

1.0 Executive Summary

The five fire districts serving the Town of Bethlehem—Delmar, Elmwood Park, Elsmere, Selkirk, and Slingerlands—jointly led and funded a study to examine opportunities for increased collaboration by and between the fire districts. This study was motivated by a genuine desire to objectively study their operations and obtain independent advice on ways to promote efficiency and to maintain services in the future. That the five districts came together voluntarily and with their own funding is exceptional. The fact that they have undertaken such a significant step is in itself a reflection of their dedication to collaborative efforts in providing services and procurement that continues today.

The five fire districts selected Manitou, Inc., a consulting firm that specializes in emergency services studies from a data-driven perspective, to complete this study. The cooperation and genuine desire for considering greater inter-organizational collaboration was apparent throughout this study.

This report and its appendices are voluminous and contain a great deal of detailed information and analysis. However, the key findings of the report and its ten-year perspective are summarized here.

1. First, existing service delivery within the Town is good. Expenditures are in line with general practices in New York State. There is no evidence of outrageous spending when viewed from an overall perspective. The quality of service appears to be good, and the level of cooperation between the districts is well above average.
2. The existing history of collaboration, especially in working together on this study, bodes well for support of additional efforts in the future.
3. Staffing challenges of volunteer fire services are real and are affecting every district in Bethlehem. Evidence suggests that these challenges will continue to grow. Existing resources in terms of staffing and equipment are adequate to meet the District's needs now and in the future. However, additional efforts to collaborate and share services will be required to maintain service levels. Shared services will be crucial in order to avoid the need to hire career staff.
4. The existing District boundaries bear little relation to modern development patterns, and in some cases inhibit management and delivery of fire services. Much of this effect is mitigated through automatic aid policies and cooperation, but more can and should be done going into the future. Alternative options could include adjustment of District boundaries and/or consolidation of districts.
5. The location of stations is not optimal, but this is normal given the historical development of fire services in Bethlehem and many other locales. While some efficiencies can be gained through adjustments in station locations in the future, these should be pursued in

- the context of improving and upgrading facilities on a gradual basis over the next ten years. Several facilities are in need of improvement – updates to these facilities should be guided by this study.
6. The districts should move toward a goal of functional integration. Within this goal are milestones of: a.) common operating policies; b.) common training requirements; c.) closest station response to emergencies; and d.) sharing of personnel between the existing districts. There are considerable cultural and organizational dimensions to this challenge that must be recognized.
 7. A large cadre of volunteers (sufficient to answer most service calls) are employed by the Town. However, they represent all five districts, and there is not a systematic plan for their utilization. This is an opportunity for the Town Government and Fire Districts to address daytime staffing issues while avoiding long-term costs.
 8. External regulatory standards and industry standards will force hard choices because there are not sufficient resources to satisfy them all. Mandatory health and safety requirements must be met, but a candid discussion of tradeoffs between insurance industry ratings and sound management of fire and emergency services is required.
 9. Although emergency medical services were not a part of this study, there are likely to be additional opportunities for shared services between fire services and EMS. These include shared facilities, administrative costs, and purchasing.
 10. Governance of the collective fire districts is *ad hoc*. A group of high-ranking organizational representatives should be formed to carry collaboration efforts forward.
 11. There are several critical dependencies on external organizations that are key to the fire defense system. Notably, the Town of Bethlehem currently operates water services and dispatching. Continued support by Town officials will be key to assuring that efforts to improve services will be effective and receive adequate support, particularly as fiscal pressures increase through the coming years.

To summarize, the state of fire services in the Town of Bethlehem is good. No major deficiencies in budgetary resources will inhibit the ability to maintain or improve service delivery. Some additional administrative costs may be necessary, but can likely be offset through increased efficiencies and avoidance of increased costs in the future.

The current participation in cooperative ventures by the five fire districts will be increasingly important in the future as a means of maintaining volunteer service delivery, and this moderating any increases in the cost of providing service. Assuming that the recommendations and schedule set out in this report are followed, cost savings from this study will occur gradually, and grow over time, particularly as the debt burden or costs of maintaining reserves for replacement of apparatus begin to be reduced by the reduced numbers of apparatus envisioned in this study. The sound application of these

recommendations can help defer the possible need to employ career firefighters, which will greatly escalate costs and greatly change the nature of service delivery in the Town. In short, this study will position the Districts to collectively monitor their performance and identify areas for increased sharing of resources.

