

BETHLEHEM CITY COUNCIL MEETING
10 East Church Street - Town Hall
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania
Tuesday, February 18, 2025 – 7:00 PM

PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

1. ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order by Vice President Leon. Present were Bryan G. Callahan, Grace Crampsie Smith, Hillary G. Kwiatek, Colleen Laird, Kiera Wilhelm, and Rachel Leon, 6; absent was Michael G. Colón, 1.

Vice President Leon announced that Mr. Colón was unable to attend this evening and that Mayor Reynolds had a conflict and would attend later if possible.

PUBLIC HEARING

Vice President Leon stated that prior to the consideration of the regular Agenda items, City Council will conduct a Public Hearing to receive comment concerning a request from Kolb, Vasiliadis, Florenz & Recchiuti, LLC, representing BPG Investments II, LLC requesting an amendment to the City's Zoning Map by changing the zoning district of 11-15 W. Garrison Street from High Density Residential (RT) to Central Business (CB). This privately proposed rezoning request is related to the proposed development of a 70-unit apartment building with commercial/retail spaces on the first floor.

6A. The Clerk read a February 14, 2025 memorandum from Assistant Planning and Zoning Director Craig Peiffer outlining the City Planning Commission's review of the zoning map amendment proposed for 11-15 W. Garrison St. Mr. Peiffer reported that the Planning Commission voted 5-0 to recommend approval of this amendment.

6B. The Clerk also read a February 12, 2025 correspondence from Jill Seitz, Chief Community and Regional Planner with the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission. Ms. Seitz assessed that the rezoning proposal to build 70 apartments and additional commercial or retail space at 11-15 W. Garrison Street aligns with the LVPC's FutureLV: The Regional Plan by facilitating mixed-use infill opportunities in areas where additional development can be accommodated.

Vice President Leon called the Public Hearing to Order and asked if anyone from the public wanted to comment.

Public Comment

Spot Zoning?

Resident William Scheirer said he opposed the zoning map amendment because he believed it would constitute spot zoning, which is illegal. He additionally believes that changing the zoning designation to Central Business (CB) increases the allowed height limit, which he does not want to see.

Vice President Leon said she would recognize representatives from the Petitioner to outline the Petition.

Attorney Michael Recchiuti said BPG Investments II, LLC proposes building a mixed-use apartment building in the 700 block of North New Street on nine parcels. One plan would be to build by right on seven of the parcels. However, the developer would prefer to build a different plan on all nine parcels if the zoning change were to be approved. Attorney Recchiuti noted that approval of the zoning amendment would allow the parcels at 11 and 15 W. Garrison Street to return to the CB designation which they had prior to a 2005 designation. He added that the drawings are conceptual for purposes of requesting the zoning amendment, and the overall design could change as the approval process progresses.

Attorney Recchiuti said the properties need redevelopment. Some buildings had to be razed following damage from a water main break and sinkhole. The previous owner of the nine parcels also requested a zoning amendment in 2019, which was rejected by City Council.

Co-developer Gabe Moyer said approval of the zoning change for 11 and 15 W. Garrison would allow developers to build fewer stories and, he believed, a more appealing and more efficient project. Moyer said his rezoning plan is considerably different than the one that failed in 2019 primarily because of the reduced number of units and a provided "stepdown" into the Garrison Street neighborhood to provide a better flow into the neighborhood. This plan also proposes providing more parking. There are also more two-bedroom units than the prior plan, suggesting more occupant permanency. These are viewed as starter homes.

Project architect Vince Marucci outlined the differences in the two plans. The "alternative" plan to build on seven of the parcels if the zoning amendment is not approved would be six or seven stories containing 70 apartments and 5,320 square feet of retail space with 45 parking spaces. The "recommended" plan to be used if the project can be built on nine parcels with the zoning amendment would be five or six stories containing 70 apartments and 8,350 square feet of retail space with 85 parking spaces. He believes that the zoning amendment would allow them to better blend into the neighborhood.

Craig Peiffer, Assistant Planning Director, noted the 5-0 Planning Commission vote to recommend approval of the zoning map amendment. He pointed out that tonight's action is just to approve a zoning map amendment. Additional reviews would take place if this plan progresses as to other matters including building design. This also would return to the Planning Commission where the public will have additional opportunity for comment.

