

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

PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

1. ROLL CALL

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

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

November 5, 2025

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

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

Historical Perspective

Retired firefighter David Ruhf said the City had 116 firefighters when he retired in 1976. The City has grown considerably yet the roster is smaller today. Bethlehem's population has grown to about 80,000. Mr. Ruhf stressed that timing is critical when saving property and the lives of residents and firefighters. Fewer firefighters means delay. He characterized a study that was performed years ago by the City as an exercise to see what could be done with the Fire Department without raising taxes. The result was the loss of an aerial and two fire stations. He said those actions were wrong.

More Firefighters Means Faster Response

Firefighter Jonathan Ruhf said City firefighters are asked to do more with less. More firefighters means faster response whether it is arriving sooner or hitting a fire more effectively to suppress it before it can spread. Mr. Ruhf added that many additional people come to the City for its festivals and other attractions, and the City has seen much additional construction - all of which needs protection. He urged Council to add to the roster to provide quicker and more effective fire protection.

Restore Staffing

Lou Jimenez, president of Local 735, said the Department has been operating for years at a "staffing-crisis" level. The City has seen tremendous growth and has more need. Meanwhile, staffing levels have been reduced from what they were 30 years ago with 104 budgeted firefighter positions today. Mr. Jimenez said the union had some input on the study the Administration is planning but many of its suggestions were not incorporated. The study is not designed to

enhance staffing. It is meant to determine how to do more with less rather than attempting to meet staffing levels recommended by the leading national authorities. He encouraged bringing the roster back to 113, a level maintained for decades. This would be the baseline of what the union is seeking. The officer's position for Engine 9 at the station on Catasauqua Road also should be restored.

Risky Situation

Rose Jimenez, wife of Lou Jimenez, called the firefighter staffing level a "failure of priorities." She said Bethlehem spends 10 percent of its budget on fire protection, well below cities of its size. Many areas of the City do not receive a fire response within the industry-standard four minutes. Similarly, recommended staffing levels are not met. Staffing and budget decisions are the cause. This results in risk, not fiscal responsibility.

An Investment

Firefighter Jack Mesce said it is important for enough professionals to arrive quickly and together to work as a team to fight fires. Understaffed crews can lead to slower rescues, greater risk to the public, and a greater risk to firefighters themselves. Thin staffing can also lead to preventative programs being cut that eventually lead to more emergencies in the long-run. He called a fully staffed fire department "an investment in saving lives."

Hire Before Tragedy Occurs

Firefighter Robert Imbodin said the City's estimated population of 79,000 swells with attendees at festivals, the casino, colleges and more. He said there was a five-year period in which the City did not hire firefighters. The overtime that this leads to in filling work schedules results in burnout, poor morale, and fewer applicants. He urged Council to hire more firefighters now instead of waiting for a tragedy to occur before it does so. He also asked why the overtime budget for each of the last two years was \$500,000 and pointed out that this budget figure was spent by April or May in 2025 highlighting the need to fill shifts.

Federal Changes Suggested

Resident Arthur Curatola referred to the recent reopening of the federal government after the lengthy shutdown. He suggested that elected officials should not receive increased salaries when military officers and personnel are not receiving more money. He suggested federal grants should not be given to nonprofit organizations that are making a lot of money. Mr. Curatola also opposes providing U.S. aid to countries that support or condone the actions of Zionists who kill innocent people.

Proper Manpower Needed

Former firefighter Mike Smith said the City had a firefighter shortage during his tenure with the Department. The City commissioned a study. The study mirrored that of Buffalo, N.Y., suggesting to him that the preparer did not do a thorough job. Then, the International Association of Fire Fighters did one of its first GIS studies and things got temporarily better as Bethlehem boosted its platoon number to 22. Mr. Smith observed that the City today has beautiful fire

apparatus but added that you have to have manpower to run it. You cannot rely on mutual aid to arrive in time.

Jobs Well Done

Resident Deborah Sacarakis commended the compost and recycling facilities, those who work there, and those collecting leaves. She said she received knowledgeable, kind and courteous service. These efforts encourage responsible citizenship. She also commended Council for its leadership. All of these efforts make Bethlehem an appealing place to live.

