

BETHLEHEM CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
10 East Church Street - Town Hall  
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania  
Tuesday, November 19, 2024 – 7:00 PM

PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

1. ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order by President Colón. Present were Bryan G. Callahan, Grace Crampsie Smith, Hillary G. Kwiatek, Colleen Laird, Rachel Leon, and Kiera Wilhelm, and Michael G. Colón 7.

CITATIONS:

Two retirees were recognized for their service to the City. Firefighter Timothy Hefferan was recognized for more than 20 years of service. Fire Lieutenant Larry Koplin served the City for almost 30 years. Neither was present but service citations will be mailed.

President Colón also recognized a brief visit by Girl Scout Troop 82008 that is visiting City Hall this evening.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

November 6, 2024

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

A. PUBLIC COMMENT (on any subject not being voted on this evening – 5 Minute Time Limit)

*Detention Pond*

Resident Christine Rothdeutsch said a neighboring detention pond has not been maintained at the Central Park Duplex Development. Grass and shrubs have not been cut, and the fence has not been maintained. A provision was made for upkeep when this project was approved in the early 2000s, but the agreement has not been regularly adhered to. She also was frustrated by being passed around to City departments when she called to report conditions. Ms. Rothdeutsch appealed to Council to get an answer as to who can do something about these conditions. She also appealed to City boards that whenever something like a detention basin is approved, make certain the City has resources to enforce approved provisions.

*Don't Rubber Stamp*

Resident Mark Will-Weber has raised concerns in the past alleging false water readings but tonight said there is general discontent in the City. He cited the reconstruction of the Walnut Street Garage, the potential for affordable housing being built at the First Presbyterian Church, and the Parking Authority as examples of issues leading to this discontent. He believes there is a

political elite, and he objects to department heads making six figures who are making the decisions for the City. These decision-makers are unfazed by raising rates. He urged Council to "think about the little guy, don't always rubber stamp the political elite even at the City level."

*Dumped Tires/Lead Pipes*

Resident Mary Jo Makoul asked the City to pick up two tires that were dumped on the west side of Grandview Boulevard. She reported this to the City a week ago. She also believes that the time to allocate remaining money received through the American Rescue Plan is running out. She asked whether this money could be used for locating and replacing lead pipes throughout the City. This money also could be used to purchase water test kits for residents.

*Fight Fascism*

Resident Harry Faber spoke against fascism. He urged all to organized against this.

*Library Hours/Social Security*

Resident William Scheirer noted that the South Side Library hours have been increased from 10 AM to 2 PM Mondays through Thursday to 10 AM to 6 PM Mondays through Thursdays. He also spoke about Social Security benefits. His income taxes go up every year. He said the prime reason is because Social Security for 2023 was 8.7 percent higher because of inflation the previous year. The standard deduction also went up but not as much, only 6.7 percent.

- B. PUBLIC COMMENT (on ordinances and resolutions to be voted on by Council this evening – 5 Minute Time Limit.

*Thanks for Support*

Resident Deborah Sacarakis identified herself as a member of the Bethlehem Fine Arts Commission. She thanked Mayor Reynolds for nominating her for a second term on the Commission. She said Commission members thank the Mayor and Council for supporting the work that they do as well as the work done by other arts and cultural organizations throughout the City. She believes this makes Bethlehem the wonderful place that it is to live. She also complimented the Bethlehem Recycling Bureau.

*Questions Auction Items*

Resident Harry Faber questioned some items listed on the proposed auction list including vehicles from 2015 and 2016. He wondered if there is anything wrong with these vehicles and considered it "an endless cycle of consumption. It's waste."

*Add More Detail for Ordinances*

Resident Frank Barron commented on the "sketchy" nature of the Ordinances to be voted on tonight. He said these do not give details or comparison to previous rates. He said this is a disadvantage to the taxpayers. He believes the City should provide a one-page summary for these Ordinances.

4. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Members of Council
- B. Tabled Items
- C. Unfinished Business

5. NEW BUSINESS

*Ms. Crampsie Smith*

Ms. Crampsie Smith asked Director of Water and Sewer Resources Edward Boscola to explain the letter recently sent to water customers.

Mr. Boscola said the letter is regarding lead in some water pipes. The federal Environmental Protection Agency recently updated its lead and copper standards. All utilities were required to send letters to all customers to provide information as to what is known regarding the status of their service line. A lot of the service lines were installed between the 1920s and 1940s. Records did not include the type of piping, which is the nature of this inquiry. This is the start of the process.

The City has until November of 2027 to update its service line inventory and, to the extent possible, identify the materials used to make up the service lines. In theory, it should then be known how much lead is in the ground. Water providers will have 10 years from that time to devise a plan to replace the lead pipes.

Mr. Boscola said the lead levels in the City drinking water system are very low. A corrosion inhibitor has been added for at least 30 years. Lead levels have been tested consistently during this time. The federal maximum lead limit is 15 parts per billion. The City consistently measures below 1 part per billion. He is confident that the water is safe to drink.