Mr. Callahan noted the comment that the "alternative" plan could proceed on seven parcels if the zoning amendment were to fail. He asked what height would be allowed.

Mr. Peiffer said the seven parcels are in the CB District which allows a height of 12 to 14 stories, a maximum of 150 feet.

Mr. Marucci was asked to discuss parking. He said there is no requirement to provide parking in the CB District, but to make the units more leasable, it is desirable to offer some parking. Some space is being provided to address neighbors' concerns raised during the 2019 rezoning attempt.

Ms. Crampsie Smith noted that Garrison Street is narrow. She was concerned that this might not be good for the added traffic and facility parking.

Mr. Marucci said a parking plan would include removing some Garrison Street on-street parking. A thorough traffic study would be required when going through the land development review stage. This is typically when infrastructure improvements would be recommended or redesign of the intersection would occur.

Ms. Crampsie Smith also asked about the previous sinkhole. She asked if conditions have been thoroughly researched.

Mr. Moyer said it is difficult to characterize conditions as a sinkhole. It began with a water main leak under North New Street. This eroded some of the land under some of the properties causing some to sag and be condemned and torn down. Conditions have since been rectified, but the parcels remain vacant. He is not aware of any existing concerns.

Ms. Crampsie Smith also asked about the current vacancy rate for apartments in this area of the City, noting that some new units have been added with the Boyd project.

Ms. Laird asked someone to address the allegation made during Public Comment as to spot zoning.

Attorney Recchiuti said this is a requested zoning map change. The requested change is for the properties to carry the designation of an adjacent district, so this would not be spot zoning.

Ms. Laird also asked why the change was made from CB to RT in 2005.

Mr. Peiffer said the area was changed to a residential designation because of the residential nature of the street. But he acknowledged that it was on the edge of the district.

Ms. Laird asked what community outreach has been done and the feedback received.

Mr. Moyer said the owners gave notice to existing tenants months ago as to redevelopment intentions. None has come here today in opposition. There was negative feedback in 2019. The developers today have made adjustments for better flow into the neighborhood and to provide adequate parking and the need for permanent type of units, which is the reason for the change to offer more two-bedroom units. They also have met with and received comments from City planning departments and Northside Alive and incorporated those into the plans.

Ms. Wilhelm asked Mr. Moyer what was meant when it was said that the "recommended" plan requiring the zoning change would be more "efficient."

Mr. Moyer said this would allow for additional parking spaces, a lower building height, and additional retail space.

Public Comment

Bishop asked whether constructing the alternative design would provide such inefficiency to the surrounding space so that it makes more sense to proceed with the recommended design.

Mr. Marucci agreed that the recommended design is more efficient and would leave a section of land undeveloped.

Scott Parkinson said he lived near the project at one time and is concerned about the integrity of the ground given the previous sinkhole. He was told by a former City inspector that the land could not be built upon, so he believes the condition was serious.

Resident Mary Jo Makoul noted that 70 apartments are planned plus commercial space. She asked for the breakdown of studio, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom units and asked the number of vehicles this project would generate, suggesting there will be a need for more parking spaces.

Resident William Scheirer said he would concede to Attorney Recchiuti that legally this zoning amendment request might not be spot zoning because the requested zoning district is adjacent, but in a planning sense he believes it is.

Resident Stephen Antalics suggested that Council follow up on the spot zoning point raised by Mr. Scheirer and determine whether the amendment would be legal before proceeding.

Cameron asked what information Council has on the environmental impacts that this project might bring and whether current tenants would face a rent increase if new units are built because rents in Bethlehem are very high.

Vice President Leon reminded that this phase concerns only the zoning map amendment. The land development phase would require discussion on potential environmental issues and more.

A neighbor whose name was inaudible and who lives across the street from the proposed project does not believe the plan would be in keeping with the character of the neighborhood. She was specifically concerned about added traffic, the impact on parking, and the overall atmosphere of the neighborhood. Parking is already a problem and Garrison Street is narrow. She added that no one from the development team talked to her about their plans. She has spoken to neighbors who also said there has not been community outreach by the developers.

Resident Harry Faber stated that the developers' presentation lacked facts in certain areas including the environment and a firm commitment on pricing of the units. He said they only care about profit. He suggested that a plan such as Red Vienna in Austria involving socialized housing would be far more desirable.