Response Time Concerns

Resident Ann Smith-Reiser supported the firefighters' staffing concerns. She is aware of the GIS study and is concerned about response times. The City roster is down quite a few people, and she encouraged starting now to boost the ranks. She urged Council to amend the budget to do so.

Leverage to Offer Water App

Resident Mark Will-Weber recounted a fire at his home in 1984 and thanked firefighters for saving his wife and property. He next turned to the November 10 budget hearing reviewing water matters. Mr. Will-Weber said there was no information showing the money being made by the City for using smart meters or the anticipated money to be made or saved through their use. He believed Council should inquire. Mr. Will-Weber noted discussion that the City is likely to request permission within a year or so from the Public Utility Commission to raise rates. He encouraged Council to make any future rate increases contingent on the app being offered to residents.

Make a Change

Resident Anthony Castillo recalled his mother's concern when the neighborhood fire station was closed. He has a similar concern today as an adult in hearing staffing worries raised by the firefighters. It does not take a study to know that more help is needed when the City has grown but staffing numbers are down. Council has the power to make a change.

Act Now

Resident Joe Hart said it is crucial for firefighters to have backup personnel present at the moment when they need help. This takes proper staffing. He encouraged increasing staffing before tragedy strikes.

Hear Their Pleas

Resident Stephen Antalics said he was shocked to hear details of what the firefighters are saying tonight. He repeated the belief that a majority of Council is an extension of the Administration. Pleas of the firefighters are not being heard. He encouraged Council to think for itself based on information presented tonight.

Boost Firefighters' Roster

Resident William Scheirer believed that the firefighters' roster should be increased by about 10 percent from 104 to about 115 at least. Mr. Scheirer next discussed the book "1775". Two paragraphs on Pennsylvania cited three decades of heavy immigration from Europe had made it the second-most populous province. The religious diversity led to tolerance.

Supports Firefighters

Resident Frank Hofstetter supported the firefighters. He is not a firefighter but believes that fire protection is important and should be made a priority.

Add Firefighters

Councilwoman-elect Jo Daniels' father was a firefighter. She believes the decrease in the roster began an administration ago but increases have not occurred during this administration. Bethlehem has many distinctions including becoming a UNESCO World Heritage site yet an inadequately staffed Fire Department makes the City less safe. The City has added 5,000 residents since 2020, high-rises, commercial buildings, and housing but we do not have emergency services support to back this growth. She has had a fire at her home and offered great praise for the response. She asked what has been so important that took precedence over adding more personnel. Ms. Daniels urged amending the budget to add personnel.

Provide More Manpower

Resident Ralph Wiggum is a retired firefighter outside the City and said he does not know how Bethlehem firefighters are able to operate with crews of two on an aerial and three on an engine. This is unsafe and unacceptable. The firefighters are exhausted and need reinforcements.

Increase Safety

Resident Carol Anders supported comments concerning the need for more fire personnel. Her son is a firefighter. She asked Council to increase the roster to add safety and take some of the worry away from firefighters' families.

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

None.

4. OLD BUSINESS

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

5. NEW BUSINESS

President Colón announced that Council will have First Reading of its 2026 budget ordinances later in the agenda under New Ordinances. Council has held budget hearings on November 10 and 12. The remaining budget calendar is as follows:

Thursday, November 20, 2025 - 6:00 PM

Third Budget Meeting

1. Community and Economic Development Department
2. Community Development Block Grant Fund
3. Police Department
4. Fire Department

Thursday, December 4, 2025 - 6:00 PM (for amendments)

Final Budget Meeting

(This meeting will only occur if necessary)

Monday, November 24, 2025 - 6:00 PM

Backup Budget Meeting

(This meeting will only occur if rescheduling of a prior budget meeting is necessary)

Tuesday, December 16, 2025 - 7:00 PM

Regular Council Meeting

Second Reading/ Adoption of the 2026 Budget Ordinances

Ms. Kwiatek

Ms. Kwiatek asked Business Administrator Eric Evans whether any cuts were proposed to the fire, police, or EMS budgets.

Mr. Evans said no. In fact, significant increases are proposed for all three.

Ms. Kwiatek knew that there has been a significant number of fire retirements within the past four years and asked how many positions have been replaced.

