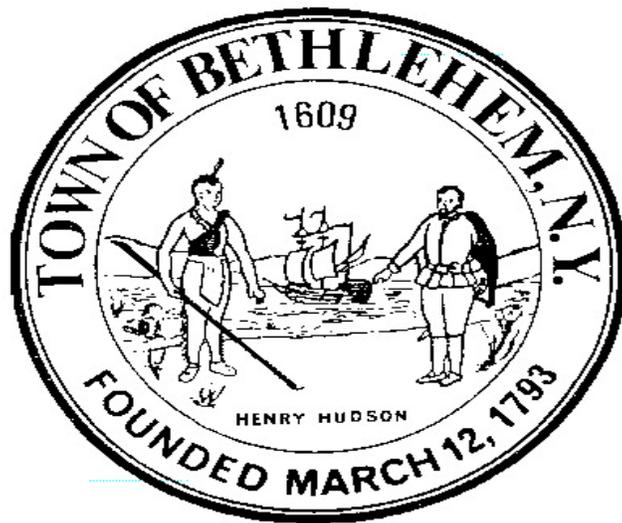


Annex 11

Sheltering Information Plan



For the
FIRE DEPARTMENTS
of the
TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

**Town of Bethlehem
Comprehensive Emergency
Management Plan**

December 2025

A. General

Assumption: The Town of Bethlehem, Hazard Analysis (HAZNY) has identified and prioritized the natural and man-made disaster types, applicable within the town of Bethlehem. While the impact from these incidents could encompass the entire Town, it is most likely to affect a specific limited area. In either case, evacuation and sheltering may be needed in the event of flood, fire, power outage, infrastructure failure, severe weather; police action, Hazmat release; etc. In the event of an evacuation, the need for the sheltering of the affected population in temporary shelters may become necessary. Management of the incident should be done utilizing NIMS pursuant to the Town's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP).

While evacuation and sheltering may be needed for the general public in the affected areas, it most certainly will be required for the affected emergency responders and key infrastructure personnel. History has taught us that without providing for the protection of these necessary and indispensable groups the process of response and recovery will not occur in a timely manner.

Scope:

This Annex to the CEMP is implemented to identify resources available and areas of responsibility for the emergency evacuation and sheltering of the fire and other emergency services response groups and key infrastructure personnel. This annex will provide the overall basis for establishing and operating temporary shelters regardless of the nature of the disaster, for this particular group.

B. Authority

1. New York State Executive Law, Article 2-B authorizes the development of local disaster preparedness plans. The Bethlehem CEMP provides for general strategic emergency response and short-term recovery operations.
2. The State of New York and the American Red Cross signed a Statement of Understanding (SOU) on November 14, 1995. This SOU provides for the cooperation and coordination between the State of New York, its agencies, counties, and municipalities, and the American Red Cross, in carrying out their responsibilities in the event of a natural or human made disaster or enemy attack.
3. New York State Defense Emergency Act, as amended.
4. Albany County Local Law 08-1993 (County Charter).
5. Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act.
6. Federal Civil Defense Act of 1950, as amended.
7. New York State Department of Health; DAL05-11.
8. The Town of Bethlehem CEMP, April, 2008 (revised)
9. Resolution by Board of Fire Commissioners

C. Definitions

1. Evacuation

Evacuation is the movement of a population due to the threat or occurrence of a disastrous event from the area of impact to another place or area that is not impacted by the event. Individuals may be advised to evacuate and report to a relocation center and potentially a shelter. As a statistical note, when evacuation is recommended during an emergency situation, approximately 80 percent of those for whom evacuation has been recommended will evacuate. For more information on Evacuations see CEMP, Appendix 5.

Individuals are advised to listen for and follow instructions from authorities. Individuals should also be prepared to make arrangements for pets or service animals. They should also be prepared to assist those who are administering the evacuation by being cooperative and attentive to instruction issued by officials.

2. Sheltering

Sheltering is the provision of food, clothing, and housing for individuals who have been displaced by an event, man-made or natural, that presents a threat to their safety. This may take place at a single point or multiple locations and can be of short or long duration, depending on the severity of the event.

3. Sheltering in Place

‘Shelter in Place’ is a method of sheltering that simply means that individuals stay where they are; secure in the building they are in. In some instances, people may need to be isolated from outside air and the effects of the emergency conditions. This is best accomplished by shutting off all intakes of outside air (shutting windows; closing air handling units; etc.) and shutting of air conditioners. In this scenario, interior rooms without windows offer the best protection. Individuals should monitor emergency information by radio / TV until the situation passes and are so informed by authorities. In some instances, the population should be prepared to shelter in place for 72 hours without assistance from outside agencies.

