

School Facility Utilization Task Force
Special Meeting
7:00PM on Thursday August 20, 2026
Ann Antolini School - Library

All appointed members of the School Facility Utilization Task Force were in attendance except for: **Samantha Wald** (Community Member).

Attendees of the meeting were:

Mary Beth Greenwood (Board of Selectman), **Kerry Guilfoyle** (Board of Finance), **Alesia Kennerson** (Board of Selectman), **Eleanor “Penny” Miller** (Board of Education), **Carmen Neale** (Community Member), **Jon Puz** (Board of Education), **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 **special** meeting to order at 7:02PM.

A. Approval of Agenda

MOTION by Mary Beth Greenwood to approve the agenda. Second by Penny Miller.

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B. Communications to the School Facility Utilization Task Force

Aulay Carlson (5) – July 10, 2026 “*School Option*”, July 23, 2026 “*Tak Force Focus*”, July 25, 2026 “*Public Informatio*”, July 29, 2026 “*Demographic and Educational Analysis*”, August 1, 2026 “*open communicatios*”

Shelley Lloyd – July 23, 2026 “*To the task force from Shelley Lloyd*”

C. School Facility Utilization Task Force Chair’s Report

Ms. Young will fill the SFU-TF in on the discussion with the Board of Education from August 18, 2026 under New Business, Item B.

D. Routine Business

- a. Approval of Minutes – Thursday July 16, 2026 (Special)

MOTION by Penny Miller to approve the July 16, 2026 special meeting minutes. Second by Mary Beth Greenwood.

AMENDED-MOTION by Penny Miller to approve the July 16, 2026 Special meeting minutes with an amendment to correct Grade 1 to Grade **2** in “**MOTION** by Kristin Young to strike the option to consolidate PreK through Grade **2** at Bakerville Consolidated School from the configurations. Second by Alesia Kennerson.” Second by Mary Beth Greenwood.

Aye: Mary Beth Greenwood, Alesia Kennerson, Penny Miller, Jon Puz, and Kristin Young

Naye:

Abstain: Kerry Guilfoyle, Carmen Neale and Ben Witte

(5-0-3)
Motion Passes

E. New Business

- a. **Bus Route Discussion with Jim McMellon (Assistant Vice President of School Bus) – DATTCO**

The goal of this conversation is to understand the implications on transportation if the town “closed” a school or “consolidated”. DATTCO reviewed the difference senarios. **The options: New Hartford Elementary was closed meaning having Bakerville and Antolini remain open, second one is close Bakerville meaning have New Hartford Elementary and Antolini remain open and lastly close Bakerville and New Hartford Elementary leaving only Antolini open.** Most Bakerville and Antolini routes would only change

slightly. There are currently 9 buses, 7 go to Bakerville and Antolini and 2 go to New Hartford Elementary. Mr. McMellon doesn't foresee a huge savings, as those two buses will be blended into the other school(s). The routes will likely stay the same, routes are attempted to be kept under an hour. If the Town wished to get the routes to under 45 minutes DATTCO could investigate re-districting, but this task comes at a cost. This option may also require extra buses if you wish to reduce the amount of time children are on the bus. To take children between Antolini and New Hartford Elementary is extra time, rather than between Antolini and Bakerville.

A majority of the routes are currently running close to an hour. This is because there are a lot of stops, fairly close to each other. There are not a lot of stops that are large groups of children, picking up 10-15 kids at a time. Children cannot be walking all over town, especially Kindergarten through Grade 2 students. Kindergarteners are always picked up at home. If Bakerville was closed and only New Hartford Elementary and Antolini were open, the times decrease slightly, although there are more kids on the bus. These routes will change because the New Hartford Elementary kids run short routes. The children get picked up and get dropped off at New Hartford Elementary, additional time would be added to then also travel to Antolini. With just Ann Antolini School, 9 buses are still needed. The current busing will still be needed, just changes to where the buses are going back and forth from. The consolidation will likely not cut any buses, but buses wouldn't need to be added either. If at some point in time the Town were to decide two options, DATTCO could review an entire re-district, either way though Mr. McMellon expressed he does not foresee any change being more than 9 buses. Re-districting costs money, a lot of time is invested in this process. DATTCO would conduct a full route analysis. Is the goal to see if there is possibility to cut buses? The answer to be certain, is unknown. This would change a lot, including many pickup and drop-off times and most likely some bus stops.

