**Resolution No: 2016 -**

**WHEREAS**, the men and women who served in the United States armed services have made extraordinary sacrifices to serve this nation and should not experience homelessness; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2010, President Barack Obama made the elimination of veteran homelessness a national priority, setting an ambitious goal to end veteran homelessness in cooperation with Federal and local partners; and

**WHEREAS**, preventing and ending homelessness among veterans is a national priority that the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and its federal partners, including the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), have taken decisive action to achieve; and

**WHEREAS**, on June 4, 2014, First Lady Michelle Obama and Second First Lady Dr. Jill Biden launched the Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness; and

**WHEREAS**, now more than 850 mayors, governors, and counties across the nation have accepted that challenge, making a commitment to end veteran homelessness in their communities; and

**WHEREAS**, City of Bethlehem Mayor Robert J. Donchez has officially joined the Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness; and

**WHEREAS**, ending homelessness for veterans and their families is critical to counties and cities as it will reduce the inefficient usage of costly health care services and emergency shelters, as well as enhance the ability of veterans to positively contribute to their communities and increase economic productivity; and

**WHEREAS**, a housing first approach removes barriers to helping veterans obtain permanent housing as quickly as possible; and

**WHEREAS**, The Lehigh Valley Homeless Veterans Task Force was formed in March 2015 to bring together partners throughout the Lehigh Valley in order to focus efforts to end veteran homelessness in our region; and

**WHEREAS**, these partners provide a comprehensive range of resources and supportive services to re-house veterans and their families, including outreach, case management, temporary financial assistance, transitional housing, permanent supportive housing, and job training.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Bethlehem City Council hereby officially joins with Mayor Donchez in supporting the Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**,that the Bethlehem City Council affirms the value of a Housing First approach to ending veteran homelessness; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Bethlehem City Council commits our support to the Lehigh Valley Homeless Veteran Task Force’s continued efforts; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Bethlehem City Council acknowledges that this community-wide collaborative approach is essential in ending veteran homelessness across the Lehigh Valley and encourages more agencies and providers to join in this effort; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,**that the Bethlehem City Council encourages policies and practices in both the private and public sectors that support employment of Veterans, provides increased access to public transportation, and encourages greater access to affordable housing; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,**that the Bethlehem City Council encourages landlords to support our veterans by providing affordable housing.

Sponsored by: (s)

(s)

ADOPTED BY COUNCIL THIS DAY OF

(s)

President of Council

ATTEST:

(s)

City Clerk