

# TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

## TOWN BOARD AGENDA

Wednesday, June 8, 2011  
6:00 PM



*Town Supervisor*

***Sam Messina***

*Town Board Members*

***Joann Dawson***

***Mark Hennessey***

***Mark Jordan***

***Kyle Kotary***

Public comments on agenda items

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6:00 Public Hearing, A local law amending the Code of the Town of Bethlehem, Chapter 119, Article VI, Vehicles and Traffic, Section 119-33, Schedule VII, Stop Intersections

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Approval of Town Board minutes for 5/25/2011

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Request from the Administrator of Parks and Recreation for approval of seasonal personnel

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Request of the Supervisor to appoint Dr. Michael Dailey, Mr. George Lenhardt and Terry Hannigan Esq. to the volunteer position of Commissioner of the Bethlehem Ambulance District Board

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Presentation by the Bethlehem 20/20 Implementation Committee of the "21st Century Town Governance and Management Structure Report", and an opportunity for the public to have input and ask questions

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New Business

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Public comments on non-agenda items

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**NEXT TOWN BOARD MEETING – Wednesday, June 22, 2011**

*Disabled individuals who are in need of assistance in order to participate should contact the Town Clerk's Office at 439-4955 Ext. 1183. Advanced notice is requested.*

# TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

*Sam Messina*  
Town Supervisor

*Gregg A. Sagendorph*  
Superintendent

Albany County - New York  
**HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT**  
74 ELM AVENUE EAST  
SELKIRK, NEW YORK 12158  
(518) 439-4955  
Fax: (518) 767-9245

Email: [gsagendorph@townofbethlehem.org](mailto:gsagendorph@townofbethlehem.org)



June 2, 2011

Bethlehem Town Board  
445 Delaware Avenue  
Delmar, NY 12054

Dear Board Members:

I respectfully request that the Town Board consider the placement of a stop sign on Adams Street at its intersection with Hudson Avenue in Delmar.

This request was recently brought to the Town by the various groups involved in the opening of a section of the Rail-Trail. Albany County, the Hudson-Mohawk Land Conservancy, and the Friends of the Rail-Trail all feel a stop sign will improve safety for anyone using the trail and crossing the Town highway. Crosswalks were recently installed and the trail was re-routed in an effort to get the users of the trail to cross at the intersection.

In recent years, when the railroad finally stopped using this track, neighbors living in the Hudson Avenue area also requested the addition of a stop sign on Adams Street due to close calls involving vehicles entering the intersection from different directions at the same time.

The addition of this one stop sign would make this four-way intersection an "All-Way Stop". Stop signs are already in place on both sides of Hudson Avenue and on North Street heading south.

Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

Gregg A. Sagendorph  
Superintendent of Highways

GAS:sc

Local Law Filing

NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF STATE
41 STATE STREET, ALBANY, NY 12231

(Use this form to file a local law with the Secretary of State.)

Text of law should be given as amended. Do not include matter being eliminated and do not use italics or underlining to indicate new matter.

County
City of Bethlehem
Town
Village
Local Law No. of 2011

A local law Amending the Code of the Town of Bethlehem, Chapter 119, Article VI,
Section 119-33, Schedule VII, Stop Intersections.

Be it enacted by the Town Board of the

County
City of Bethlehem as follows:
Town
Village

ADD STOP INTERSECTIONS AS FOLLOWS:

STOP SIGN ON AT INTERSECTION OF DIRECTION
Adams St. Hudson Ave. north

ALL WAY STOP ON AT INTERESECTION OF DIRECTION
Adams St. Hudson Ave. north
Hudson Ave. Adams St. east
Hudson Ave. Adams St. west
North St. Hudson Ave. south

This local law shall take effect immediately upon filing with the Secretary of State.

(If additional space is needed, attach Pages the same size as this sheet, and number each.)

# Adams Street & Hudson Avenue



1 **Town Board**  
2 **May 25, 2011**  
3

4 A regular meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Bethlehem was held on the above date at the Town  
5 Hall, 445 Delaware Avenue, Delmar, NY. The meeting was called to order by the Supervisor at 6:00PM.  
6

7 PRESENT: Samuel Messina, Supervisor  
8 Joann Dawson, Councilwoman  
9 Mark Hennessey, Councilman  
10 Mark Jordan, Councilman  
11 Kyle Kotary, Councilman  
12 Nanci Moquin, Town Clerk  
13 James Potter, Town Attorney  
14

15 Supervisor Messina called the meeting to order and lead the Pledge of Allegiance.  
16

17 **PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS**  
18

19 Marie Capone – Congratulated Councilman Kotary on running for supervisor.  
20

21 Kathleen Bragel, 1575 New Scotland Rd. – She is in favor of the resolution supporting the historical  
22 district. She thanked Susan Leath for her hard work. She lives in the Slingerland House, one of the  
23 historical houses. Some of the papers that were left in the house have been donated to the Town. She said  
24 the area is full of historic.  
25

26 Elona Mulech, 1471 New Scotland Ave. – She is in favor of the resolution to support the historical  
27 district. She has lived on New Scotland Rd. for 40 years. Older homes have their challenges. There is  
28 very little turnover in the area. She went door to door with Susan Leath and met many other people who  
29 also loved the area and the historical nature of the area.  
30

31 Kim Strosahl – Brockley Dr. – She did not agree with the Planning Board’s recommendation for the  
32 removal of preference given to cell towers located on municipal property. She said the approval of the  
33 Van Dyke tower included the Town’s SCADA antenna to be placed on the tower at no charge to the  
34 Town. She said the recommendation was contrary to the wishes of the residents.  
35

36 Jared King, 22 Paxwood Rd. – Asked where he could get copies of the proposed amendments to Zoning  
37 Law. Supervisor Messina said they were on the WEBSITE.  
38

39 Shari Sandusky - 698 Kenwood Ave. – In support of the historical district. She said this would be an  
40 opportunity to get the name of Town out there.  
41 -----  
42

43 **APPROVAL OF TOWN BOARD MINUTES FOR 4/27/2011 AND 5/11/2011**  
44

45 A motion to approve the minutes of 4/27/2011 was offered by Councilman Jordan, seconded by  
46 Councilman Hennessey and approved with the following vote:  
47

48 AYES: Supervisor Messina, Councilwoman Dawson, Councilman Hennessey, Councilman Jordan,  
49 Councilman Kotary  
50 NOES:  
51

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52 A motion to approve the minutes of 5/11/2011 was offered by Councilman Jordan, seconded by  
53 Councilwoman Dawson and approved with the following vote:

54  
55 AYES: Supervisor Messina, Councilwoman Dawson, Councilman Hennessey, Councilman Jordan,  
56 Councilman Kotary  
57 NOES:

58  
59 -----

60  
61 **REQUEST FROM THE TOWN HISTORIAN FOR THE TOWN BOARD TO ADOPT A**  
62 **RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE NOMINATION OF THE PROPOSED SLINGERLANDS**  
63 **HISTORIC DISTRICT TO THE NATIONAL AND STATE REGISTERS OF HISTORIC**  
64 **PLACES**

65  
66 A motion to approve the Resolution Supporting the Nomination of the Proposed Slingerlands Historic  
67 District was offered by Councilman Jordan, seconded by Councilman Hennessey

68  
69 DISCUSSION:

70  
71 Ms. Leath said this is a great district and a wonderful thing for the Town. The residents support this.  
72 Tony Opalka from the State Historic Preservation Office was present to answer questions. The  
73 nomination materials will be finished and submitted to SHPO in July. This proposed district will come  
74 before the SHPO for consideration in October. Ms. Leath said this nomination won't put any restrictions  
75 on the property owners.