In his professional opinion, Mr. McMellon feels two elementary schools aren't going to change busing drastically in terms of cost. There is also the possibility if the option is to go with only Antolini, parents change their mind on pickup/drop off, it may be important to consider how many parents will opt in or out of driving their child versus the child taking the bus? There is potential that students may opt back into transportation, depending which way you go. Estimated at 50 kids a bus, if 80 students opted back in to transportation, you could potentially need 2 additional buses. Roughly, 20% of kids get dropped off. This number has increased substantially. Most schools in the State of Connecticut are not designed for parent pickup at a great level, it interferes with buses. Schools have not been designed to have 50 cars and 10 buses at the same time. Every summer the school district sends out a form to parents and the parents must inform whether or not they opt their kids into the bus transportation for the following school year. They then determine who is eligible and who isn't. Adding a couple kids to a bus, usually isn't an issue. Busing starts in Kindergarten, PreK students are not allowed to take the bus, they need to be dropped off and picked up, unless they need special transportation as part of their case.

b. Review Board of Education Discussion on August 18, 2026 and Guidance on Task Force Next Steps

There is a difference between what is offered in the schools right now versus options for the future, in terms of programming. There is a significant difference in cost in terms of those different programming pieces. Ms. Young expressed if the School Facility Utilization Task Force has specific questions regarding programming needs, then the Task Force should ask the Board of Education. If "Option A" is put aside, amongst the other configurations, the question remains is there the need to fit Special Education, or a split gym and cafeteria, which are complicated to stick in any existing footprint. The SFU-TF could benefit from tiered program priorities from the Board of Education. For example, with Special Education, does the administration feel a separate Art and Music room is necessary? There are baseline options and there are 21st century options, a lot is covered by programming. Ms. Young suggested the SFU-TF compile a clear list of questions for the Board of Education. What is the Board of Education's position on separate spaces, or expanding Special Education in-district? Does the Board of Education wish to entertain moving Grade 2 (*there are financial and structural considerations*), or how many PreK classrooms should the SFU-TF plan for? Is there interest in consolidating Central Office? Do they wish to have separate the Art and Music rooms? Would they consider repurposing the multi-purpose room? Lunch waves, is there space to have multiple grades in a lunch wave? If additional languages were added, is there room for that? It is important to remember to look at this project from the perspective of 20 years from now. The Board of Education has been requested to give a path forward regarding Special Education for the SFU-TF. Is expanding the life skills program important? Is additional intervention space important? Ms. Young advocated those questions be put in place by the end of tonight's meeting, she will then direct to the Board of Education for their next meeting to take action on answering the questions. Members concluded a

summary of all the data to present for the Board of Education would be a good idea. Kristin Young and Michelle Miller (SP+A) will partner to put a summary together.

MOTION by Jon Puz that the School Facility Utilization Task Force formally request the *Board of Education, Board of Finance and Board of Selectman* to proceed or pursue with *Civil, Structural and Environmental* analyses, with a cost of \$10,000 in the coming 6 weeks, prior to the School Facility Utilization Task Force making a recommendation to the Board of Education. Second by Kerry Guilfoyle.

Is the intention to have the engineered analyses prior to the SFU-TF making a recommendation? Depends how fast this work could happen, but Jon Puz reiterated, this is a critical piece of information in respect to the options being considered. For the SFU-TF to make a recommendation to the Board of Education without this information is subpar. This is a small amount of funding for professional analyses to assist in a 50 (plus, or minus) million-dollar project. The information needs to be brought to the table sooner rather than later, as the change in cost can differ drastically, this piece is critical. If the Town chooses not to proceed with these analyses, the Town can choose to do so. Was this work requested/included in the original RFP? Kerry Guilfoyle, recalled it was not. Originally the Request for Proposal was going from having no data to how to gather data to start making a decision. There are core pieces to the decision making that need to be addressed, specific to each site.