4. General Population Temporary Shelter

Temporary sheltering is defined as the period of time in which a shelter is needed immediately prior to or after a disaster. Shelters are short-term lodging locations of evacuees. The length of time in which a shelter is needed will depend on the size and scope of the disaster.

The American Red Cross has been tasked with the General Population Sheltering within the town of Bethlehem and has recruited and contracted with a number volunteer sheltering organizations and locations. The American Red Cross, within their ability to perform, will provide for and supply for the sheltering needs of the authorized shelters. Some shelter locations have been identified as refuge only with no staff, food, bedding or other necessary sheltering needs.

A General Population Temporary Shelters will include persons of all ages and shall be staffed and equipped to house those who do not require special care or services for eating, sleeping, recreation, daily basic hygiene and personal care, medical conditions, or emotional impairments. Shelter populations shall consist of individuals who are able to provide for their own assistance or care needs and are self-sufficient in the shelter setting. All persons with disabilities, who are independent, or independent with the aid of a caregiver, shall be considered eligible for general population temporary shelters.

These shelters shall be smoke-free, alcohol-free, free of weapons, and free of all illegal substances. The majority of General Population Temporary Shelters will be managed by American Red Cross

chapters and staffed by trained volunteers. Additional shelters may also be managed and staffed by local municipalities or other voluntary organizations active in disasters (VOADs).

5. Fire Department Temporary Shelters

Due to the possibility for wide spread and prolonged damages to the town infrastructure, the need for sheltering may well be acute. History has shown (Katrina) that sheltering provisions must be planned for emergency service responders and critical infrastructure workers and their families. Since these groups are critical for the response, rescue, restoration and repopulation, accommodations must be made for their sheltering. Since the rescue and response activities will be centered in and around the town's fire departments and facilities the sheltering of fire, police, EMS and other response and infrastructure workers will be at these fire department locations as opposed to the General Population Shelters.

6. Functional and Medical Needs Shelters

Sheltering people with medical or non-independent special needs during a disaster entails a higher level of planning in order to address the numerous issues and considerations that will arise when compared with the residents of the general population shelters. Functional Medical Needs Shelters will house those individuals who may need assistance due to medical conditions and/or personal care requirements, during evacuation and sheltering because of physical, emotional, or mental impairments or disabilities, but do not requiring nursing home or hospital care. The Town of Bethlehem **does not** have the facilities, expertise nor staff to perform in, or operate Functional Medical Needs Sheltering. Individuals with Functional/Medical Needs will be sheltered within the shelter, only if deemed compatible with the services offered. Otherwise, such individuals will be transported to hospitals or other safe locations. After the emergency has passed, those evacuees able to safely return to their previous living situation will be directed to do so. For those who cannot return, the Town of Bethlehem Senior's Department or the Albany County Social Services may be called upon to assist in identifying long term shelter options.

7. Mass Care

Mass care includes providing food, shelter, and emergency clothing to those who have been displaced from their homes by a hazardous situation or the threat of such a situation.

8. Disaster Welfare Inquiries

Disaster welfare inquiries are requests from relatives, friends, employers or others for information on the status of persons in an area affected by an emergency situation who cannot be located because they have evacuated, become separated from their families or cannot be contacted by normal means of communications. Registration of disaster victims at shelters provides some of the information needed to answer welfare inquiries. For emergency situations that extend beyond several days, the American Red Cross may activate a Disaster Welfare Inquiry system to handle such inquiries.

9. Relocation Center

A relocation center, if activated, is an area or facility that is the initial destination of evacuees. This location is temporary and will be utilized while the incident is further assessed and specific evacuees' needs are identified. Evacuees will be briefed about the incident and given instructions relevant to their needs.

10. Emergency Responders

Are those individuals, groups and/or volunteer individuals and organization that provide life safety, property protection, recovery efforts and services to the Town, and its residents. These consist of, but are not limited to, the Bethlehem police, fire and emergency medical services.

11. Key Infrastructure Personnel

Are those individuals, groups and organizations that are important and vital to the continuity of government, operation of vital facilities and the maintenance of the Town's infrastructure. Included in this would be, but is not limited to key elected officials, supervisory personnel, vital employees of the Highway Department, DPW and other key departments and organization both inside and outside of Town Government.

