

BETHLEHEM CITY COUNCIL MEETING
10 East Church Street - Town Hall
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania
Wednesday, May 19, 2021 – 7:00 PM

INVOCATION

PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

1. ROLL CALL

President Waldron called the meeting to order. Present were Bryan G. Callahan, Michael G. Colón, Grace Crampsie Smith, Olga Negrón, J. William Reynolds, Paige Van Wirt, and Adam R. Waldron, 7.

CITATIONS

Honoring Donald Klingel

President Waldron read the Citation for Donald Klingel on the occasion of his retirement from the Department of Public Works after over 20 years of service and stated the Citation will be mailed to him.

Honoring Michael Becker

President Waldron read the Citation for Michael Becker on the occasion of his retirement from the Public Works Department after over 30 years of service and stated the Citation will be mailed to him.

Honoring Brian Strausberger

President Waldron read the Citation for Brian Strausberger on the occasion of his retirement from the Water and Sewer Resources Department after over 30 years of service and stated the Citation will be mailed to him.

Honoring Richard McKenney

President Waldron read the Citation for Richard McKenney on the occasion of his retirement from the Water and Sewer Resources Department after over 20 years of service and stated the Citation will be mailed to him.

Honoring Nick Manesis

President Waldron read the Citation for Nick Manesis on the occasion of his retirement from the Water and Sewer Resources Department after over 20 years of service and stated the Citation will be mailed to him.

President Waldron thanked them for their service to the city.

Lehigh Valley Regional Homeless Advisory Board

President Waldron remarked before Public Comment we will hear from the Lehigh Valley Regional Homeless Advisory Board about their recommendations regarding the homeless strategy in the Lehigh Valley. Marc Rittle, the Executive Director of New Bethany Ministries will begin the discussion this evening.

Mr. Rittle thanked Council for this timely presentation. With him tonight are several members of the Lehigh Valley Regional Homeless Advisory Board representing Allentown, Bethlehem, and Easton, also all of Northampton and Lehigh Counties. Mr. Rittle turned this over to Alisa Baratta.

Alisa Baratta stated she is the Executive Director of Third Street Alliance for Women and Children and co-chair of the Lehigh Valley Regional Homeless Advisory Board along with Rob Nicoletta. The advisory board is part of a 33 county effort to prevent and end homelessness in eastern Pennsylvania and we represent the Lehigh Valley in that. We work with federal funding to make this happen. We wanted to come to you today to talk about the federal funding that is available through the American Rescue Plan and how we think it can be best used in the Lehigh Valley. We are presenting information tonight about Bethlehem. You will see in later slides that we make reference to Allentown because when we did some initial research on this process we got some developers to give us some financial numbers around properties. We were using that as a benchmark. We think they are adaptable across the entire Lehigh Valley particularly in the urban areas. Ms. Baratta advised we are coming before you because we recognize that we can all do more to prevent and end homelessness. But homelessness is just one very visible symptom in a bigger issue related to housing. If we want to work to help our unsheltered neighbors we have to talk about affordable housing and the supply of housing because right now the lack of housing is creating a huge demand across the Lehigh Valley. Right now the rescue plan makes this an unprecedented opportunity for us to make progress in preventing and ending homelessness. By investing American Rescue Plan funds that cities and counties have available to them we believe we can dramatically impact homelessness and housing instability. The rescue plan is a game changer; it presents us with funding for emergency rental assistance for qualified households and housing vouchers. We have been seeing this in Bethlehem, in Northampton County assisting landlords and tenants who are impacted by the eviction moratorium right now and really stabilizing these households and keeping them from entering eviction. Ms. Baratta added there is also homeless assistance dollars that help us to develop affordable housing and also could help us acquire non-congregate shelter that could be converted into permanent housing for use as emergency shelter. In this money we think is a special need for the Bethlehem Emergency Shelter System and we want to make sure there is focus in Bethlehem on that. There is also additional homeowner assistance for rural homeowners within the American Rescue Plan and also for utility assistance for folks who are at risk of homelessness and we have been utilizing that throughout Lehigh and Northampton Counties. They have done a lot of research and we use evidence based practice around our work. Our goal is to be the best collaborate partner we can be with county and city officials in implementing plans to assist people who are at risk and experiencing homelessness. We are data informed and because we have federal funding we really have to gather a huge amount of statistics and actually keep information about our outcomes. We follow HUD mandated standards of excellence and we follow the National Alliance to End Homelessness. Some of the examples of the work we have done recently is to develop a coordinated entry system that tracks performance within the system and this brings people who

are experiencing homelessness into one door, one way to get access to homeless services throughout the Lehigh Valley. We have diversion, prevention, and landlord engagement programs and use a housing first model which means people should get housing regardless of whatever issues they are facing and then work with them to maintain and stabilize housing. For folks who are chronically homeless we look at case management through street outreach, access to emergency shelter, and move them quickly into permanent supportive housing and rapid rehab and then move on strategies whenever available. Ms. Barrata remarked that the snapshot in Bethlehem for 2020, the most recent statistics we have, 131 households presented as homeless in Bethlehem, 301 households have received rental assistance and otherwise they could have become homeless, and 49 people were counted at the emergency shelter on the point in time count in January of 2020 and that is just one night. Those are the statistics in Bethlehem and she will now move this on to Sherry Binder who will talk about our next slide.

