

February 12, 1985

Dear Rev. Washburn:

The enclosed letter is designed for you to be able to copy and post as well as give to an organbuilder; unless you wish to use it yourselves as a resource from which to posture what you need or want in another fashion. It takes everything of importance out of our last letter, correcting wrong impressions contained therein, and omits the "goals and philosophy"-type issues that are really yours to convey to whatever extent you wish.

If there is anything you or others have questions on or that we might have overlooked, please feel free to let us know.

Thank you for the excellent discussion and lunch again!

Sincerely,

*Mike & Susan Friesen*

Michael and Susan Friesen

February 12, 1985

Rev. Stephen C. Washburn  
The Congregational-Universalist Church  
221 Dean St.  
Woodstock, IL 60098

Dear Rev. Washburn:

We appreciated the opportunity recently to visit with you and with members of the Organ Study Committee at your church, to examine the organ, and to discuss possible options open to you in effecting repairs to the Kimball organ of c. 1906. We will not resummairize all of that discussion nor our earlier correspondence here, but instead focus on the parameters you need at this point to have as you seek proposals from organbuilders.

The specification is as follows:

<u>Great (61 notes)</u>	<u>Swell (61 notes)</u>	<u>Pedal (30 notes)</u>
8' Open Diapason	8' Violin Diapason	16' Bourdon
8' Gamba	8' Stop'd Diapason	Great to Pedal
8' Dulciana	8' Salicional	Swell to Pedal
8' Melodia	8' Aeoline	
Great Super Octave	4' Flute Harmonic	Bellows Signal
Great Sub Octave	8' Oboe & Bassoon	Wind Indicator
Swell to Great	Tremolo	Crescendo
	Swell Super Octave	
	Swell Sub Octave	

It appears that all of the ranks are full-compass, but it is hard to tell without counting all of the pipework in the Great, because something is wrong in the action whereby the Great 8' Open Diapason is constantly on in the bass octave, obliterating the bottom notes of the softer ranks. It appears that at least one, probably two, and conceivably all three of the softer ranks have their own bass, most likely that two of the softer ranks share a common 12-note bass. The first time we saw the organ no soft basses appeared to play; this last time at least two could be heard through the relative "din" of the Open Diapason! So something is wrong in the action in that octave on the Great. The Swell action works and shows that there are no "Tenor C" (i.e. lacking or sharing a common lowest-12-note bass set of pipes) ranks in that division.

Beyond that, there are several areas which we would like to discuss about repairs or retention and why.

First of all, the chests are in need of repair-- probably all internal parts which use leather should be releathered, even if most are still working. The fact that some are not working means that they will all be failing sooner or later and to do repairs on a patchwork basis will end up costing more money over the long-run than to do all chestwork at the same time now. There should be no reason why they cannot be repaired; tubular-pneumatic organs such as this organ is are rare nowadays but do exist both restored and unrestored-- St. Mary's R.C. in Woodstock has a 1910 Hutchings tubular-pneumatic organ, restored



recently, and not long ago we discovered a c.1900 Kimball tubular-pneumatic organ still playing fine, very similar to yours, in Millard Ave. Baptist Church, Chicago, never restored to our knowledge.

Some of the problems you have with dead or slow action may be due simply to crushed tubes (or pits in the lead they are made of) from when the organ was tuned in probably hurried service calls in the past. Tubular-pneumatic actions are admittedly not the most efficient organ mechanisms ever invented, so they are a little "slow" (in terms of promptness of attack) and are more complicated; they are also more inconvenient to work on from an organbuilder's viewpoint and consume more labor. However, they are not falling apart and in view of the above-mentioned other organs, it seems pointless to undertake the considerable expense to simply replace them unless you wanted to considerably rebuild the organ and expand its tonal scheme thereby. Nor are we convinced that converting them to electropneumatic or electric action is any cheaper than repairing them. However, we would be happy to discuss with any builders any contrary opinions, because the repairs should last a long time, and if they feel they will not, we should not commit the next generation to another organ project by our action in 1985.

The tremolo is inoperable. It is relatively inexpensive to repair.

The reservoir is good. It should be retained. It may not need releathering at this exact point, but will need it in the not-that-distant future, so if the church can afford it, it would probably be better to do the releathering at the same time as the rest of the work. Otherwise it could be done as a second phase as long as the congregation knows, needs to, or agrees to support a "Phase 1 - Phase 2" program upfront. It appears that there is sufficient room in the organ space that the reservoir could be releathered in place (after sufficient access is created, see below) if necessary. Some builders in the past on other organs have replaced reservoirs with smaller reservoirs because it was too difficult to get to them, or even to remove them from an organ space without dismantling most of an organ, but such a step does not retain the integrity of the winding system in regards to volume of air, especially with the amount consumed in tubular-pneumatic action. In this case releathering should not cost more than buying new reservoirs. The feeder bellows should be retained since they are not in the way of anything, although it is not necessary to restore them to working order (they were part of the mechanism for when the organ was pumped by hand or water motor and were bypassed when an electric blower was later added).

