



School Facility Utilization Task Force (SFU-TF)
7:00PM on Thursday, February 19, 2026
New Hartford Elementary School - Gymnasium

All appointed members of the School Faculty Utilization Task Force were in attendance except for **Kerry Guilfoyle** (Board of Finance). Members in attendance were:

Mary Beth Greenwood (Board of Selectman), **Alesia Kennerson** (Board of Selectman), **Eleanor “Penny” Miller** (Board of Education), **Carmen Neale** (Community Member), **Jon Puz** (Board of Education), **Samantha Wald** (Community Member), **Bernard “Ben” Witte** (Board of Finance), **Kristin Young** (SFU-TF Chair / Board of Education) and **Michelle Miller** (Project Manager SP+A).

Kristin Young, the School Facility Utilization Task Force Chair called the meeting to order at 7:03PM.

A. Communications to the School Facility Utilization Task Force

Background information from the last time consolidation was discussed (*10 years ago*) containing data and statistics was submitted by Theresa Campanelli. There was also a request to evaluate the School Facility Utilization Task Force meeting time (7:00PM).

B. School Facility Utilization Task Force Chair’s Report

- a. Presentation and Discussion of Procedures for School Facility Utilization Task Force Meetings

Ms. Young, the SFU-TF Chair reported that school facility tours for SP+A and the SFU-TF members has been completed. She thanks Superintendent Jeffrey Sousa, Director of Student Services Michael Lynch and the rest of the administration team for a tour into every aspect of the schools, including the basement. Michelle Miller from SP+A will give a preliminary overview of what has been discovered so far, SP+A is still in the fact-finding phase. She also advised the School Facility Utilization Task Force is subject to FOIA, which means, all discussion is available to the public. There will not be any meetings outside of the publicly listed dates. There will not be any discussion behind the scenes. Jon Puz, explained the importance of transparency versus speed. The only communication between SFU-TF members is at public meetings, therefore this means the process may take longer. Jon Puz explained the trade-off for promoting transparency; the effort to provide clear transparency means a longer process, as discussion is only happening at said meetings. Ms. Young shared a document that has been created to outline the procedures and operations of the School Facility Utilization Task Force. The document being discussed covers: *what the purpose of the SFU-TF is, the role of the SFU-TF, what decisions can be made (and not be made) by the SFU-TF, how meetings will be conducted, the rules regarding public comment and more.* This document will be posted to the NHPS, School Facility Utilization Task Force website.

<https://www.newhftd.org/board-of-education/school-facility-utilization-task-force>

MOTION by Alesia Kennerson to adopt the document. Second by Samantha Wald.



Ms. Kennerson begun the discussion, she had several suggestions for the other members, some grammatical, some clarity items including providing more detail to the purpose of the School Facility Utilization Task Force and adding specific language on what the potential recommendations may be, specifically more detail as to what those may be. She suggested more language to include the SFU-TF will recommend X and clarify the recommendations will be to the Board of Education. Ms. Kennerson also felt the bullet points in paragraph four were redundant as they were discussed already previously up above in the roles of the SFU-TF. Ms. Young stated the purpose of the bullet points were to clarify the role of SP+A and the responsibility of the SFU-TF. Carmen Neale voiced her thoughts to keep the redundant bullet points within the document as they may provide clarity to some readers. Ms. Kennerson reiterated at the end of this study, the SFU-TF will make a recommendation to the Board of Education, but not translate technical findings. Ms. Kennerson also provided an area of confusion in the third bullet of the approach, what does “*each Board*” mean? Further explaining to the group that single individuals cannot speak for their whole corresponding Board. The intent of this wording was to have the members of each Board act as liaisons between their Board (*Education, Finance and Selectman*) and the SFU-TF. Conversation was had to incorporate language such as “**a representative of each Board**” or “**contributing Board’s SFU-TF member**”. The consensus of what was attempted to be achieved here was because the SFU-TF consists of a number of representatives from a number of different Boards (*Education, Finance & Selectman*), if a question was asked relating to that specific Board, the liaison may be able to provide additional information. Ms. Kennerson felt under “chair responsibilities” the word summarize was unnecessary. She feels the Chair of the SFU-TF needs a defined role, such as: to prepare meeting agendas with the input of SP+A and facilitate the process of discussions during the SFU-TF meetings, but does not feel the Chair should periodically summarize.