Sherri Brokopp Binder, Executive Director of Ripple Community Inc. in Allentown stated the next slide provides more information about Housing First and permanent housing or permanent supportive housing. The figure on this page illustrates why we are taking this permanent housing approach. In the past we operated off of an assumption that when a person or family loses their housing or becomes homeless they need to go through multiple steps to earn back that housing. But there is a very large body of research now that shows that those steps just create a fail point so they create opportunities for people to drop out and fall out of the system that is meant to support them. The research shows our best option is to provide permanent housing immediately and without condition to households that have lost their housing. What we have seen in the research is that permanent housing piece really is the foundation for stability in all other areas of life and that is why we want to focus on that as a first step. Ms. Binder stated in doing this work in the Lehigh Valley we are lucky to have the benefit of local data we can work from. The data tells us that our biggest gap currently is in the area of rapid rehousing which is that short-term assistance and services that help people obtain housing as quickly as possible after losing it. We have a gap in that area and that is for households that do not qualify for permanent supportive housing which is not often the best practice for people who need more support to obtain their housing well. The lack of safe and affordable units is a fundamental challenge across all of our programs and municipalities and across the region particularly in our urban area. We have a supply problem when it comes to housing units that are available and accessible to the people we work with. There are a number of proven strategies that can help us address these challenges and that is good news, so we will talk more about blight remediation, landlord engagement, and access to rapid rehousing and permanent housing vouchers.

Mr. Rittle noted you have seen the data and heard our theory in terms of getting people into housing first and then wrapping around all the services they need. Now is an opportunity to use the American Rescue Plan funds to be able to actually end homelessness in the City of Bethlehem. The first strategy is an Emergency Shelter Strategy, we should of course invest in that and as was said the Bethlehem Emergency Shelter has on average 49 people per night. If we had 131 people in the City of Bethlehem calling to say that they are homeless at this moment of time and 49 people are in the emergency shelter we clearly have an issue where we need more emergency shelter spots. One solution in addition to supporting further strategies is to use hotels. This has started to being used across the country in various spots. We did this here in Bethlehem immediately after the pandemic last year. In fact the strategy in Bethlehem to do this where we placed in a transitional setting for 90 days, exactly the same plan, it was to keep people safe from Covid but New Bethany was also able to place a majority of the people into permanent housing as

a result. So that is 19 people out of the 26 we had in a local hotel, Comfort Suites just down the street, that we could actually transition them into permanent housing during that 90 day stay. That is 19 people who would have been homeless during the crisis. We think as we emerge from the crisis this is a strategy we can use. Mr. Rittle suggests having a variety of hotels, possibly even across the entire region so you are not putting the burden onto a single one and again do this in concert with emergency sheltering solutions we have in the Lehigh Valley. He mentioned for \$200,000 dollars they can provide 3,000 nights of safe, appropriate, and sanitary emergency shelter and this includes case management services. If everyone spends 90 days it will be 33 families with placement to permanent housing following the solution. As for landlord engagement, if we are going to do a rapid rehousing strategy as Ms. Binder mentioned that is part of the housing first, put people in to homes; provide the case management, and the rental assistance. This can only be successfully done if you have partner property owners and partner landlords who are participating with you and understand what the organizations are doing who are working with the clients. We are saying for \$250,000 dollars we can make safe, healthy housing accessible for at least 15-20 families for a year.

Jessica Elliott, Executive Director at Habitat for Humanity for Lehigh Valley stated she is going to speak to renovation of blighted properties and the renovation of underutilized properties. We all know there is an increase in blighted properties across the Lehigh Valley and these properties can be renovated to provide safe, healthy affordable housing for low income families through PSHRH and First Time Home Buyer Programs. The estimated cost per unit for renovation would be \$85,000 dollars and could be owned through a land bank and managed by non-profits. So for \$5 million dollars the city and its community partners can rehab 50 units of safe, healthy housing for vulnerable residents. As far as the large, abandoned, or underutilized properties in Allentown there is a sample property near 13th Street and there are also similar properties in Bethlehem that could be renovated into 15 one bedroom apartments. Some of they could handle more individuals or couples as well and the estimated cost to renovation would be about \$1.7 million dollars. So for \$1.7 million the City of Bethlehem and its community partners could renovate 15 units of permanent, safe, healthy housing for vulnerable residents in Bethlehem and benefit the broader community by restoring nuisance properties.

Rob Nicolella, Executive Director of Catholic Charities and also co-chair of the Lehigh Valley Regional Homeless Advisory Board stated he wanted to summarize this presentation. He noted with the Emergency Shelter at local motels and hotels \$200,000 would provide up to 3,000 nights of emergency shelter, with case management and with landlord engagement \$250,000 dollars would support at least 15-20 families a year. As for the renovation of blighted properties, \$5 million to rehab 50 units of safe, healthy housing for the chronically homeless and other vulnerable residents with an average of \$85,000 in renovation costs per unit and the renovation of larger, underutilized properties it would be \$1.7 million for 15 renovated units. All of Bethlehem benefits when we provide best practice solutions for our unsheltered neighbors. Mr. Nicolella pointed out by leveraging American Rescue Plan funds to address these housing challenges, we can meet our current housing and shelter needs, provide housing stability for our unsheltered and unstable housing neighbors. As we noted housing stability directly affects physical, mental health, employment, educational stability and improved academic achievement. Converting dilapidated properties into community assets would be important and to strengthen our shared community by implementing housing solutions that are just, equitable, and sustainable. We need to bring about change that will last for a generation or more by focusing on long term solutions.

There is this opportunity because of these funds and we can start implementing these meaningful solutions today.

