

School Facility Utilization Task Force
Special Meeting
7:00PM on Thursday July 16, 2026
Ann Antolini School – Library

All appointed members of the School Facility Utilization Task Force were in attendance except for: **Kerry Guilfoyle** (Board of Finance), **Carmen Neale** (Community Member) and **Bernard “Ben” Witte** (Board of Finance).

Those 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), **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 **Special** meeting to order at 7:03PM.

A. Approval of Agenda

MOTION by Mary Beth Greenwood to approve the agenda, and move item “B” after item “F”, to get to New Business first. Second by Samantha Wald.

Aye: Mary Beth Greenwood, Penny Miller, Jon Puz, Samantha Wald and Kristin Young (5)

Naye: Alesia Kennerson (1)

Abstain:

(5-1-0)
Motion Passes

B. Communications to the School Facility Utilization Task Force

Moved after item F.

C. School Facility Utilization Task Force Chair’s Report

An enrollment analysis was presented to the task force by Mr. Aulay Carlson (New Hartford resident). SP+A was asked to review the documentation submitted by Mr. Carlson, and concluded they couldn't effectively evaluate the analysis because the study completed by Mr. Carlson does not meet the standards required for enrollment projections for the State of Connecticut. There are assumptions that were more specific to the State level and not the Town level, therefore unable to be used as part of this study, a comparison is unable to be derived because the reported information is not the same. Mr. Carlson’s analysis did not include a grade-by-grade breakdown of the classrooms. There is an analysis provided by the hired consultant (SP+A); if the task force cannot combine or compare, then the analysis must be put aside. The task to compare or evaluate the studies together is out of scope for work by SP+A and members of the task force are not qualified to do a comparison, given the different methodologies.

For those interested, all documentation that has been communicated to the School Facility Utilization Task Force is available on the New Hartford Public Schools website.

Ms. Young plans to meet with the Superintendent of NHPS, Jeffrey Sousa, to identify “priorities”. She will request the Board of Education conduct a “first pass” at the options presented by SP+A so far, and gather a conclusion on what the Board of Education would recommend at this time. The Board of Education will be asked to provide further recommendations on what are “priorities” they’d like to see, as the Board of Education is responsible for maintaining the facilities. There should be discussion in further detail of what projects they may wish to begin now, and how long those may take. Ms. Young proposed

having more information from the Board of Education for the next August 20, 2026 (Thursday) School Facility Task Force meeting.

Some further discussion on the programming requests needs to be had at the Board of Education level (these options add additional costs), these programming requests are being incorporated into the new configurations or “options”. This could allow for the School Facility Utilization Task Force members to gain more information about the clear priorities of the programming needs. What are the trade-offs? The idea is to consider what items are being handled inadequately now that need to change, a must. These discussions need to come forward now, before making a recommendation, there is potential to address issues now rather than later. There is a Board of Education meeting schedule for August 18, 2026 (Tuesday) and then the next School Facility Task Force meeting is August 20, 2026 (Thursday). The Board of Education will be asked, how would they prioritize the work that needs to be done, what are the definite needs versus the nice to have? There has been a lot of effort to accommodate programming, a big component of how the building is manipulated. What would the Board of Education support base on all the presentations to date by SP+A? There have been discussions at the task force level that should be discussed at the Board of Education level as well because they are big changes to programming, those changes are structural changes outside the purview of the task force, and it is important to get an idea from the Board of Education if these ideas would be supported or not.

The task force is considering all options as the goal is to determine: how are the schools being utilized? How can education be made more cost efficient? Discussion regarding bussing was suggested. The intention of the request is to gain more information for the task force to narrow down options, to have a better understanding of what exactly the Board of Education is looking for. There are deficiencies, some have to be addressed and others are optional.

Ground boring at Ann Antolini School has been questioned several times, after discussion with SP+A this is premature, the project would provide a better understanding of how usable the site is, but without a real plan this task would be a waste of money. The Town could explore a limited preliminary geotechnical assessment. This assessment is outside the scope of SP+A. This would be something to conduct when there is a recommendation for the site to the Board of Education, which could then be further vetted before making a final design or recommendation to the Town.

