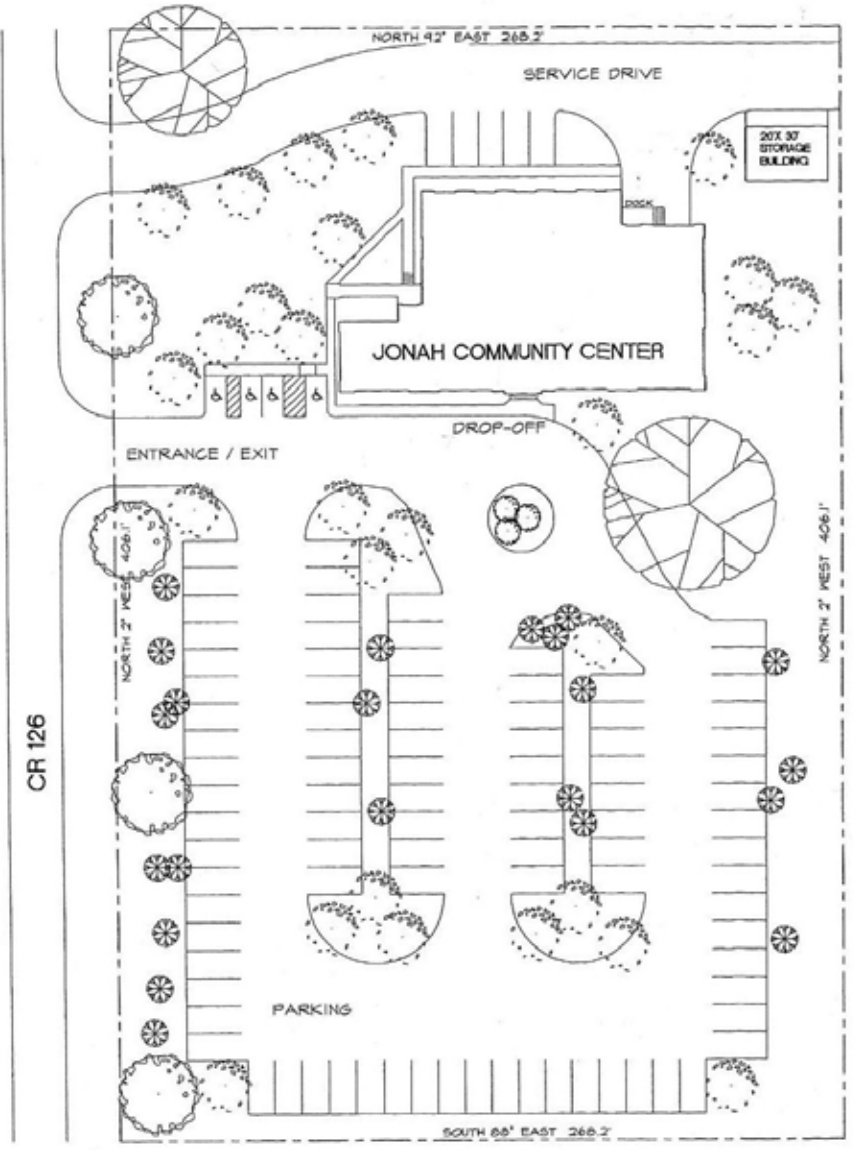
1. Replace deteriorated floor framing.
2. Replace floor coverings, remove damaged plaster, other original finishes where possible, and ceiling tiles.
3. Where upgrades are made, maintain an appearance as close as possible to original historic fabric.
4. Preserve hallway graphics as determined by governing board and repaint building.

**PHASE C**

- a. Replace all windows and trim to match original condition.
- b. Complete site development per Proposed Site Plan.



**FLOOR PLAN WITH PROPOSED CHANGES**  
 GRAPHIC SCALE 0 5 10 20 30  
 IN FEET



CR 126

**PROPOSED SITE PLAN**



GRAPHIC SCALE  
IN FEET



## **Time Line for Repairs, Renovation, or Improvements Previously Paid by Jonah Community, Inc. (JCI), Donors, or Renters**

1972 Georgetown ISD deeds the Jonah School building/property to JCI for use as the Jonah Community Center. It continues to be used for that purpose in 2013.