President Waldron thanked this group for the presentation and all this information. Obviously homelessness in Bethlehem and the Lehigh Valley and throughout our country is something that has become a cause of concern more than it ever has been due to Covid and the challenges it has put on individuals and families and local municipalities. This is something that is close to every Member of Council's heart. We have had some conversations about affordable housing and this is just a continuation of that topic. With the money that is coming to the City of Bethlehem he is sure that we will continue to have conversations about how we are going to spend that money. This is something that is definitely on our radar and he imagines that we will continue that conversation with you as well as other non-profit groups and organizations where we can best use that money to help as many people as possible, especially the ones who need the most help. It is clear with the amount of money we are getting we can have a large impact on a lot of individuals and a lot of families that can help stabilize those families and our community. President Waldron reiterated thanks for joining us this evening.

Dr. Van Wirt thanked them for that presentation. She had a question about where we are with the Bethlehem Emergency Shelter relocation. We heard that the shelter itself was having a difficult time finding an affordable piece of real estate that would function well for a shelter because of the pressure on the housing market on the south side. She sees that was not part of one of the recommendations was direct funding for the BES on the south side. She asked for a comment on that. The second part of the question is that there are 4 strong recommendations and 2 of them were temporary, meaning rental stabilization for families and hotel use for homeless people. Those are great but they are a one and done, if we are just using the Cares Act money. The other two strategies were kind of longer term ways to address homelessness by actually creating more units. Dr. Van Wirt wonders how they thought about which way to prioritize funds, ones that immediately take people off the street versus ones that actually build our housing stock up with permanent units.

Mr. Rittle stated because this is a regional presentation when we did this for Allentown we also did not include the YMCA which is the emergency shelter there. We are presuming that this is already an investment so what we are saying with the ARP funds these are new opportunities. There is a unique opportunity in Bethlehem because there might be a new project. He sees Bob Rapp from the Bethlehem Emergency Shelter is on this call and maybe he is prepared to address that but his not sure what he can share.

Mr. Rapp remarked the Bethlehem Emergency Shelter is in a tough position here and will be in the near future. As most of you know we are under and extension of a contract with Christ Church UCC and they are exploring possibilities of what they will do with their facility. One would be to repurpose it and one would be to actually put it on the market and sell it. Mr. Rapp is not sure actually where they are at today but they had been moving a lot on that due to Covid. However that does not necessarily help us as a shelter as we need a permanent location. Actually when there is talk about stability, there is stability within a shelter too, especially for our chronically homeless folks. Mr. Rapp noted that Dr. Van Wirt spoke of having a tough time finding an affordable location, but we are having a tough time finding a location, period, within the city. We asked for help through your housing folks, we have been on the phone; we just had a meeting with the county and with the possibility of relocating the shelter to a county location

outside of the city. That will not help folks who deem it necessary to stay close to service within the city but it would help the majority of the population if in fact that is the only place we can find a location. We put the word out to developers, we put the word out to real estate folks and we have been talking to the city and the county but we just cannot find a location that is sizable enough. He noted that the Bethlehem Emergency Shelter actually wants to move a little forward in sponsoring some of those micro-apartments so that little stop gap measure that allows folks to move a little forward while waiting for the processes that the folks Regional Homeless Advisory Board are talking about. So we do not talk about affordable housing, we talk about entry level housing. These are folks that are getting less than \$1,000 a month, some who are on disability, and some who do collect social security; they cannot afford what we talk about as affordable housing. We need entry level housing for the folks who are going to take the next step. Also, to include the Regional Homeless Advisory Board in their rehousing programs also, we need both, but we need a place to do that.

Dr. Van Wirt stated that answered her questions, she was looking for an update in how your needs fit in with our current funding possibilities and you helped. She is sorry we are having such a tough time and she hopes that Council can be available to you along with the Administration to have more vigorous dialogues about this and how we can be of assistance.

Mr. Rapp noted the had found a place on the south side of Bethlehem that would be suitable and productive in what we need to do but we find that property in a receivership right now and it seems to be we cannot get with the right folks to be able to help sort that out to explore possibilities, but we are working on it.

Dr. Van Wirt thanked him for what they do and for everyone who did this presentation, it is important and she appreciates it.

Ms. Crampsie Smith thanked everyone for this presentation, it is timely and she wants to thank everyone who is part of the advisory board. She has attended meetings over the last 2 years and she is in awe of all of your efforts to try and help the homeless and to advocate for housing that is affordable. Some of the ideas are great and she has had experience like the case management piece, she sees that as critical. We need to do more collaboration with the county and she is glad that Mr. Rapp is talking to the county folks. She knows there are departments and offices within the county, because when she was at the county she was a representative payee for many folks who would probably be homeless unless we took care of their rent and utilities. It was the only way they could stay in their place. It is a win/win when we have the case management because the landlord is assured of getting their rent and also that the renters will follow the rules and then the people have a place to live. Ms. Crampsie Smith noted the big question is that we need a homeless shelter but she asked Mr. Rapp if the place on the south side is still a possibility. She knows there are some legal issues regarding ownership but is this still on the table as a possibility for a site.

Mr. Rapp informed that is how he views it at this point.

Ms. Crampsie Smith remarked we definitely need to do something and get a shelter. She agrees that with the rescue plan money it is a great opportunity that we will have funding available to address this issue. She attended a few webinars about the rescue plan about funds about two months ago and there were more questions than answers on how we can use this

money. But in every webinar she attended it was very clear and definite that we could use this money for a shelter for the homeless as well as affordable housing options. That is a plus. We are all advocates here on Council for the homeless and those who need housing; we really want the city to do whatever we can to earmark funds towards those needs. Ms. Crampsie Smith noted they are estimating about \$7.1 million dollars to try to resolve some of the issues around housing. When you look at the different programs and cost that you outline if we have to prioritize could you say how you would prioritize those different programs to earmark the money towards.