D. Situations and Assumptions

1. It is recognized that the sheltering of the emergency responders and key infrastructure personnel and their families is of paramount importance to the successful termination of a disaster within the Town.
2. It is also recognized that the most efficient and appropriate sheltering location for these individuals and families would be done at the local fire houses. These locations will allow these emergency responders and key personnel to maintain their duty status and to remain within a safe off-duty environment for both them and their families.
3. The Town of Bethlehem will, through the incident command system, assist local fire officials and organizations in the coordination of the provision of sheltering and the mass care of these individuals and to protect those emergency response personnel and key infrastructure personnel that are displaced from their homes.
4. Shelter and mass care needs may range from very short term operations, for a limited number of people, where the primary objective is to provide protection from the weather, comfortable seating and access to rest rooms, to more lengthy operations for a large number of evacuees where feeding, sheltering and shower facilities are desirable and a variety of assistance must be provided to evacuees.
5. While the American Red Cross has been chartered under federal law to provide mass care to victims of natural disasters it is doubtful that they would have the assets to operate a shelter within the fire houses, in addition to the General Population Shelters.
6. The Red Cross, will however, be available to train volunteer staff, offer insight and information on the operation of shelters and provide some assets when available.
7. The personnel to manage and staff Fire House Shelters will be drawn from internal fire department support personnel and pre-determined volunteers. These individuals will plan, staff and provide for the shelter inhabitants from the departments assets, stores, equipment and inventories.
8. Assistance for the Fire House Shelters, depending on area conditions, may be available through the Albany County Citizens Corp., and in particular the Medical Reserve Corp., operated under the Albany County Department of Health. The Town of Bethlehem, Office of Emergency Management, will also provide assistance, if available and where necessary and in conjunction with the various annexes, appendices and attachments pursuant to the town's CEMP.
9. All Fire House Shelters shall report their opening; daily activities and their closing to the Town EOC so that planning and logistical needs may be assessed and addressed.
10. Hazards that are highly visible or extensively discussed in the media may require evacuation prior to an official recommendation to do so, therefore shelter and mass care operations may have to commence early in an emergency situation.

E. Operating System

1. The National Incident Management System – Incident Command System (NIMS-ICS) will be used in the administration of this Annex and the facilities therein. The organizations within each jurisdiction will be modified for their particular use and ease of management.
2. Each department will select an individual(s) to fill the command structure from their available volunteers. These individuals will be selected according to the normal ICS structure and will perform within each of the required designate capacities.
3. The command structure, will beforehand, appoint a Shelter Working Group who will review and make necessary arrangements and accommodations for filling personnel positions and stocking necessary food, bedding and other Red Cross suggested sheltering items.
4. The external agencies listed below may have missions related to the establishment, support, and maintenance of these shelters depending on the scope of the incident:

AGENCY

SHELTER ACTIVITIES

Supervisor	Responsible Authority Declaration of State of Emergency Promulgation of Emergency Orders
BEMO	Coordination among shelters and Town/County/State/Federal assets
Police Department	Law Enforcement Security Safety Communications
Fire Departments	Fire suppression, accidents, hazardous material emergency responses Fire Department Shelter Working Groups Specialized sheltering
Emergency Medical Services	Medical Care and Treatment
Albany County Social Services	Human Needs Assessment
Albany County Mental Health	Crisis Counseling
Town Senior Services	Personal Assistance Monitoring Transportation
Town Clerk	Filing and Informational Services
Town Comptroller	Supply and Procurement (assistance)
American Red Cross	Sheltering; Feeding and Clothing Assistance (if available)
CART	Animal considerations

