School Facility Utilization Task Force Special Meeting
7:00PM on Wednesday September 16, 2026
Ann Antolini School - Library

All appointed members of the School Facility Utilization Task Force were in attendance except for: **Samantha Wald** (Community Member) and **Bernard "Ben" Witte** (Board of Finance).

Those members in attendance 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), **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 7:01PM.

A. Approval of Agenda

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

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B. Communications to the School Facility Utilization Task Force

Kristin Young - Intervention Room Usage, August 20, 2026, and Response from Superintendent Sousa, August 24, 2026
Shelly Lloyd - Correction to Minutes, August 27, 2026
Aulay Carlson - Proposed Methodology, September 11, 2026

C. School Facility Utilization Task Force Chair's Report

Ms. Young reported that the Board of Education had a robust conversation regarding SFU-TF questions.

D. Routine Business

a. Approval of Minutes - August 20, 2026 (Special)

MOTION by Penny Miller to approve the minutes from August 20, 2026 with the amendment from Ms. Lloyd. On page 4, "... *a Speech Therapist in the hallway*" changed to "*occupational therapy and physical therapy used hallway space*". Second by Kerry Guilfoyle.

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E. New Business

a. Discuss Additional Consultants: Structural, Civil, and Environmental Evaluations Across the Three Sites

Michelle Miller presented a cover letter with a cost breakdown of fees. The services are in three categories: *Structural* from Michael Horton at $8,400 ($2,400, $2,400 and $3,600), *Civil Engineering* from Benesch at $10,000 and *Environmental* from Eagle at $11,000, in addition to 10 hours of SP+A time at $1,530. The subtotal is $29,400, with a 10% SP+A markup at $2,940 the total fees come to $33,870.

The Structural review consists of a visual investigation. The Civil Engineer would review: *topography, acreage, potential for expansion, flood plains, parking and traffic circulation* to help refine a concept plan. Based on Michelle's initial conversations with these consultants, there are definitely issues which could hinder options on the table. These consultants will come to a public meeting, if desired. The Environmental evaluation will be visual and not include any testing. If an issue is discovered by any of these consultants, will the Board of Education be required to remediate? These reports would be for "potential" issues. Is it possible to narrow down options further before proceeding with any consultants? The goal of these reports, if requested, are to determine what the issues are with each site. Ms. Kennerson doesn't agree with spending money on the consultants at this time. She suggested the Board of Education use their budget for the additional consultants. Jon Puz disagrees, he has expressed advocating for the additional consultant's professional information. Mr. Puz reminded the SFU-TF that this topic

has been discussed at length in previous meetings, noted the show stopping issues which have been discussed and the need for the unknowns to be further explored. This concern has been raised several times by members of the public in addition to the SFU-TF, and has been discussed in great length. In order to obtain the needed information, there is a cost. There are many assumed potential issues which require more information prior to a recommendation going to referendum. Mr. Puz feels not preceding with these consultants is "putting the cart before the horse". Ms. Guilfoyle agrees with both sides of the discussion, but advocates Civil Engineering is critical. Ms. Kennerson suggests the townspeople will not support large scale additions. She also would not propose bump outs at New Hartford Elementary. Does it make sense to spend money for a little bit of space? Jon Puz made the public aware that if there is not construction at Bakerville or New Hartford Elementary, then this leaves Ann Antolini as the only option, which increases the importance of knowing what their working with. Mary Beth Greenwood recommends more information be obtained before going to referendum, she feels it would be irresponsible to put options out there before the community, with a potential to then go back and say the option cannot be done. Kerry Guilfoyle agrees, options should not be presented to be voted on that cannot physically be done because of site issues, whether it be a *Structural, Civil or Environmental* issue. The goal of the SFU-TF is to narrow down to three options.

Conversation paused.

Conversation continued later in the meeting.

Discussion has requested Michelle Miller get an individualized quote for the Civil Engineering request. She will obtain a revised quote. The Board of Finance has the discretion to approve $20,000 in spending per department without going before the taxpayers, although a public meeting is still required.

MOTION by Jon Puz for the SFU-TF to proceed with the additional consultants. Second by Kerry Guilfoyle.

AMENDED-MOTION by Jon Puz to recommended for approval by the appropriate Boards to fund the additional Change Order with SP+A:

- Inclusive of the Environmental Services clarification
- Proceeding with a phased approach and via a process of elimination
- Starting with Civil Engineering
- Utilizing the previously allocated videography funding of $3000.00

Second by Kerry Guilfoyle.

The scope of work and final cost will be determined after SP+A clarifies the costs. The approval up to the full cost to obtain these reports which are to be completed in stages, Civil first then Structural.

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

(6-1-0)
Motion Passes

F. Old Business

a. Final Summary of Staff Stakeholder Survey Results

Tabled.

b. Discuss Board Direction from September 15th on School Facility Utilization Task Force Submitted Questions

The School Facility Utilization Task Force members discussed the responses from the New Hartford Public Schools administration and Board of Education at length. Please see the document attached, the light blue is the SFU-TF question that was posed to the Board of Education, the yellow is the administration's response to the SFU-TF question, and the bullets that come afterwards summarize the key points of the conversation at the Board of Education level. The other greenish/blue after is a summary of the Board of Education's direction. These are high level conversations.