76  
77 The motion was approved with the following vote:

78  
79 AYES: Supervisor Messina, Councilwoman Dawson, Councilman Hennessey, Councilman Jordan,  
80 Councilman Kotary  
81 NOES:

82  
83 -----

84  
85 **REQUEST FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR OF PARKS AND RECREATION FOR APPROVAL**  
86 **OF SEASONAL PERSONNEL**

87  
88 A motion to approve the seasonal personnel in Ms. Lanahan's 5/25/11 memo was offered by  
89 Councilwoman Dawson, seconded by Councilman Kotary and approved with the following vote:

90  
91 AYES: Supervisor Messina, Councilwoman Dawson, Councilman Hennessey, Councilman Jordan,  
92 Councilman Kotary  
93 NOES:

94  
95 -----

96  
97 **RECOMMENDATION FROM PLANNING BOARD ON PROPOSED LOCAL LAW**  
98 **AMENDING PROVISIONS OF THE ZONING LAW AND SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS,**  
99 **AND REQUEST FROM TOWN PLANNER TO CONSIDER ISSUING A SEQR NEGATIVE**  
100 **DECLARATION ON THE LOCAL LAW, SETTING A PUBLIC HEARING AND MAKING**  
101 **NECESSARY REFERRALS**

102

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103 A motion to issue a SEQR Negative Declaration was offered by Councilman Jordan, seconded by  
104 Councilman Kotary and approved with the following vote:

105  
106 AYES: Supervisor Messina, Councilwoman Dawson, Councilman Jordan, Councilman Kotary  
107 NOES: Councilman Hennessey

108  
109 This will be referred to the Albany County Planning Board for their meeting on June 16, 2011. The  
110 adjoining communities will also be notified.

111  
112 A motion to set the public hearing for 6:00PM on June 22, 2011 was offered by Councilman Jordan  
113 seconded by Councilman Kotary;

114  
115 DISCUSSION: Councilman Hennessey said there had been additions suggested that he did not see in the  
116 amendments. He wanted to hold off on the public hearing until they were addressed. Mr. Lipnicky said  
117 there had been suggestions submitted to the Planning Department and a discussion paper put together.  
118 Some of the suggestions were included in the amendments and some were not. The draft set out criteria  
119 for telecommunication facilities. An applicant would need to show that they attempted to place the cell  
120 tower using that criteria. The telecommunications the facilities have to be located where they are needed.  
121 Municipal lands were taken out of the criteria because it would put municipal property in competition  
122 with private property owners and that was thought to be inappropriate. Councilman Hennessey didn't  
123 think the use of municipal property was in there solely for economic gain. He thought part was to use  
124 existing sites. He said it was the Town Board's job to pass laws, not the Planning Board. He thought it  
125 should be left in and the other concerns should be addressed prior to the public hearing. Mr. Lipnicky said  
126 he was reporting on the Planning Board's recommendation. Mr. Lipnicky said a recommendation for a  
127 1,500 set back from schools was reviewed. It was determined that the federal government has preempted  
128 local zoning on that issue because health reasons cannot be used in the determination of where a  
129 telecommunication facility can be placed. He said the backup material that was received with the  
130 recommendation was about health reasons. Councilman Hennessey thought conditions that were not  
131 based on health reasons could be applied. Mr. Lipnicky said there are telecommunications facilities on the  
132 water tower near the middle school. Councilman Hennessey still wanted to hold off on the public hearing.

133  
134 Councilwoman Dawson asked if there was a limitation on the size of structure in the Commercial Hamlet  
135 zone. Mr. Morelli said no, but anything over 5,000 sq ft needed to be articulated as to appear as different  
136 structures. The proposal is to give the Planning Board the authority to determine if that articulation is  
137 sufficient. Councilwoman Dawson said that along with the changes that bring the code up to date and  
138 consistent with other laws, there are significant areas that need further detail before going forward.

139  
140 Mr. Lipnicky said if the Town Board held the public hearing, they would obtain feedback from the public  
141 on other items. The Town Board doesn't need to act. Mr. Potter said if changes of substance were made  
142 to the law as presented, it need to be redrafted and go back to the Albany County Planning Board and the  
143 come back to the Town Board. He would determine for the Board if the changes warranted another  
144 public hearing.

145  
146 Mr. Morelli thought the Town Board should proceed with the public hearing to get all the comments then  
147 decide how to proceed with the law. The Board members can reach out to staff on any of the  
148 recommendations prior to the public hearing for more clarification.

149  
150 Councilman Jordan wanted to move forward and hold the public hearing to get all comments for the  
151 public.

152  
153 The motion was approved with the following vote:

---

154  
155 AYES: Supervisor Messina, Councilwoman Dawson, Councilman Jordan, Councilman Kotary  
156 NOES: Councilman Hennessey  
157 -----

158  
159 **REQUEST FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT OF HIGHWAYS TO PURCHASE TWO USED**  
160 **LEAF VACUUM MACHINES FOR USE BY THE HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT**

161  
162 A motion to approve the purchase of two (2) used leaf vacuum machines was offered by Councilman  
163 Kotary, seconded Councilman Jordan by and approved with the following vote:

164  
165 DISCUSSION: Thanked Gregg for looking for a deal.  
166

167 AYES: Supervisor Messina, Councilwoman Dawson, Councilman Hennessey, Councilman Jordan,  
168 Councilman Kotary  
169 NOES:

170  
171 -----

172  
173 **REQUEST BY TOWN ENGINEER TO AWARD CONTRACT FOR EXTERIOR**  
174 **RENOVATIONS TO THE TOWN HALL TO TITAN ROOFING AND TO AUTHORIZE**  
175 **SUPERVISOR TO SIGN CONTRACT WITH TITAN ROOFING**

176  
177 A motion to award the contract for exterior renovations to Town Hall to Titan Roofing and to authorize  
178 the Supervisor to sign the contract with Titan Roofing was offered by Councilman Kotary, seconded by  
179 Councilman Jordan

180  
181 Supervisor Messina said \$470,000 was approved by the Board for this work and the cost will be  
182 \$318,000. The Town will now borrow less.