The report is in two volumes: the first volume contains the report. The second volume contains appendices and supporting material including maps.

2.0 Overview

There are five fire districts that serve the Town of Bethlehem (henceforth called “the Town” and/or “the District” of Bethlehem) in Albany County, New York: Delmar, Elmwood Park, Elsmere, Selkirk, and Slingerlands. These five districts began discussions in October 2009 of ways to collaboratively address planning for the role of equipment, facilities, volunteer and paid staffing, and training needs over the coming 5-10 years. These efforts led to a decision to hire a consultant to develop a 10-year plan for increased collaboration among the Districts. A formal Request for Proposals was released in August 2010, with a due date of September 2010. After a competitive process, the District selected Manitou, Inc. to perform the study.

Before awarding of the contract, the District’s task force changed the scope of the project to omit emergency medical services. The task force submitted a revised scope of work to focus solely on fire services, and contracts to begin the study were executed in Fall 2010. Separate contracts were executed with each of the five participating fire districts, with costs being split evenly among them. The study was originally scheduled to be completed in May 2011, but due to delays in obtaining background data from some of the participating fire districts, the task force decided to extend the contract to September 30, 2011, anticipating completion of the report and presentation in September.

The study methodology consisted of a mixed-methods approach, relying on a combination of interviews, focus groups, surveys, review of documents, and collection and analysis of quantitative data on system performance. This methodology was intended to produce a balanced understanding not only of objective system performance issues, but also the organizational dynamics and cultural concerns that underlie the delivery of service within the five fire districts participating in the study.

The project began with a meeting with the task force, this was used to clarify expectations and initiate the process of collecting data and documentation for the districts. The data that Manitou, Inc. collected was comprehensive, and the process took longer than anticipated as some organizations scoured their files. Interviews were held with each Commissioner and Chief of each department. This was followed by focus groups and, later, by a member survey. During the study, Manitou, Inc. decided to issue a citizen survey, and the results of that survey are also included as part of this report. Numerous interviews and follow-up questions were asked of supporting organizations, and additional interviews were conducted with members requesting them.

The analytic process made heavy use of geographic information systems, which were used to process and display data from the local Assessor’s office, census, individual agencies, and the State of New York. Finally, Manitou, Inc. reviewed previous studies that were completed by others.

There are several other precedent studies commissioned by the districts individually over the past decade. Most recently, the Selkirk Fire District produced a 10-year plan in 2005. A report for the Elsmere Fire District dated November 1988 entitled *Service Delivery and Station Location*

Report by Dr. John A. Granito indicated the need for a second station at the intersection of Feura Bush Road and Wemple Road. In 2005 a proposal for the *Operational Consolidation of the Delmar and Elsmere Fire Districts* focused on the building of a new main fire station for Delmar near the existing Delmar sub-station. The report indicated that the existing main station could be utilized for ambulance service. One Elsmere engine would be stationed in the new Delmar station, and one Delmar engine would be stationed in the Elsmere firehouse. The 2005 proposal focused on the need for better coverage south of the Delmar Bypass. These studies have generally supported the notion of increased cooperation and a more rational utilization of stations, equipment, and members. This current study is unique because it was jointly commissioned by all five of the fire districts serving the Town of Bethlehem.

3.0 Organization and Management Structure for Administration and Operations

Organization of fire districts is subject to requirements of state law, but there is considerable room for variation with regard to how various positions are filled, particularly with regard to firematic (operational) organization, which varies considerably from district to district. This section of the report will describe the administrative structure of the five fire districts, including compensation policies for administrative positions and standards and requirements for members.