In conclusion information regarding an energy switch from oil to propane for example, is out of the scope of SP+A, the energy modeling and actual costs is not a part of this study. The true cost for conversion would be another step, and also discussed further in the early design phase. Engineers and designers would further determine such information. A building committee would be a more appropriate level to have these specific discussions. ENERGIA was mentioned to be discussed at the next Board of Selectman meeting.

Ms. Young requested information from Superintendent Sousa, an analysis of the cost savings if consolidation occurred. The data is unknown at this time, because there are too many viable options. Mr. Sousa could review further once there are fewer options on the table.

D. Routine Business

- a. Approval of Minutes - June 8, 2026 (Monday)

MOTION by Mary Beth Greenwood to approve the minutes from June 8, 2026. Second by Jon Puz.

AMENDED-MOTION by Mary Beth Greenwood to approve the minutes from June 8, 2026 with an amendment to Alesia Kennerson’s previous motion from May 27, 2026. The amendment changes “**without program changes**” to “**no major additions**”. Second by Jon Puz.

Aye: Mary Beth Greenwood, Penny Miller, Jon Puz, Samantha Wald and Kristin Young (5)

Naye:

Abstain: Alesia Kennerson (1)

(5-0-1)
Motion Passes

E. New Business

- a. Silver Petrucelli & Associates delivers Potential Configurations: Phasing, Scheduling and Cost Estimates

Michelle Miller from SP+A presented on construction phasing for the options previously presented, and the associated costs and scheduling. New construction and additions are \$1,000 a square foot, and renovations are \$850 a square foot. These costs add in: *demolition, asbestos, temporary costs for phasing construction*.

Phase school construction is an approach which the renovation of spaces is completed in multiple stages while portions of the school remain operational and occupied by students. It's commonly considered in educational facilities because of continuity and a priority keep students where they are. Temporary facilities are usually impractical and undesirable. Phasing can reduce disruption associated with displacing a school, but does add complexity and operational constraints. Phasing really only works when adding onto a building and much more challenging when not.

Unoccupied school construction is where you are relocating the entire school (most likely off site). This option does enable work to go quicker, but there's a cost associated with moving an entire school population for 30 months or more. In Connecticut, renovation projects in PreK through 12 during the last 15 to 20 years, typically have some degree of phasing. Most schools and additions on available sites are constructed while the existing school remains occupied and students then move into the new building or that new addition and then components are demolished. The complete vacating of a building is uncommon because few districts have an empty school to move students in or wish to spend millions of dollars that portable school's cost. Most of the design durations are 12 to 15 months. The more complex designs are 15 months. There is a three-month period for bidding and contract award. Then construction durations are based on the architect's assessment of each of these options. However, final durations would be determined by a construction manager later on in the process.

• Option A5 (Renovate as new Bakerville School, and facility conditions to New Hartford Elementary)

In this scenario the goal is to replace the modulares with an addition, there's a four-classroom addition but first, the new septic fields must be installed. The modulares would stay to phase in this building. These two areas would be renovated. So, when this is built, these students move into these classrooms. These students would move and shuffle through the building in about three phases. This option removes the modulares, while maintaining New Hartford's three school model. There are drawbacks of three schools with inefficiencies throughout, there is staff travel, duplicated programs and there is no cafeteria or gym separation. There's no improvement to the Special Education and there is the problem of septic displacement. Bakerville School does have asbestos. Phasing work must happen at the right times. Occupied construction does add additional time and associated costs.

• Option B (Combine PreK-2 into One School; New Hartford or Bakerville then Renovate as new Antolini)

B1 New Hartford: two-story addition on the back with a couple additions throughout the school, all within the setbacks, but all within the flood plain. Some benefits are: *to utilize the existing buildings and have two buildings; one on each side of town*. This allows of the program to be expanded for Special Education. The entire building is brought to new condition. The drawbacks are: *flood plain and this option will require some additional engineering for foundations*. Kindergarten does not have individual restrooms. The site is a bit constraint there is limited space for parking, playgrounds, and drop-off. This is the option where first grade is upstairs, they must have their own dedicated stair. There are multiple additions which add some expense to the overall costs.