School Districts

Shelter Operations & Emergency Transport

Highway Department

Road clearance and debris removal

F. Concept of Operations

1. General

- a. The Bethlehem Emergency Management Office (BEMO) is responsible for developing plans for coordinating and providing mass care services to persons affected by a disaster within the Town. The requirements for services may vary depending upon the nature, type and level of the emergency. BEMO will work closely with the American Red Cross and the Town's Fire Departments and their representatives and volunteers to provide shelter and feeding facilities for their personnel and those assigned personnel from other response agencies and infrastructure entities.
 - The Incident Commander (IC) or the Director, Emergency Management Office (BEMO) are expected to determine the need for opening Fire Department Shelters, general population shelters and commencing operations based on the emergency situation that prevail.
 - The Incident Commander should ascertain the operational requirements of the incident, along with the scope and expected duration of the incident which may dictate the need for requesting additional sheltering assistance from other sources.
 - Based upon the assessment of the IC, the general population may be requested to shelter in place or evacuated to a relocation center dependent on the scope of the incident and as determined through the use of incident command practices.
 - Fire Department Shelters will open based on the degree of need and the situation at hand and will be occupied by the emergency responder community and key infrastructure personnel.
- b. The Bethlehem Emergency Management Office, in cooperation with the Red Cross and volunteer and other disaster assistance organizations, will provide temporary sheltering and essential services for the general public displaced from their homes in other shelters located within the Town, based on those planning documents and agreements in place.
- c. The American Red Cross will be requested to train Fire Department personnel in shelter management practices and associated activities.
- d. Other volunteer organizations, not for profit groups or private entities will be requested to assist the Fire Departments in their sheltering and feeding efforts.
 - Assist in administrative and clerical record keeping
 - Assist in organizing shelter teams
 - Assist in the registration process.
 - Provide feeding, basic first aid and other basic life support needs for those occupying the fire house temporary shelters
 - Provide for professional medical and mental health care for the evacuees
 - Provide for temporary pharmaceutical assistance

- Provide communications assistance
 - Provide Faith Based assistance if requested
- e. The designated Fire Department Shelter Manager will provide periodic reports on the status of shelter and mass care operations to the Director, Bethlehem Emergency Management Office on an as needed basis. To the extent possible, BEMO will assist and coordinate additional disaster needs for the personnel occupying the Fire Department Shelters.
- f. A Town Reception Center(s), if required, will be used as an initial gathering place for the general population evacuees to provide initial processing. Individuals in the general population will be accounted for and assigned, as necessary, to temporary shelters sufficient to their needs.
- g. Fire Department personnel and emergency responders that will be sheltered at the Fire Departments will not be required to register at the Town Relocation Center, but will register at their applicable fire houses.
- h. Other non-fire department emergency responders, key town employees and infrastructure personnel will register at the Town Relocation Center and will be assigned to a fire house location convenient to their residence or work location, if possible.
- i. Pets and other domestic animals owned by the emergency responders and key infrastructure personnel are their own responsibility will be housed at the fire houses only at the pleasure of the appropriate Fire Department's Shelter Manager. The Albany County Animal Response Team (CART) may be called upon to assist in the relocation of these animals. For issues relative to animals in disasters and the implementation of the CART it is suggested that the Albany County Emergency Manager be contacted.
- j. The Special Needs Community requires considerations above those of the general population.
 - Transportation to the shelters, including emergency evacuation, shall be carried out according to The General Population Sheltering Appendix 5, as part of the Town of Bethlehem's CEMP. The immediate responsibility for transportation starts with the individual or facility; escalates to the Town, county and then to the state or federal authorities dependent on the severity of the incident.
 - Those emergency responders or key infrastructure personnel or family members needing special needs considerations, unavailable at their designated fire house, will be required to register at the Town Relocation Center and will be placed in a shelter location meeting their required needs. Plans for special needs residents have been developed and are coordinated with the Town CEMP. Town shelter locations for the general public will not be able to shelter those special needs individual requiring life support measures.
 - The Albany County Office of Emergency Management and the New York State Office of Emergency Management DHSES (OEM) are responsible for supporting local government in the event that an incident overwhelms the Town's ability to support special needs populations in a disaster situation. This assistance is accessed by the Town Emergency Management Office through appropriate channels with Albany County and the NYS DHSES EMO Region III office.
 - Persons in need of medical assistance or unable to be sheltered due to life-threatening problems will be transported to area hospitals or designated county sites by means of the existing EMS system.

2. Evacuation and Repopulation

a. Evacuation

The IC will determine the need for and scope of an evacuation. The method and means of an evacuation may vary greatly based on the necessity for this action. An evacuation may take various forms and complexities based on the emergency and situation at hand. The supporting actions for evacuations may vary greatly based on the emergency. Evacuations may take the form of people movements from affected areas due to hazardous materials contamination or personnel relocation and sheltering due to natural emergencies. The affected population for evacuation will be alerted via the various methods as noted in the CEMP, Section III, Response, E, Public Warning. Self-evacuation should be encouraged and relocation areas identified.