1976 JCI leases the building to Georgetown Community Theater and gives lessee permission to wall in approximately 25% of the auditorium and to use that space to create a hall, 2 bathrooms, a janitor's closet, a sound room, and storage within the sound room. Lessee also painted a hall mural depicting Jonah's history with the assistance of students from the Art Dept. of Southwestern University in Georgetown, TX.

1981 Jonah Water Supply Corporation leases room 3 as the office of Jonah Water Supply and additional storage space. A chain link fence was installed and paid for by the water company. Central heat/air was also installed and paid for by Jonah Water Supply.

2001 JCI leases space to Faith Community Church for use on Sundays only. Church bought gas range and freezer for kitchen. JCI bought refrigerator. Church bought and installed 5 window air-conditioners. JCI bought 4 heaters. Church disbanded in 2011.

2002 Professional yearly termite inspection and treatment when needed paid by JCI begins and continues in 2013. (Average inspection costs JCI about \$250 per year.)

2002 JCI purchases Solar Screens for 10 windows on south side of the building at a cost of \$500.

2002 JCI Board votes to remove theater-type seats from auditorium (not original).

2002 Contractor James Ropollo evaluates building condition. Ropollo recommends that an architect be hired to do a master plan.

2003 JCI shares cost of replacing central heat/air in room 3 used by Jonah Special Utility District (formerly Jonah Water Supply Corp.) Cost to each party was \$1732.

2005 JCI purchases a sign board on 2 tall poles with moveable letters. Volunteer Jack Graves installs the sign near Hwy 29 on JCI property. JCI pays project costs of \$493.

2004-2005 Volunteer, David Voelter, an architect, does a walk-through and informal assessment of building condition. Voelter puts floor plan of building into computer. County Probationers remove old theater-type seats, repaint auditorium, caulk windows.

2006-2007 Mv3 Construction, LLC, a minority-owned business, rents office space in room 3. Renters supplied paint and repainted the room.

## **Time Line for Repairs, Renovation, or Improvements continued**

2010 New xeriscape landscaping for front and west sides of building is designed by Grace Lidell and planted by Grace, Carl Lidell, and volunteers from Williamson County Master Gardeners. All materials are donated by businesses and individuals.

2010 New roof is installed and repairs are made to parapet and outside masonry. One downspout is replaced. Cost (\$33,136.87) is paid by JCI.

2010 Wall of Honor for Jonah Veterans is created in auditorium and executed by JCI volunteers. JCI paid all costs of materials (\$196.19).

2011 An outdoor site is rented to Ms. Garcia for operation of a food trailer. Ms. Garcia paid for electrical service (220 and 110) to that site to be installed. The electrical service was donated to JCI as an improvement when she ceased to operate her business in Jonah.

2011 JCI reconnects a third security light, incurring additional monthly utility costs.

2012 David Voelter is hired to design and draw plans for renovation. Larry Myers, electrical engineer, and James Ropollo, contractor, provided estimates. Cost of Voelter's services (\$1022.73) paid by JCI.

2012-2013 JCI rents room 3 and room 4 for worship services and Bible classes on Sundays by Early Covenant Baptist Assembly.

2013 A young man did his Eagle Scout project by installing an underground electric line and an automatic light to shine on an existing flagpole, repainting the flagpole, building a landing pad under an existing swing set, cleaning flower beds, painting a mailbox post, and planting two young trees. He raised funding for the project and recruited dozens of other Scouts and family volunteers to work with him. JCI donated \$300 for pea gravel for the landing pad under the swing.