183  
184 and approved with the following vote:

185  
186 AYES: Supervisor Messina, Councilwoman Dawson, Councilman Hennessey, Councilman Jordan,  
187 Councilman Kotary  
188 NOES:

189  
190 -----

191  
192 **REQUEST FROM THE COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC WORKS FOR THE TOWN BOARD TO**  
193 **AWARD THE PURCHASE OF A NEW UTILITY SERVICE TRUCK TO ROBERT GREEN**  
194 **TRUCK DIVISION FOR \$59,970.00. PURCHASE OF THIS UTILITY TRUCK WAS**  
195 **PROGRAMMED INTO THE APPROVED 2011 DPW WATER DISTRICT OPERATING**  
196 **BUDGET.**

197  
198 This item was in the DPW's 2011 operating budget.

199  
200 A motion to award the purchase of a new utility service truck to Robert Green Truck Division was offered  
201 by Councilman Kotary, seconded by Councilwoman Dawson

202  
203 DISCUSSION:  
204

---

205 Councilwoman Dawson asked what was budgeted for this item. Mr. Cansler said it was less than the cost.  
206 They had decided on a different truck that was more efficient and safer for the employees. They are  
207 making up the difference by not purchasing another truck that was budgeted.  
208

209 The motion was approved with the following vote:

210  
211 AYES: Supervisor Messina, Councilwoman Dawson, Councilman Hennessey, Councilman Jordan,  
212 Councilman Kotary

213 NOES:

214

215 -----

216

217 **REQUEST FROM THE COMPTROLLER TO ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF THE 2010**  
218 **INVESTMENT REPORT**

219

220 The Town Board acknowledged receipt of the 2010 investment report. Ms. Traylor said the investment  
221 policy has not changed. Councilman Kotary asked if there was something else the Town could do with  
222 our investments. Ms. Traylor said the safest place to have the Town's money is money market accounts. It  
223 is a challenging issue. CD's pay very low rates. They are doing whatever they can to maximize the  
224 Town's dollars. Councilman Kotary encouraged the continued conservative investments. Ms. Traylor said  
225 they have been able to see some savings with prepayments. Contracts can then be negotiated better and  
226 the Town sees significant savings.

227

228 -----

229

230 **REQUEST FROM THE COMPTROLLER TO APPROVE FINAL 2010 BUDGET TRANSFER**  
231 **REQUESTS**

232

233 A motion to approve the Final 2010 Budget Transfer requests was offered by Councilwoman Dawson,  
234 seconded by Councilman Jordan

235

236 DISCUSSION: Ms. Traylor said if a certain line item goes over and another is under the budgeted  
237 amount, the revenue is shifted to the area where it is needed without going over the budget. There aren't  
238 any additional line items, the transfers are to existing accounts. Sometimes the system has to be  
239 overridden to pay bills. The transfers are done to handle the balance sheet.

240

241 The motion was approved with the following vote:

242

243 AYES: Supervisor Messina, Councilwoman Dawson, Councilman Jordan, Councilman Kotary

244 NOES: Councilman Hennessey

245

246 -----

247

248 **PRESENTATION BY THE COMPTROLLER OF THE DECEMBER 31, 2010 YEAR END**  
249 **FINANCIAL RESULTS AND THE APRIL 30, 2011 FINANCIAL RESULTS**

250

251 Ms. Traylor presented. The speed sheet was a summary of the all of the data sent to the State Comptroller  
252 due April 30<sup>th</sup>. The auditors are currently auditing those figures. The audited financial statement  
253 presentation will be in June.

254

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255 General fund – In the 2010 budget, it was anticipated that \$573,000 would be used from the fund balance,  
256 the amount used was \$161,000. The Time Warner Franchise produced more revenue and as did other  
257 fees. The fund balance is higher than the 15% the Town likes to keep available. She said next year  
258 because of new regulations, the Town will need to break the fund balance into several different  
259 categories. The fund balance will be presented differently in the future.

260  
261 Highway Fund –2010 budget included a \$351,000 loss but there is a surplus of \$738,000. The reason was  
262 a mild winter in 2010 and paving was bonded. Mr. Sagendorph suggested paying more on the paving  
263 bond with the surplus.

264  
265 Water Fund – \$960,000 surplus in the water fund. The reason was higher revenues.

266  
267 Sewer Fund - \$960,000 surplus because of higher revenues.

268  
269 Ms. Traylor said the Town’s revenue has gone up \$1,950,000 in the past five years. Revenue comes from  
270 real property tax, sales tax and mortgage tax. Government aid is going down. The spending for the Town  
271 has stayed almost the same for the past 5 years.

272  
273 Sales tax for this year is up over what was budgeted. The new census data shows the growth of the Town  
274 since 2007. We have 33,000 people per the census. That’s why we end up with more sales tax revenue.

275  
276 Revenue for the General Fund - Revenue is up and spending is down. All of the highway revenue comes  
277 in all at the beginning of the year when taxes are paid. Spending in the highway department - tough first  
278 part of the year with the weather. Summer will have paving.

279  
280 Water fund –May has been a very wet month, and the water fund is not doing as well. The sewer fund  
281 mirrors the water fund.

282  
283 Long term financial view – economic conditions are inconsistent. There should be a 2% tax cap adopted  
284 by NYS. This limits the ability to tax residents. Every department tries to look for grant opportunities.  
285 The Town has been working on economic development with the IDA to lessen the burden to the tax  
286 payers. It is yet to be seen how the cable TV franchise revenues will pan out. She said certain costs out  
287 pace the 2% tax cap such as the pension, health care and Albany County Water Contract.

288  
289 Supervisor Messina said the unaudited numbers all the funds show cost reductions and revenue increases  
290 over all. Each of the fund balances are better than anticipated. He said the census data has helped with the  
291 sales tax revenue to the Town.

292  
293 Ms. Traylor said these numbers on the spreadsheet are through April 30<sup>th</sup>.

294  
295 Councilwoman Dawson asked Ms. Traylor if the Board should be concerned with any item in the trend.  
296 Ms. Traylor said the Board was very fiscally conservative in the 2011 budget. She sees no red flags.

297  
298 Councilman Kotary said he was pleased to see the hold on spending. The user fees have been flat and the  
299 taxes have gone up. He thought possibly the user fees could be used to meet expenses instead of the taxes.  
300 He said looking at all the fund balances the total is about 12 million dollars. Ms. Traylor said that per the  
301 new regulations the fund balances must be transferred and the use of funds must be identified by the end  
302 of the year. There can’t be any excess funds sitting in any balance except the general fund.