Emergency responders and key infrastructure personnel and families will not be transported to their designated shelter location unless no other means are available. For more information, see CEMP, Appendix 5.

b. **Repopulation**

The IC will determine the scope and the timing of the repopulation. At that time the IC will advise the relocation centers and the evacuees of the change in status and the approval for repopulation.

3. Registration

- a. The purpose of registration is to be able to respond to inquiries about the status of evacuees, monitor health concerns, supply sufficient materials and assets and to provide a basis for post-emergency follow-up support and financial reimbursement if appropriate.
- b. Registration of all shelter residents is required and will be monitored by the individual Fire Department Shelter Manager of their designee.
- c. The American Red Cross may assist local government for training in the process of the registration of evacuees who are housed in the shelters.
- d. BEMO will coordinate with other Fire Department Shelters and organizations that operate shelters to ensure that evacuees occupying those facilities are registered and information provided to the EOC.
- e. The Fire Department Shelter Locations are not designed or equipped to accept general population resident or individuals. Such individuals requesting admission should be directed or transported to the Town Reception Center where they will be assigned to an active Shelter Location.

4. Shelter

- a. The American Red Cross maintains standards for temporary shelter locations.
- b. The American Red Cross offers training in sheltering and shelter management.
- c. Shelter Operations:
 - Each Fire Department Shelter will appoint a Shelter Manager and name the appropriate sheltering personnel positions to staff and operate their shelter. The operation of the Fire Department Shelters and the appointment of management and staff personnel will be according to standard incident command and NIMS principles.
 - In the interest of resource utilization, shelters are opened and closed based on need. When occupancy of existing shelters reaches capacity, consideration will be given to opening an additional facility.
 - Shelter Managers are encouraged to stock non-perishable food products and associated goods as is practicable, i.e., water, dry goods, bedding materials etc.
 - Shelters should be managed by individuals with shelter management training; The American Red Cross offers shelter and shelter management training.

- To ensure consistency in shelter activities, the Fire Department Shelters should follow a general set of operating guidelines. The American Red Cross offers a policy guide on how a facility is staffed and operated.
- Fire Department Shelter Managers are expected to provide daily reports to BEMO on the number of occupants and the number of meals served. This information will then be compiled and forwarded to the County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) by BEMO at a minimum of once a day during the duration of the event.
 - i. Town of Bethlehem is responsible for providing security, debris clearing and other support as deemed needed for shelter operations:
 - ii. Evacuees normally return to their homes as soon as the danger has been mitigated and most shelters are closed quickly and returned to normal use. This is even more critical for the Fire Departments due to their service obligations. However, some evacuees may be unable to return to their homes due to damage or destruction. It may become necessary to have one or more Fire Department or General Population shelters remain open for an extended period until those who cannot return to their residences can be relocated to other shelters, motels, rental units, mobile homes and other types of temporary lodging. These extended use facilities will be coordinated through BEMO and County Emergency Management, in coordination with NYS EMO and FEMA.

4. Mass Care

Mass care includes the registration of evacuees, feeding of evacuees and the provisions of other life support needs for shelter occupants.

- a. Feeding:
 - The fixed facilities of each of the sheltering fire houses will be used for preparing and serving meals. Each Fire Department will be responsible for meal service and other personal requirements of its sheltered personnel. The American Red Cross, the Salvation Army and other disaster relief agencies may provide care, support and may also deploy self-contained mobile feeding units to supplement fixed feeding facilities, if available. Shelter Managers are encouraged to stock non-perishable food products and associated goods as is practicable, i.e., water, dry goods, etc.
 - The Town Emergency Management Office will endeavor to assist in providing stocks of food and sheltering supplies but the responsibility for the acquisition and distribution of these will be the responsibility of the individual Fire Departments.
- b. Other Needs
 - In addition to providing shelter and mass care services, evacuees may need assistance with clothing, basic medical attention, prescription medicines, medical assistance, disaster mental health services, and other support services. Some of these services may be provided by the Fire Department that is operating the shelter. In other cases, BEMO will have to identify the needs of those in these shelters and forward these requests to the ICS Human Needs Section, of the EOC, who may be able to arrange for assistance from the American Red Cross, Salvation Army and/or other organizations and agencies.

5. Incident Command System

The National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the use of ICS as a standard operating system had been approved by the Town Board and have been in place for all emergency operations and training exercises since that time. It is important that all responding agencies use the ICS system and are trained in that use. All operational activities within the emergency management and emergency response system and the activities therein will follow the guidelines of NIMS and ICS. This will be the case for the operation of the Town's sheltering operations.