Ms. Baratta informed a huge priority is the Bethlehem Emergency Shelter. We also think a huge issue is blighted properties and the rehabilitation of blighted properties because that opens up the pipeline for moving people out of shelter into housing. Anything we can do to create new units is really very important. That is why the rescue plan money is so very important because it moves us from just focusing on getting shelter into moving people out of shelter into rapid rehousing. She thinks the entire advisory board would say to invest in any opportunity to create new units or to bring blighted units back onto the market.

Ms. Crampsie Smith knows some of the other communities are looking at the tiny homes option, what are your thoughts on that as an option.

Ms. Baratta explained they are not in support of tiny homes because in the long term there are no funding streams at the federal or state level that will pay for ongoing support of tiny homes. They are not considered shelter, they are considered transitional housing and the federal government has moved away from supporting transitional housing. We are saying to focus on blight remediation, rapid rehousing, housing voucher that are permanent and rapid and not transitional.

Mr. Nicolella added that the one that gets lost in the mix is the landlord engagement. One of the things that the pandemic has proven is that the landlords and property owners are a group of individuals that were also suffering in this situation. The landlord engagement program is something that will bolster that relationship that has already been productive with the emergency rental assistance program that we are involved with. He wanted to keep that at the forefront, hence the 4 ideas but he does agree with what Ms. Baratta was mentioning with regards to where we need to prioritize. He always wants to make sure that the landlords and the property owners are thought of because of what you just experienced with the pandemic.

Mr. Rapp noted he would not comment on the tiny homes but he would in fact like to come before City Council in the future to discuss tiny homes but he would rather allow some time period so that maybe you folks could forget about what you heard in Allentown and then we will readdress tiny homes in a way that the Bethlehem Emergency Shelter sees feasible. He asked if that would be appropriate.

Ms. Crampsie Smith would be in favor of a presentation but would defer to President Waldron on that. We could also do a presentation during a committee meeting. She does not want to speak for the President of Council.

President Waldron related that typically we have an agenda topic that deems a larger ongoing conversation and we can schedule a specific committee meeting where we can talk in length about certain details. Whereas tonight we have a full Council Meeting agenda ahead of us

getting into some of these details is a challenging ask right now. If we were going to continue our conversation about some of the solutions ahead of us including the potential for tiny homes that would be something more appropriate for a committee meeting.

Ms. Crampsie Smith likes the idea of the blighted properties, it just seems like the housing shortage is such an issue. The realtors are frustrated because there is a lack of housing for people. One of the big questions in her mind is how do we balance because we are seeing an influx of folks moving in from out of the area who have an exorbitant amount of cash to pay above and beyond what the price is that people are asking for. While we want to be a welcoming community she is concerned how do we balance that with the sharing with those long term residents in Bethlehem and their children and grandchildren are still going to be assured there is housing in this community. That is something she wanted to throw out there.

Mr. Callahan thanked Mr. Rittle for the presentation. According to the presentation it is \$85,000 dollars per unit to rehab and outfit.

Mr. Rittle explained they sampled a couple of properties and they were in Allentown, so he would be in favor of revising that using Bethlehem data. That would be if the Council is interested we could work together to find what is a good number for Bethlehem.

Mr. Callahan asked if that is including the uptick in the wood market.

Mr. Rittle stated that is a recent number, although he does not know what Mr. Callahan is talking about but he knows that was taken into account because we just received that two weeks ago.

Mr. Callahan added he knows it is a large number but if we are really serious about this issue he again proposes that we put aside \$5 million dollars from that federal stimulus money for the city into the units. It was also said that \$5 million dollars would cover 50 plus units. He would recommend and support that.

Mr. Colón stated he would be more than happy to dig into some of this information deeper and expand on some of these conversations at a committee meeting where we could have a broader conversation and more Bethlehem specific conversations. In the meantime are there any examples of other counties or municipalities or organizations that are tackling homelessness that are models to look at. There could be a multi-unit property that was renovated in another municipality. The game has changed now that the rescue plan money is coming down the pike but before this money was available to us were there any examples of someone doing this the right kind of way.

Ms. Baratta reported that nationally there are a number of examples. What she would like to do is to look to a city that is about the size of Bethlehem with some of the same aging properties and bring you a few case studies around that. This would make more sense rather than saying here look at this town. We can find that for you and make sure we forward that to Council.

Mr. Colón stated he would appreciate it just to see some of the things that have been already going on as we look at best practices and lay the ground work for good models to follow.

Ms. Negrón also stated thanks for this presentation and for taking the time to organize this. She loves the idea of the renovation of blighted properties. She is thinking of the south side but there are also other areas of the city, not just the south side. The Administration in the past has done a great job realizing the south side and work hard to better the downtowns. There are still eyesores of properties in between beautiful places. If we spend money in fixing these properties and turn them into such needed housing stock, she will be happy to put the money into there. She agrees with the landlord engagement and she saw this during the pandemic and sent a lot of families to get the help, because it engages the landlord it becomes a better relationship. They want to get paid so it is very helpful. She is concerned about the emergency shelter, she talks about this often because she works for a law firm with personal injuries so many of her clients end up homeless because they lose their job. They get hurt at work in the warehouses that we have so many of and get hurt and the companies are not paying them, they lose their job and end up losing their homes. She knows that New Bethany has helped one of her clients with housing. Just getting help for a week or a few days, it was great that the city paid for the time this gentleman had Covid and he has nowhere to go and was sick but that was helpful. Ms. Negrón deals with this every day and it is devastating. She hopes that we can put the money into the shelter. She asked Mr. Rapp if he has checked the Holy Infancy School that will be a great place. She hopes with this money we help to get a place because that is important to our community.