303  
304

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305 **REQUEST FROM THE COMPTROLLER TO ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF THE 2010**  
306 **REPORT ON CAPITAL RESERVE FUNDS**

307  
308 The Town Board acknowledged the receipt of the 2010 Report of Capital Reserve Fund balance.  
309 -----

310  
311 **NEW BUSINESS**

312 none  
313 -----

314  
315 **PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

316  
317 Linda Jasinski – She understands the process for the zoning changes and has been waiting for the proper  
318 time to voice her opinion. To hear a Councilman say that he knows what the public wants, offended her.  
319 She wants to have her say and was glad the public hearing went forward. She asked how someone would  
320 get something considered in the Zoning Code. Supervisor Messina said to put it in writing and send it to  
321 Mr. Morelli.

322  
323 Jared King – He came to a public hearing and there was a presentation in the public hearing. He thought it  
324 was against NYS Law. A public hearings time and place should be stated and the fact that a presentation  
325 will proceed should be noted. He mentioned the raises for employees. Town employees should have the  
326 same issues as non employees. He was concerned about the user fees in the financial report. The Town  
327 has built commercial building but the people don't have any benefit. Staff is doing an excellent job trying  
328 to hold down expenses. He said maybe new hires are not necessary. What the general public faces as  
329 employees and what the government employees face should be similar.

330  
331 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

332  
333 A motion to adjourn into executive session for matters of potential litigation was offered by Councilman  
334 Jordan, seconded by Councilman Kotary and approved with the following vote:

335  
336 AYES: Supervisor Messina, Councilwoman Dawson, Councilman Hennessey, Councilman Jordan,  
337 Councilman Kotary

338 NOES:  
339

340 A motion to adjourn the regular meeting was offered by Councilwoman Dawson, seconded by  
341 Councilman Kotary and approved with the following vote:

342  
343 AYES: Supervisor Messina, Councilwoman Dawson, Councilman Hennessey, Councilman Jordan,  
344 Councilman Kotary

345 NOES:

346 The meeting ended at 8:10.

347  
348 Submitted by,

349  
350 Nanci Moquin  
351 Town Clerk

352  
353

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## 21st Century Town Governance & Management Structure Bethlehem 2020 Implementation Committee

### Background

This report flows from the original Bethlehem 2020 Report, which specifically called for “a nonpartisan committee to evaluate opportunities for modernizing Town government, including exploring consolidation of Town departments, encouraging shared services, and changing some of the Town’s elected offices to professional appointments.” This work has been influenced by the opportunities for cost savings identified in other studies, our own preliminary reviews of town functions, as well as the steady drumbeat for more modern, efficient and effective government at all levels. The options presented for consideration are based on available research and our discussions, and attempt to answer the question: What is the right governance model for Bethlehem?

### Modernization Options *for Town Board consideration and Voter approval*

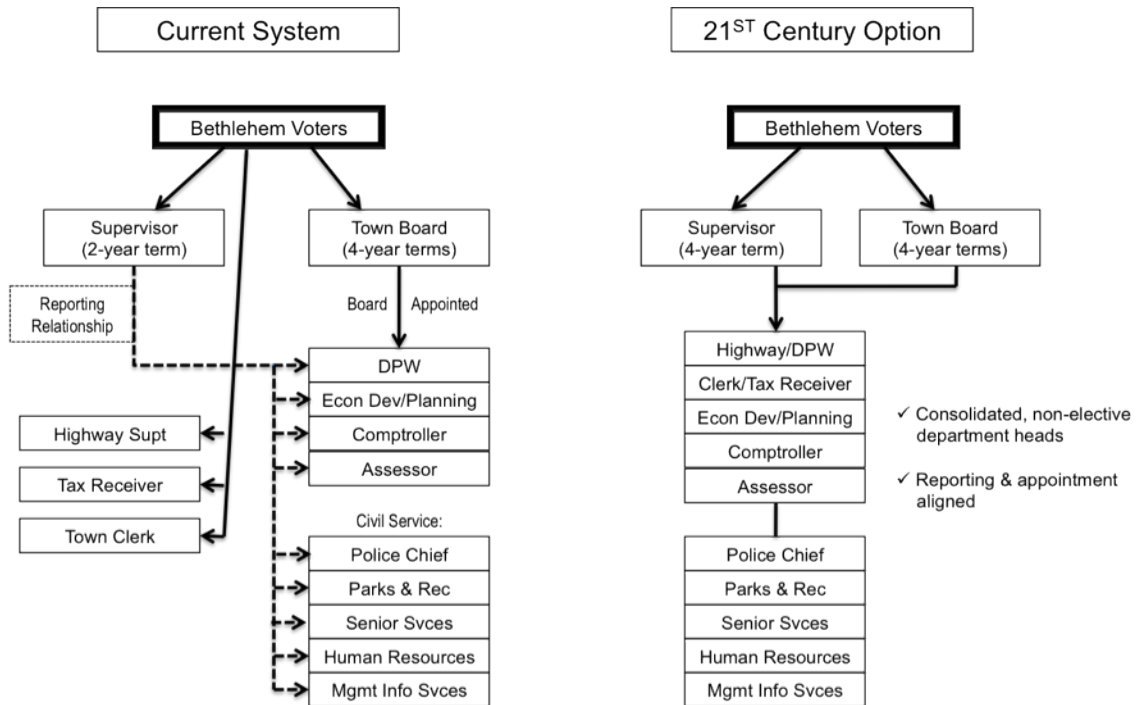
- Lengthen the term for Town Supervisor from two to four years
- Move to appointed department heads for all Town departments, eliminating elective offices for Highway Superintendent, Tax Receiver and Town Clerk  
*Note: Neither current incumbents nor those to be elected this fall would have their terms affected by this option, which would also require voter approval*
- Consider giving the Town Supervisor power to appoint or nominate some key policy-related positions, or conform their terms to the Supervisor’s

### Rationale

As a major and complex municipality, with a population of 33,000 (larger than most small cities), Bethlehem could benefit from a modern governance system with stronger executive control, streamlined management and without independently managed “silos.”

- Stronger executive control could help Bethlehem address long-standing issues and forge partnerships with other taxing jurisdictions.
- Moving from elected to appointed department heads (for the 3 of 12 Town departments where they still exist) would modernize and provide consistency in the Town’s management structure.
- It would facilitate coordination or consolidation of currently separate operations for Highways/DPW and the Clerk/Tax Receiver offices.
- Streamlined management and departmental consolidation would allow for lower costs and more effective services. Our study of consolidation possibilities for DPW and Highways tentatively concurs with the 2006 Interdepartmental Management Advisory Committee (IMAC) report that significant savings are possible; IMAC consolidation alternatives projected efficiencies of \$300,000 to \$425,000 annually. Additionally, a current review of Town financial management operations suggests consolidation of certain departments and duties could generate annual savings while preserving services and strengthening financial management.