- a. At the direction of the Incident Commander (IC), the need for sheltering being established, the Bethlehem Emergency Management Office will request that sheltering activities be commenced where needed.
- b. Depending upon the conditions at hand, BEMO will contact the command authority of the Town's Fire Department(s) to request the opening of Fire Department Shelter(s)
- c. BEMO, in addition, will also request the opening of the designated General Population Shelters as needed.
- d. The Fire Department Shelters will operate under established ICS procedures and the organizational chart for the Town's sheltering activities will be determined.
- e. Fire Department personnel will be appointed, by the individual fire department commanders, to fill the ICS organizational structure for the sheltering operations.
- f. The staffing of the various ICS; command, and general staff positions will be determined and transmitted to the EOC in order to establish the appropriate lines of communications.
- g. All required ICS forms and action plans will be used and maintained as a matter of record.
- h. The organizational staffing chart for sheltering operations is attached.

7. Public Information

- a. The ICS public information officer is expected to develop emergency public information messages to advise the location of fire department and public shelters and general shelter policies to those who are or will be evacuating.
- b. The public information officers should also provide information to the shelter managers on the emergency situation so they can pass such information on to shelter occupants.
- c. A Fire Department PIO may be required for its operational activities but it is not required nor recommended for sheltering information. Information to the public concerning sheltering should be done through the IC or EOC.

8. Disaster Welfare Inquiries

The American Red Cross will attempt to answer Disaster Welfare Inquiries to the extent possible using the registration data obtained at shelters and other facilities. BEMO will respond to inquiries until the American Red Cross can assume that function. The Communications Section will provide assistance with these types of inquiries.

9. Communications

Uninterrupted and useable communications during an emergency situation is critical to the successful conclusion of the event in question. The emergency communications network within the Town, while being heavily burdened during the operational stages of a wide scale emergency, should operate successfully. The additional components of multiple sheltering locations may tax that system, but it should remain operational if used prudently. Therefore it is critical that the communications system in place be used economically.

- a. It is estimated that during the heavy operational phases that the emergency radio system will be heavily occupied and available for only emergency radio traffic.
- b. It has also determined that if the emergency event at hand has affected the infrastructure that loss of telephone, cable, radio, television will occur and possibly cell use will be dramatically lessened.

- c. Other communications options should be explored for use in the sheltering network to relieve the burdened emergency radio system.
 - i. Commercial hand held radios
 - ii. Use of the RACES network and the Town’s Ham radio system
 - iii. Albany County, NYS and federal emergency communications and alert systems
 - iv. All relevant Social Media outlets and apps.

10. Funding and Reimbursements

- a. The Fire Department Shelter Manager should appoint a Finance and Administration Section Leader, under the ICS system, who will be responsible for the tracking and the accounting of all expenditures relevant to the total sheltering operation.
- b. The expenses for sheltering should include those items purchased specifically for mass care and sheltering and should also include those in-house goods and stock items expended.
- c. The accounting for the Sheltering Operation should be separate and distinct from any other operational activity and expenses borne by the Fire Department.
- d. The Fire Department Shelter Manager or the F/A Section Leader should also track those labor hours, volunteer or paid, and any other expense relative to the operation of the shelter.
- e. Depending on the type and severity of the disaster and the response by the State and Federal governments and the declaration of emergency or disaster; State and/or federal reimbursements may be available.

11. Fatality Management

Other than the response to and the investigation of deaths under these circumstances, the town of Bethlehem has no capabilities in dealing with mass or multiple deaths as a result of an emergency or disaster requiring sheltering. Albany County is responsible for the local Fatality Management Planning. The County Emergency Management Office in conjunction with the County Health Department and the Coroner’s Office will play the lead role in fatality planning.

G. Annex Development and Maintenance

- 1. The Town of Bethlehem, Director of Emergency Management and the individual fire department’s Shelter Manager or designated individual are responsible for developing and maintaining this annex. Recommended changes to this annex should be forwarded as needs become apparent.
- 2. This annex will be revised annually and updated.
- 3. Departments and agencies assigned responsibilities in this annex are accountable for developing and maintaining SOPs covering those responsibilities.

H. Attachments to this Plan

- 1. Attachment #1 ICS Organizational Chart for Town Emergency Management
- 2. Attachment #2 ICS Organizational Chart for Human Services and Sheltering
- 3. Attachment #3 Suggested List of Shelter Operations Personnel

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