Resident Anna Zawierucha disagreed with several speakers tonight. She believes some are pointing fingers at Council for not putting an end to this plan. She believes these comments are rude and disrespectful. City Council cannot do more than the zoning will allow it to do. She reminded that the developers' alternative design is permitted by right under the existing zoning, so Council cannot stop the project entirely. If people want things changed, it is time to change the laws and the zoning. Ms. Zawierucha also is aware of Red Vienna and noted that it was a plan put in place over 50 years. It took full community commitment. Holland has a similar plan that was 50 years in the making.

Resident Tommy Parisi took some of what was said by the developers this evening as a threat. They made it seem as though a worse version would be built if the zoning amendment is not granted. If the goal is truly to build this project for the community, he wondered why the developer would not just build all residential units.

Resident Jo Daniels is concerned that building projects are pitched under the guise that housing is needed and the more that are built the cheaper the rents will be. That just has not happened. The Boyd Apartments were at 20 percent of occupancy as of yesterday. The largest apartment in that project has two bedrooms and rents for \$2,600 monthly. That is not affordable for the average person living and working in the City. Taylor Flats apartments are larger but are renting for \$3,600 monthly. Studio apartments are starting at \$1,700 monthly. Ms. Daniels added that the City's infrastructure cannot continue to handle growth. The demands are too much for Public Works, fire, police, and EMS.

Resident Arthur Curatola said every city should take control of the situation and put a ceiling on rent rates. He suggested that developers be allowed to charge market rates for first-floor apartments, something less for those on a second level but that affordable housing rates must be charged on a third level.

Resident Brandon Matlack asked if the presented building rendering looks like something that belongs in Bethlehem. He thinks of historic brick or stone buildings of Historic Bethlehem but this would not fit in with the nature of the neighborhood.

Rafael lives across from the project. The block is already dense. He would prefer to see the buildings on the parcels knocked down for parking and opposes the proposed project.

Vice President Leon said Council will vote solely on a zoning map amendment when action is taken. This is not the land development phase. A proposed Ordinance will be placed on the March 4 Council agenda. The Public Hearing was adjourned at 8:36 PM.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

February 4, 2025

Vice President Leon announced that agenda items 8 A through 8 0 have been removed from tonight's agenda as well as 10 F.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

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

Pass Welcoming City Legislation

Resident Regina Padilla was born and raised in Bethlehem but now lives in Allentown. She is a descendant of immigrants. She urged Council to pass welcoming city legislation similar to that which was passed by Allentown. The immigrant community should be treated with the dignity and respect that they deserve.

Send Message to Washington

Resident Harry Faber was disappointed by statements released by police Chief Kott and Mayor Reynolds recommending not passing welcoming city legislation. Local governments have the utmost responsibility to stand up to federal government abuse. Passing legislation would send a clear message that immigrants are people and that we will not participate in the dehumanization of our immigrant population.

Echoing Supportive Words

Ciaran Buitrago is a Lehigh University student who supported welcoming city legislation. He shared the words spoken last meeting by Ruben Gomez in support of allowing immigrants to continue to contribute to American society.

Codification Urged

Resident Tommy Parisi asked the City to do all it can to protect immigrant neighbors. He specifically wants to prohibit City agencies and employees from inquiring about sensitive data such as citizen or immigration status, and to prohibit City resources from assisting immigration enforcement operations. He acknowledged that Chief Kott's statements last meeting about immigration-related activities were positive, he believes these actions should be codified into City law so that they are permanent and carry over to new administrations.

Landlord/Tenant Training

Resident Jo Daniels outlined a proposal for mandatory landlord training and proactive rental inspection programs. This would apply to all rentals, including student rentals. The objective is to educate landlords and tenants and enforce housing ordinances through a tiered inspection system, and improving housing conditions by holding landlords accountable.

Do Away with Borders

Resident Arthur Curatola said this country was based on immigrants. He said there should be no borders. People should be able to come and go.

Prove Police Statements

Dominic Trabosci lives in Easton but is a Moravian University graduate. He would support Bethlehem adopting welcoming city legislation. He wants to see unlawful U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) arrests stop. He believed that Bethlehem adding related legislation would prove statements that the City's police policies already offer such protections. He added that codification would prohibit future City Councils from reversing this action.

Support the Vulnerable

Resident Hannah Graybeal believes that Bethlehem is welcoming but urged Council to pass a welcoming city ordinance. We need to support those who are vulnerable.