Mr. Boscola said the letter identifies a link on the City's website in which owners can check out what is known and what is not about their service line. The website can provide a form for owners to offer information about the pipe material that is entering their homes. There is the private side (from the curb to the house which the homeowner is responsible for) and the public side (from the curb to the main in the street, which is the City's responsibility). These can be two different types of materials.

The City began a process to remove some lead pipes before the EPA mandate. About 500 lead lines have been removed to date. He does not know how many more are out there, but it could be a few thousand. Outside workers will have to be hired to assist. Many water providers are in the same situation.

Ms. Crampsie Smith asked whether all removal can take place even sooner than the 2037 deadline.

Mr. Boscola said he could not estimate. He will have to get a better handle on how many total lines must be replaced. He added that the EPA wants providers to replace 10 percent of the lead lines annually over 10 years. The EPA understands that funding will be a challenge. There is

only so much state and federal money to assist. The 10 percent figure provides predictability and planning and the ability to finance that, if necessary.

Mr. Callahan wondered if the letter deals with just the service lines.

Mr. Boscola said that was correct. No mains were made of lead.

Mr. Callahan asked how the residents can help.

Mr. Boscola said the easiest way to determine the material used was to go to the basement and find the pipe that comes through the wall and into their water meter. It will be copper, lead, galvanized or another type of steel. Instructions are given on the City's website as to how to identify the metal used. They can call, email or fill out the form to provide the City with the type of material. The City will still have to identify the material on the City side of the piping. Mr. Boscola estimated an average cost of \$10,000 per residence from the main to the house. He believes the EPA will want the City to pick up the cost, but details have not been released.

Mr. Callahan asked where water samples must be obtained.

Mr. Boscola said tests must be done in homes because the service line transports water inside. The City works with customers all the time on obtaining samples. It provides instruction on how to do it and the time of day.

Mr. Callahan asked when a safe date would be for homes to have been built that would not include lead service lines.

Mr. Boscola said 1991. If a house was built after 1991, it probably does not have a lead service line. He knows intuitively that lead was not being used in the 1950s through the 1980s, but it cannot be proven without looking at the line. There are no records containing this information.

Ms. Kwiatek asked about funding for the 400-500 lead lines that have been replaced.

Mr. Boscola said the expense was covered by a PennVest grant.

Ms. Laird asked Mr. Boscola's plan over the next three years to identify the materials used in services lines beyond asking people to check their basements.

Mr. Boscola said that will be worked on in 2025. Some will include chasing records that might indirectly bring answers including when developments were built. Test digs can be done. Analytics can be done. Using this technique, random sampling may be done on a block that was developed around the same time to determine whether lead pipes exist.

Ms. Laird noted the administrative change about to take place in Washington. She added that the city already was changing out lead pipes. Would it continue to do so if the EPA relaxed regulations that no longer required the lead remediation?

Mr. Boscola said regulations do not change quickly. He also predicted that the EPA requirement will not change. There is a rule affecting the EPA that does not permit "backsliding."

Ms. Wilhelm picked up on Mr. Boscola's statement that lead testing kits are available free. She asked how customers can obtain them.

The email is [leadserviceline@bethlehem-pa.gov](mailto:leadserviceline@bethlehem-pa.gov). The customer sends an email and the City will coordinate with them. Otherwise, the City is focusing on those that already have been identified or are suspected of having lead service lines. All cannot be sampled at this time. He did not recommend that customers use kits purchased online or in stores. The kit the City provides is acceptable to the DEP and EPA. Besides the email address, Mr. Boscola said that customers are welcome to call the City.

President Colón asked Mr. Boscola to provide Council with updates as they become available and offered the Public Works Committee as a forum for future discussion as it becomes appropriate.

Ms. Wilhelm commented that the role of City department heads is much more than just raising rates, as was generally stated by a resident during Public Comment. She said these actions by Mr. Boscola show that an important part of the job is keeping customers safe and healthy. This is true of other department heads.

*Ms. Crampsie Smith*

Ms. Crampsie Smith said some residents questioned her about fires being seen at the homeless encampment during current drought conditions. She asked whether anyone is aware of this.

Fire Chief Michael Reich said that any time they have received complaints about this, they have handled it as they would any complaint about open burning. The fire gets extinguished. They try to identify the person who started it. That person is educated as to the law and safety. The first time results in a warning. If they have received a warning, they may be cited.

Ms. Crampsie Smith also noted the concern raised about City vehicles being approved to be auctioned. She surmised that these vehicles are at the point of age and use that they should be changed out. She was assured this was the case. Ms. Crampsie Smith added that these are emergency vehicles that must remain reliable.

Business Administrator Eric Evans said that some of these vehicles on the list are used nearly 24/7 and 365 days of the year. Public safety vehicles are not like residential vehicles. They received much harder use.

*Ms. Leon*

Ms. Leon followed up on the Public Comment that they were bounced around City Hall and unable to get a straight answer on a neighbor's poor property maintenance. Ms. Leon asked what the process is for dealing with resident phone calls. How does the City make sure that the loop is closed and that issues get resolved?