Profit & Loss Statements

Jonah Community, Inc.  
2011 – 2013

<b>INCOME</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013 *</b>
Chili Supper Income	\$ 3161.50	\$ 2364.00	\$ 3224.00
Membership Dues Income	500.00	380.00	380.00
Community Sale Income	757.30	0.00	0.00
90 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Bldg. Celebration	0.00	2434.00	0.00
Gifts Received	310.00	5.00	6255.00
Gifts Received: Chisholm Trail Foundation	5220.00	765.00	0.00
Interest Income	51.17	29.19	18.40
Rental Income	<u>3850.19</u>	<u>2690.00</u>	<u>2360.00</u>
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$13,850.16</b>	<b>\$ 8667.19</b>	<b>\$ 12,237.40</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
Chili Supper Expense (includes cleaning)	\$ 1340.00	\$ 860.35	\$ 1110.19
Donation Plaque, Plates, Engraving	0.00	173.73	0.00
Utilities: Electricity	1916.56	1446.44	1448.51
Utilities: Water	432.63	382.68	403.29
Utilities: Propane (includes \$5 rental fee)	5.00	280.00	252.74
Utilities: Garbage	181.74	232.56	226.60
Pest Control Maintenance	269.93	286.13	303.30
Building Repairs/Maintenance	944.30	579.74	687.89
Management Fees/Filing Fees	112.50	150.00	155.00
Supplies and Stamps	233.00	179.80	38.51
Insurance	1608.27	1608.27	1608.27
Professional Services	0.00	1022.73	0.00
90 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Of Bldg. Celebration	0.00	1688.46	0.00
Building Improvement	<u>0000.00</u>	<u>0000.00</u>	<u>480.75</u>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 7044.73</b>	<b>\$ 8890.97</b>	<b>\$ 6715.05</b>
<b>INCOME-EXPENSE (PROFIT OR LOSS)</b>	<b>\$ 6805.43</b>	<b>-S 223.78</b>	<b>\$ 5522.35</b>

\* YTD 12/16/2013

**Balance Sheet**  
**Jonah Community Inc.**  
**12/13/2013**

ASSETS

Cash and Bank Accounts	\$16,463.03
Checking	13,409.47
Savings	5,110.00
Chisholm Trail Community Foundation	<u>\$34,982.50</u>
Total Cash and Bank Accounts	\$34,982.50

TOTAL ASSETS

LIABILITIES & EQUITY

Liabilities	\$ 0.00
Equity	<u>34,982.50</u>

**TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY**                      \$34,982.50

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
JONAH COMMUNITY, INC.**

2011

Stiles Byrom	Georgetown, TX	President
Marya Welch	Georgetown, TX	Vice-President
Carolyn Endsley	Georgetown, TX	Secretary
Jennifer Lidell David	Georgetown, TX	Treasurer
Lynn Lidell	Georgetown, TX	At-Large

2012

Carolyn Endsley	Georgetown, TX	President
JoAnn Thornton	Weir, TX	Vice-President
Robbi Arnett	Hutto, TX	Secretary
Jennifer Lidell David	Georgetown, TX	Treasurer
Marya Welch	Georgetown, TX	At-Large

2013

Carolyn Endsley	Georgetown, TX	President
Karen Gattis	Hutto, TX	Vice-President
Robbi Arnett	Hutto, TX	Secretary
JoAnn Thornton	Weir, TX	Treasurer
Bailey McAnulty	Taylor, TX	At-Large

**APPENDIX A**

**VERIFICATION OF 501(C)4 STATUS**

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE  
P. O. BOX 2508  
CINCINNATI, OH 45201

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Date: OCT 09 2002

JONAH COMMUNITY INC  
40 COUNTY RD 126  
GEROGETOWN, TX 78626

Employer Identification Number:  
74-2995908  
DLN:  
17053232036012  
Contact Person:  
DEL TRIMBLE ID# 31309  
Contact Telephone Number:  
(877) 829-5500  
Internal Revenue Code  
Section 501(c)(4)  
Accounting Period Ending:  
December 31  
Form 990 Required:  
Yes  
Addendum Applies:  
No

Dear Applicant:

Based on information supplied, and assuming your operations will be as stated in your application for recognition of exemption, we have determined you are exempt from Federal income tax under section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code as an organization described in the section indicated above.