Chief Matthew Griffin said 35 firefighters have been sent to the academy in the past three years. At least 35 have retired within that time.

Ms. Kwiatek observed that it has been a challenge to try to keep up with the full complement.

Chief Griffin said that retirements are taking place at a much faster rate than what the City has been able to hire replacements and train them at an academy.

Ms. Kwiatek recalled that a second academy was found and the cost was added to the budget last year in an effort to get more recruits onboard faster.

Mr. Evans agreed. He added that there was a spike in hiring 20 years ago. That means that a large number is eligible for retirement now, and that is what the City has been experiencing. While some may stay longer and the length of careers cannot be predicted, certain assumptions

can be made based on history. The cost to the City of sending one cadet to an academy is \$20,000 for tuition and equipment. Funding at \$300,000 is in the 2026 budget for 15 cadets.

Ms. Kwiatek said it appears that with eight more cadets enrolled in an upcoming academy, the City roster would have the 104 budgeted firefighters, assuming no more retirements for now. Still, this is below what the fire union is recommending.

Mr. Evans said there always will be differing opinions as to what adequate numbers should be. This is the reason the Administration is in the process of commissioning an objective study to include staffing. He believes the last one was conducted in 1995. Discussions to commission a study included the Administration and the union, which has been aware of intentions to study the issue. The plan is not to make decisions without this study. However, Mr. Evans said the Administration received short notice that the union wanted to discuss a study that it commissioned during a Public Safety Committee meeting that was held on October 29.

Ms. Kwiatek asked whether roster spots are not being filled in order to balance budgets.

Mr. Evans said no. He added that salaries and overtime work inversely. The Administration budgets as if every position were filled. However, when overtime is necessary to fill open shifts, the overtime budget is drawn upon while the salaries budget is not tapped for the unused time.

Ms. Kwiatek said she has been proud to vote for budgets that included contractual salary increases for firefighters and added four paramedics when the case was made to do so.

Ms. Crampsie Smith

Ms. Crampsie Smith, as Chairwoman of the Finance Committee, announced that that committee will meet at 6 PM on December 2 in Town Hall to review the 2024 City audit and consider a budget adjustment to purchase additional police vehicles.

Ms. Crampsie Smith next asked how many more firefighters are eligible to retire as of today. She has heard 25-30. And what would the number be in 2026?

Chief Griffin believed 25 would be accurate right now. He said personnel records would indicate how many more would be eligible next year but retirements cannot be assumed.

Ms. Crampsie Smith acknowledged several difficulties in hiring qualified firefighters fast enough to keep up the roster. First is the many recent retirements. Then comes the uncertainty of who might retire next and when. The next difficulty is the timing of when the next academy class is offered and the amount of time it takes to get that certification. She assessed that the City is understaffed both because of the many retirements and improper staffing levels for at least the past six years. She additionally offered that the Fire Department is responding to more calls with fewer personnel than it had in the 1970s. This is resulting in delayed response in some instances and less manpower to do the work to keep flames from spreading. She also cited that Bethlehem's fire budget is at 10 percent compared to some other cities in the state that are in the 20s, including Allentown which is at 21 percent. Ms. Crampsie Smith said she would be proposing an amendment to the budget to add four more firefighters. This would allow the promotion of four

firefighters to lieutenant in order to staff an officer at Engine 9 on Catasauqua Road for all shifts. She stressed that even though firefighters are included in the 2026 budget, they are replacements for retirees. Her proposal would add to the roster.

Mr. Callahan

Mr. Callahan asked whether enough cadets could be sent to an academy to fill anticipated retirements and the additions that Ms. Crampsie Smith is proposing.

Chief Griffin said another academy begins in January. He would do all he could but said it would be a challenge to vet job candidates, including government clearances, but said that appeared to be a tight deadline.

Mr. Callahan suggested that some of the money to hire more firefighters may be available in unused overtime funds since overtime should decrease. He also asked Mr. Evans how much the salary and benefits would cost the City to add four firefighters.

Mr. Evans estimated \$500,000, including the cost to send all to an academy. He would have to calculate exact figures.