- A modern governance system may help Town leaders respond to today’s fiscal challenges, rapidly changing environment and economic development opportunities.
- By establishing Bethlehem as a leader in local government efficiency and restructuring, we could position our Town to capitalize on state government interest and grant opportunities.



**Review Process and Findings**

In developing these options, we have reviewed available research and spoken with local government experts at the Association of Towns, several academic institutions, and to officials in other Towns that have made changes. We also spoke to the Town Attorney and current and previous Town officials (although this does not imply endorsement of our findings). To the extent possible we have sought examples from other local governments, although in some areas comprehensive data are lacking.

We acknowledge that those currently holding elected department head positions may have a different view than ours of the efficacy of these changes, and hearing from those officials will be an important part of the discussion. Further, we want to emphasize that these options should not be construed as criticism of any elected or appointed official or their staff. We simply believe that more efficient and effective organizational structures are available to address the significant challenges that Bethlehem faces.

Referenda are required for these options, which would give Bethlehem voters the power to decide whether they wish to continue certain department head positions as elective offices or change the length of the Supervisor's term. Any voter-approved changes would be prospective, and would not affect current officeholders or those to be elected this fall.

### **Four-Year Term for Supervisor**

Bethlehem's Town Supervisor currently serves for a two-year term. This compares to four-year terms for the other Town Board members. Towns can choose to move to a four-year supervisor term through a public referendum, and many have. A total of 279 towns have done so to date, nearly 30 percent of the 932 towns statewide. While unfortunately there is no unifying study detailing these individual decisions or comparing results, usually the choice is made along the same lines that led to four-year terms for mayors and governors – simply that a longer period is advisable for a leader to successfully implement improvements. We think that a four-year term would give Bethlehem's Supervisors a more workable timeframe within which to make improvements. Many observers, including previous Bethlehem Supervisors, believe that a two-year electoral cycle simply isn't enough time. We would also note that of all the towns who have gone to a four-year term, none have returned to two.

We believe that a longer term of office, in combination with other recommended options, would be beneficial. Many Bethlehem residents think of the Town Supervisor as they would a mayor or a chief executive, and are likely unaware of how little executive control that office possesses (with the exception of certain financial matters). The difficulty our Town has experienced in resolving some long-standing issues (for example, many raised by the Interdepartmental Management Advisory Committee or "IMAC" study) tells us that providing our elected Town Supervisor with a stronger hand administratively would be a positive step. A longer term of office would also provide a more stable timeframe within which to develop partnerships with other taxing jurisdictions, develop partnerships, and be in a position to act more effectively on priorities like economic development.

### **Moving Away from Elected Department Heads**

Having elected department heads within Town Government appears to have notable disadvantages, and the elective posts of Highway Superintendant, Tax Receiver, and Town Clerk could be eliminated in favor of appointive professional positions, making them consistent with the other nine Town Department Heads (many of which head larger operations). This change would also allow for consolidating the operations of currently separate, though similar, departments including the Highway Department, the Department of Public Works, and the offices of the Clerk, Tax Receiver, and possibly other financial or clerical operations. These changes would also more clearly focus accountability for Town affairs with our elected Town Board and Supervisor, which we believe is appropriate.

**Departments with Elective Heads**

Highway Department (60 staff)  
Tax Receiver (3 staff)  
Town Clerk's Office (3 staff)

**Other Town Departments**

Department of Public Works (60 staff)  
Economic Development & Planning (10)  
Police Department (60 staff)  
Parks & Recreation (10 staff)  
Senior Services (6 staff)  
Comptroller's Office (4 staff)  
Assessor (4 staff)  
Human Resources (3 staff)  
Management Information Svcs (4 staff)

The current arrangements, it should be noted, are somewhat an accident of history, and even a casual observer would probably wonder at the differentiation. That is, why the heads of the Highway, Clerk and Tax Receiver offices are elective, whereas, for example, the Commissioner of Public Works, the Director of Economic Development and Planning, and the Comptroller are not. In truth, as has been acknowledged in recent Commission reports and academic studies, this distinction is purely historical. Offices created in the early 1900s or before were historically elected, whereas those created later are not. The current system, based on the somewhat dated default provisions of the Town law, bears little relation to how large the departments are or how complex the functions.

The options we suggest are in full concurrence with the findings of the Lundine Commission on Local Government Efficiency (see Appendix 2), which concluded that separately elected posts may stand in the way of shared or combined services. Simply put, the tradition of elected Tax Receivers, Clerks and Highway Superintendents is a vestige of a time when towns in New York were almost exclusively rural, generally without a municipal workforce, a full-time supervisor, independent audits, or any of the other modern management tools of which Bethlehem already has the benefit.

We note that the majority of towns statewide (577, or 62% of the total number) have already chosen to eliminate tax receivers/collectors as a separate elective office, usually placing that responsibility with town clerks (whether elective or appointive). There is anecdotal evidence that more communities are taking up these changes. For example, in Onondaga County the Towns of Dewitt and Geddes have eliminated their positions of tax receiver (the Geddes referendum passed most recently by a vote of 530 to 55 and the change is expected to save about \$100,000). Referenda have also recently passed in communities like Wheatfield and Van Buren.

A majority of towns continue to have elected town clerks, although 43 appoint their clerks (as do villages). Whether elected or appointed, the town clerk acts as the secretary of the town board, has custody of the records of the town, accepts filings required by law, and serves as the records access officer for purposes of the Freedom of Information Law; many other duties vary by town.

In the case of highway superintendants, a much smaller proportion of towns have moved away from elective office (873 town highway superintendants remain an elective office; 59 are now appointed). While a unified study is lacking, the idea of eliminating the elected office and combining the highway function with a Department of Public works is increasingly coming under discussion as towns across the State search for new ways to do more with less. In Chemung County, where a concerted effort to share services is underway, several towns have converted to an appointed highway superintendant. Generally, when towns eliminate an elected highway superintendent, this function is combined with the operations of Departments of Public Works, which are also labor-intensive operations involving heavy equipment. Note that this issue applies exclusively to towns, as cities and villages do not have elected highway superintendants. The common sense proposition is that separate departments with separate workforces and equipment inventories must offer opportunities for efficiency and performance enhancement if combined. As noted earlier, a previous analysis for Bethlehem projected potential savings in the \$300,000-\$425,000 range (IMAC study).

The options we suggest would make changes only for future terms; they do not involve removing any sitting elected officials, including both those currently holding office, as well as those to be elected this fall. As referenda are required, these options would give Bethlehem voters the power to decide whether or not they wish to continue elective offices for the three Town departments where they still exist. Any changes approved by voters would be prospective, and as described in these options, changes first take effect for terms commencing in 2014.