President Waldron thanked everyone for joining us this evening; he would anticipate in the near future we will continue this conversation and potential for a Community Economic Development Committee Meeting. That would be appropriate.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

None.

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

Building on the South Side of Bethlehem

Jefferson Vitelli, 910 Hess Street, stated he has been listening to the public comments from the last meeting but was not prepared at that time to make any public comment but he is now. He has written a letter to Council and Mayor Donchez which he would like to make part of the public record and he would like to read that letter. “I am writing as a resident of Bethlehem's South Side for more than thirty years to add my voice to those who oppose further gentrification of our neighborhoods represented by the proposed development of 60 and 90 foot buildings in the 3rd and New St area. Driving across the New Street Bridge, I have always been enamored and proud of the Working Class History of the South Side, evidenced by the faces of the row homes, the 19th and early 20th century architecture, the gables of company housing, where Lithuanians and Ukrainians, Poles, Italians, Puerto Ricans, and so many others, came to Bethlehem to work the Steel Mills, and the spires of the many churches that sprout from the skyline, where all those souls congregated to worship. Since the Steel Mills closed in 1997, and South Side has struggled to find its new identity, I have become increasingly dismayed by the intrusion of tall buildings that do not compliment this historic architecture that so embodies the soul of the South Side, and the impact that this development has had on the demographics of the South Side. Many of the

historically diverse communities have been displaced. The proposed development of expensive 60 and 90 foot buildings will drive out remaining low-income working people, and further marginalize already struggling communities. More than "feet on the street", what South Bethlehem needs is "hearts in our hearths", souls attached to the soles of those feet. Consider one positive, conscientious development project: Recently the developer of the Masonic Temple Site, at the south end of the Hill-to-Hill Bridge, decided to invest considerable effort, and his own money, to preserve the original chimney so that chimney swifts would be able to roost by the thousands, on their Spring and Fall migrations through the Lehigh Valley. Great credit goes to Mr. John Noble and the "Save our Swifts" group that mobilized support for the preservation, and thanks to Bethlehem City Council for their decision to name Chimney Swifts as the official bird of Bethlehem. This is truly an example of considering the housing needs of all our residents in development planning. Here is my challenge for developers; Why doesn't someone with money to invest put a new roof on the old Bethlehem Steel Machine Shop, currently, an eyesore, visible as one comes down Hayes Street to 3rd, but in its heyday, the largest Machine Shop in the world. This is an historic landmark, a symbol of our history, well worth preserving, and well worth developing. There could be a huge Community Center, a Market Place, a shelter for the homeless, or a museum of Industrial History. I urge you not to approve proposals to demolish existing structures on South Side, and replace them with 60 or 90 foot buildings. Thank you for your consideration in service of our community." Sincerely, Jefferson B. Vitelli.

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

Rose Garden Farmers Market

Mary Toulouse, 1528 W. Market Street, informed she is calling tonight as the co-manager of the Bethlehem Rose Garden Farmers Market. She wanted to give an update on the market because Council will be voting on the Use Permit Agreement this evening. It has been 6 years since this market had begun and it is growing each year. For the first time this will truly be a full service market with baked goods and a variety of fresh products. Just to give a few highlights according to a survey 76% of our shoppers are regulars and come every week and multiple times per month. The conclusion is that the market seems to serve as a regular source of fresh local products for the community. According to the survey 48% of our shoppers say they spend money at other local businesses when they visit the market and that is an indication that this market is playing an important role in supporting the west side business district. The market serves as a catalyst to our neighborhood activity over the last few years and has been a contributing factor in the redevelopment of the park. You may not know that we received a 2020 Lehigh County tourism grant this last year thanks to the markets activity. We will celebrate our first Rose Fest on June 26th and we hope all will join us. All the money we get from the market goes back into the market. For example, each year the market sponsors at least one new business vendor or start up farmer to come to the market. This year we have two new produce vendors coming to the market. We have also been working with the West Side Moravian Church to set up licensed, affordable vendors who would like to sell prepared food so they can meet the health department requirements. (not audible). There is not one in the City of Bethlehem. The city will now be closing the Raspberry Street alley adjacent to the park, this wonderful thing and we are especially grateful for it. (not audible) safe space for food trucks, they are a necessity for our market where people come to stay and picnic in the park as well as buy food for the week. Normally there would be a \$2,000 charge for the permit to have a food truck in the street but this

charge would have crippled our outreach program. In conclusion Ms. Toulouse cannot stress enough how important it is for the city to continue to take an active role in support of the farmers markets. She noted that Allentown and Easton seem to have done this a bit earlier. In fact there are many new white papers on food policy indicating that the food and nutrition security in cities with growing urban populations like that of Bethlehem and all its new development, this security cannot be taken for granted. The Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture, a non-profit run by the Rockefeller Foundation recently did a highly publicized survey of small independent farmers in the northeast. This survey indicated that 30-40% of local farmers will not survive in coming years without intervention. These small independent farmers are the ones who are behind the, eat healthy, eat local, farm to table movement. She personally knows 3 of these farmers and one of them has the last name of Rodale. Ms. Toulouse thanks Council for their vote later tonight on the Rose Garden and she hopes Council will continue to support the market as part of the development of a strong public food policy in Bethlehem.