Model Ordinance Available

Resident Valerie Noonan believed adopting a welcoming city ordinance in Bethlehem is possible. She believed that the strength of an ordinance would be meaningful. She suggested that Bethlehem could begin by looking at Allentown's welcoming city ordinance and tailor it, if necessary, to suit Bethlehem's needs.

Bridge and Greenway Safety Concerns

Resident Anna Zawierucha agreed with comments on immigration. She also raised concerns about falling concrete from underneath the bridge at Spring and Conestoga Streets. Some barricades blocked the walkway below weeks ago, but she believes netting should be installed to catch falling debris. She also recommended making changes to signage on The Greenway to make it safer for bicyclists and pedestrians by placing stop signs in the area for motor vehicles.

Pass an Ordinance

Sophia said that City officials claim that Bethlehem is a welcoming city, but failure to codify these intentions shows that officials do not want to codify the existence of immigrants in this city. She urged Council to pass an Ordinance.

Crucial Protections

Victoria Wagner, a Lehigh student, two weeks ago urged Council to enact welcoming city legislation similar to that of Allentown and tonight further urged Council to enact legislation to prohibit City agencies and employees from discriminating based on actual or perceived immigrant status and from asking about or recording sensitive data such as citizen status. Council silence sanctions the actions of ICE.

Dismissive Statement

A female resident whose name was inaudible said the City's statement regarding the request for welcoming city legislation was dismissive and not helpful. She asked whether anyone from the immigrant community was involved in writing the statement. She does not feel safe despite assurances. She asked why it is so hard to enact legislation if the City supposedly already has protections in place. She asked Council to reconsider and to approve legislation to protect immigrants.

Alleviate Fear

Resident Eva Ward has seen what ICE raids can do to cities. Not putting a bill on the table is an insult to all. The City has enacted some nondiscrimination policies. These brought progress. A bill to become a welcoming city needs to be considered immediately to alleviate fear.

Don't Believe Myths

Sam lives in Fountain Hill but works in Bethlehem and supports calls for a welcoming city ordinance. She encouraged people not to believe the fear-mongering myths that immigrants are criminals and are taking Americans' jobs. These pit working people against each other and are racist.

Feels Unwelcome

Resident Mary Jo Makoul said the last two meetings in Town Hall remind her of the atmosphere of a year ago involving Middle East tensions. After voicing her opinion about immigration at the last meeting, she no longer feels welcome. She said she was called a racist by someone who spoke about her remarks. She also was told to by an audience member to leave, and she was upset that no one on Council or in the Administration came to her defense. Ms. Makoul also read names of people whom she said allegedly were killed by illegal aliens.

Study Results

Resident William Scheirer mentioned a study by the Cato Institute. The results found that the group with the highest arrest rate was native-born citizens. Next was the legal immigrants, and the group with the lowest arrest rate was the illegal immigrants. He said this is understandable because illegal immigrants do not want to have contact with the police. There are some violent criminals who have been convicted, and they should be the first to be deported. But he believes the mass deportation intentions are ridiculous.

No Need for Welcoming Legislation

Resident Mike O'Hare was glad to see that the Easton Mayor and Police Chief spoke against enacting a welcoming ordinance and was glad to see the same in Bethlehem. Bethlehem is already a welcoming city. He believes that the majority of City residents do not share to opinion of the majority of those who have spoken tonight. Most love immigrants and want to see legal immigration, but they want criminal, illegal immigrants taken out of the country. We need immigration reform, but that is up to the federal government.

New Level of Fear

Resident Ronald Johnson said most of the immigrants in this community are hard-working, law-abiding people, not criminals. On February 5, the U.S. Justice Department released a memorandum about restoring the death penalty relating to illegal aliens. Communities are living in fear of state-sanctioned terror. He begged Council members to speak for those who cannot speak for themselves.

No Sense of Safety

Logan Scheirer attends Moravian University and found Bethlehem to be a welcoming place. Students there received an email from the university President outlining what students should do if ICE agents arrived on campus. He believes a welcoming city Ordinance would be a stronger statement in Bethlehem. The statement by a City official suggested that an Ordinance would be a false sense of safety but he said, right now, there is no sense of safety.

Seek Input from those Affected

Cameron also urged Council to pass legislation for Bethlehem to become a sanctuary city. He said white nationalism is rising and said Council could reverse this with legislation. He attended the meeting two weeks ago and said that Council did not ask about specifics of what those in attendance would like to see in an Ordinance or other related details. Instead, the Mayor and Police Chief were asked questions, but not those most affected.