Unless specifically excepted, you are liable for taxes under the Federal Insurance Contributions Act (social security taxes) for each employee to whom you pay \$100 or more during a calendar year. And, unless excepted, you are also liable for tax under the Federal Unemployment Tax Act for each employee to whom you pay \$50 or more during a calendar quarter if, during the current or preceding calendar year, you had one or more employees at any time in each of 20 calendar weeks or you paid wages of \$1,500 or more in any calendar quarter. If you have any questions about excise, employment, or other Federal taxes, please address them to this office.

If your sources of support, or your purposes, character, or method of operation change, please let us know so we can consider the effect of the change on your exempt status. In the case of an amendment to your organizational document or bylaws, please send us a copy of the amended document or bylaws. Also, you should inform us of all changes in your name or address.

In the heading of this letter we have indicated whether you must file Form 990, Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax. If Yes is indicated, you are required to file Form 990 only if your gross receipts each year are normally more than \$25,000. However, if you receive a Form 990 package in the mail, please file the return even if you do not exceed the gross receipts test. If you are not required to file, simply attach the label provided, check the box in the heading to indicate that your annual gross receipts are normally \$25,000 or less, and sign the return.

If a return is required, it must be filed by the 15th day of the fifth

Letter 948 (DO/CG)

JONAH COMMUNITY INC

month after the end of your annual accounting period. A penalty of \$20 a day is charged when a return is filed late, unless there is reasonable cause for the delay. However, the maximum penalty charged cannot exceed \$10,000 or 5 percent of your gross receipts for the year, whichever is less. For organizations with gross receipts exceeding \$1,000,000 in any year, the penalty is \$100 per day per return, unless there is reasonable cause for the delay. The maximum penalty for an organization with gross receipts exceeding \$1,000,000 shall not exceed \$50,000. This penalty may also be charged if a return is not complete, so please be sure your return is complete before you file it.

You are not required to file Federal income tax returns unless you are subject to the tax on unrelated business income under section 511 of the Code. If you are subject to this tax, you must file an income tax return on Form 990-T, Exempt Organization Business Income Tax Return. In this letter we are not determining whether any of your present or proposed activities are unrelated trade or business as defined in section 513 of the Code.

You are required to make your annual information return, Form 990 or Form 990-EZ, available for public inspection for three years after the later of the due date of the return or the date the return is filed. You are also required to make available for public inspection your exemption application, any supporting documents, and your exemption letter. Copies of these documents are also required to be provided to any individual upon written or in person request without charge other than reasonable fees for copying and postage. You may fulfill this requirement by placing these documents on the Internet. Penalties may be imposed for failure to comply with these requirements. Additional information is available in Publication 557, Tax-Exempt Status for Your Organization, or you may call our toll free number shown above.

You need an employer identification number even if you have no employees. If an employer identification number was not entered on your application, a number will be assigned to you and you will be advised of it. Please use that number on all returns you file and in all correspondence with the Internal Revenue Service.

Donors may not deduct contributions to you because you are not an organization described in section 170(c) of the Code. Under section 6113, any fundraising solicitation you make must include an express statement (in a conspicuous and easily recognizable format) that contributions or gifts to you are not deductible as charitable contributions for Federal income tax purposes. This provision does not apply, however, if your annual gross receipts are normally \$100,000 or less, or if your solicitations are made to no more than ten persons during a calendar year. The law provides penalties for failure to comply with this requirement, unless failure is due to reasonable cause.

If we have indicated in the heading of this letter that an addendum applies, the enclosed addendum is an integral part of this letter.

Because this letter could help resolve any questions about your exempt

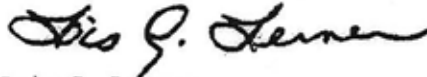
Letter 948 (DO/CG)

JONAH COMMUNITY INC

status, you should keep it in your permanent records.

If you have any questions, please contact the person whose name and telephone number are shown in the heading of this letter.