Suggestions were made to adjust the wording regarding community engagement. Community engagement was intended to inform, give an understanding, surface priorities and highly concerns, but is not to serve as a vote on specific options. The intent was rather to hear community engagement, potentially adjust to “*the SFU-TF seeks to ensure that community perspective will be taken into consideration when developing any recommendations to the Board of Education*”. In the last paragraph, Ms. Kennerson feels “Town Meeting” shall be added to the document, depending on the recommendation the resolution may a Referendum or a Town Meeting. Ms. Young responded to clarify her intent was to be absolutely clear, the SFU-TF is not a decision-making Board/Committee, that other Boards and the Town as a whole will be engaged in some way, before a final decision is made.

There was discussion on how to handle public comment. Currently proposed is in-person attendance is required for public comment, and currently based on “agenda items only” at a standard three minutes. Email submissions are also accepted as a method of public comment. Many members gave input regarding public comment. Public comment restrictions may depend on the amount of community involvement. Ms. Wald suggested an attendance list (***name and address***) for record keeping purposes for those who wish to give public comment to be included as part of the meeting minutes. Administratively, allowing for virtually public comment could become challenging. For those who cannot attend the meetings in-person always has the option to send any correspondence via email to the SFU-TF. Said correspondence will be included and made available with the next set of SFU-TF meeting minutes.

NHTaskForce@newhdfd.org

The Board of Education does require in-person attendance for public comment, there is no virtual component for public comment. The Board of Selectman offers virtual public comment. The rules could depend on how much public comment there is, if there is a substantial amount—the process could get messy. There would need to be a moderator for the virtual component. The amount of public comment regarding the SFU-TF, is slightly different than amount of public comment at a Board of Selectman meeting. If there was 40 people virtually



wishing to voice public comment, will that be entertained? Other members voiced public comment should not be limited to only certain questions or agenda items. Funding should be supplied to allow for public comment from those who attend virtually. Consensus from the group was to allow for public comment to be public comment—no restrictions, except for being related to the SFU-TF. Comments and questions should be related to the reason the meeting is being held.

MOTION by Alesia Kennerson to adopt public comment as public comment, not strictly based on agenda items only. Second by Penny Miller.

Further discussion was had on the responsibility of the Chair of the SFU-TF, the Chair may delegate questions that may be out of the scope of the SFU-TF, to the corresponding Board, the Chair will moderate questions and re-direct if a question is associated to another Board, rather than asking a member of that Board on the spot.

MOTION by Samantha Wald to allow for public comment, virtually. Second by Alesia Kennerson.

Questions regarding the process of how this is going to work was asked. Discussion mentioned that the Board of Education is responsible for costs related to the SFU-TF, further it was suggested to start with the Board of Education for funding to have the meeting virtually hosted. Consensus was to table this discussion and take to the Board of Education at their next meeting for funding of a moderator for virtual public comment. Clarity was had regarding a sign-up list, for speaking. The intent is nearly for record keeping and provide proper spelling as to who's spoken. Ms. Young was asked if there is a specific devoted amount of time is allowed for public comment? Is there an overall duration to the length of time for public comment, beyond just the three minutes per person? Right now, there is no plan for a limit on the duration of public comment. If this becomes problematic, further discussion can be had. For now, Ms. Young feels all those who wish you speak, be heard.

Ms. Young stated there was a request from the Town to move the meeting time up. The SFU-TF members discussed; conclusion was 7:00PM is the time most other town meetings are held at. The other consideration was 6:00PM, which some thought may be too early for those who work, or need time in-between work and meetings. Others mentioned, extra-curricular activities for children. 7:00PM has always seemed to work, suggestion was made to leave the meetings at 7:00PM and adjust if needed in the future—evaluate as they move through the process. Consensus was, 6:00PM is too early, and 7:00PM is more reasonable.