Aye:
Naye: Mary Beth Greenwood, Kerry Guilfoyle, Alesia Kennerson, Penny Miller, Carmen Neale, Jon Puz, Ben Witte, and Kristin Young
Abstain:

(0-8-0)
Motion Fails

MOTION by Jon Puz to work with Michelle Miller (SP+A) to request proposals for *Civil, Structural and Environmental* analyses of all three sites. Second by Penny Miller.

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Some top questions or ideas that were discussed: the consideration to moving Grade 2? Interest in changing the PreK format? The gym cafeteria separation? How many PreK classrooms to plan for? How much Special Education services would be brought back in house? Is the Board of Education open to changing the grade structure of the schools? Is the Board interested in prioritizing separate Art and Music spaces versus the combined spaces? Does the Board of Education anticipate bringing back any programs such as world languages? Art and Music exist in the schools but utilizes shared/combined spaces. The goal is to bring the schools into the future. If programming is intended to be added, that space should be accounted for. Is it possible to deliver that program without a dedicated space? Central Office at Town Hall versus within the schools? Is it critical? What life skills or outpaced services does the Board of Education intend to have? The purpose of this question is to understand if there is a need to plan for space to have these services in-house, if so, what are the space requirements.

MOTION by Kerry Guilfoyle to submit written request to the Board of Education, to request the School Facility Utilization study be a part of the interview process, obtain an interim Superintendent, and conduct a longer-term search for a Superintendent, a formal request is to ask if the candidate has experience with a similar project – to specifically ask each candidate about their experiences with School Facility Utilization. Second by Penny Miller.

Motion withdrawn.

MOTION by Jon Puz that the School Facility Utilization Task Force send a formal request to the Board of Education, that candidates interviewed in the search for a Superintendent be informed of the ongoing School Facility Utilization process. Second by Penny Miller.

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

Shelley Lloyd - 29 Pioneer Drive

Ms. Lloyd clarified bus numbers with Mr. McMellon. She stated on record the programs in the schools have insufficient facilities. For example, a Speech Therapist in the hallway. Ms. Lloyd clarified the option which the SFU-TF took off the table at the last meeting which was expansions at Bakerville. She noted to maintain the existing facilities would require replacing the portables at Bakerville, at some point. If it's chosen to keep three schools open, there is still deferred maintenance.

John Lloyd - 29 Pioneer Drive

Mr. Lloyd has emphasized a Civil Engineer consultant, before a recommendation to the Board of Education. This analysis must be sooner than later. If the SFU-TF goes down a certain path, the Board of Education needs to know that path is even a possibility. He also reminded the Task Force of his comment a while back about setting deadlines. He noted the deadlines haven't been followed. In the timeline posted, the final presentation was to be delivered on August 9. Which has passed. There are other problems that need to be resolved. The SFU-TF has been at this for some time and feels the need to set a deadline, maintain it and wrap up.

Taylor Johnson - 182 Gillette Road

Ms. Johnson asked several questions: *who determines the stop, which students can cross the road and at what point is a pickup spot deemed unsafe?* Mr. McMellon noted DATTCO. Kindergarteners cannot cross the road; it is preferred to pick up student's door side when possible. If you feel a pickup stop is unsafe, contact DATTCO, they have a Safety Department which will review the stop.

G. Old Business

a. Final Summary of Staff Stakeholder Survey Results

Chair of the SFU-TF, Ms. Young, has made a recommendation to table "Old Business". Samantha Wald is unable to join the Task Force tonight, Ms. Wald was presenting the Staff Stakeholder Survey results.

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

a. Regular Meeting - September 9, 2026 at 7:00PM at Ann Antolini School - Library

I. Adjournment

MOTION by Penny Miller to adjourn the meeting at 9:30PM. Second by Jon Puz.

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Respectfully submitted by,
Elizabeth Domas, Recording Secretary

Attachments:
Beyond the Numbers
NHPS – DATTCO Presentation – August 20, 2026 "Overview of Transportation with Possible School Realignment"

Dedicated email for the task for is NHTaskForce@newhrtfd.org
Dedicated webpage is <https://www.newhrtfd.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>