We stress that the presentation of these options should in no way be seen as criticism of current officeholders, or of the work done by the employees in the Departments they head. We have no reason to believe that these Departments are functioning poorly. We simply believe that there are better organizational structures available that can yield cost savings and operational improvements and that there is little modern day rationale for having elected offices to head these three departments. The historical rationale, direct democracy, was designed at a time when towns were almost exclusively rural and their functions were few.

Bethlehem has eliminated an elective office previously with good results, and now has an appointed assessor providing excellent service. We suspect that Town residents are likely more interested in operational improvements than in maintaining elective offices where no policy-making role exists and which many believe to be outdated. The changes we suggest, if approved by the Town Board and the voters, could help reduce costs, improve operations, and achieve efficiencies over time. However, our strong preference is that they will be implemented in a way that avoids layoffs.

### **Appointment and Term of Department Heads**

We think there would be a benefit to giving the elected Town Supervisor the power to directly appoint or nominate some department heads (subject to approval by the Town Board). The terms for appointive posts should also be reviewed, aligning appointive terms to the Supervisor's term where appropriate.

In Bethlehem, the supervisor currently appoints only the deputy supervisor (an uncompensated position with no staff) and an administrative assistant. The people who lead the 12 operating Town departments are either appointed by the Town Board (as a whole, including the Supervisor), elected by the voters, or filled through a civil service process (i.e., subject to competitive examination, professionally qualified, with neither the Supervisor nor Board free to make at will appointments).

We believe that providing the Supervisor with appointment or nominating power for some key posts, in combination with other modernization options, would be beneficial. Many Bethlehem residents think of the Town Supervisor as they would a mayor, and may be unaware of how little executive control the office possesses, with the exception of certain financial matters. Making some key department heads truly answerable to the Supervisor would enhance management control.

### **Town Department Heads by Method of Appointment**

#### **Elected**

- Town Clerk: (2-year term, current incumbent N. Moquin)
- Highway Superintendent: (2-year term, current incumbent G. Sagendorph)
- Receiver of Taxes: (4-year term, current incumbent N. Mendick)

#### **Appointed**

- Commissioner of Department of Public Works (by Board, 1-year term, J. Cansler)
- Comptroller (by Board, 2-year term, S. Traylor)
- Assessor (by Board, 6-year term, P. McVee)
- Director of Economic Development & Planning (by Board, 1-year term, M. Morelli)

#### **Civil Service**

- Parks & Recreation – N. Lanahan, Administrator
- Senior Services – J. Becker, Director of Senior Services
- Human Resources – M. Tremblay-Glassman, HR/Payroll Manager
- Management Information Services – J. Dammeyer, Director
- Chief of Police – L. Corsi

We are suggesting a reconsideration of Town management positions, possibly including giving the Town Supervisor direct appointment power for some positions, or the power to nominate positions subject to Town Board approval. In combination with reconsideration of elective department heads, this would allow the Town to

reach a current and comprehensive consensus, with a consistent rationale and approach to department head positions. Giving the Town Supervisor appointment or nominating power would require referenda, although aligning terms would not. Since we envision that choices in this area will take some time, we have not outlined referenda for these purposes in the timeline below.

We expect that those department heads currently appointed through a civil service process would be left as is – i.e., professionally qualified, subject to competitive examination, and with neither the Supervisor nor the Board free to make at will appointments. Individuals in these positions, like other town employees, will continue to serve without respect to electoral changes either in Supervisor’s office, or the Town Board generally.

Currently the appointive department heads include the Director of Economic Development and Planning and the Commissioner of Public Works (both are subject to a one-year appointment by the Town Board), the Comptroller (appointed by the Board for a two-year term which overlaps supervisor terms), and the Assessor (appointed by the Board for a six-year term, as specified in state law). In addition, if any of the elective offices for Tax Receiver, Clerk and Highway Superintendent were to be converted to appointed positions, these or successor positions would be part of the consideration. In this report we are not considering the Town Attorney (which is not a department head position and serves at the pleasure of the Town Board) or the Justice Court operation (a component of the court system).

In some areas, neutral competence may be the highest value – with Board appointment and overlap of supervisor terms preferred (e.g., the Comptroller and possibly Town Clerk if the position becomes appointive). In other areas, the Town may be better served by having Department Heads serving with and answerable to the Town Supervisor. Although we have not attempted to determine which positions these would be, our thought is that it should be those positions with the greatest involvement in policy. The goal would be for a rationalized approach explicitly adopted by the Town to reflect modern day conditions. Possibly the Town could seek State assistance in reaching these determinations, with a view toward developing better information on the most advantageous organizational structure for modern suburban towns.

### **Timeline**

Voter approval is required for all changes affecting elective offices, and there is a long lead-time to make changes. Accordingly, we would like to see a discussion begin now, with a public information effort preceding referenda, which could be placed on the November 2011 ballot but not to take effect until 2014.

We think these changes might best be approached as a group of referenda on modernization of town governance on this fall’s ballot. If approved, changes could take effect for terms beginning pursuant to the next election, which in most cases would be January 2014. This approach would not affect any incumbent

officeholders, nor would it affect the terms for those elected this fall, although certainly those seeking elective office could become involved in the discussion.

While it is possible to hold a referendum at any time, scheduling them separately from regular elections carries additional costs and participation is usually far lower. For example, the Town of Malta held a special referendum on March 15 to abolish the elective office of Receiver of Taxes and transfer the function to the Town Clerk, but the measure tied 71 to 71, in extremely low turnout for a town of over 13,000.

Bethlehem 2020 will continue to look at specific efficiencies and improvements available through consolidating highway/DPW and Town financial management functions, with updates to the Town Board helping to inform the discussion. However, we do not believe that a Town-wide discussion should wait until completion of these studies.

We believe that these modernization options are common-sense propositions backed by Commission reports and other examples. Voters need not wait for the details of implementation choices, which will in any event be made over time by Bethlehem's elected leaders. And while we believe that there will be savings associated with these actions, as a nonpartisan Citizen's Advisory Committee, we are not empowered to make the specific operational decisions that will be required to implement changes, and which will determine the level of savings.

Following is a suggested timeline. The rationale for beginning this process now is that (i) adequate lead time is needed for leaders to discuss and citizens to consider these options, and these issues would be more in focus in a local election year, and (ii) if the Town chooses to move forward with modernization options that could be replicated elsewhere, Bethlehem could be well-positioned to compete for the Governor's new Local Government Performance and Efficiency Program.