3.1 Administrative Structure

A board of five fire commissioners governs every fire district in New York State. These commissioners are elected by the qualified voters of the fire district at an annual election held on the second Tuesday of December of each year. Each commissioner is elected for a five-year term with one commissioner elected each year; consequently there will always be experienced commissioners on the board. Commissioners annually elect one member to act as chairman. Fire district commissioners receive no compensation. Commissioners elected or appointed on or after January 22, 2007 are required to complete an Office of the State Comptroller (OSC) approved training course within 270 days of taking office.¹ The training covers legal, fiduciary, financial, procurement and ethical responsibilities, and such other topics as may be prescribed by the State Comptroller. The State Comptroller's office provides a list of approved training providers.²

Every fire district must have a secretary and a treasurer. The secretary is appointed for a one-year term. The treasurer may either be an elected official, serving for a three-year term, or an appointed official holding office for one year. The treasurer and the secretary are compensated in an amount fixed by the board of fire commissioners. The Delmar, Selkirk, Slingerlands and Elmwood Park fire districts employ both a secretary and a treasurer. The treasurer may also serve as secretary as is the case in the Elsmere Fire District. A fire district treasurer who also acts as secretary may receive compensation for both positions.¹ A fire district may also have an appointed deputy treasurer to assume the duties in the absence of the district treasurer. The Elsmere Fire District has a deputy treasurer who also holds the position of deputy fire district secretary. The deputy treasurer and deputy secretary are compensated at a rate determined by the Board of Fire Commissioners for the time spent filling in for either the secretary or treasurer. Though not required, most fire districts are represented by an attorney because the administration of a fire district is subject to many and varied complex laws which require the professional knowledge of an attorney for interpretation. Attorney compensation is fixed by the Board of Fire Commissioners.

Individual fire departments are governed by a set of rules put forth in its *Constitution and Bylaws*. This document provides a framework for the operation and management of the organization (i.e. *North Bethlehem Fire Department Inc., or Elsmere Fire Company A, Inc.*) Generally, bylaws outline requirements for meetings, membership, elections of a board of

¹ *Powers and duties of fire district commissioners*. Section 176(4), *N.Y. Town Law*.

² Office of the New York State Comptroller, "Local official training unit: Fire district training providers." <http://osc.state.ny.us/localgov/training/fdtprovider.htm>. (22 September 2011).

directors and officers, filling vacancies, types and duties of officers, committees, and assessments, and provides general rules of conduct and disciplinary procedures. In this framework, the board of directors and civil officers administer the business/social side of the organization and line officers control the firematic activities of the company.

The following section lists the line and civil or administrative officer structure of each of the five fire districts. It also includes a brief description of the fire departments protecting the Town of Bethlehem. More detailed information on each department is offered and discussed throughout this report.

3.1.1 Delmar Fire District

The Delmar Fire Department has been providing service since 1911. Staffed by 84 members, the department responded to 349 calls in 2010. The department maintains two stations: Station 1 is located at 145 Adams Street, and Station 2 is located at 803 Feura Bush Road. Fire apparatus includes two engines—one truck and one squad. Significant facilities protected by the Delmar district includes:

- the 775,000 square foot Owens Corning fiberglass manufacturing plant;
- a bulk cryogenic air separation facility producing large quantities of liquid oxygen, nitrogen, argon, and gaseous oxygen;
- a lumber yard
- six gasoline filling stations;
- a propane refill station;
- a 100 unit assisting living facility; and
- five residential homes for disabled adults.

The Delmar Fire Department also performs a vital function supporting the activities of Delmar EMS. From the two stations, a total of four ambulances and one paramedic fly car answered 2,104 calls in 2010, providing service primarily to Delmar, Elsmere, and Slingerlands. More than 40 Delmar Fire Department volunteers and several mutual aid volunteers answered 36.5 percent of those calls, with the remainder being daytime calls that were answered by paid emergency medical technicians (EMTs). These fire stations provide the necessary administrative, storage, decontamination, as well as crew standby facilities for this EMT service. The Delmar Emergency Management System (EMS) pays the Delmar Fire District a fee for the use of these two facilities.

The Delmar Fire District has a chief, 1st and 2nd assistant chiefs, a captain, and four lieutenants. In addition, they have a captain, lieutenant of fire police, a quartermaster and assistant quartermaster.

Table 3.1: Delmar Fire Department line officer structure

Chief
1 st Assistant Chief
2 nd Assistant Chief
Captain
1 st Lieutenant
2 nd Lieutenant
3 rd Lieutenant
4 th Lieutenant
Fire Police Captain
Fire Police Lieutenant
Quartermaster
Assistant Quartermaster

The civil officer structure follows traditional lines, with the addition of a chaplain, delegate, assistant delegate, and historian.