C. Routine Business

a. Timeline Check In

Michelle Miller (SP+A) provided a brief status report. The process is currently “on-time”, SP+A is continuing to work on facility conditions, to wrap up hopefully by February 25, 2026, with the goal of providing documentation to the SFU-TF about a week prior to the presentation (March 11, 2026). Michelle has started the “Programming” phase, by documenting existing building conditions and soon they’ll begin benchmarking. Regarding enrollment projections, Michelle spoke with M&P Planning, they should have a draft within two weeks. The timeline which has been broken up into sections is available on the NHPS School Facility Utilization Task Force website.

There are various ways to stay up to date regarding the SFU-TF. You can sign up for email alerts from the town webpage (for agenda and minute reminders) and follow the New Hartford Public Schools Facebook Page.



Links for agendas, meetings and minutes will be available on the NHPS-SFU-TF webpage, along with any other applicable documentation from the meetings/process.

<https://www.newhftd.org/board-of-education/school-facility-utilization-task-force>

Additionally, there is a YouTube channel to view recordings of the meetings. The first meeting was not recorded. Recordings will be posted within (1) business day, providing staff is available and without technical complications.

Sign up for e-mail alerts (*for agendas and minutes*) from the School Facility Utilization Task Force on the Town of New Hartford website at: <https://www.newhartfordct.gov/subscribe>

Ms. Young stated the SFU-TF will review meeting minutes, from the first and second meeting at the next (*third*) meeting.

D. New Business

a. Silver Petrucelli & Associates preliminary update on facility conditions

Michelle Miller (SP+A) presented brief preliminary updates of the facility conditions determined thus far, in the facilities current state, currently they are finalizing narratives and estimates. SP+A went through the buildings, created floor plans to study the capacity of the schools. Michele informed the task force of many shared spaces, which is a negative. SP+A compiled information about when additions were built. They will use enrollment today to project further enrollment to determine what will be needed. SP+A determines how the building is being utilized. They look at size of the classroom, to determine the capacity within the schools. Michelle noted a common complaint is not enough space for support services, shared spaces don't work all the time. If you need to have a conference, and the sensory room is being used, you cannot have the conference. Bakerville Consolidated School lacks bathrooms, there are specific issues between kindergarteners and first/second graders. New Hartford has a shared space for the conference room and school psychology, which is not ideal.

Some but not all issues noted were:

Bakerville: not ADA compliant, water in the windows, roof aging, plumbing and fire protection, central air needs replacement, electrical distribution panel replacement and additional LED fixtures. There is an issue with the restrooms between kindergarten to first and second graders and the main corridor is small.

NHE: not ADA compliant, roof and soffits, ceilings are damaged, flooring has discoloration, plumbing, thermostats, grease trap requirement, exhaust fans for ventilation, additional LED fixtures and signage. There is no dedicated conference room, furniture disorientation because cafeteria and gym are a shared space.

Ann Antolini: not ADA compliant, older flooring, expansion joints, old locker rooms (need renovation), mechanicals, lack cooling and signage.

Ms. Kennerson questions whether there has been consideration for future expansions, and has there been any thoughts of consolidating 6th grade into Region 7. Some were confused if an addition section was added to the Pre-K program. Questions arose if there was a requirement to offer a Pre-K program? Or can these services be out-sourced to local daycares? Michelle says towns typically increase their Pre-K programs, because there are incentives from the State. Kristin Young stated more will come up regarding this topic in the Programming phase of the study. Ben Witte asked if there are plans to increase the Pre-K next year. Superintendent Jeffrey Sousa stated there is no plans to expand the program as of now. Samantha Wald advocated the Pre-K program is



highly desirable, there is always a waiting list. There is a very large demand for this program. Jon Puz suggests this conversation be had from the Board of Education. Samantha Wald asked if M&P Planning reviews the at enrollment projections for Pre-K, Michelle Miller stated usually there is a standard number given to them. Ms. Kennerson inquired what the number of outplace students are and what the cost savings would be to bring those students back into district. She had discussion with Director of Student Services, Michael Lynch regarding potentially bringing outplaced students back. She clarified her desire is not to increase class sizes, maybe to consolidate without increasing class size. There are limits for class sizes determined by the Board of Education policies.

E. Public Comment

Comments are summarized and not limited to the below.

Aulay Carlson—455 West Hill Road

Mr. Carlson commented on class size, he stated class size only makes a difference if there are good teachers. He questioned; how many students was the school designed for? He asked if the building was open to the public? Mr. Carlson questioned the reason the floorplan map was not made viewable to the public?

Jay Bailey—575 Main Street

Mr. Bailey stated the Selectmen are experienced, they are individuals who know things others don't, he feels when the Selectmen speak it is important to listen to what they are saying. He agrees with Alesia Kennerson, why is building a new school part of this study? Mr. Bailey states the cost to build a new school could range from 90-135 million dollars and the state only pays for half. He says the study of building a new school should be taken off the plate—it's a waste of time discuss the topic. He was wrong to say Ann Antolini School could take an addition. Mr. Bailey informed by Daniel Jerram says one location probably won't work; additions will cost a lot of money. Mr. Bailey says a million-dollar roof for NHES is cheap, compared to the cost of building a new school or additions. Again, feels folks should pay attention to the Selectman. Mr. Bailey feels staffing is an issue and should be downsized. He states there is heavy staffing (administratively wise), and having a part-time Superintendent should be considered. Mr. Bailey states New Hartford is the only town with a full-time Superintendent. Lastly, Jay expressed his concern and issue with the empty classrooms at Ann Antolini being used for "other services".

Shelley Lloyd—29 Pioneer Drive

Ms. Lloyd doesn't feel there should be a sign-up sheet, individuals' comment may lead to someone else wishing to comment. Ms. Lloyd stated she worked in the schools as a substitute. She noted consolidation would alleviate multiple places for staff to go. Cost estimates she hopes are prioritized.

Thomas Buzzi—651 Niles Road

Mr. Buzzi recommended repairs for the buildings be broken out, **1:** which are required for the buildings to remain as schools and **2:** what is required for the building regardless of its use. If a building will be closed as a school but there will still be a cost to maintain said building not as a school, what will that cost be?

Katherine Wilder—415 Stub Hollow Road

Ms. Wilder asked a number of questions including: the number of vacant classrooms? There are 3 (at Ann Antolini) vacant classrooms that don't have students in them. Where is NHPS is ranked in the State of CT compared to other elementary schools in the State? What is the teacher to student ratio? Answer: 17 students to 1 teacher. Is the library open at every school every day? Answer: no. The librarian travels from one school to another depending on the day. Who pays for the travel? The librarian is at Ann Antolini (3) days, Bakerville Consolidated (1) day and New Hartford Elementary (1) day.



Kristen Kosiba—40 Windsor Lane

Kristen advocated for funding to have a virtual moderator. She asked the selection process for the SFU-TF members? How often will the SFU-TF be meeting with the hired firm? Will the documentation be posted on the website (except the map, because of security issues)? How are the estimates determined by the firm? She voiced a concern regarding NHES being located in a one-way zone. There could be problem with one way in and one way out, if there is an emergency. Will resources be re-used if consolidated?

Daniel Jerram—535 Town Hill Road

Mr. Jerram thanked the SFU-TF for their dedication and patience. He is in support of any public comment. Mr. Jerram suggested question be submitted using a chat function and the read allowed by the moderator if the amount of public comment becomes unmanageable. SP+A has not contacted the Town of New Hartford regarding information on new developments.

VIRTUAL:

Marrit Budny - 59 Cottage Street

Ms. Budny felt discussing the layout of the schools was foolish to then not have “the map” to follow along.

F. Action steps for next meeting w/ date, location and time

- a. March 11, 2026 (Wednesday) at 7:00PM at Bakerville Consolidated School – SP+A to Share Facility Conditions Presentation

The next SFU-TF meeting will be on Wednesday March 11, 2026 at Bakerville Consolidated School at 7:00PM. At this meeting SP+A will present their findings for the Facility Conditions phase of the School Facility Utilization study; this will be the main focus of the meeting.

G. Adjournment

MOTION by Mary Beth Greenwood to adjourn the meeting at 9:20PM. Second by Jon Puz.

*Respectfully submitted by,
Elizabeth Domas, Recording Secretary*

Recorded School Facility Utilization Task Force meetings will be posted to:

<https://www.youtube.com/@schoolfacilityutilization>

Attachments:

[New Hartford SFU-TF: How to Stay Informed](#)

[School Utilization Task Force Overview including Purpose and Process \[DRAFT\]](#)