**Public Discussion:** To begin immediately

1. 2020 Implementation Committee acts on submission of the report to the Town Board (completed - April 6, 2011)
2. Release the Bethlehem 2020 Implementation Committee report (will be posted to town web site on 4/21) with agenda for Town Board Meeting
3. Second quarterly 2020 update to town board – April 27
4. Encourage questions and comments from the public; continue input opportunities for town department heads. (ongoing)
5. Town Board, community leaders and civic groups consider and discuss Modernization Options (public forums May-July)
6. Subsequent Updates from Bethlehem 2020 Subcommittees looking into possible operational improvements, as well as any other available studies, could help to further define potential savings or other effects (ongoing)
7. July – 3<sup>rd</sup> quarterly 2020 update to town Board

8. August – Town Board considers local laws to authorize one or more referenda; which must be adopted on or before September 9, 2011 (see NOTE on timing below)
9. November 8, 2011– referenda on ballot for voter action

**Four Referenda:** Could go to voters in November 2011

1. Extend the term of Town Supervisor to four years, taking effect for the term beginning January 2014 (i.e., applying to the supervisor elected in 2013)
2. Eliminate the elected position of Receiver of Taxes and transfer duties to another officer, effective 2016 (or 2014 for consistency)
3. Eliminate the elected position of Highway Superintendant, to take effect January 2014
4. Convert the position of Town Clerk from elective to an appointee of the Town Board, effective for the term beginning January 2014 (& possibly extend the term to 4 years to overlap the supervisor's term)

NOTE: These changes affecting elected offices require the Town Board's adoption of a local law subject to a mandatory referendum at a general election held not less than 60 days after the adoption of thereof. This would mean town Board adoption, after a public hearing, on or before September 9, 2011 (assuming only the regular meeting schedule of the Town Board, this would imply adoption at the August 24 meeting). Further, local laws must be introduced and in final form at least 7 days (exclusive of Sundays) before passage. This would mean introduction at the August 10 meeting and scheduling of public hearing(s) for August 24 or an intervening date between the 16th and 24th of August.

**Departmental Changes:** Timeline to be determined, pending public discussion, Town Board decisions, and further analysis.

- Potential Highway/DPW and Clerk/Receiver Consolidations – detailed work and consideration by the Town Board and Supervisor will take time; 2020 Implementation Committee will present additional work in this area for their consideration by September 2011.
- Review Town Department Head positions – comprehensive evaluation of positions including whether some should be directly appointed or nominated by the Town Supervisor. Changes to the Town Supervisor's powers to appoint or nominate some would require referenda, but as the timeline is yet to be determined for these choices, we have not included such referenda in this outline.

**Note:** Appendix I (following) includes an Illustration of this suggested timeline by year, providing an example of when elections and appointments would occur.

## Appendix I – Supporting Information

### Illustrative Timeline by Year

For illustrative purposes, here is a listing of the positions to be elected/appointed, by year, demonstrating how the process would change if referenda were put on the ballot in 2011 by the Town Board and approved by voters.

#### **2011 (November Election)**

- Supervisor election, for a two-year term (2012-2013)
- Two town board members to be elected to four-year terms
- Town Clerk election for a two-year term
- Highway Superintendent election for a two-year term
- Receiver of Taxes election for a four-year term
- Four Referenda go to Voters (assumed to pass, for purposes of this timeline)

#### **2013 (November Election)**

- Town Supervisor Election, for a four-year term (2014-2018)
- Two town board members to be elected to four-year terms

#### **2014 (January)**

- Town Board appoints a Town Clerk for a two-year period (2014-2016)
- Highway Superintendent is now an appointed position, possibly combined with DPW, appointed by the Board or Supervisor, for a term to be determined.

#### **2016 (January)**

- Town Clerk appointed by Board for a four-year term
- Receiver of Taxes elected in 2011 term would end, and at this point the position could be eliminated, with the function being carried out by another Town office

### Statewide Town Organizational Statistics

(source: NYS Association of Towns)

Of 932 Towns Statewide:

- 647 town supervisors have a 2-year term, 279 have a 4-year term
- 889 towns have elected town clerks, whereas 43 appoint their clerks
  - 403 town clerks have a 2-year term, 518 clerks have a 4-year term
  - 577 town clerks serve as tax collectors or receivers
- 873 town highway superintendents are elected; 59 are appointive
- 441 town highway superintendents have a 2-year term; 447 a 4-year term

### Process for Conversion from Elected to Appointed

To convert any of the three elected Department Heads (Highway, Receiver or Clerk) to an appointive office, a local law passed by the town board, as well as a mandatory referendum of the voters is required. Voter approval can occur on a general election day or by a special referendum, provided the Town Board passes a local law at least 60 days before the election date. Separate local laws, and therefore referenda, are necessary for conversion of each position. Timing challenges include that it would be awkward to have a proposal converting positions to appointed at the same time voters are electing people to such offices. However, separate special referenda carry additional costs and participation may be lower. Referenda are therefore usually enacted with a delay (taking effect at the end of terms).

## Appendix II – Lundine Commission Extract

### Lundine Commission on Local Government Efficiency Recommendations on Elected vs. Appointed Town Officers

Extract from Final Report, p. 46, available online at:  
[http://www.nyslocalgov.org/pdf/LGEC\\_Final\\_Report.pdf](http://www.nyslocalgov.org/pdf/LGEC_Final_Report.pdf)

#### Conversion of Elective Offices to Appointive

**The following administrative positions should be converted from elected to appointive offices by statute: town highway superintendent; town clerk; assessor; town tax receiver and collector.**

Making changes at the local level requires a lot of willing parties. When the change that is proposed is functional, impacting a specific service rather than the entire structure of a municipality, resistance is frequently mounted by the local official in charge of that function. When the local official is elected, rather than appointed, merging of municipal departments or service sharing with another municipality becomes quite difficult.

We believe that there is no need to elect people who carry out administrative functions and that direct state action to convert these positions is warranted rather than relying on town-by-town referendum. These non-policymaking offices demand specific skills. Many of those currently in positions we propose for conversion have that specific knowledge and should be retained.

We also recommend the elimination of the office of elected assessor (at the end of current elective terms). Although most municipalities have already taken this step, assessors are still elected in about 150 municipalities. Assessors who submitted testimony to the Commission emphasized the service they provide to their constituents, and we have no doubt that most are responsive to the electors of their districts. Many will be able to continue that service as appointed officials, or as employees of a county assessing unit. Town tax receivers and collectors made similar arguments. While we appreciate the viewpoints offered, it is the Commission's finding that these are not policymaking, and therefore do not require direct accountability to the electorate. These are professional or administrative functions that would better be handled through an appointive or civil service process. Moreover, the existence of elected officials in these roles may stand in the way of consolidating functions. Similarly, elected town tax receivers and collectors should be converted to appointed positions at the end of current elective terms and the requirement that receiver/collectors be town residents should be eliminated.