Don't Equate Immigrants with Criminals

Bishop was an international Lehigh student and continues to live here. He said there is a false view that immigrants are criminals. Most people are immigrants simply to improve their circumstances.

Echoing Sentiments

Resident Sebastian Zeveruka agreed with the previous speaker.

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

Support for Salary Increases

William Scheirer supports the matter of proposed salary increases for elected officials, agenda item 6 I. He advocated for this a few years ago. It takes a lot of time and effort to be a conscientious Council member. He believed the annual salary should be at least \$10,000.

Vice President Leon noted that this matter is on the agenda as a memorandum this evening.

4. OLD BUSINESS

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

5. NEW BUSINESS

Vice President Leon said agenda items 8 A through 8 0 removed from the agenda because of advertising requirements. The advertising publication has changed and the deadline was not met for at least 7 days' notice prior to tonight's meeting. These agenda items will appear on the March 4 agenda. She added that item 10 F, the Certificate of Appropriateness for 1304 Spring Street, was removed at the developer's request.

Ms. Crampsie Smith

Ms. Crampsie Smith asked for an update on the condition of the bridge at Spring and Conestoga Streets.

Public Works Director Michael Alkhal said that regular inspections identified deficiencies. The City will investigate to see whether the remedy will be removing and replacing loose concrete or if something more is needed.

Ms. Kwiatek

Ms. Kwiatek agreed that false stereotypes surrounding immigrants need to be eliminated. She said she may have a differing opinion as to adequate protection of those with varying immigration statuses, but her views on what is happening in this country do not differ.

Ms. Laird

Ms. Laird asked where the police policies are listed.

Chief Kott said directives exist that set operations. They can be found under the police section on the City's website. For example, a directive states what an officer can and cannot do if a person is detained, such as questioning. These are based on the Fourth Amendment as well as the Department's CALEA accreditation. CALEA reviews aspects yearly, including complaints from the public, to be certain that what the Department represents is reflective of its actions, Chief Kott said. The accreditation could be revoked or individual officers disciplined if infractions are found.

Ms. Crampsie Smith

Ms. Crampsie Smith asked Chief Kott if she is aware of any ICE raids in Bethlehem in since the Trump administration has taken office.

Chief Kott was not, although she said we are not always notified by outside agencies.

Ms. Crampsie Smith also said that she believes that Allentown supported its welcoming city Ordinance is because the language was changed from "mandate" to "suggest" that the welcoming city policies be followed. She asked the solicitors whether "suggest" really gives much legal bite. Would there really be much difference to what Bethlehem is doing now?

City Solicitor John F. Spirk, Jr. said he does not think there is much difference.

Ms. Leon

Vice President Leon asked whether anyone from the Administration wanted to make additional comment.

Chief Kott said that she would mostly repeat what she said at the last meeting because it remains true. The situation in Washington is changing, and the City and police will continue to monitor the situation and react accordingly if needed. Conversations are being had with the community. All is being done to make sure that everyone feels safe and is proud of their community. She said that she and Director of Equity and Inclusion Janine Santoro met last week with some community members to try to see what is needed. Those conversations will continue. She added that the welcoming attitudes are not a recent event, but has been something that has long been worked on by the Department, even before she became Chief.

Solicitor Spirk agreed with Chief Kott that we are in a rapidly changing environment now with the federal administration. The City is not immune from those circumstances and will continue to monitor the situation and react accordingly. It is difficult to legislate absolutes in terms of police behavior. They are not immune from circumstances on the street.

Vice President Leon also asked about detainers.

Chief Kott said detainers directed by ICE likely would not apply to BPD. These would be to hold a suspect for 48 hours. BPD generally only has a suspect in custody for less than 6 to 8 hours before transporting them to county prisons in Lehigh or Northampton. The counties are more likely to deal with this.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

C. *Emergency Management Coordinator and Mayor Reynolds – Lehigh Valley 2024 Hazard Mitigation Plan Adoption*

The Clerk read a February 10, 2025 memorandum with an attached Resolution jointly authored by Mayor J. William Reynolds and Emergency Management Coordinator Michael Reich. The two recommend adoption of the Lehigh Valley 2024 Hazard Mitigation Plan Update. Adoption of the plan is a prerequisite to receiving post-disaster Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funds.