Table 3.2 Delmar Fire Department civil officer structure

President
Vice President
Treasurer
Secretary
Chaplain
Delegate
Assistant Delegate
Historian

3.1.2 North Bethlehem Fire Department (Elmwood Park Fire District)

The North Bethlehem Fire Department was established in 1948. The department protects the Elmwood Park Fire District, which includes residents in the Towns of Bethlehem, New Scotland and Guilderland. The station located at 589 Russell Road houses one engine, one engine-tanker, one squad and an EMS response vehicle. With 47 members, the department responded to 263 fire calls and 365 EMS calls for a total of 628 in 2010. The district consists mostly of residential single and multi-family dwellings, some agricultural farms, four churches, two senior residential facilities and a day facility for the learning disabled.

The Elmwood Park Fire District has two chiefs—a chief and 1st assistant. Below them is a captain, overseeing three lieutenants. They also have a captain of fire police. The civil officer structure includes a sergeant-at-arms, in addition to the basic positions.

Table 3.3 Elmwood Park Fire Department line officer structure

Chief
1 st Assistant Chief
Captain
1 st Lieutenant
2 nd Lieutenant
3 rd Lieutenant
Captain of Fire Police

Table 3.4 Elmwood Park Fire Department civil officer structure

President
Vice President
Treasurer
Secretary
Sergeant-at-Arms

3.1.3 Elsmere Fire District

Elsmere Fire Company “A” was formed in 1922. The firehouse at 15 West Poplar Drive serves the mainly residential Elsmere Fire District, which consists of approximately 8,500 citizens, 3,400 single- and multi-family residences and 350 commercial establishments. Growth in the district’s Route 9W corridor has produced several shopping centers with major supermarkets, restaurants, and a home improvement center. A second commercial corridor contains several shopping centers and a major supermarket. The area includes the Good Samaritan complex (assisted, unassisted and nursing care), several group homes and the Delaware Avenue Business corridor. The company currently has 74 members and in 2010 the department responded to 360 calls. Apparatus includes two engines—one truck and one squad.

The Elsmere Fire District has a chief, with a first and second assistant, a single captain, and four lieutenants. Their fire police is headed by a lieutenant. The civil structure includes three directors and a quartermaster in addition to the basic administrative positions.

Table 3.5: Elsmere Fire Company line officer structure

Chief
1 st Assistant Chief
2 nd Assistant Chief
Captain
1 st Lieutenant
2 nd Lieutenant
3 rd Lieutenant
4 th Lieutenant
Fire Police Lieutenant

Table 3.6: Elsmere Fire Company civil officer structure

President		
Vice President		
Treasurer		
Secretary		
Director	Director	Director
Quartermaster		

3.1.4 Selkirk Fire Department

Three fire companies provide protection to the Selkirk Fire District which dates back to 1928. The Selkirk Fire District encompasses an area of 30 square miles with a population of over 8,500. The protection area includes the Selkirk Rail Yard (CSX), seven miles of Hudson River shoreline and seven miles of the New York State Thruway. Selkirk Fire Co. #1, with 33 members, is located at 126 Maple Avenue in Selkirk. Apparatus at this station includes two engines—one heavy rescue and one boat. This station responded to 306 calls in 2010. Selkirk Fire Co. #2, located at 301 Glenmont Road in Glenmont, has 41 members and houses one engine, one brush truck and one truck along with an air support unit. In 2010, this station responded to 296 calls. Selkirk Fire Co. #3 located on Bridge Street in South Bethlehem has 20 members. The station houses one engine, one brush truck and one engine/tanker and responded to 265 calls in 2010, according to the department’s annual report.