Sincerely yours,



Lois G. Lerner  
Director, Exempt Organizations





Carolyn Endsley <c42.endsley@gmail.com>

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**Form 990-N E-filing Receipt - IRS Status: Accepted**

1 message

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**epostcard@urban.org** <epostcard@urban.org>  
To: c42.endsley@gmail.com

Wed, May 15, 2013 at 8:18 PM

Organization: JONAH COMMUNITY INC  
EIN: 74-2995908  
Submission Type: Form 990-N  
Year: 2012  
Submission ID: 7800582013135kr75737  
e-File Postmark: 5/15/2013 9:12:40 PM  
Accepted Date: 5/15/2013

The IRS has accepted the e-Postcard described above. Please save this receipt for your records.

Thank you for filing.

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e-Postcard technical support  
Phone: 866-255-0654 (toll free)  
email: ePostcard@urban.org

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JONAH COMMUNITY INC  
% Carolyn Endsley  
260 Old Hwy 29 East  
Georgetown, TX 78626

**APPENDIX B**

**A HISTORY OF JONAH, TEXAS**

**ITS SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY CENTER**

**JONAH COMMUNITY CENTER**  
**(formerly the 1922-1971 Jonah School building)**  
**a history compiled in 2012 by Carolyn Endsley**

Jonah, Texas, an unincorporated community, is located on State Highway 29 in Williamson County about eight miles east of Georgetown. The San Gabriel River, a regional river, transverses the community of Jonah. The two major forks of the San Gabriel River originate in Burnet County. They merge in Georgetown and flow west to east through Jonah emptying into the Little River in Milam County, thence into the Brazos River. The area was originally settled in the late 1840's by farmers who called the settlement Water Valley. Education was important to the settlers. According to Clara Scarborough in *Land of Good Water*, Water Valley (now Jonah) and Towns Mill (Weir) schools already existed in 1854 when Common School laws were enacted by the State. Williamson County officials on March 20, 1854 ordered that fourteen Common School Districts be organized in the county and appointed presiding officers to hold school elections. Water Valley, Towns Mill, and surrounding areas comprised one of the fourteen districts. Nathaniel Burden was in charge of this district. The formation of districts had little effect on these schools initially since the appropriation for each student amounted to only sixty-two cents each year. In this period of time schools were built by citizens or often by Masonic groups. The buildings were usually one-room and were often also used for church services and Masonic meetings.

In 1857 James Warnock and Joseph Mileham built a mill for corn and wheat on the river and the community steadily grew around it. In 1866 the Texas Constitution authorized the formation of a Board of School Examiners for each county and also made provision for the education of African Americans. Not long thereafter a school for black children was built on the south side of the river and became a part of the District. By the 1880's, additional legislation affecting Common School Districts was passed and appropriations for each school were increased. A larger wood frame schoolhouse was built. In 1884, the town applied for a post office and submitted a new name, Jonah, which was accepted. County school records for 1884-1885 show the name of the school had also been changed to Jonah School and that the trustees were J. Eberle Walker, Calvin Weir, and Henderson F. Salyer. J.M. Whitton, the teacher, was paid \$375 per school year (Nov. through May). Sixty-six pupils were enrolled that year. The appropriation per student per year was five dollars. By 1896, Jonah had two mills, two cotton gins, two general stores, and even two doctors as well as a population of 200 persons. By 1903 records indicate the school in Jonah had ten grades, 100 pupils, and two teachers. A school publication, "First Annual Announcement of the Jonah High School 1916-1917" showed that there were then eleven grades and 240 students in the District. The faculty had increased from three teachers to five teachers and a principal. By 1920 the trustees knew a larger and better equipped building than the frame one soon would be needed and began to plan for a brick one.

In 1921, Jonah was hit by a severe flood that destroyed a church and the bridge across the San Gabriel River. The frame schoolhouse was not destroyed though it did have water inside the building. Since the trustees already had blueprints for the proposed building before the flood, they decided that the time had come to actually construct a new building across the road east of the existing building. This property was on higher ground and was farther away from the river and Mileham Branch. The brick building was constructed in 1922 and classes began there on January 6, 1923. Enrollment that year was 219 pupils. It was designed by Hugo Franz Kuehne, founder of

the University of Texas School of Architecture. It was well-constructed and is one of the earlier of the hundreds of historic buildings and homes designed by Mr. Kuehne in the Austin/Central Texas area. It had five classrooms and an auditorium with a stage. The Trustees at that time and for many years were C.G. Holmstrom, C.M. Gattis, and W.H. Percy, family names still prominent in Jonah and Williamson County. This building served as a school and, in many ways, as a community center for the rural community of Jonah for 49 more years. In fact, in the 1940's "Jonah Community Club" met twice a month for talent shows, speakers, community suppers, and other activities.