5. OLD BUSINESS

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

6. COMMUNICATIONS

- A. *Director of Public Works – Recommendation of Award – Ocean Construction, LLC – Construction of 26 ADA Curb Ramps*

The Clerk read a memorandum dated May 4, 2021 from Michael Alkhal, Director of Public Works recommending a contract with Ocean Construction, LLC for construction of 26 ADA accessible curb ramps. The term of the contract is 90 days. The cost is \$153,084 and there are no renewals.

President Waldron stated Resolution 10 A is on the agenda.

- B. *Director of Public Works – Recommendation of Award – New Enterprise Stone & Lime Co., Inc. – Street Overlays and Curb Ramps*

The Clerk read a memorandum dated May 4, 2021 from Michael Alkhal, Director of Public Works recommending a contract with New Enterprise Stone & Lime Co., Inc. for street overlays and curb ramps. The term of the contract is 120 days. The total cost is \$740,415 broken down by street sections described in the contract approval request. There are no renewals.

President Waldron stated Resolution 10 B is on the agenda.

- C. *Director of Water and Sewer Resources – Recommendation of Award – R-III Construction, Inc. – Hecktown Road Water Main Relocation*

The Clerk read a memorandum dated May 10, 2021 from Edward Boscola, Director of Water and Sewer Resources recommending a contract with R-III Construction, Inc. for the

Hecktown Road Water Main Relocation. The contract runs through November 30, 2021 and the cost is \$594,200. There are no renewals.

President Waldron stated Resolution 10 C is on the agenda.

- D. *Director of Water and Sewer Resources – Recommendation of Award – Kleinfelder, Inc. – WWTP Regulatory Consulting Services*

The Clerk read a memorandum dated May 10, 2021 from Edward Boscola, Director of Water and Sewer Resources recommending a contract with Kleinfelder, Inc. for WWTP Regulatory Consulting Services. The contract runs through December 31, 2022 and the cost is \$50,000. There are no renewals.

President Waldron stated Resolution 10 D is on the agenda.

- E. *City Solicitor – Use Permit Agreement – ArtsQuest – Levitt Summer Concert Series*

The Clerk read a memorandum dated May 13, 2021 from William P. Leeson, Esq., with an attached resolution and associated use permit agreement. The permittee is ArtsQuest and the event is the Levitt summer concert series. The agreement covers dates from June 2, 2021 through October 31, 2021 as specified in the body of the agreement. The covered premise is 1st Street from Founders Way to the beginning of the parking lot at 650 East 1st Street.

President Waldron stated Resolution 10 E is on the agenda.

- F. *City Solicitor – Use Permit Agreement – CADCB – Greenway Farmers Market*

The Clerk read a memorandum dated May 13, 2021 from William P. Leeson, Esq., with an attached resolution and associated use permit agreement. The permittee is Community Action Development Corporation of Bethlehem and the event is the Greenway Farmers Market. The agreement covers dates from June 9, 2021 through October 13, 2021 as specified in the body of the agreement. The covered premise is the Greenway from Taylor Street to Pierce Street.

President Waldron stated Resolution 10 F is on the agenda.

- G. *City Solicitor – Use Permit Agreement – MANA – Rose Garden Farmers Market*

The Clerk read a memorandum dated May 13, 2021 from William P. Leeson, Esq., with an attached resolution and associated use permit agreement. The permittee is Mount Airy Neighborhood Association and subpermittee is the Colony Meadery, LLC. The event is the Rose Garden Farmers Market. The agreement covers every Saturday from June 5 through October 16, 2021. The covered premise is the Bethlehem Rose Garden.

President Waldron stated Resolution 10 G is on the agenda.

- H. *Director of Public Works – Recommendation of Award – B & F Petroleum Installation, Inc., – Underground Storage Tanks Replacement at Municipal Garage*

The Clerk read a memorandum dated May 13, 2021 from Michael Alkhal, Director of Public Works recommending a contract with B & F Petroleum Installation, Inc., for underground storage tanks replacement at the Municipal Garage. The cost is \$345,249.62. The estimated completion date is May 27, 2021. There are no renewals.

President Waldron stated Resolution 10 H is on the agenda.

7. REPORTS

- A. *President of Council*
- B. *Mayor*
- C. *Community Development Committee Meeting*

Chairwoman Van Wirt stated The Community Development Committee met on Tuesday, May 11, 2021 at 6:00 PM. The Committee considered the following agenda items: The committee reviewed an administration-proposed bill amending Article 1713 related to the composition of the Historical Architectural Review Board. The committee voted to recommend approval of the bill and referred it to full council for consideration at a future council meeting; the committee also reviewed the South Bethlehem Historic District Planning Study. The discussion was for informational purposes only and no votes were taken.

8. ORDINANCES FOR FINAL PASSAGE

- A. *Bill No. 15-2021 – Zoning Map amendment proposal submitted by the property owner at 1852 West Market/1843 West Broad Street from CL (Limited Commercial) to LI (Light Industrial)*

The Clerk read Bill No. 15-2021 – Zoning Map amendment proposal submitted by the property owner at 1852 West Market/1843 West Broad Street from CL (Limited Commercial) to LI (Light Industrial) sponsored by Ms. Negrón and Mr. Waldron and titled:

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING PART 13 OF THE CODIFIED
ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM, PENNSYLVANIA,
AS AMENDED, KNOWN AS THE ZONING ORDINANCE OF THE
CITY OF BETHLEHEM, PENNSYLVANIA, BY AMENDING
THE CITY ZONING MAP

Voting AYE: Ms. Negrón, Mr. Reynolds, Dr. Van Wirt, Mr. Callahan, Mr. Colón, Ms. Crampsie Smith, and Mr. Waldron, 7. Bill No. 15-2021 now known as Ordinance No. 2021-14 was passed on Final Reading.