Mr. Callahan also addressed the uncertainty of vetting and hiring recruits in time to enroll them in a January academy. He suggested that starting this process as soon as possible, even if a January deadline cannot be met, would at least start working toward hiring more personnel sooner rather than waiting until 2027. Mr. Callahan also asked whether some of the American Rescue Plan money could be used toward firefighter or police salaries.

Mr. Evans said that money has been allocated by the City to affordable housing and homeless accounts for planned projects. He added that a bedrock principle of this Administration is that recurring expenses should be paid with recurring revenue. American Rescue money was a one-time revenue. Ongoing salaries would have to be funded in other ways.

Mr. Callahan believed that \$400,000-\$500,000 could be found in the General Fund. This amount, if found, would not bring staffing levels to where they should be; however, it would be a start.

It was noted that the Fire Department budget is scheduled for review during the next budget hearing on November 20. Discussion was likely to continue then.

Ms. Laird

Ms. Laird knew that staffing issues have been present for years. She also recalled during last year's fire budget review that union and administration representatives said their relationship was quite good and that staffing was moving in the right direction. She next heard that a union staffing study was discussed at the October 29 committee meeting, and now she is hearing that the Administration is working toward commissioning its own study. She was surprised and confused at the lack of cohesion.

Mr. Jimenez said the union paid for its study. The committee meeting was not deliberately scheduled the day before the Mayor's Budget Address. Mr. Jimenez added that relations with fire leadership are very good. The disconnect is with the Administration.

Mr. Evans said the Administration has planned to study personnel, response times, stations, apparatus and more at a cost of \$60,000. Costs and feasibility will need to be known. The union was in on this planning. RFPs were due at the end of October. Firms will be interviewed in December. The study should be completed in summer. This would give enough time for numbers to be worked into the 2027 budget.

Mr. Jimenez agreed that the union participated in planning discussions for study parameters but he said that much of the input was not incorporated.

Ms. Laird asked Chief Griffin if he is concerned about staffing.

Chief Griffin said he is concerned about the overtime and whether it is creating burnout. He would always accept more manpower, but he is willing to wait for the comprehensive study to see what is recommended.

Ms. Wilhelm

Ms. Wilhelm noted the increase in population and buildings in the City but asked whether there has been a significant increase in structure fires.

The Chief said there has not been a noticeable increase in the numbers of fires. But there have been more calls of varying nature including EMS assists.

Ms. Leon

Ms. Leon, chairwoman of the Public Safety Committee, said she called the October 29 meeting. She thought that it would be helpful to have reviewed the union's study prior to entering into 2026 budget considerations. She thought more information would be better. However, she recalled stating during the committee meeting that the union information would be considered along with the Administration's eventual information. She did not believe the union's study would be followed by an immediate request for more manpower without having the Administration's information to consider as well. In hindsight, she believes she should have waited to hold the meeting.

Ms. Leon looked at historical roster numbers. It seems as if the largest cut was in 2021 during the pandemic. Personnel went from 110 to 106. Council at that time reduced the roster because of reduced income from casino table game revenue, \$1 million drop in Earned Income Tax, a lack of entertainment tax and more. She believes the studies by the union and the Administration were meant to restore personnel numbers during better economic times.

Mr. Evans said the purpose of at least the Administration's study is to obtain an objective overview of the situation.

Mr. Callahan

Mr. Callahan asked Mr. Evans whether he knew how much a mill generates.

Mr. Evans said he would need to look that up.

Mr. Callahan suggested that if Council could not agree on making enough cuts to fund new fire positions, it would be important to know how much tax money would need to be raised in order to do so in order for Council to determine the value of such a move.

Ms. Crampsie Smith

Ms. Crampsie Smith noted Council's Conflict of Influence ordinance passed in 2022 stating that its purpose was so that elected officials could avoid being influenced by financial contributions, specifically those made by developers seeking influence. She supported this ordinance but believes there is need for further clarification as it relates to oversight and enforcement. The ordinance says that Council members and the Mayor shall recuse themselves from voting if a conflict of interest exists, but the Mayor in Bethlehem does not vote. She said that Mayor Reynolds in July accepted a \$15,000 campaign contribution from one of the leading developers in Bethlehem. He has additionally received campaign contributions from other developers and consultants. She asked for a legal opinion as to the oversight and enforcement of the Conflict of Interest ordinance of 2022. She requested a committee meeting for discussion and made a motion to do so.

President Colón said the Committee of the Whole would be the appropriate committee for review. Once Council Solicitor Stephanie Steward issues an opinion, the City Clerk can work to schedule a Committee of the Whole meeting. He did not believe a motion was necessary to request this meeting.

Ms. Crampsie Smith rescinded her motion, based on this information. She further explained that this ordinance is clear as to how Council would be affected in terms of oversight and enforcement but, since the Mayor does not vote, it is not clear how it affects the Mayor or other elected officials. Does the ordinance mean that the Mayor should not do business with a developer who he has accepted \$500 or more from? The direction is not clear other than for members of Council.

Mr. Callahan said he was under the impression that if a donation is made of \$500 or more, the developer is not able to do business with the City for a certain amount of time, perhaps two years.

President Colón could not be certain but thought he recalled that this possibility was considered when the ordinance was passed. Because Council ultimately votes to approve contracts, he believed that is why the ordinance speaks of Council and not the Mayor. He also recalled that enforcement is on the "honor system."

Ms. Crampsie Smith noted that "financial interest" is defined as "a contribution of \$500 within 60 months or 5 years before official action on a subject." She believes this should apply more intensely to elected officials. Despite not voting, the Mayor could still have influence.

Ms. Laird

Ms. Laird asked Director of Water and Sewer Edward Boscola whether there has been increased revenue for the City with the ongoing switch to smart meters. She also asked whether Council has the ability to put any contingencies on a utility increase, as Mr. Will-Weber suggested.

Mr. Boscola said there has not been an increase in revenue with the new meters. They obtain a reading and billing is done accordingly, just like the old meters. He added that the Public Utility Commission is involved in setting rates for non-resident water users, so Council does not have full control of rates and could not make a rate increase, at least for non-residents, contingent on the City providing an app allowing customers to monitor their water usage. However, it might be possible for Council to add this stipulation for resident customers if that were the wish of Council.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

A. *Grants Administrator, Community and Economic Development – PA Department of Community and Economic Development – Statewide Local Share Account Grant – West Broad Street Construction Contract Amendment 4*

The Clerk read a November 10, 2025 memorandum and proposed Resolution from Lori Gilio, Grants Administrator for Community and Economic Development. Ms. Gilio seeks authorization to apply for a Local Share Account grant for \$1 million from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development. The grant money would be for construction on West Broad Street.

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

B. *Grants Administrator, Community and Economic Development – PA Department of Community and Economic Development Statewide Local Share Account Grant – Bethlehem Emergency Shelter*

The Clerk read a November 12, 2025 memorandum and proposed Resolution from Lori Gilio, Grants Administrator for Community and Economic Development. Ms. Gilio seeks authorization to apply for a Local Share Account grant for \$750,000 from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development. The grant money would be for capital improvements to the Bethlehem Emergency Shelter.

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

C. *Business Administrator – Capital Plan Funding 2026-2029 – Budget Adjustment Ordinance – General Fund*

The Clerk read a November 11, 2025 memorandum, and proposed Ordinance from Business Administrator Eric Evans. Mr. Evans recommends transferring \$11,300,000 from Revenue account 001A-308901 into Expense account 0801-42083 in the Non-Utility Capital Fund where it will be allocated into accounts that will fund capital needs in 2026-2029.

President Colón stated that Ordinance 9 L is on the agenda.

7. REPORTS

A. *President of Council*

None.

B. *Mayor*

None.

8. ORDINANCES FOR FINAL PASSAGE

8 A. *Bill No. 45-2025 – Ordinance to Amend Article 1702 – Construction Fees and Staffing*

The Clerk read Bill No. 45-2025 – Ordinance to Amend Article 1702 – Construction Fees and Staffing, sponsored by Ms. Wilhelm and Ms. Crampsie Smith, and titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, AMENDING
ARTICLE 1702 OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM
CODIFIED ORDINANCES TITLED “FEES FOR THE
ENFORCEMENT OF THE PENNSYLVANIA UNIFORM
CONSTRUCTION CODE, ACT NO. 45-1999.”