The Selkirk Fire Department is the only department in the Town of Bethlehem with three fire stations each housing separate fire companies: Selkirk Fire Co. # 1, Selkirk Fire Co. # 2 and Selkirk Fire Co. # 3. Collectively, the three companies protect the community, responding as one organization to calls for service. Each company is governed by civil officers. The by-laws allow for five civil officers: a president, a vice president, a secretary and/or corresponding or membership secretary and a treasurer. (A company also may appoint a chaplain which may be considered as a civil officer.) This structure is not unique; it is common in other fire districts to have multiple independent fire companies organized under one department. It is also common for each company to have a civil officer structure to control the affairs of the company. During the

course of interviews, some members stressed that the three companies function well at emergency operations but felt that there should not be three separate board of directors controlling company business. Individual fire companies, with strong leaders, that manage the business/social needs of the company, that are responsive to the members and instill company pride, are an asset to the whole fire department. This is not to say that one civil officer structure overseeing the three companies could not achieve the same success. There has been ongoing discussion about the efficacy of this structure, but any changes require amendment of bylaws, which has not been achieved to date.

Table 3.7: Selkirk Fire Department line officer structure

District Chief
1 st Assistant District Chief & Co. #1 Chief
2 nd Assistant District Chief & Co. #3 Chief
3 rd Assistant District Chief & Co. #2 Chief
4 th Assistant District Chief & Captain - Fire Police
District Safety Officer

Company #1	Company #2	Company #3
1 st Assistant Chief	1 st Assistant Chief	1 st Assistant Chief
2 nd Assistant Chief	2 nd Assistant Chief	2 nd Assistant Chief
3 rd Assistant Chief	3 rd Assistant Chief	3 rd Assistant Chief
Safety Officer	Safety Officer	Safety Officer
1 st Lieutenant Fire Police	1 st Lieutenant Fire Police	
2 nd Lieutenant Fire Police	2 nd Lieutenant Fire Police	

Table 3.8: Selkirk Fire Department civil officer structure

Company #1	Company #2	Company #3
President	President	President
Vice President	Vice President	Vice President
Treasurer	Treasurer	Treasurer
Secretary	Secretary	Secretary
	Chaplin	Membership Secretary

The Selkirk Fire Department has thirteen chief officer positions. This structure is clearly defined in the *By-Laws of the Selkirk Fire Department*. Past efforts to amend the by-laws and adopt a line officer structure (captains and lieutenants) similar to the other fire districts, have been unsuccessful. Article XV of the by-laws contains the procedures for an amendment which, when presented at a meeting of active membership, requires three-fourths of the members present to vote for passage. This has failed. Several members of the Board of Commissioners as well as current chief officers have expressed frustration with this failure. They see the need to change the current structure to bring the Selkirk Fire Department in line with the rest of the fire service. The title “chief” is reserved for the person in charge of the department, the highest level of command,

and is usually supplemented by assistant or deputy chiefs. Control in the organization flows to the next level of command, captains with the support of lieutenants, who are responsible for individual companies. This officer rank structure contravenes nearly every established principle of fire service management, and is utterly without precedent in the experience of the project team.

3.1.5 Slingerlands Fire Department

The Slingerlands Fire Department was formed in 1928. The mainly residential Slingerlands Fire District includes a portion of the Town of New Scotland. The firehouse located at 1520 New Scotland Road houses two engines and a heavy rescue. In 2010, the department, comprised of 45 members, responded to 224 calls.

The Slingerlands Fire District has a Chief and first and second Assistant Chiefs. They have three Captains, one each designated for Rescue, Fire, and Fire Police. Civil officers include the basic positions, plus a Representative to the Board of Fire Commissioners.

Table 3.9: Slingerlands Fire Department line officer structure

Chief
1 st Assistant Chief
2 nd Assistant Chief
Fire Captain
Rescue Captain
Fire Police Captain
1 st Fire Lieutenant
2 nd Fire Lieutenant
3 rd Fire Lieutenant
Rescue Lieutenant
Superintendent
Superintendent
Superintendent
Superintendent
Quartermaster

Table 3.10: Slingerlands Fire Department civil officer structure

President
Vice President
Treasurer
Secretary
Representative to the Board of Commissioners
Chaplain
Delegate
Alternate Delegate
Historian

3.2 Paid Positions

While many positions in the Bethlehem Fire District that Manitou, Inc. reviewed are uncompensated, there are administrative positions that do receive compensation. In addition, certain line positions also receive some minimal compensation, usually as an offset to the unreimbursed costs such as mileage and extra time required to fulfill these duties. This section provides a review of the positions receiving monetary compensation.

3.2.1 Delmar Fire Department

In the Delmar Fire Department, in addition to the secretary and treasurer, there is one full-time administrator and two part-time custodians employed by the district. The job description for Delmar Fire District administrator states; “[this] position is responsible for the daily administrative duties of the Fire District and its properties, and when Board approved, support the Department’s administrative matters.” Hours of work for this position are Monday through Friday, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. This position requires the employee to attend all Board functions as required. The administrator may not be an active member of the Delmar Fire Department/Rescue Squad.

The custodians “are responsible for the daily maintenance and upkeep of all Fire District and Department facilities and/or properties.” Both positions are flexible, 20 hours per week positions. The custodians may not be active members of the Delmar Fire Department/Rescue Squad. Delmar EMS reimburses 55% of the district administrator salary and 1/3 of the secretary and treasurer salaries.

Table 3.11: Delmar Fire District administrative compensation

Year	2009	2010	2011
District Administrator	\$41,088	\$42,320	\$42,320
Secretary	\$2,714	\$2,796	\$2,706
Treasurer	\$10,484	\$10,799	\$10,799
Custodian #1	\$15,600	\$15,600	\$15,600
Custodian #2			\$15,600
Total	\$69,886	\$71,515	\$87,025

3.2.2 North Bethlehem Fire Department (Elmwood Park Fire District)

The North Bethlehem Fire Department (Elmwood Park Fire District) employs a district treasurer and secretary. Supplied data shows the amount budgeted for the years indicated:

Table 3.12: Elmwood Park Fire District administrative compensation

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Treasurer	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$8,000	\$8,000
Secretary	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
Total	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$12,500	\$12,500	\$13,000	\$13,000

3.2.3 Elsmere Fire District

In addition to the one Fire District Secretary/Treasurer position, the Elsmere Fire District has a mechanic, quartermaster, custodian, and assistant custodian. The following table describes the position, daily schedule, and type of compensation for each position.

Table 3.13: Elsmere Fire District staff position schedules

Position	Schedule	Compensation
Administrator	Monday through Friday 9:30am to 2:30pm	monthly
Secretary to Chief	As needed	monthly
Mechanic	As needed	hourly
Quartermaster	As needed	hourly (not >20hr/week)
Custodian	As needed	hourly
Assistant Custodian	As needed to fill in for Custodian	hourly

The administrator is expected to be present at the Elsmere firehouse from 9:30 am to 2:30 pm each weekday. Duties include receptionist/secretarial tasks, as well as bookkeeping and maintaining computerized records. The administrator may also assist the fire district secretary, deputy secretary and the secretary to the chief as necessary.

The secretary to the chief is required to perform various administrative record-keeping and computer data entry tasks involving alarm reports, training reports and other data maintained by the chief’s office. This includes weekly, monthly and annual tasks. The secretary to the chief is expected to be present at the Elsmere firehouse as needed in order to accomplish the necessary administrative and record-keeping tasks as outlined in the job description.

The mechanic is required to perform various maintenance tasks involving vehicles, the building, tools and equipment. The mechanic is expected to be present at the Elsmere firehouse as needed in order to accomplish the necessary repairs, maintenance and inspections as outlined in the job description. This includes completing weekly and monthly equipment checks as well as performing minor repairs.

The quartermaster has the responsibility of maintaining both physical equipment inventory and personnel records management. Duties apply to all apparatus, vehicles and equipment and include personal protective equipment (PPE), self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) and any item requiring timed maintenance, calibration and testing. This may include transporting equipment to and from local vendors for repairs. The quartermaster is expected to be present at the Elsmere firehouse or at a related work location, on a routine basis so as to perform the required and necessary tasks. Work shall not exceed 20 hours per week.

The custodian is expected to perform various custodial and maintenance tasks’ involving the district’s building and grounds. Duties include checking, re-stocking and picking up janitorial

supplies. Outdoor tasks include lawn mowing and landscape maintenance as well as entrance and sidewalk snow removal. The custodian is expected to be present at the Elsmere firehouse as needed in order to accomplish necessary maintenance and custodial tasks as outlined in the job description. The assistant custodian shall fill in for the main custodian when the latter is unavailable.