For more information, see the Lundine Commission Brief on Conversion of Elected Local Offices: [http://www.nyslocalgov.org/pdf/Conversion\\_of\\_Elected\\_Local\\_Offices.pdf](http://www.nyslocalgov.org/pdf/Conversion_of_Elected_Local_Offices.pdf)

**Bethlehem 2020 Implementation Committee**  
**21st Century Town Governance & Management Structure Options**  
**Frequently Asked Questions**

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**Q. Bethlehem is a great town to live in – why change town government now?**

**A.** Indeed most people agree this is a great town. A survey of town residents in 2009 found that 78% of those surveyed felt that the quality of life in Bethlehem was better than other places in the region. One reason for this is our very dedicated town employees who work hard to see that we have the best services available.

However our town is facing serious challenges that cannot be addressed by the status quo: aging town buildings, pipes and sewer lines, stagnant sales and mortgage tax revenues, higher health and pension costs for our town's employees, and faces competitive challenges in attracting economic development. In fact, the projected growth of Town expenses exceeds the projected growth in revenues. Simply put, we cannot continue to do business the way we have done so in the past.

It is because we want to keep our town a great place to live for people of all ages, *and* be a great place to do business, that we suggest a more modern town government structure to address these numerous challenges.

**Q Will these changes save money?**

**A.** Not all by themselves. But they will result in cost savings through the actions that follow. Here's how: Changing from elected officials to professionally appointed department heads would open the doors to consolidating or realigning activities or functions that are similar across departments, making the most of our town employee resources while eliminating redundancies.

This approach was overwhelmingly supported by the 2009 survey of town residents in which over 90% stated support for continuous evaluation of opportunities for improved services and reduced operating costs through consolidation of programs and services.

Did you know that the average household in the Town requires \$1860 more in services that it pays in taxes? In fact, unhappiness about high property taxes overshadows the fact that *only 12 cents out of your tax dollar* supports all of our town services like parks and senior citizens services, public safety, and infrastructure needs like highways, water and sewer maintenance. Finding ways to reduce costs *and* maintain quality of services is very much part of the thinking behind these proposals.

**Q. Why are you trying to get rid of these elected officials? They must be doing a good job since they keep getting re-elected.**

A. Actually, a change to appointed positions would have no effect on the terms of the four current elected officials or those running this fall. Due to the lead time needed to complete the process, these changes would not take effect until 2014 and beyond. These proposals are not a reflection of how well the current officeholders do their job; it is about creating the best structure for continuous improvement of town operations.

**Q. There must be a good reason why the town structure is the way it is, isn't there?**

A. Actually the current alignment (see below) is not the result of a thoughtful analysis of the best structure to meet the town's current problems.

**Departments with Elective Heads**

Highway Department (60 staff)  
Tax Receiver (3 staff)  
Town Clerk's Office (3 staff)

**Other Town Departments**

Department of Public Works (60 staff)  
Economic Development & Planning (10)  
Police Department (60 staff)  
Parks & Recreation (10 staff)  
Senior Services (6 staff)  
Comptroller's Office (4 staff)  
Assessor (4 staff)  
Human Resources (3 staff)  
Management Information Svcs (4 staff)

Why are the heads of the Highway, Clerk and Tax Receiver offices elective, whereas, for example, the Commissioner of Public Works, the Director of Economic Development and Planning, and the Comptroller are not? In truth, as has been acknowledged in recent studies, this distinction is purely an accident of history. Offices created in the early 1900s or before were elected, whereas those created later are not. The current system bears little relation to how large the departments are or how complex the functions.

**Q. What is the way forward?**

A. Following a public discussion and dialogue of these ideas, the Town Board can consider local laws that would allow for the voters to decide in November on these options. This is not an "all or nothing" exercise. The Town Board and voters can act on these issues up individually. The public's voice in the kind of a future they want for the town will be an important part of this process.

**Bethlehem 2020 Implementation Committee**  
**21st Century Town Governance & Management Structure Options**  
**Executive Summary**

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**Purpose**

This report evaluates opportunities for modernizing Town government, including consolidation of some Town departments, encouraging shared services, and changing some of the Town's elected offices to professional appointments. The options are presented with the goal of engaging the public in a dialogue on the right governance model or structure for our Town government.

**What Options Are Being Proposed?**

- Lengthen the term for Town Supervisor from two to four years.
- Move away from elective department heads, placing accountability for all Town operations with the elected Town Board and Supervisor and allowing consolidation of positions and departments. This would make the management and functions of Highway Superintendent, Tax Receiver and Town Clerk consistent with the majority of Town operations (such as Police, Public Works and Parks & Rec, which do not have elective heads).
  - ✚ These recommendations would require passage of a local law by the Town Board to authorize a public referendum by the voters in November
  - ✚ Neither the current elected four office holders, nor those to be elected this fall would have their terms affected by passage by the voters of these referenda, which would not take effect until 2014.
- Comprehensively review the current arrangements for department heads, including considering giving the Town Supervisor power to directly appoint or nominate some department heads and align appointive terms with that of the Supervisor where appropriate. Currently department heads reflect a mix of elected, appointed and civil service positions, and there appears to be little rationale for the differentiation (see chart below).

**Why Support These Options?**

- Overall, as a major and complex municipality, with a population of 33,000 (larger than most small cities), our Town would benefit from a governance system with stronger executive control and more streamlined and accountable management, without independently managed "silos." These changes can help Town leaders respond to today's fiscal challenges, rapidly changing environment and economic development opportunities.
- Previous Bethlehem Supervisors (from different political parties) have all agreed that a two-year electoral cycle simply isn't enough time for a leader to propose, develop consensus and implement solutions to difficult and complex issues. A longer term of office would also provide a more stable timeframe within which to develop partnerships with other taxing jurisdictions and be in a position to act more effectively on priorities like economic development.

- Elected Tax Receivers, Clerks and Highway Superintendents are a vestige of history when towns in New York were almost exclusively rural, generally without a municipal workforce, a full-time supervisor, independent audits, or any of the other modern management tools of which Bethlehem already has the benefit.
- Voter approval of these options, which reflect the findings of the Lundine Commission on Local Government Efficiency, would create the opportunity for cost savings that could be achieved through consolidating the operations of currently separate though similar departments including Highway, Public Works, and the Offices of the Clerk, Tax Receiver and possibly others.
- Bethlehem has eliminated an elective office previously with good results, and now has an appointed assessor providing excellent service.
- By establishing Bethlehem as a leader in local government efficiency and restructuring, we could position our Town to capitalize on state government interest and grant opportunities.

**The Governance Report and Options are not.....**

Meant as criticism of *any* elected or appointed official or their staff, or meant to suggest that these departments are functioning poorly. We believe however that more efficient and effective organizational structures are available to address the significant challenges that Bethlehem faces.