Ben Witte inquired if the courtyard at New Hartford Elementary could be closed off and use that space for offices only. There are classrooms that ring around and would be hindered to receiving the daylight required. There are classrooms that need the courtyard light because they are blocked on the other side by the corridor; the layout is too tight.

B2 Bakerville: there is no way to have an occupied (phase) construction for this option. The portables cannot be maintained and build the addition at the same time. The site is too small to have other portables. So, occupied construction benefits are: *utilizing the existing building, expanding the program and bringing that entire building up to new*. The drawbacks are: *Bakerville has a small building site (beyond what the site can handle), the gym and cafe cannot be separated, construction displaces the*

septic system and the building has asbestos. Unoccupied construction adds additional time to locate portables at New Hartford Elementary School for roughly 30 months. The overall cost to doing that, is an immediate drawback. The phasing over 28 months is proposed to happen in three phases. The plan is to build the addition first and then split the building in half and start renovating. This option utilizes the existing building and renovating as new. The gym will provide better opportunities for scheduling lunch waves and Physical Education. This provides the town with a standard elementary gymnasium, removing the underutilized tier multi-purpose room.

- **Option C: (New Construction, one side of town) “Unoccupied Construction”**

There is a longer phase time of 15 months for the design of a new school. The benefit of new construction is there is no impact during construction. The benefits are: *modern design layout, separate wings, meets all program requirements, and high performance.* This option creates a district campus with a proposed separate bus and parent drop-off areas in a more secure location. The drawbacks: *larger costs and less reimbursement, increased site work (to address bus load) and road utilities, potential ledge and taking away from the town hiking areas.* The benefits: a new gym with better scheduling and can incorporate Central Office, which improves the administrative efficiencies. The existing components which remain needing maintenance are phased construction. This option puts all grades at Ann Antolini School, all options for Ann Antolini: A, B and C are all interchangeable. There is \$750,000 for site development included, although this does not include the road.

- **Option D (One district-wide school at Ann Antolini School; 449 students)**

This option adds a PreK through grade 2 structural addition. There would be a gym, added parking and a PreK drop off, this is estimated to be a 48-month project, pretty substantial. The project would need to happen in a few phases, but the benefits: *is you can build the addition with very minor interruption to the school.* Some construction fencing would be needed. The connection could happen later, once the wing is built then the connection can happen when ready. Renovating occupied existing schools are not easy. This option, rear addition has a little impact on the school during construction, which would house PreK through grade 2 students in a separate wing. The option meets all program needs, as well as a separate PreK drop-off in a secure location. The same drawbacks are: *increased site work and road utilities (with potential ledge).*

- **Option E (Two schools, PreK -1 at New Hartford Elementary (E1) or Bakerville (E2), & Grade 2-6 at Ann Antolini School)**

E1 New Hartford: This option is a reduced program configuration, there is limited expansion of Specials, which includes minor front and side additions only at New Hartford Elementary. None of the bump outs are large enough to be classrooms; this is a renovate as new. The benefits are: *a building on each side of town*, but the program expansion is limited, the entire build is renovated as new. The drawbacks are: *Specials do remain in one classroom with the three uses, all programs cannot fit.* The two classrooms where the placement is unknown, are included in the estimate. The Special Education and intervention services were not met and the gym and cafe are not separated. Additionally, Kindergarten doesn't have separate restrooms. The site does have multiple additions at an added expense, phase construction adds time and lastly the flood plain at New Hartford Elementary.