In the 1930's, Jonah population began to gradually decrease due to the Depression, farm losses, and labor-saving changes that reduced the number of workers needed on the farms. The Jonah School District arranged for its high school students to attend Georgetown High School. Jonah School became a grammar school for grades one through eight. By 1948 only grades one through seven were taught and by 1967, the school offered only grades one through six. Many alumni of the school give great credit for their successes in life to their years at Jonah School and the influence of their teachers and principals. In 1971, due to further diminished student population in Jonah School as well as rapid changes required in instruction and programs, the Jonah Common School District was divided and parts consolidated with the Granger, Taylor, Hutto, and Georgetown Districts. The 2.5 acres of land and the Jonah School building were deeded to Jonah Community, Inc. with the proviso that they were to be used as a community center.

With a new name and a new mission, the Jonah Community Center is the most visible of Jonah's remaining historic structures which can still be seen by today's traffic on Hwy 29. For 40 years, the mission of Jonah Community Center has been to promote the heritage of the growing and diverse community of Jonah and to maintain the historic building as a meeting place, a venue for social occasions, and a place for educational and enrichment opportunities for all ages. The building has served as a meeting place for 4-H clubs, Extension Service clubs, agricultural meetings and other informational and educational meetings. A wedding and reception, a funeral and reception, as well as many family reunions, and school reunions have been held at the former school building. CPR classes have been held as well as dog vaccination clinics. Dogs have even been trained at the building and grounds as rescue animals for military uses. Several small churches have rented weekly space in the early years of their existence. The large auditorium and stage were renovated for use by a community theater group for several years. During that time the theater group, with the assistance of art students from Southwestern University, painted a mural of the history of Jonah on walls and ceilings of the entry hall and the main hall. Additionally, space in the Community Center was rented by Jonah Water Supply/ Special Utility District until their new facility was built in 2004. Also, until 2012 the Center served as a polling place for primary and general elections.

The building is currently used for regular meetings of Jonah Community, Incorporated, the annual Jonah Reunion, monthly senior luncheons, an annual community Christmas party, and the Jonah Chili Supper, an annual major fundraiser for Jonah Community, Inc. The various rooms or combination of rooms are still rented by Jonah residents or the public for family reunions and other events at reasonable rates. Rental revenue and chili supper proceeds are important sources of operational funding as well as funding for badly needed renovation. As a result of many fundraisers and thousands of volunteer hours through the years, some of the most needed repairs such as a new roof in 2010 as well as repairs to exterior brick, downspouts, and parapets have been completed. This new roof and the expensive exterior repairs were paid for by Jonah Community,

Incorporated. Volunteers, primarily Master Gardeners of Williamson County, donated over 100 hours of labor installing new landscaping. Businesses and Jonah residents donated most of the hardy native plants which now complement the new flower beds on the West and South sides of the 90 year-old building. Jonah volunteers also painted a wall in the auditorium to simulate sky and clouds. That wall showcases photos of 72 veterans of U.S. wars beginning with WWI who have lived in the Jonah area, many of whom had also attended Jonah School. Much work by members of Jonah Community, Inc. resulted in two albums corresponding to the photos giving information about each veteran, providing another and ongoing educational element to the “old school”.

Much more renovation is planned and remains to be done to make it possible for Jonah residents, and even friends of Jonah who no longer live there, to realize their dreams of serving the needs of the rapidly growing and changing Jonah area. Their desire is that Jonah Community Center will be able to continue to serve as the hub of both Jonah’s unique history and its bright future. Jonah folks have always been known as spirited and resourceful and its present citizens don’t plan to break the tradition on their watch!

## **RESOURCES:**

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