Vice President Leon said Resolution 10 A is on the agenda.

D. *Director of Bureau of Health – Records Destruction*

The Clerk read a February 3, 2025 memorandum and proposed Resolution from Health Director Kristen Wenrich requesting the Destruction of Records from the Health Bureau. Ms. Wenrich 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.

Vice President Leon stated a Resolution will be placed on Council's March 4 agenda.

E. *Benner Trovato – Petition – Amendment to the city of Bethlehem Zoning Ordinance – 8th Avenue and Martin Court*

The Clerk read a January 29, 2025 communication from Attorney Dennis Benner requesting to rezone one parcel and a portion of another at 8th Avenue and Martin Court from a CMU Zoning District to a CS Zoning District. The applicant seeks the zoning change in order to build an upscale car wash and/or a restaurant.

Vice President Leon stated that he would accept a motion and a second to schedule a Public Hearing for April 1, 2025 to consider the requested zoning map amendment.

Ms. Kwiatek made a motion, seconded by Mr. Callahan, to schedule a Public Hearing at 7:00 PM on April 1, 2025 to consider the requested zoning map amendment involving parcels at 8th Avenue and Martin Court.

Voting AYE: Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, and Ms. Leon, 6. The Motion passed.

F. Director of Water and Sewer Resources – 2025 16 FIS Field Verification – Colliers Engineering & Design, Inc.

The Clerk read a February 12, 2025 memorandum and proposed Resolution from Director of Water and Sewer Resources Edward Boscola. The memorandum seeks authorization to execute an agreement with Colliers Engineering & Design, Inc. of Allentown to provide professional GIS services to assist with web server and software upgrades and related duties. This is the third phase of a multi-step project to upgrade the City's GIS infrastructure. The cost is \$41,440, and the work is to be completed by December 31, 2025. There are no renewals.

Vice President Leon said Resolution 10 B is on the agenda.

G. Director of Water and Sewer Resources and City Solicitor – 2025 17 Environmental Regulatory Counsel Recommendation of Award Memo – Hangley Aronchick Segal Pudlin Schiller

The Clerk read a February 12, 2025 memorandum and proposed Resolution from Director of Water and Sewer Resources Edward Boscola and City Solicitor John F. Spirk, Jr. The memorandum seeks authorization to execute an agreement with Hangley Aronchick Segal Pudlin & Schiller of Philadelphia to provide representation and advice for matters involving environmental laws and regulations before the Pennsylvania DEP and the United States EPA for purposes of negotiating the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit renewal. Compliance and related enforcement matters. The cost is not to exceed \$25,000, and the work is to be completed by December 31, 2025. The agreement has three single-year renewal options for 2026 through 2028 at the same \$25,000 annual cost.

Vice President Leon said Resolution 10C is on the agenda.

H. Director of Water and Sewer Resources – 2025 18 WIMS Consultation Services – Entech Engineering, Inc.

The Clerk read a February 12, 2025 memorandum and proposed Resolution from Director of Water and Sewer Resources Edward Boscola. The memorandum seeks authorization to execute an agreement with Entech Engineering, Inc. of Reading to assist with startup, programming, data management, and training for new Water Information Management System programs for the water and wastewater treatment plants. The cost is \$7,500, and the work is to be completed by December 31, 2025. There are no renewals.

Vice President Leon said Resolution 10 D is on the agenda.

I. Councilwoman Wilhelm – Salary Increases – Council and Council President, Controller, and Mayor

The Clerk read a February 13, 2025 memorandum from Councilwoman Kiera Wilhelm along with an exhibit and three proposed Ordinances. Ms. Wilhelm recommends increasing the salaries of Council Members, the Council President, the Mayor, and Controller. The memorandum states that more than a decade has passed since any of these salaries were increased as well as additional supporting rationale for her proposal.

Vice President Leon stated said the three Ordinances will be placed on the March 4 Council agenda for First Reading.

7. REPORTS

A. President of Council

Vice President Leon advised that President Colón will circulate a memo detailing advertising requirements and the reason for the delay involving the Second Reading of the 15 Ordinances listed on tonight's agenda.

B. Mayor

7B1. Administrative Order – Ronald J. Donchez – Bethlehem Authority

Solicitor Spirk relayed that Mayor Reynolds re-appointed Ronald J. Donchez to the Bethlehem Authority. The re-appointment is effective through January of 2030. Ms. Leon and Ms. Wilhelm sponsored Resolution 2025-026 to confirm the appointment.