E2 Bakerville: Same scenario, to add additions, the four classrooms have to be removed from the beginning, essentially impossible to keep the school active while doing the proposed construction. So, unoccupied construction and place portables at New Hartford Elementary (because they can share the gym). There is a more functional gym added, downsized from Option B but equal to what New Hartford Elementary has. The entire building is renovated as new. The drawbacks are: *Specials remain in one classroom for three uses and the building is large compared to the site, there are space limitations, a displaced septic system and asbestos.* Antolini is renovated as new with additions using phase construction. The gym is added because there is no way they could meet the Physical Education needs and lunch waves. There is undesirable grouping outside of mainstream school design in this option, meaning that Grade 2 through 6 being combined (early elementary school students with pre-adolescence), is just not typical. The configuration cannot support the lunch waves and gym class, in addition to no added intervention or Special Education. Toughest will be for second graders. There is limited expansion for the life skills program, instruction is heavily focused, and not able to address those with intensive behavioral needs. Moving in second grade doesn't now allow for the life skills program. The playgrounds for the age group will need to be adjusted. There

are so many obstacles at Bakerville. The asbestos issue is the biggest problem. Any changes will require sprinklers be added which is a huge expense and the portables must be replaced and the school has to be kept a school for 20 years. Regardless of if fiscally responsible, the site is small. Moving second grade to Antolini and having another school PreK through 1 is not desirable or a “standard”.

MOTION by Kristin Young to strike the option to consolidate PreK through Grade 1 at Bakerville Consolidated School from the configurations. Second by Alesia Kennerson.

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b. Discussion on New Hartford BOE Employee Survey Results

Members reviewed the staff survey results, it was determined that a front page to a survey result analysis is important, describing the methodology how the survey was administered, methodology meaning: a preface, what was done, when it was done, and the background on the question. They distributed 97 surveys and got 57 responses, which is a reasonable response rate. There are those pending factors of the survey happening at the end of the school year and a short turnout time. Top highlights were in favor of some form of consolidation, either consolidating to two schools or one school. There was a small group that wished to maintain current standards. There were concerns noted about costs, and this may be from staff concerns about staffing cuts. The staff sees the benefits of consolidation but also wish to preserve the neighborhood school structure. Major concerns were: *staffing changes and layoffs, facility capacity, and increased classroom sizes*. The Board of Education has the caps of classroom sizes. A big concern was the overall condition of the general classrooms. When you talk renovate as new, that exactly what they are looking for. Items like outlets for newer technology setups or temperature control. Results of the survey will be distributed.

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

Shelley Lloyd (29 Pioneer Drive) — Ms. Lloyd expressed her desire to form a Building Committee, building maintenance has to happen now. She gave sentiments of her previous experience with this kind of situation. She doesn't feel the requests are unreasonable, but what she doesn't want to see is that nothing comes of the research and utilization study of the schools, leaving the town in the same boat as 10 years ago. Ms. Lloyd feels removing Bakerville as an option is a good idea, the district needs to think forward even though the costs are troubling. She hopes a building committee would design something that is going to last, not just what's cheap. Sometimes you have to invest in infrastructure and the cost is not going to be desired regardless — but ultimately what is going to provide better education.

Aulay Carlson (455 West Hill Road) — Are there other options for school consolidation that do not consist of repair and/or building? Could other options be explored? Mr. Carlson feels the Board of Education added PreK classrooms without consulting the Board of Selectman and Board of Finance.

Alesia Kennerson left the meeting at 9:13PM.

G. Communications to the School Facility Utilization Task Force
(Previously item B)

The School Facility Utilization Task Force received one communication from the public since the last meeting.

Mr. Carlson proposed an effective solution to New Hartford's three school problem. His recommendation is to consider moving Grade 6 to regional 7 and renting the space out. That consideration is not within the scope of this task force. The recommendation is to have Mr. Carlson bring that proposal to the Board of Education, to pursue further. The thought process behind the analysis was appreciated, and is posted on the website.

H. Old Business

a. Update from Stakeholder Engagement Subcommittee

N/A

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

- a. Special Meeting - August 20, 2026 (Thursday) at 7:00PM at Ann Antolini School - Library

J. Adjournment

MOTION by Samantha Wald to adjourn the meeting at 9:16PM. Second by Penny Miller.

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*Respectfully submitted by,
Elizabeth Domas, Recording Secretary*

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>