Mayor Reynolds said the Service Center is generally the initial point of contact. Center dispatchers evaluate concerns and direct them to the most appropriate department. Sometimes

residents will contact multiple departments and have them working on the same thing. Use of the Service Center has improved this sort of thing a lot, but there is a long way to go. The City is looking for a way for the Service Center dispatchers to follow up with the department heads rather than just directing the initial call. The City has had multiple sources for reporting issues including Community Plus, Finance Plus, direct call, and the Service Center. He is hopeful to find a way to streamline reporting and close the loop on follow-through to be more certain that matters are addressed.

Ms. Leon suggested that this might be a conversation for a Council committee.

President Colón believed the Service Center falls under the Police Department, which would be handled by the Public Safety Committee. This might be a topic of conversation during the third budget hearing on November 25 because the Police Department and Service Center will be discussed that night. A budget hearing is not the forum for an in-depth discussion like this, but it may be a starting point.

Ms. Leon said she would contact the other Public Safety Committee members to see if they believe this would be a good forum to discuss this matter.

Mayor Reynolds said that grant money is available through the Health Bureau to study communications strategies. This can be included. Other considerations include formalizing procedures for Service Center dispatchers to follow to better ensure completeness.

Ms. Laird suggested a ticketing system that would track work flows and communication across departments. There would be significant expense.

The Mayor said the study funded by the health grant may be a good start in finding direction. He also clarified that the benefit would include the Health Bureau, but the study would look at all communications coming into the City.

## 6. COMMUNICATIONS

### A. *Director of Community and Economic Development – Memo – 2023 35 Scantek Infomanagement Solutions – Contract Amendment 4*

The Clerk read a November 8, 2024 memorandum and proposed Resolution from Laura Collins, Director of Community and Economic Development. Ms. Collins recommends contract Amendment #4 with Scantek Infomanagement Solutions of Willow Grove to continue to digitize files for DCED. The additional cost for Amendment 4 is \$53,769.50 and the new completion date is December 31, 2025. There are no renewals.

President Colón stated that Resolution 10 A is on the agenda.

### B. *Director of Community and Economic Development – Memo – 2024 45 Accessory Dwelling Unit Zoning Study – PSA Woodsong Associates*

The Clerk read a November 4, 2024 memorandum and proposed Resolution from Laura Collins, Director of Community and Economic Development. Ms. Collins recommends a contract

with Woodsong Associates of Portland, Oregon to team with the City and Lehigh University to research and recommend best practices related to zoning reform for accessory dwelling units and to develop and codify ADU provisions for the City. The cost is \$65,000. The completion deadline is December 31, 2025. There are no renewals.

President Colón stated that Resolution 10 B is on the agenda.

C. *Director of Water and Sewer Resources and City Solicitor – Memo – Water Utility Counsel – McNees Wallace Nurick*

The Clerk read a November 13, 2024 memorandum with a proposed Resolution and Agreement from Director of Water and Sewer Resources Edward Boscola and City Solicitor John F. Spirk, Jr. The two recommend an Agreement with McNees Wallace & Nurick LLC of Harrisburg to represent the City involving water utility regulatory and transactional matters and representation before the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission. Duties are fully detailed in an October 14, 2024 proposal. The cost is not to exceed \$25,000 for the initial term. There are three annual automatic renewals for 2026 thru 2028. The collective cost of these is not to exceed \$100,000 over the additional three years.

President Colón stated that Resolution 10 C is on the agenda.

D. *Director of Community and Economic Development – Memo – LSA Grant Celtic Classic*

The Clerk read a November 14, 2024 memorandum and proposed Resolution from Laura Collins, Director of Community and Economic Development. The memorandum seeks support to apply for a Local Share Account grant from the Pennsylvania Commonwealth Financing Authority requesting up to \$160,000 to help fund the 2025 Celtic Classic Highland Games & Festival.

President Colón stated that Resolution 10 D is on the agenda.

E. *Director of Purchasing – Vehicle Auction – December 2024*

The Clerk read a November 11, 2024 memorandum from Sandra Steidel, Director of Purchasing. Ms. Steidel provided an attached list of equipment and vehicles recommended for sale within the next 60 days at an online auction. The proposed auction is in accordance with the provisions of Resolution 2009-95.

President Colón stated if Council has no objection to the property listed, the items may be added to the online auction. If Council would like to discuss a specific item, the same shall be removed from the list and discussed at the next Council meeting on December 3, 2024. He asked if any Council Member would like to remove any item from the list and discuss it at the next City Council Meeting. If not, it will be communicated to the Purchasing Director that City Council has no objections to auctioning the listed property. No objections were raised. The Clerk's Office will communicate this to the Purchasing Director.

F. *Eastburn and Gray, PC – Petition – Amendment to the City of Bethlehem Zoning Ordinance*

The Clerk read an October 24, 2024 communication from Attorney John McShea on behalf of Pennsylvania Avenue Development, LLC with a Petition requesting a text amendment to the Zoning Ordinance involving 815 Pennsylvania Avenue. An accompanying Petition identifies the property's use as a licensed personal care home. Petitioner requests that City Council amend the ordinance to address the adaptive reuse of existing industrial uses located within the RS – Single Family Residential Zoning District and the RT – High Density Residential Zoning District. He further states that the amendment proposes to facilitate the conversion of existing health care buildings into different health care uses.

President Colón stated that he would accept a motion and a second to set a Public Hearing date. Ms. Leon made a motion, seconded by Ms. Wilhelm to set a Public Hearing for 7:00 PM on Tuesday, December 17, 2024 in Town Hall.

Voting AYE: Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon, and Mr. Colón, 7. The Motion passed.

G. *City Solicitor – Memo – Records Destruction*

The Clerk read a November 13, 2024 memorandum with a proposed Resolution from City Solicitor John F. Spirk, Jr., requesting the Destruction of Records from the Law Bureau. Solicitor Spirk has reviewed the Municipal Records Retention Act, and the records listed on the exhibit accompanying the memo fall within the categories where destruction is permitted.

President Colón stated that a Resolution will be placed on Council's December 3 agenda.

H. *City Solicitor – Memo – Franchise Grant Comcast (Ordinance)*

The Clerk read a November 13, 2024 memorandum and attached proposed Ordinance from City Solicitor John F. Spirk, Jr. Solicitor Spirk recommends Council's consideration for awarding a cable television franchise system to Comcast of Southeast Pennsylvania, LLC.

President Colón that Ordinance 9A is on the agenda.

I. *City Council President – Memo – Rules of Council Amendments – Rule 8 – Committees*

The Clerk read a November 14, 2024 memorandum and proposed Resolution from Council President Michael Colón. President Colón recommends transferring consideration of matters involving the Bethlehem Parking Authority from Council's Public Safety Committee to the Community and Economic Development Committee. To do so would require amending Rule 8 of Council Rules.

President Colón stated that a Resolution will be placed on Council's December 3 agenda.

7. REPORTS

A. *President of Council*



President Colón announced that the third budget hearing will be at 6 PM on Monday, November 25 in Town Hall. Topics will include Community and Economic Development Department, the Community Development Block Grant Fund, Police and Fire.

B. *Mayor*

7B1. Administrative Order No. 2024-32 Linda Bahner – Mental Health Services Appeal Board

Mayor Reynolds re-appointed Linda Bahner to the Mental Health Services Appeal Board. The re-appointment is effective through October of 2028. Ms. Wilhelm and Ms. Crampsie Smith sponsored Resolution 2024-247 to confirm the re-appointment.

Voting AYE: Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon, and Mr. Colón, 7. The Motion passed.

7B2. Administrative Order No. 2024-33 Grace Crampsie Smith – Mental Health Services Appeal Board

Mayor Reynolds re-appointed Grace Crampsie Smith to the Mental Health Services Appeal Board. The re-appointment is effective through October of 2028. Ms. Wilhelm and Ms. Crampsie Smith sponsored Resolution 2024-248 to confirm the re-appointment.

Ms. Kwiatek asked what this board does and who it is sanctioned by.

Ms. Crampsie Smith believed the Ordinance was passed in 2019. The Ordinance banned conversion therapy in the City. It banned therapists from performing conversion therapy relative to sexual gender orientation. Mayor Robert Donchez at that time appointed her as a Council representative, since this was a Council-developed board. The board only meets once a year very briefly. There have been no instances of reported conversion therapy.

Mayor Reynolds added that this matter was researched. There is nothing that would prohibit a Council member from serving on this board.

Voting AYE: Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon, and Mr. Colón, 7. The Motion passed.

7B3. Administrative Order No. 2024-34 Richard Begbie – Bethlehem Fine Arts Commission

Mayor Reynolds re-appointed Richard Begbie to the Bethlehem Fine Arts Commission. The re appointment is effective through November of 2027. Ms. Wilhelm and Ms. Crampsie Smith sponsored Resolution 2024-249 to confirm the re-appointment.

Voting AYE: Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon, and Mr. Colón, 7. The Motion passed.

7B4. Administrative Order No. 2024-35 Chloe Cole-Wilson - Bethlehem Fine Arts Commission

Mayor Reynolds appointed Chloe Cole-Wilson to the Bethlehem Fine Arts Commission. The appointment is effective through May of 2027. Ms. Wilhelm and Ms. Crampsie Smith sponsored Resolution 2024-250 to confirm the appointment.

Voting AYE: Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon, and Mr. Colón, 7. The Motion passed.

7B5. Administrative Order No. 2024-36 Deborah Sacarakis - Bethlehem Fine Arts Commission

Mayor Reynolds appointed Deborah Sacarakis to the Bethlehem Fine Arts Commission. The appointment is effective through September of 2027. Ms. Wilhelm and Ms. Crampsie Smith sponsored Resolution 2024-251 to confirm the appointment.

Voting AYE: Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon, and Mr. Colón, 7. The Motion passed.

7B6. Administrative Order No. 2024-37 Salvatore B. Verrastro - Codes Board of Appeals

Mayor Reynolds re-appointed Salvatore B. Verrastro to the Codes Board of Appeals. The re-appointment is effective through November of 2027. Ms. Wilhelm and Ms. Crampsie Smith sponsored Resolution 2024-252 to confirm the re-appointment.

Voting AYE: Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon, and Mr. Colón, 7. The Motion passed.

Mayor Reynolds noted that the City Tree-Lighting Ceremony will be held on November 29. This past weekend, he attended the "Saint Nick of Bethlehem" premiere. This movie is good exposure for Bethlehem. Within the past week, he also attended the South Side Tomorrow annual meeting, which was a great opportunity to see committee members and small business owners to talk about the great work going on within that group. The North Side Alive annual meeting will take place on Thursday. He also attended the Climate Action Plan annual update. Mayor Reynolds additionally announced that he served on a couple of panels in Harrisburg today for the Shapiro Administration's Executive Order on Housing. There is a lot of respect from within the Governor's Administration and elsewhere for the work being done in the Lehigh Valley and Bethlehem. This includes putting private and public sector representatives in the same room.

C. *Finance Committee Chair*

Ms. Crampsie Smith reported that the Finance Committee will meet at 5:30 PM on December 3 in Town Hall. Budget adjustments will be on the agenda.

8. ORDINANCES FOR FINAL PASSAGE

None.

9. NEW ORDINANCES

A. *Bill No. 44-2024 – Bill No. 44-2024 Cable Franchise Grant to Comcast*

The Clerk read Bill No. 44-2024 Cable Franchise Grant to Comcast, sponsored by Ms. Wilhelm and Ms. Crampsie Smith and titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,  
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA,  
PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 908, ET SEQ, OF THE  
CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF  
BETHLEHEM GRANTING A CABLE TELEVISION  
FRANCHISE SYSTEM TO COMCAST OF SOUTHEAST  
PENNSYLVANIA, LLC.

Voting AYE: Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon, and Mr. Colón, 7. Bill No. 44-2024 passed on First Reading.

B. *Bill No. 45-2024 – Bill No. 45-2024 – Adopt 2025 General Fund Budget*

The Clerk read Bill No. 45-2024 Adopt 2025 General Fund Budget, sponsored by Ms. Wilhelm and Ms. Crampsie Smith and titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,  
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, ADOPTING  
THE GENERAL FUND BUDGET FOR 2025

President Colón noted that a number of budget Ordinances are on the agenda tonight for First Reading. Any Ordinance must have two readings. Historically, the First Reading occurs during the second meeting in November, and the Final Reading/Enactment takes place during the second meeting in December. Budget hearings are held on other nights for detailed considerations. A fourth night of hearings may be held just for budget amendments if any are offered by Council members. President Colón added that the budget books provide expenditure and expense comparisons for recent years for all line items. The proposed budget is posted on the City's website.

Voting AYE: Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon, and Mr. Colón, 7. Bill No. 45-2024 passed on First Reading.

C. *Bill No. 46-2024 – Bill No. 46-2024 Adopt 2025 Water Fund Budget*

The Clerk read Bill No. 46-2024 Water Fund Budget, sponsored by Ms. Wilhelm and Ms. Crampsie Smith and titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,  
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA,  
ADOPTING THE WATER FUND BUDGET FOR 2025

Voting AYE: Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon, and Mr. Colón, 7. Bill No. 46-2024 passed on First Reading.

*D. Bill No. 47-2024 – Bill No. 47-2024 Adopt 2025 Sewer Fund Budget*

The Clerk read Bill No. 47-2024 Sewer Fund Budget, sponsored by Ms. Wilhelm and Ms. Crampsie Smith and titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,  
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA,  
ADOPTING THE SEWER FUND BUDGET FOR 2025

Voting AYE: Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon, and Mr. Colón, 7. Bill No. 47-2024 passed on First Reading.

*E. Bill No. 48-2024 – Bill No. 48-2024 Adopt Golf Course Enterprise Fund*

The Clerk read Bill No. 48-2024 Golf Course Enterprise Fund, sponsored by Ms. Wilhelm and Ms. Crampsie Smith and titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,  
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, ADOPTING  
THE GOLF COURSE ENTERPRISE FUND BUDGET FOR 2025

Voting AYE: Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon, and Mr. Colón, 7. Bill No. 48-2024 passed on First Reading.

*F. Bill No. 49-2024 – Bill No. 49-2024 Adopt 2025 Liquid Fuels Fund Budget*

The Clerk read Bill No. 49-2024 Liquid Fuels Fund Budget, sponsored by Ms. Wilhelm and Ms. Crampsie Smith and titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,  
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, ADOPTING  
THE LIQUID FUELS FUND BUDGET FOR 2025

Voting AYE: Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon, and Mr. Colón, 7. Bill No. 49-2024 passed on First Reading.

*G. Bill No. 50-2024 – Bill No. 50-2024 Adopt 2025 Capital Budget for Non-Utilities*

The Clerk read Bill No. 50-2024 Capital Budget for Non-Utilities, sponsored by Ms.

Wilhelm and Ms. Crampsie Smith and titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,  
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, ADOPTING  
THE 2025 CAPITAL BUDGET FOR NON-UTILITIES

Voting AYE: Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon, and Mr. Colón, 7. Bill No. 50-2024 passed on First Reading.

*H. Bill No. 51-2024 – Bill No. 51-2024 Adopt 2025 Capital Budget for Water Utilities*

The Clerk read Bill No. 51-2024 Capital Budget for Water Utilities, sponsored by Ms. Wilhelm and Ms. Crampsie Smith and titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,  
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, ADOPTING  
THE 2025 CAPITAL BUDGET FOR WATER UTILITIES

Voting AYE: Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon, and Mr. Colón, 7. Bill No. 51-2024 passed on First Reading.

*I. Bill No. 52-2024 – Bill No. 52-2024 Adopt 2025 Capital Budget for Sewer Utilities*

The Clerk read Bill No. 52-2024 Capital Budget for Sewer Utilities, sponsored by Ms. Wilhelm and Ms. Crampsie Smith and titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,  
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, ADOPTING  
THE 2025 CAPITAL BUDGET FOR SEWER UTILITIES

Voting AYE: Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon, and Mr. Colón, 7. Bill No. 52-2024 passed on First Reading.

*J. Bill No. 53-2024 – Bill No. 53-2024 Adopt 2025 Community Development Block Grant Budget*

The Clerk read Bill No. 53-2024 Community Development Block Grant Budget, sponsored by Ms. Wilhelm and Ms. Crampsie Smith and titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,  
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA,  
ADOPTING THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
BLOCK GRANT BUDGET FOR 2025

Voting AYE: Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird,

Ms. Leon, and Mr. Colón, 7. Bill No. 53-2024 passed on First Reading.

K. *Bill No. 54-2024 – Bill No. 54-2024 Adopt 2025 Storm Water Fund Budget*

The Clerk read Bill No. 54-2024 Storm Water Fund Budget, sponsored by Ms. Wilhelm and Ms. Crampsie Smith and titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,  
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, ADOPTING  
THE STORM WATER FUND BUDGET FOR 2025

Voting AYE: Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon, and Mr. Colón, 7. Bill No. 54-2024 passed on First Reading.

L. *Bill No. 55-2024 – Bill No. 55-2024 Fix 2025 Tax Rate for All City Purposes*

The Clerk read Bill No. 55-2024 Tax Rate for All City Purposes, sponsored by Ms. Wilhelm and Ms. Crampsie Smith and titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,  
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, FIXING  
THE TAX RATE FOR ALL CITY PURPOSES  
FOR THE YEAR 2025

Ms. Leon referenced the resident suggestion under Public Comment to provide a one-page summary of fund budgets. She asked Mr. Evans if this could be done in addition to the budget book, which is required.

Mr. Evans said there is too much information to boil down to one-page summaries. He believes our budget format is the most transparent and thorough compared to others locally, including historic and actual figures. Additionally, Council holds three nights of hearings to discuss proposed budgets.

Mayor Reynolds discussed the budgeting process and offered the option to hold quarterly budget meetings to provide more updates as to how the financial projections are holding up and a look ahead to the next year's needs.

Ms. Leon liked that idea. She said it allows Council more time to see where things are headed.

Ms. Kwiatek clarified that there is no proposed tax increase for 2025.

It also was agreed that two copies of the budget book be sent to the Bethlehem Area Public Library for public reference.

Voting AYE: Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird,

Ms. Leon, and Mr. Colón, 7. Bill No. 55-2024 passed on First Reading.

10. RESOLUTIONS

A. *Approve Resolution – 2023 35 PSA Scantek Infomanagement Solutions – Digitizing Files – Contract Amendment 4*

Ms. Wilhelm and Ms. Crampsie Smith sponsored Resolution No. 2024-253 that authorized to execute all documents and agreements with Scantek Infomanagement Solutions to continue the process of digitizing files for the Department of Community and Economic Development.

Voting AYE: Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon and Mr. Colón, 7. The Resolution passed.

B. *Approve Resolution – 2024 45 Accessory Dwelling Unit Zoning Study – Professional Services Agreement Woodsong Associates*

Ms. Wilhelm and Ms. Crampsie Smith sponsored Resolution No. 2024-254 that authorized to execute all documents and agreements with Woodsong Associates to consult with the City and Lehigh University to research and recommend best practices related to zoning reform for accessory dwelling units, and to develop and codify ADU provisions for the City.

President Colón asked for the Administration to provide Council with an overview on this matter. He also noted a letter of support on this matter from one of the state directors from AARP.

Mayor Reynolds said this was a grant obtained by Lehigh University. Lehigh does not have the capacity to do the work, so this would be a matter of passing the money along for the City to study what potential changes would have to be made to the Zoning Ordinance to allow and regulate ADUs. The City also does not have the capacity to do the study, so it would use this grant money to pay a consultant to do that work.

Ms. Wilhelm said she would be recusing herself from the vote because she is employed by Lehigh. Ms. Kwiatek also did so for the same reason.

Ms. Crampsie Smith asked whether the grant money must be used for research and consultant fees or could it be used for waiving fees and construction costs?

Ms. Collins said there is a \$40,000 HUD research grant. This was specifically awarded for research. The second grant of \$25,000 is part of a larger funding source that will offer some incentives to make this affordable housing.

Ms. Crampsie Smith has voiced concerns before about spending a lot of money on consultants. She would rather see the money directly benefit those in need. More than \$200,000 has been spent on consultants for affordable housing and the homeless shelter. She does not oppose ADUs, but she would rather spend the money on fee waivers, permits or construction. She also noted the AARP letter of support but added that that support was for the concept of ADUs, not a consultant. Ms. Crampsie Smith said she has found a lot of information on ADUs.

This information is readily available. She would rather not spend the money gathering information that is already available.

Ms. Collins previously said that she believed the study was necessary to differentiate the needs and circumstances in Bethlehem from those of, for example, a West Coast city of similar size.

Mr. Callahan noted that he was not on Council when this project began. He asked where the impetus began.

Ms. Collins said that ADUs were one recommendation that came out of the Comprehensive Housing Strategy. This was developed with robust community engagement including opinions of more than 3,500 residents, stakeholders, and the housing steering committee. ADUs are popular option now in terms of affordable housing. Part of allowing this housing type would be to draft zoning changes.

Mayor Reynolds said that ADUs are not a new strategy. There are an estimated 500-700 residences in Bethlehem that meet the definition of ADU and predate the modern zoning code. Having this study done would hopefully provide technical answers for standards to be set for lot size and setback distances. The Mayor added that a study also would suggest whether the ADU concept makes sense for Bethlehem.

Mr. Callahan stated his understanding of the concept: A property owner would take a portion of his property and develop it into an ADU. For 10 years, that owner cannot rent it out at market value and must fall within a set affordable housing amount. At the end of the 10 years, the property owner could rent the ADU at market rate.

Mayor Reynolds said specifics such as how long the affordable housing period would last have not been determined yet, but that is the basic concept of how this would work. He added that it is anticipated that only 15 to 30 ADUs out of 35,000 housing units would be added if the Zoning Ordinance were changed to permit them.

Mr. Callahan asked why the West Side was chosen for the pilot program being spearheaded by Lehigh.

Ms. Collins explained that the West Side has some houses that today would be called ADUs and are grandfathered. They have not adversely affected housing prices and the concept works in terms of density. The South Side was discounted, at least for the pilot program, because it is extremely densely populated.

Mr. Callahan was concerned that some experienced developers will see this as an opportunity to provide new construction and cram in more housing.

Mayor Reynolds agreed that the City does not want to allow anyone to put just anything in their backyard. There is a sensitivity to this subject. But this is the reason to plan and include appropriate limitation in the Zoning Ordinance.



Ms. Collins added that it could be researched but, if it is legal in Pennsylvania, it could be written into the zoning regulations that one of the residences on the property must be owner-occupied. This would prevent investors from carrying out the scenario suggested by Mr. Callahan.

Mr. Callahan said he would not support authorizing the study. He believed that at least most companies hired would simply tell the City what it believed it wanted to hear. He also said it is a dangerous slope to change the zoning in residential neighborhoods. People moved to those areas because they liked the existing character of the neighborhood. They do not want change thrust upon them.

Ms. Laird believes this is a complex issue. She believes that spending a small amount on research before making changes is the responsible thing to do.

Ms. Leon asked for a clarification on what Council is voting on in this matter.

Ms. Collins said this is not just a recommendation of whether to allow ADUs. This includes drafting potential zoning updates. She said the City has used consultants when considering other major amendments to its Zoning Ordinance in the past. The work is led by the Director of Planning and Zoning, but support work has routinely been led by a third party. The Student Housing Overlay is one example. In the case of ADUs, the work would include the technical assistance and affordability strategies.

Ms. Leon said she has been to ADU meetings and supports the concept including in South Bethlehem. These offer the most affordable housing. She knows they work in her community, but would want this studied to see if they would work in more or all of Bethlehem's neighborhoods. As a Council person, she does not want to vote on gut instinct. She wants data to better ensure results.

Ms. Crampsie Smith said she thought the Lehigh project was going to be a pilot project. She thought that three or so ADUs might be developed and that the City would then evaluate the results.

Ms. Collins said one pilot project was approved by the Zoning Hearing Board for a variance. That is the project that will be evaluated for potentially drafting new zoning language and work being done by Lehigh. But the goal was not to send multiple pilot projects to the Zoning Hearing Board for a variance.

Ms. Crampsie Smith said she will not support this Resolution because of the consultant aspect. She believes the research money could be better spent otherwise. She also is not convinced, after searching its website, that this is the best consultant for the job.

Ms. Leon asked what happens to the money if Council does not pass the Resolution.

Mayor Reynolds said the money would return to Lehigh. Lehigh can probably get its own consultant, but they came to the City because they wanted to involve the City.

Ms. Collins added that the City's Planning and Zoning Bureau is an integral part of this process. Lehigh could hire this same group, but that puts Bethlehem "a step away" from the process. "That takes us as a city out of the role of really being the most hands-on when it comes to our zoning," she said.

Ms. Kwiatek reconsidered her intention to recuse herself in this matter. She has recused herself on matters involving Lehigh in the past to err on the side of caution. But she believes that it would not be in Bethlehem's best interest to not more aggressively participate. For example, certain aspects of a study might not be sought if Bethlehem does not participate.

Ms. Wilhelm also was considering withdrawing her recusal. She asked whether a withdrawal is an appropriate action.

Council Solicitor Stephanie Steward said pursuant to §3(a) and (b) of the City's Conflict of Interest Ordinance, Council members shall not vote on matters in which they have a financial interest. This is a personal financial interest.

Ms. Kwiatek explained that she has recused herself in the past on matters involving Lehigh because she receives a paycheck, but it is clear to her that the money in this case does not touch her hands at all.

Ms. Wilhelm said that with the Solicitor's reading of the Ordinance, she is also comfortable voting on this matter.

President Colón directly asked Solicitor Steward if she believes this vote meets the standard of Council's Conflict of Interest Ordinance.

Solicitor Steward believes voting would be appropriate. "This particular Resolution does not lead to a benefit specifically to them as employees of Lehigh University," Solicitor Steward said.

Mr. Callahan asked if the language included whether an appearance of a conflict exists. He said he does not have a problem with the decisions being made. But, for the future, he would like to know whether appearance can be a factor. He said, if he were getting a paycheck from one source and an item on the agenda involves that source, he would think that would be an appearance of a conflict. He thought he recalled the appearance as being a factor.

Solicitor Steward said the definition of financial interest includes campaign contributions. She could not find anything in the City's Ordinance about an appearance. She began to consider the state language on conflicts of interest.

Mr. Callahan said, "Like getting a paycheck?"

Solicitor Steward began forming an answer.

Ms. Kwiatek said, "No, like getting a campaign contribution."

President Colón asked all to allow the Solicitor an opportunity to offer an opinion. He noted that Solicitor Steward already answered the question once, which could be her ultimate answer unless she wanted to add to it.

Solicitor Steward said, “A financial interest does not include a paycheck. It includes campaign contributions, direct or indirect investment or ownership interest in any business property, etc. 10 percent or greater that would be benefitted by the vote.” She said her opinion still stands.

President Colón said he would support the Resolution. He explained that planning, implementation, and evaluation are important phases. Lehigh is relying on the City to be the hub of this project. He believes the conversations on this matter should be happening at City Hall and bring everyone together. This would keep the City at the center of the conversation. This is grant funding, so there is no expenditure from the General Fund. This process will involve community engagement. ADUs may be a part of the affordable housing solution. The study also does not bind the City to anything.

Voting AYE: Ms. Wilhelm, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon and Mr. Colón, 5; NAY: Mr. Callahan and Ms. Cramsey Smith, 2. The Resolution passed.

*C. Approve Resolution – Water Utility Counsel – McNees Wallace Nurick, LLC*

Ms. Wilhelm and Ms. Crampsie Smith sponsored Resolution No. 2024-255 that authorized to execute an Agreement with McNees Wallace and Nurick, LLC to represent the City involving water utility regulatory and transactional matters and representation before the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission.

Voting AYE: Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon, and Mr. Colón, 7. The Resolution passed.

*D. Approve Resolution – LSA Grant – Celtic Classic*

Ms. Wilhelm and Ms. Crampsie Smith sponsored Resolution No. 2024-256 that authorized and directed to execute all application forms necessary to apply for a Local Share Account grant through the Pennsylvania Commonwealth Financing Authority for funds to support the 2025 Celtic Classic Highland Games & Festival and that the Mayor and Controller are authorized to execute such other agreements and documents as are deemed to be necessary and/or related thereto.

Ms. Kwiatek said it seems that this event continues to struggle financially. She understands that this will be a one-time grant of \$160,000. She asked if there is a purpose to this grant other than to provide operating funds to try to keep the Celtic Cultural Alliance going. If so, she asked if there is a long-term plan to get this event onto better financial footing.

Mayor Reynolds said he was unaware of the internal conversations. The City helped support the event by sponsoring the Parade of Shamrocks. He said the grant is on the agenda at the request of Senator Lisa Boscola. She had conversations with the Celtic Cultural Alliance. The

City values what Celtic Classic brings to the City, but he does not know all of the details of this grant.

Ms. Kwiatek said Celtic Classic is one of her favorite weekends. She is just concerned that this will remain viable.

Voting AYE: Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Wilhelm, and Mr. Colón, 7. The Resolution passed.

*E. Certificate of Appropriateness – HARB – 346 West Street*

Ms. Wilhelm and Ms. Crampsie Smith sponsored Resolution No. 2024-257 that authorized to demolish a 1960s concrete block garage structure and an existing enclosed rear porch and construct a new addition at the rear of the home.

Voting AYE: Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, and Mr. Colón, 7. The Resolution passed.

*F. Certificate of Appropriateness – HARB – 131 East Church Street*

Ms. Wilhelm and Ms. Crampsie Smith sponsored Resolution No. 2024-258 that authorized to construct a 5-foot-high brick wall in front of the home.

Voting AYE: Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon, and Mr. Colón, 7. The Resolution passed.

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned 10:07 PM.

ATTEST:

Tad J. Miller  
City Clerk