9. NEW ORDINANCES

None.

10. RESOLUTIONS

A. *Approve Contract – Ocean Construction, LLC – ADA Curb Ramps*

Mr. Colón and Mr. Waldron sponsored Resolution No. 2021-090 that authorized to execute an agreement with Ocean Construction, LLC for the construction of 26 ADA curb ramps.

Voting AYE: Ms. Negrón, Mr. Reynolds, Dr. Van Wirt, Mr. Callahan, Mr. Colón, Ms. Crampsie Smith, and Mr. Waldron, 7. The Resolution passed.

B. *Approve Contract – New Enterprise Stone & Lime Co., Inc. – Street Overlays and Curb Ramps*

Mr. Colón and Mr. Waldron sponsored Resolution No. 2021-091 that authorized to execute an agreement with New Enterprise Stone & Lime Co., Inc. for street overlays and curb ramps.

Voting AYE: Ms. Negrón, Mr. Reynolds, Dr. Van Wirt, Mr. Callahan, Mr. Colón, Ms. Crampsie Smith, and Mr. Waldron, 7. The Resolution passed.

C. *Approve Contract – R-III Construction, Inc. – Hecktown Road Water Main Relocation*

Mr. Colón and Mr. Waldron sponsored Resolution No. 2021-092 that authorized to execute an agreement with R-III Construction, Inc. for the Hecktown Road water main relocation.

Voting AYE: Ms. Negrón, Mr. Reynolds, Dr. Van Wirt, Mr. Callahan, Mr. Colón, Ms. Crampsie Smith, and Mr. Waldron, 7. The Resolution passed.

D. *Approve Contract – Kleinfelder, Inc. – WWTP Regulatory Consulting Services*

Mr. Colón and Mr. Waldron sponsored Resolution No. 2021-093 that authorized to execute an agreement with Kleinfelder, Inc. for Wastewater Treatment Plant regulatory consulting services.

Voting AYE: Ms. Negrón, Mr. Reynolds, Dr. Van Wirt, Mr. Callahan, Mr. Colón, Ms. Crampsie Smith, and Mr. Waldron, 7. The Resolution passed.

E. *Approve Use Permit Agreement – ArtsQuest – Levitt Summer Concert Series*

Mr. Colón and Mr. Waldron sponsored Resolution No. 2021-094 that authorized to execute a Use Permit Agreement with ArtsQuest for the Levitt Summer Concert Series.

Voting AYE: Ms. Negrón, Mr. Reynolds, Dr. Van Wirt, Mr. Callahan, Mr. Colón, Ms. Crampsie Smith, and Mr. Waldron, 7. The Resolution passed.

F. *Approve Use Permit Agreement – Community Action Development Corporation of Bethlehem – Greenway Farmers Market*

Mr. Colón and Mr. Waldron sponsored Resolution No. 2021-095 that that authorized to execute a Use Permit Agreement with Community Action Development Corporation of Bethlehem for the Greenway Farmers Market.

Voting AYE: Ms. Negrón, Mr. Reynolds, Dr. Van Wirt, Mr. Callahan, Mr. Colón, Ms. Crampsie Smith, and Mr. Waldron, 7. The Resolution passed.

G. *Approve Use Permit Agreement – Mount Airy Neighborhood Association – Rose Garden Farmers Market*

Mr. Colón and Mr. Waldron sponsored Resolution No. 2021-096 that that authorized to execute a Use Permit Agreement with the Mount Airy Neighborhood Association and the Colony Meadery for the Bethlehem Rose Garden Farmers Market.

Voting AYE: Ms. Negrón, Mr. Reynolds, Dr. Van Wirt, Mr. Callahan, Mr. Colón, Ms. Crampsie Smith, and Mr. Waldron, 7. The Resolution passed.

H. *Approve Contract – B & F Petroleum Installation, Inc. – Underground Storage Tanks Replacement at the Municipal Garage*

Mr. Colón and Mr. Waldron sponsored Resolution No. 2021-097 that authorized to execute an agreement with B & F Petroleum Installation, Inc. for the Underground Storage Tanks Replacement at the Municipal Garage.

President Waldron remarked he sees there was an original contract price of almost \$300,000 and then two change orders which the description was understandable. The thing that jumps out to him is that May 27, 2021 completion date which is a week away. He asked about that timeline.

Mr. Alkhal asked if he means what the current anticipated completion date is to confirm that we will completely done with the project.

President Waldron informed it seems as if we are approving funds for a change order and the work may have already been done.

Mr. Alkhal stated the pumps are going to be operational money so the work has been done but there was no question as to the need or necessity of the work and he guesses the project manager did not put that forward before Council before the work was executed.

President Waldron just hopes we do not get into the habit of having work completed and then after the fact coming to Council saying here is the invoice for the work that we have already completed. Obviously this will pass because it needs to and it is the right thing that needs to happen. He just wants to make sure that those checks are there to make sure that the process is being followed consistently.

Mr. Alkhal noted they understand that and we appreciate your consideration and we will strive to make every effort to prevent these things from occurring. Unfortunately on this particular project it has encountered some delays but the bottom line is that we apologize for it and we will try to make every effort to prevent this from recurring in the future.

Voting AYE: Ms. Negrón, Mr. Reynolds, Dr. Van Wirt, Mr. Callahan, Mr. Colón, Ms. Crampsie Smith, and Mr. Waldron, 7. The Resolution passed.