The wind trunks do need releathering at this time.

The pedalboard needs considerable repair, and even replacement might be considered if the costs of either alternative are close. Since the pedal compass is 30 notes, you might as well stick with that, as the current standard of 32 notes is not such a significant difference as to seriously impair the flexibility of the pedal division. Since the Pedal division action was also originally tubular-pneumatic, but removed many years ago and replaced with electric action, the organ is no longer "original." But it is still essentially unaltered, and that gives it reasonable historic validity that would not be

hurt by a modern pedalboard replacement. Additionally, there is no need (nor would it be particularly easy) to reconstitute tubular-pneumatic action for the Pedal. However, the present electric action in the Pedal is not good and should be replaced with new electric action; it probably is not even worth repairing.

The blower is old, noisy, and energy-inefficient, and should be replaced with a smaller, silent, ample-capacity new blower. It could possibly be placed in the organ space if you wish to free up room in the basement. The LaMarche Orgel-extra power supply could be retained (it converts AC to DC for internal organ current).

The pipework is all in quite fine condition except for the Swell Oboe & Bassoon rank, which needs to be taken out and sent to a pipeshop for repair and cleaning. None of it needs to be revoiced. The pipework is somewhat dusty, but is not generally so dirty as to impair speech. It would be advisable to clean the organ and the pipes, especially if so doing would be advantageous to the releathering and chest repairs work which could be compromised by environmental dirt. If you are looking for ideas of how to involve the congregation in a tangible way in the organ project, so they feel that they are really contributing something to it and not just money, then the pipes could be washed some Saturday by lay persons under a builder's supervision, which would save a fair amount of labor expense, and to apply that saving towards work which simply must be done by professionals.

We suggest that the church provide a new access to the chamber (i.e. a standard 30-inch doorframe and door) instead of making do with the quite-inconvenient crawl hole. This may be another way congregational members may contribute to the project in a tangible fashion, as the organbuilder should not have to do this. It is perhaps possible to do something with the front case paneling to gain access from that direction without redesigning half the organ in the process, but the facade should remain as it presently looks, paneling treatment, pipe layout, and all. The church should also expect to pay an electrician for new blower hookups or a new line altogether if the wiring is too old, etc. The miscellaneous humidifier material should be removed. The builder can advise if a modern humidifier appliance would be advantageous to have.

Since we want to be conservative with your funds, the last issue deals with any tonal changes, and one is about all you should think about at this time. The Swell Aeoline seems to be the most dispensable stop, since it is very soft and probably the least distinguishable in service or literature playing. This is not to say that it is not a pretty sound, but as there is no stop in the organ above 4-foot pitch, this is one area where some brightness can be introduced into the organ without compromising its integrity if you desire. The Aeoline could be cut down in size to create a 2-foot stop (a few pipes would have to be added at one or both ends of the rank to obtain the correct scaling since the diameter-height relationship of an 8' pipe is not the same when it is cut off at 2' height), or it could be replaced with an altogether new 2' rank. The first way would be somewhat less expensive and should be able to be done well (too much reworking of pipes is generally not successful).



However, if the latter is not much different in price, you should consider just removing and storing the Aeoline rather than cutting it down. It would still be around to reinstall if you decided you didn't like that decision. This change would make the Swell have more variety and brightness than the Great, which in some respects it being the expressive division and thus the one most used for accompaniments and for solo sounds, is just exactly the right thing to do. Then the Great can achieve more variety and brightness through coupling the Swell to it. (Presently coupling the Swell to the Great adds almost nothing from a chorus point of view.) Also, as we mentioned, providing the organist(s) of the church with some training sessions on registration is a small investment which could go a long ways, since there are various flexible schemes "built into" the organ already with the current couplers, if imaginatively utilized.

There may be some other incidental expenses that would be incurred, but this covers the vast majority of what we think you should get bids on. If you have any other questions, please feel free to let us know.

Sincerely,

*Michael Friesen*

*Susan Friesen*

Michael and Susan Friesen

### SUGGESTED BID PARAMETERS

(Discuss any "Phase 1 - Phase 2" options)

1. Repair or releathering of chests (3: Great, Swell, Pedal)
2. Repair of action (key, stop, and coupler)
3. Repair or replacement of pedalboard
4. Repair or replacement of pedal action
5. Releathering of double-rise reservoir
6. Releathering of wind trunks
7. Purchase and installation of new blower and wind connections
8. Repair of Oboe & Bassoon rank
9. Repair of tremolo
10. Cleaning of organ and pipework (2 calculations: with or without volunteer labor under paid supervision factored in)
11. Cutting down of or replacement of Aeoline with a 2' stop
12. Other concurrent miscellaneous repairs, regulation, and tuning.

Inquiries should be made if travel time and expenses are charged separately from the actual work.