

**BETHLEHEM FIRE DISTRICTS
COLLABORATIVE PLANNING TASK FORCE**

PRESS RELEASE

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Bethlehem Fire Districts Release Final Report of Collaborative Planning Study, Announce Public Presentation of Results

Bethlehem, NY – The Bethlehem Fire Districts Collaborative Planning Task Force, a representative group composed of the five fire districts’ chiefs and commissioners serving the Town of Bethlehem and parts of the Towns of Guilderland and New Scotland, are releasing the final report of their study on improving collaboration in fire services between the Districts. The study included extensive analysis and a survey of citizens conducted online to gauge attitudes toward fire services.

The study, performed by Manitou, Inc, a Peekskill, NY-based public safety planning consulting firm, which cost approximately \$54,585, was funded by the five Districts. The study examines numerous aspects of fire service provision over the next ten years, and is designed to help the Districts maintain or improve the current level of service while controlling costs. The Fire Districts of Delmar, Elmwood Park (North Bethlehem), Elsmere, Slingerlands, and Selkirk participated in the study.

A public presentation of the study will be given on November 30, 2011 at 6:00 pm at the Bethlehem Central High School auditorium, 700 Delaware Avenue, Delmar, NY. The presentation will review highlights and recommendations of the report, and a question-and-answer session will be included.

The study, which took approximately 13 months to complete, examined training, record keeping, fire prevention, mutual aid, apparatus and facility needs, dispatching, standardization and purchase of tools and equipment, evaluation of organizational structure, and provides a ten-year plan for the Districts' collaboration.

The study established that current costs for services are reasonable, and the Districts are already cooperating well beyond the norm in similar communities. The study also provides recommendations for increased cooperation, sharing of resources, and measures to reduce costs in the future.

“This study by an independent and objective public safety services consulting outside firm provides a candid look at the overall level of fire service in the Town and gives us concrete goals for continuing our efforts to cooperate and preserve the volunteer system within the Town,” stated John Lutz, Chairman of the inter-departmental Task Force.

The 200-plus page study will be available for download from the Fire Districts' and Town of Bethlehem web sites.

Media: For further information on the study or survey, please contact John Lutz, Chairman of the Task Force, at firestudy@elsmerefire.org.