A review of available data shows the line item expenditures budgeted for the position during the listed years:

Table 3.14: Elsmere Fire District administrative compensation

Year	2009	2010	2011
Treasurer/Administrative Secretary	\$25,000	\$24,960	\$24,960
Mechanic	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000
Custodian	\$2,500	\$3,000	\$3,500
Chief's Secretary	\$3,900	\$4,000	\$4,000
Quartermaster			\$15,000
Total	\$37,400	\$37,960	\$53,460

3.2.4 Selkirk Fire Department

The Selkirk Fire Department employs a treasurer and secretary. Supplied data shows the amount budgeted for the years indicated:

Table 3.15: Selkirk Fire Department administrative compensation

Year	2009	2010	2011
Treasurer	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,800
Secretary	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$17,160
Total	\$18,000	\$18,000	\$27,960

3.2.5 Slingerlands Fire Department

The Slingerlands Fire Department employs a treasurer and secretary. The secretary is also compensated for duties as the Length of Service Awards Program (LOSAP) administrator. Supplied data shows the amount budgeted for the years indicated:

Table 3.16: Slingerlands Fire Department administrative compensation

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Treasurer	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,600	\$3,600	\$4,200	\$4,200
Secretary	\$4,800	\$4,800	\$5,400	\$5,400	\$6,000	\$6,000
Total	\$7,800	\$7,800	\$9,000	\$9,000	\$10,200	\$10,200

3.2.6 Summary of Administrative Staff Costs

Analysis of the Districts’ collective expenses for administrative staff shows that in 2010, they collectively spent \$137,000 (including custodial positions). It is likely that sharing responsibilities between Districts could reduce this cost. We make recommendations for sharing some administrative functions. It is anticipated that performance of these functions with shared staff, and sharing of information systems will hold the potential to reduce these costs. However, some Districts operate on a shoestring, and would likely need to spend more to achieve a level of administrative responsiveness desired by this study.

3.3 Physical Standards for Firefighters

All fire departments within the Town of Bethlehem require new firefighter candidates to complete a medical examination. The results of the exam will determine the classification or type of duties the candidate can perform. The common terms that are used to classify the duties that can be performed are **interior qualified firefighter** and **exterior qualified firefighter**. Basically, an interior qualified firefighter means the firefighter is allowed to go into a structure to perform the duties wearing a SCBA. An exterior qualified firefighter is allowed to perform the necessary operational activities outside of the structure and may or may not use a SCBA. A letter classification system (A to D) also exists, which reflects the medical assessment of the individual and the type of work that can be performed.

3.3.1 Delmar Fire Department

The Delmar Fire Department *Chief’s Rules and Regulations*, Section 10: “Active Members Requirement” states that “all members will be required to pass physical examinations to retain Active Membership status (OSHA 29CFR 191.156 B2) according to the following guidelines.” The frequency that firefighters must complete physical exams are listed in Table 3.17.

Table 3.17: Delmar Fire Department physical exam requirements

Age	Under 30	30-40	Over 40	Over 50
Interior Firefighter	Every 3 yrs.	Every 2 yrs.	Annually	Annually
Exterior Firefighter**	Every 5 yrs.	Every 3 yrs.	Every 2 yrs.	Annually

** includes Fire Police and EMS only

The policy states any member not passing interior physicals may be limited to exterior firefighting activities. Members not passing exterior physicals may be limited to inactive status should it be able to be applied.

3.3.2 North Bethlehem Fire Department (Elmwood Park Fire District)

The North Bethlehem Fire Department *Physical Policy* requires an annual physical for all members. The department schedules exams prior to June 1 of each year and each member must complete a physical with 60 days of the initial scheduled date. Failure of the member to complete

a physical within this timeframe will result in the suspension of the individual from firematic duties, which include, but are not limited to, emergency response, drill and training participation.

3.3.3 Elsmere Fire District

The Elsmere Fire District’s *Physical Examination Policy* requires all members to complete an annual medical exam. Results of the exam determine the member’s classification (A thru D). The policy lists the examination procedures to be performed including exceptions based on age or current classification. Any member, of any classification, who fails a physical exam, has the opportunity to request another exam or second opinion (at their own expense) within 30 days of the examination failure.