In summary, regarding the seven questions…the New Hartford Board of Education:

- **Q1** - supports a separate Gym and Cafeteria as a high priority, a must have while being mindful of cost
- **Q2** - maintain 3 sections of Pre-K, does not support a decrease in sections, enrollment demand to be reviewed annually
- **Q3** - supports the implementation of Life Skills, no objection was raised. The Board leans towards supporting in-district Life Skills and a Special Education program for the potential cost savings while recognizing the competition for space in the consolidation scenario
- **Q4** - does not support Grade 2-6 configuration, the Board supports to maintain Pre-K-Grade 2 and Grade 3-6.
- **Q5** - supports separate Art and Music Spaces, treat as low priority, not a must
- **Q6** - supports bringing back programs (Spanish, Sign Language…), preserve the flexibility for world languages, long-term planning at a lower priority
- **Q7** - supports Central Office being located within the school system, but not the highest priority

Ms. Kennerson feels the space constraints and cost for the Pre-K program is a problem (*for non-mandated students*). Ms. Kennerson feels non-mandated Pre-K students should pay the full tuition cost. Ms. Young refers the actual headcount of students in the Pre-K program to Board of Education. Ms. Greenwood stated the intent of asking these questions of the Board of Education was to gain answers to what the SFU-TF does not have the authority to answer. The cost per student who is outplaced is $200,000 per year. The children who would use the Life Skills program are very high-level support students, from both Canton and New Hartford. The number of students would change year to year and further details on the program will come later. The Life Skills program would allow students to have relations with other students within the town. The Life Skills is an effort to keep all students integrated in the community and provide cost savings. Ms. Guilfoyle feels the decision should be left up to the taxpayers of the town.

Based on Board of Education's direction to the SFU-TF, what are the next steps? Ms. Young discussed there remains options on the table for the SFU-TF to consider. Michelle Miller (SP+A) will review the numbers based on the ARPA items which have recently been completed to date. Ms. Guilfoyle suggests reviewing the long-term savings to the options remaining. Ms. Young suggested the SFU-TF revisit the remaining 5 options on the table, as some discussion has suggested striking various options. The members had discussion on the remaining options. Ultimately, consensus of the Task Force is, the Board of Education does not support option E (a Grade 2-6 configuration). Potentially more discussion between B1 and C should occur, there are concerns. The additional consultants discussed earlier in this meeting, may provide more insight to those problems. All sites appear to be problematic, but without verifiable professional proof, making a decision is difficult. If a Civil Engineer said there was no possibility to expand at New Hartford Elementary, this would eliminate B1. Jon Puz feels spending $2,400 for the additional consultant against a million-dollar roof is the path which should be considered. More than one option can be recommended to the Board of Education. The idea as a whole loses credibility if an option is put on the table, that is not a feasible option. The money hypothetically spent on additional consultants is to validate the options, are they feasible? Or should they be eliminated? To survey the community with options, those options need to be viable, or it is irresponsible to survey the community with options that may not be possible. There is value to keeping option A5 on the table as a point of comparison to the other options.

The 5 remaining options as of the beginning of this meeting:

A5: Maintain Existing (Bakerville Renovate as New and replace portables)

B1 - New Hartford Elementary - Combine Pre-K-2 into one school at existing site

~~**B2 - Bakerville** Combine Pre-K-2 into one school at existing site~~

This option has been eliminated at a prior meeting.

C - PreK-Grade 2 into one school, build separate structure located at Antolini (New Construction)

D - One District Wide Campus (requires an addition to Ann Antolini School)

~~**E - Two schools:** Pre-K- 1 (at BAK or NHE) and **Grade 2-6 at Ann Antolini**~~

This option has been eliminated as of this meeting.

MOTION by Mary Beth Greenwood to remove Option E from the concepts which the School Facility Utilization is considering. Second by Jon Puz.

Aye: Mary Beth Greenwood, Kerry Guilfoyle, Eleanor "Penny" Miller, Carmen Neale, Jon Puz, Kristin Young
Naye: Alesia Kennerson (No Way to Contest Board of Education Decision)
Abstain:

(6-1-0)
Motion Passes

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

Daniel Jerram - 535 Town Hill Road
Mr. Jerram feels townspeople will not vote for any options without floorplans. Additionally, he stated he feels New Hartford is atypical, no other district has a Grade 2-6 configuration because they already have 1 building. There is a Civil Engineer report for New Hartford Elementary in the 2006 packet. There is a complex issue of the desire to build 20,000 square feet of space, but the fact is the Town already has 100,000 square feet. How much space is needed and how much will it change the budget? Is that cost really worth it?

H. **Action steps for next meeting w/ date, location and time**
   a. Regular Meeting - October 14, 2026 at 7:00PM at Ann Antolini School - Library

I. **Adjournment**

MOTION by Penny Miller to adjourn the meeting at 9:05PM. Second by Jon Puz.

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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

Attachments:
Additional Services for New Hartford Utilization Study: Civil, Structural and Environmental Services SP+A Project No. 25.186
ARPA Phase I and Phase II
Readout: Board of Education Input on Task Force Programming Questions