I. *Certificate of Appropriateness – 125-127 West Fourth Street*

Mr. Colón and Mr. Waldron sponsored Resolution No. 2021-098 that granted a Certificate of Appropriateness to renovate the front facade at 125-127 West Fourth Street.

Voting AYE: Ms. Negrón, Mr. Reynolds, Dr. Van Wirt, Mr. Callahan, Mr. Colón, Ms. Crampsie Smith, and Mr. Waldron, 7. The Resolution passed.

11. NEW BUSINESS

Primary Election

President Waldron congratulated all the candidates in the city who won election last evening. It is great to see the system working under the challenges of Covid with all the mail-in votes. It is refreshing to see something play out as far as the process of voting and all that tabulation. That thank you extends to both Lehigh and Northampton County election offices as well. Congratulations to all those candidates who were successful last evening.

Public Works Project List

Dr. Van Wirt remarked she wanted to comment on a very interesting handout that Council received from the Department of Public Works and Mr. Alkhal. It is a walk through status update on some if not all of the different projects in Public Works that the city is involved with. She has two questions for Mr. Alkhal. This is an informative piece of information for the city taxpayers and she wondered if the citizens are able to access this through the open data port or how could they get their hands on this same document.

Mr. Alkhal stated currently that is not made available, we could certainly consider that. We develop the quarter status report and it does include just about every significant project for the department as well as any projects the department is doing for any other department in the city. The main genesis of this status report is to ensure that each assigned project manager is moving projects forward and this prompts them on a quarterly basis to provide updates and we find this is a tool that advances projects and tries to the extent possible to avoid unnecessary delays and make sure we are making progress. He will look into whether or not there would be an issue to make the plan available and report back.

Dr. Van Wirt does think it is important that the taxpayers have trust and knowledge and the only way they can do that is if they can have access to the data. She would really welcome Mr. Alkhal's insight into how to make this available to our citizens. She then asked about the Monocacy Way Trail improvements and this may be more specific to Ms. Karner. There is a \$286,000 dollar grant from DCNR for upgrades to Monocacy Way and the whole project is interesting for us but the part she is interested in also is the wetlands delineation. It says that the wetlands delineation has been completed and we have had a lot of discussion lately about Martin Tower and its proximity to Monocacy which is a protected watershed in Pennsylvania. She was wondering if we could get this information of what the wetlands delineation for Monocacy Creek is.

Ms. Karner will defer to Mr. Alkhal because that was managed out of the Department of Public Works with a consultant that we hired specifically to help us with the permitting process.

Mr. Alkhal stated we can certainly provide the wetlands delineation that was completed to Council or to whoever is interested in it. That is not a problem.

Dr. Van Wirt pointed out we received the NPDEF permit and are preparing to go to bid, she wonders if there is a timeframe for when that RFP will go out.

Mr. Alkhal informed we are hoping to have it go out in the next month or two.

Dr. Van Wirt asked if there is a way we can see what it looks like, the RFP.

Mr. Alkhal stated yes, before we go out to bid we can provide it.

Dr. Van Wirt is not asking for approval, she would just like to be able to see what it looks like.

Mr. Alkhal stated yes.

Dr. Van Wirt reiterated this is a very informative document and she is glad they put it together for Council.

Martin Tower Site

Mr. Callahan remarked he has been doing some research on the Martin Tower site as far as the water runoff but he has a question. When people come to build inside of our city are they following the EPA federal guidelines or are they following the DEP guidelines or are the DEP guidelines base off the EPA federal guidelines.

Mr. Alkhal stated the permits are administered by the DEP on behalf of the federal government so they apply to the DEP and the DEP will approve the permit. We have our own internal reviews of stormwater issues both for quantity as well as quality for our ordinances.

Mr. Callahan is curious because in the coming weeks we will have a big decision to make as far as the Martin Tower site. He asked if the developers at the Martin Tower site met all the guidelines by the EPA and the DEP.

Mr. Alkhal does not believe that process has been completed. There have not been detail reviews or the submittal of the necessary plans to allow for that to be done yet.

Mr. Callahan asked when that will get done.

Mr. Alkhal stated when the official retail plans are submitted to the city, then it gets circulated at the same time, there will be applications for the referenced permit that Mr. Callahan is discussing and that is when the detailed reviews will take place to make sure they are complying with all of the requirements, both city as well as those with the respected permits as part of the development of the site.

Mr. Callahan thanked Mr. Alkhal for the information.

Primary Election

Ms. Negrón congratulated everyone that won in the election across the city and even in the state. More than anything she wanted to thank everyone that came out and voted. Many times in a primary election, especially local primary elections people think voting is not important. She thanked all the citizens in the City of Bethlehem that spoke up and got out and placed a vote. She is happy she gets to finish her time on Council and then there will be a great group of individuals taking over. She also congratulated Councilman Reynolds for his win in the Mayoral election.

Mr. Callahan congratulated everyone that won yesterday and he hopes the best for Mr. Reynolds or whoever wins the election of Mayor in November. He stated it has been his honor to serve the citizens of Bethlehem. He will sit back and relax for a while and concentrate on his driving school test center. He appreciates everyone that came out and voted yesterday, it is the greatest process in the world, there is not a better process in the world. Everyone wants to complain about the United States of America but we have a system that works. We do have our faults and there are things we can always look back on but he has had a ball being on Council. He will take a little break and he just wanted to thank all the voters that participated in the process yesterday.

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm.

ATTEST:

Robert G. Vidoni, Esq.
City Clerk