Voting AYE: Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, and Ms. Leon, 6. The Motion passed.

C. Committee Chairs

7C1. Hillary Kwiatek, Chair – Community and Economic Development Committee

Ms. Kwiatek reported that the Community and Economic Development Committee is scheduled to meet at 6 PM on March 4 in Town Hall to discuss amendments to the Residential Permit Parking program.

7C2. Grace Crampsie Smith, Chair – Finance Committee

Ms. Crampsie Smith announced that the Finance Committee will meet at 6 PM on February 24 to discuss proposed amendments to elected officials' salaries.

8. ORDINANCES FOR FINAL PASSAGE

None.

9. NEW ORDINANCES

None.

10. RESOLUTIONS

A. Approve Resolution – Lehigh Valley 2024 Hazard Mitigation Plan Adoption

Ms. Leon and Ms. Wilhelm sponsored Resolution No. 2025-027 that authorizes adoption this document as the official Hazard Mitigation Plan of the City of Bethlehem and that the respective officials and agencies of the City of Bethlehem identified in the implementation strategy of this plan are directed to implement the recommended activities assigned to them.

Voting AYE: Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, and Ms. Leon, 6. The Resolution passed.

B. Approve Resolution – 2025 16 GIS Field Verification – Colliers Engineering & Design, Inc.

Ms. Leon and Ms. Wilhelm sponsored Resolution No. 2025-028 that authorized to execute an Agreement with Colliers Engineering & Design, Inc. to provide GIS field verification.

Voting AYE: Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, and Ms. Leon, 6. The Resolution passed.

C. *Approve Resolution – 2025 17 Environmental Regulatory Counsel Recommendation of Award Memo – Hangley Aronchick Segal Pudlin Schiller*

Ms. Leon and Ms. Wilhelm sponsored Resolution No. 2025-029 that the disposal authorized to execute an Agreement with Hangley Aronchick Segal Pudlin & Schiller to provide legal counsel associated with environmental regulatory matters.

Ms. Kwiatek said a newly signed presidential Executive Order impacts new regulations on water and sanitary sewer area such as PFAS, known as forever chemicals. The Executive Order would strip away some regulations. She asked if Mr. Boscola had any information as to how this might impact the City.

Mr. Boscola said he has heard talk about a pause or rollback on recently implemented regulations. He does not believe that anything is official yet.

Ms. Kwiatek recommended moving ahead with the stricter regulations because municipalities are permitted to have more strict guidelines.

Mr. Boscola cited action to move ahead with replacement of lead service lines as an example.

Voting AYE: Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, and Ms. Leon, 6. The Resolution passed.

D. *Approve Resolution – 2025 18 WIMS Consultation Services – Entech Engineering, Inc.*

Ms. Leon and Ms. Wilhelm sponsored Resolution No. 2025-030 that authorized to execute an Agreement with Entech Engineering, Inc. to provide new Water Information Management System programs for the water and wastewater treatment plants.

Voting AYE: Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, and Ms. Leon, 6. The Resolution passed.

E. *Certificate of Appropriateness – HCC – 708 East Fourth Street*

Ms. Leon and Ms. Wilhelm sponsored Resolution No. 2025-031 that authorized to install window graphics, all white, one measuring 18-inches in diameter, one measuring 12-inches x 40-inches. Each sign to be centered within the window frame.

Voting AYE: Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, and Ms. Leon, 6. The Resolution passed.

G. *Certificate of Appropriateness – HARB – 415 Long Street*

Ms. Leon and Ms. Wilhelm sponsored Resolution No. 2025-032 that authorized to install a new storm door, two glass panels in an existing wood door, and two wrought iron railings at the front porch. The lighting fixture at the front door is also proposed to be replaced.

Voting AYE: Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, and Ms. Leon, 6. The Resolution passed.

H. Certificate of Appropriateness – HARB – 459 Main Street

Ms. Leon and Ms. Wilhelm sponsored Resolution No. 2025-033 that authorized to remove and replace the existing slate roof, install new OSB sheathing, install new Owens Corning Duration Shingles, and replace the existing skylight.

Voting AYE: Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, and Ms. Leon, 6. The Resolution passed.

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned 10:38 PM.

ATTEST: