School Facility Utilization Task Force
7:00PM on Wednesday, March 25, 2026
Ann Antolini School - Multi-Purpose Room

All appointed members of the School Faculty Utilization Task Force were in attendance, except for **Kerry Guilfoyle** (Board of Finance) and **Carmen Neale** (Community Member).

Members in attendance were:
Mary Beth Greenwood (Board of Selectman), **Alesia Kennerson** (Board of Selectman), **Eleanor "Penny" Miller** (Board of Education), **Jon Puz** (Board of Education), **Samantha Wald** (Community Member), **Bernard "Ben" Witte** (Board of Finance)-*VIRTUALLY*, **Kristin Young** (SFU-TF Chair / Board of Education), **Michelle Miller** (Project Manager SP+A) and Mike Zuba (MP Planning Group).

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

A. Approval of Agenda

MOTION by Alesia Kennerson to approve the agenda as presented. Second by Samatha Wald.

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B. Communications to the School Facility Utilization Task Force

Pamela Colombie (*2-March 11 & 12, 2026*)

C. School Facility Utilization Task Force Chair's Report
Ms. Young informed attendees of the "*Task Force Meeting Videographer*" position available, which is posted to the NHPS webpage for applicants to apply.

D. Routine Business

a. Approval of Minutes - March 11, 2026

MOTION by Samantha Wald to approve the Minutes March 11, 2026. Second by Alesia Kennerson.

AMENDED-MOTION by Samantha Wald to approve the meeting minutes from March 11, 2026 with an amendment to correct "regret tiles" to "re-grout tiles" (*reference Page 3 Ann Antolini-Architectural Interior*). Second by Alesia Kennerson.

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b. Timeline Check In

Michelle Miller (SP+A) feels SP+A is on track, there will be a presentation from Michele Miller in two weeks at the next meeting on Wednesday April 8, 2026.

E. New Business

a. Projections
Silver Petrucelli & Associates and MP Planning Group LLC delivers Enrollment
Mike Zuba with MP Planning Group LLC, introduced himself. Mike has been in this profession for 26 years. He explained student enrollment drivers, trends and the projections themselves.

Population Trends
New Hartford's population declined by 4.5% between 2010 and 2020 census. While overall population decreased over the last decade, trends vary by group. The population between the ages of 35-54 saw a decline of over 30% (*group most likely to have school-aged children*). Population by age cohort shows demographic decline.

Female of Childbearing Age (FOCBA)
FOCBA typically have a strong correlation with births. There was an overall decrease in FOCBA, however, females 30-34 had the highest birth rates and modest increases from 2010 to 2020. There was notable growth in the female population in their 20's between 2010 and 2020.

Birth Trends and Projections
Birth tabulations and projections switched from calendar year to September-August to align with the new Kindergarten entry age requirements for the 2024-25 year. Birth projection models are anticipated to stabilize and average around 50 annually. There are three different birth projection models: **Low** (*47 births*), **Medium** (*50 births*) and **High** (*54 births*). If a grant is submitted to the State of Connecticut, enrollment projections are required as well as unemployment rates. The unemployment rate locally for 2025 YTD in New Hartford is 3.2%, while the state unemployment rate was 3.9%.

Median Home Sale Price
Median single-family home sale prices increased by 74% from $236,000 in 2019 to $410,000 in 2025. Condo median sale prices increased by 69% since 2019.

Home Sale Trends
Home sales peaked in 2004 at 131, then sharply dropped to a low of 50 home sales in 2011 and 2014, a time known as the "Great Recession". Over the last three years the total sales in New Hartford declined, averaging 71 annually, total sales in New Hartford didn't exceed prior year peaks.

Housing Permit Activity
Permit activity peaked in the early 2000's. Single-family permits have averaged 7 units annually since 2016. The Planning & Zoning Commission has not approved any notable residential projection that would impact student enrollment.

Town Plan Review
The New Hartford Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) was recently updated and adopted in January 2026. The POCD has a priority to "enable opportunities for housing" with prioritization for senior housing and residential development around New Hartford's Center.

Historic Enrollment Trends
Districtwide enrollment peaked in 2009-10 at 632 students. Over the last 10 years enrollment has declined by 7%, averaging 440 students. Over the last five years: (PK) averaged 29 students, (K-2) averaged 164 students and (3-6) averaged 247 students.

K-2 Enrollment Trends
In the last five years, Bakerville Consolidated School averaged 101 students and New Hartford Elementary School averaged 61 students.

Non-Public School Enrollment Trends
Since 2021-22 the enrollment of 56 students in non-public schools has declined with 2024-25 at 43 students, which is the lowest in recent history.

Other Public Schools Enrollment Trends
Since 2017-18 other public-school's enrollment averaged 8 students annually. Since peaking in 2020-21, the student enrollment in "other public schools" has decreased to only 2 students in 2025-26.

Kindergarten Caveats & Assumptions
The entry date change which is new for the 2024-25 school year (per State of CT law), the cutoff date shifted from January 1 to September 1. Students who turn 5 after September 1, can apply to enter Kindergarten early via a waiver process, consisting of parental request and a readiness assessment. This number has slightly receded in the last two years. The Birth-K numbers does have something to do with the State imposed entry date change, and there is a similar drop-off within other communities.

Projections Assumptions
The models don't vary greatly, they are tightly banded, to be expected because this is the "unknown", the further out in time the wider the data. The projection models in the first five years vary roughly 30 students (405-433), the uncertainty increases towards the 10-year (2035-36) model ranging from 416-495 students.

High: projections average 54, migration averages 3.3%
Medium: projections average 50, migration averages 3.0% (*likely the best model, average 437 students for 2025-26 over the next decade, and 457 students in 2035-36*)
Low: projections average 47, migration averages 2.4 %

Districtwide Projections (*using the medium projection model*)
PK projections remain constant at 39 students, K-2 (11%) increases by 16 students, averaging 161 students and 3-6 (2%) increasing roughly 5 students, averaging 237 students.

Projection Takeaways
All three projection models have narrow bands of roughly 30 students. Recent housing conditions, demographics and enrollment in-migration align best with the Medium Projection Model and represents the most likely direction for New Hartford.
Over the next five years:
Bakerville Consolidated School is projected to increase by 13%, averaging 102 students. New Hartford Elementary School is projected to increase by 2%, averaging 92 students. Ann Antolini School is projected to decline by 12%, averaging 232 students.

There are not a lot of elements within the community that will create big swings in student enrollment. There is a very small difference between the High and Medium Projection Models. Unless there is something outside of the control of the community (*Recession or Pandemic, for example*), the enrollment in New Hartford is fairly stable. Outplacement students are only included within these numbers if the NHPS district is financially responsible for the student. If the district is not financially responsible for the student, they are not included. The numbers included in the presentation depend upon how the student was reported by the State of Connecticut.

Aulay Carlson - 455 West Hill Road
Mr. Carlson expressed his surprise; he ran the figures for the projection models three times and he cannot come close to the same numbers as MP Planning Group. Mr. Carlson determines there to be a much lower number of students by 50 or 60.

Towns that have seen growth are: ***South Windsor, Granby, and Glastonbury***. Mike Zuba explained how suburban districts similar to New Hartford are stable — if not growing. Urban districts are not growing, for example: ***Stamford***. Where housing has been the fastest growing housing, increasing for 20 years, and their enrollment in declining.

F. Old Business
a. Discuss public stakeholder input and process with the potential of scheduling (2) public hearings

Members discussed holding two informational meetings, available to everyone. Suggestion was to have an informational session happen during the week with an earlier start time and the other informational session happen on a weekend day. These public informational meetings would be conducted after the April 8, 2026 presentation by SP+A. Saturday April 25, 2026 is Opening Day for baseball-bad day for parents to attend a public informational meeting. Consensus was after much discussion to add two additional "Public Informational Meetings" which dates are: **Saturday May 2, 2026 at 1:00PM** (weekend date) and **Tuesday May 19, 2026 at 5:30PM** (earlier evening weekday date).

Discussion on how to reach out to the community consisted of many different ideas. Ms. Wald suggest a post card mailing. Ms. Young suggested a subcommittee. Ms. Greenwood suggest to have a clear purpose for the survey. Ms. Miller suggested reaching the senior community to get the word out, by a platform that does not consist of technology or social media. Mr. Witte suggested to have options for the community before initializing a survey, he recommended to wait until the SFU-TF has a set direction with reasons to support said direction(s).

MOTION by Jon Puz to create a "*Gather Feedback Subcommittee*" for SFU-TF, and nominate no more than 3 SFU-TF members and have the fourth member be Kristin Young (as ex officio). Second by Penny Miller.

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Mary Beth Greenwood, Penny Miller and Samantha Wald are the three members of the SFU-TF assigned to the "Gather Feedback Subcommittee".

MOTION by Jon Puz to change the order and bring public comment forward. Second by Penny Miller.

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b. **Discuss, propose and align School Facility Utilization Task Force Goals came after public comment**

Alesia Kennerson expressed the SFU-TF main goals to focus on should be: "*develop fiscally responsible solutions that address cost of capital projects, transportation, staffing and operations, address safety and security concerns and improve the efficiency and consistency of resources and continuity of educational delivery*". Ms. Greenwood emphasized travel and busing must be considered, what are the costs and the length of travel? How do we improve how we deliver education in a more efficient manner, not only cost wise but within the cohorts themselves? Jon Puz agrees with Ms. Kennerson. Ms. Greenwood suggested adding "potential alternative building use" as a factor to the matrix and including "the traffic pattern at the school" (Michele Miller advised: *this will be included in the site analysis*). Should travel be included as a factor?

G. Public Comment - (For Task Force Business Only)

Taylor Johnson - 182 Gillette Road
Ms. Johnson expressed the data presented by MP Planning Group (enrollment projections) does not include home sales that are "*off-market*" or rental properties. The data set from Mike Zuba comes from home sales only within the MLS. She feels numbers could fluctuate by not including the off-market sale or students who may reside at a rental property. There are off market sales in town, a follow-up with Mike Zuba regarding this question seemed to be a good consensus.

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

a. April 8, 2026 (Wednesday) at 7:00PM at Ann Antolini School Library - Programming & Capacity (Presentation by SP+A)

I. Adjournment

MOTION by Penny Miller to adjourn the meeting at 8:56PM. Second by Jon Puz.

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Respectfully submitted by,
Elizabeth Domas, Recording Secretary

Attachments:
Pamela Colombie (*2-March 11 & 12, 2026*)
MP Planning Group NHPS Enrollment Projections DRAFT

Dedicated email for the task for is NHTaskForce@newhtfd.org

Dedicated webpage is https://www.newhtfd.org/board-of-education/school-facility-utilization-task-force

Sign up for e-mail alerts from the School Facility Utilization Task Force on the town website:
https://www.newhartfordct.gov/subscribe

Recording will be made available on the YouTube channel. You can subscribe here:
https://www.youtube.com/@schoolfacilityutilization