The Elsmere Fire District’s *Policies and Procedures: Physical Examination Policy* details the four classes of firefighter. The following is a brief explanation of the classifications:

Table 3.18: Member classifications (Elsmere Fire District and Selkirk Fire Department)

Class A	Interior structural firefighter, unlimited SCBA use, no restriction
Class B	Exterior firefighting, SCBA limited to emergency conditions, light to moderate workload
Class C	Exterior support firefighter, no SCBA, light workload
Class D	Administrative/Non-firefighting activities

3.3.4 Selkirk Fire Department

The Selkirk Fire Department’s *Standard Operating Guidelines (SOG’s)* Section 2-14.1 governs firefighter designations. The Selkirk Fire Department’s *Physical Examinations and Fit Testing* policy requires yearly physical for all members. All Class A & B firefighters must pass a physical examination, EKG, SCBA fit test, and vision & hearing tests. All Class C firefighters must pass a physical exam, EKG, and vision & hearing tests. Any member who has not had an examination by December 31st of each year is removed from the active list and denied all duties and privileges until the physical examination requirement is met. They use the same member classifications as Elsmere (See Table 3.18).

3.3.5 Slingerlands Fire Department

Under their *Requirements for Active Membership*, the Slingerlands Fire Department requires physical examinations based on age and position (interior firefighter, exterior firefighter, fire police) annually, biannually, or triennially. They also use the A, B, C, and D classification for firefighters and require “fit tests” for respirator usage consistent with federal OSHA requirements.

3.4 Recruitment

The ability to recruit and retain members is a national concern in the volunteer fire service community. Recruitment for Albany County’s fire departments is solicited through the web site <http://joinemsfire.org/>. The Albany County Fire Advisory Board Recruitment and Retention

Committee is a recruitment and retention committee set up by the Albany County Fire Coordinator's Office, the Albany County Sherriff's Department and the Albany County Legislature (see Figure 3.1). The committee exists to support all the Fire and EMS agencies in Albany County. The Committee has a recruitment and retention trailer which an organization can request for open houses, special events or fundraisers. Request can be made via e-mail at Trailer@joinemsfire.org. The committee meets monthly at the North Bethlehem Fire House and encourages all recruitment officers to attend the meetings.

Figure 3.1: Albany County Volunteer Firefighter and EMT recruitment advertisement



The Albany County volunteer fire and EMS recruitment website offers links to various fire and EMS departments located throughout Albany County. The site also allows an interested person to enter contact information, which the task force will use to respond. A button is also available (<http://www.joinemsfire.org/joinus.htm>) which opens to a screen that allows submission of contact information for potential membership.

The fire departments located within the Town of Bethlehem district use the Albany County volunteer fire and EMS recruitment website through their own individual websites. For instance, the Delmar Fire Department website provides a link under the "Get Involved" menu to the Albany County volunteer fire and EMS recruitment website.

The Elsmere Fire District website (<http://www.elsmerefire.org/member-benefits.html>) has the recruitment hotline number posted under “Member Benefits” and lists the programs and benefits provided to active members of the company. Elsmere also has a Junior Firefighters Program named “Future Firefighters of Elsmere,” which has as its goals “to train young men and women as future firefighter by becoming familiar with firematic equipment, policies, procedures and safety.” The program, initiated to pique the interest of future firefighters, is limited to 20 members and encompasses youth aged 10-13 in the lower division and aged 14-17 in the upper division.

Under the “Volunteer Now!” button, the Selkirk Fire Department website (<http://www.selkirkfd.org/>) provides the recruitment hotline number, the fire department number and the e-mail address for the department secretary. This website also encourages people interested in volunteering to stop by one of the three stations on Wednesdays between 6:00 and 7:00 pm to speak with an officer.

The Slingerlands Fire Department website (<http://www.slingerlandsfirerescue.org/>) provides the recruitment hotline number under the “Join Now” menu and lists the requirements for active membership.

Members of the North Bethlehem Fire Department (Elmwood Park Fire District) expressed pleasure with their recruitment and retention efforts to date. The current 1st Assistant Chief started in the department as a junior firefighter. Currently, 27 percent of the membership (13 out of 47) is under 25 years of age and 40 percent (19 out of 47) have less than 5 years with the department. Both numbers are the highest among the five departments in The Town of Bethlehem. Their website is located at <http://northbethlehemfd.com>.