Voting AYE: Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon, Ms. Wilhelm, and Mr. Colón, 7. Bill No. 45-2025, now known as Ordinance 2025-43, passed on Final Reading.

8 B. *Bill No. 46-2025 – Ordinance to Amend Article 1113 – Food Code Regulation*

The Clerk read Bill No. 46-2025 – Ordinance to Amend Article 1113 – Food Code Regulation, sponsored by Ms. Wilhelm and Ms. Crampsie Smith, and titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, AMENDING
ARTICLE 1113 OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM
CODIFIED ORDINANCES TITLED “FOOD CODE REGULATION.”

Voting AYE: Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon, Ms. Wilhelm, and Mr. Colón, 7. Bill No. 46-2025, now known as Ordinance No. 2025-44, passed on Final Reading.

9. NEW ORDINANCES

9A. *Bill No. 47-2025 – Bill No. 47-2025 – Adopt 2026 General Fund Budget*

The Clerk read Bill No. 47-2025 Adopt 2026 General Fund Budget, sponsored by Ms. Kwiatek and Ms. Crampsie Smith and titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, ADOPTING
THE GENERAL FUND BUDGET FOR 2026

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

Mr. Callahan said he would vote no until additional funds are found to fund four additional firefighters.

Ms. Crampsie Smith said she also would vote no and intends to present an amendment that would including funding to hire four additional firefighters.

Voting AYE: Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon, Ms. Wilhelm, and Mr. Colón, 5; NAY: Mr. Callahan and Ms. Crampsie Smith, 2. Bill No. 47-2025 passed on First Reading.

9B. *Bill No. 48-2025 – Bill No. 48-2025 Adopt 2065 Water Fund Budget*

The Clerk read Bill No. 48-2025 Water Fund Budget, sponsored by Ms. Kwiatek and Ms. Crampsie Smith and titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA,
ADOPTING THE WATER FUND BUDGET FOR 2026

Voting AYE: Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon, Ms. Wilhelm, and Mr. Colón, 7. Bill No. 48-2025 passed on First Reading.

9C. *Bill No. 49-2025 – Bill No. 49-2025 Adopt 2026 Sewer Fund Budget*

The Clerk read Bill No. 49-2025 Sewer Fund Budget, sponsored by Ms. Kwiatek and Ms. Crampsie Smith and titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA,
ADOPTING THE SEWER FUND BUDGET FOR 2026

Voting AYE: Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon, Ms. Wilhelm, and Mr. Colón, 7. Bill No. 49-2025 passed on First Reading.

9D. *Bill No. 50-2025 – Bill No. 50-2025 Adopt Golf Course Enterprise Fund*

The Clerk read Bill No. 50-2025 Golf Course Enterprise Fund, sponsored by Ms. Kwiatek and Ms. Crampsie Smith and titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, ADOPTING
THE GOLF COURSE ENTERPRISE FUND BUDGET FOR 2026

Voting AYE: Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon, Ms. Wilhelm, and Mr. Colón, 7. Bill No. 50-2025 passed on First Reading.

9E. *Bill No. 51-2025 – Bill No. 51-2025 Adopt 2026 Liquid Fuels Fund Budget*

The Clerk read Bill No. 51-2025 Liquid Fuels Fund Budget, sponsored by Ms. Kwiatek and Ms. Crampsie Smith and titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, ADOPTING
THE LIQUID FUELS FUND BUDGET FOR 2026

Voting AYE: Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon, Ms. Wilhelm, and Mr. Colón, 7. Bill No. 51-2025 passed on First Reading.

9F. *Bill No. 52-2025 – Bill No. 52-2025 Adopt 2026 Capital Budget for Non-Utilities*

The Clerk read Bill No. 52-2025 Capital Budget for Non-Utilities, sponsored by Ms. Kwiatek and Ms. Crampsie Smith and titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, ADOPTING
THE 2026 CAPITAL BUDGET FOR NON-UTILITIES

Voting AYE: Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon, Ms. Wilhelm, and Mr. Colón, 7. Bill No. 52-2025 passed on First Reading.

9G. *Bill No. 53-2025 – Bill No. 53-2025 Adopt 2026 Capital Budget for Water Utilities*

The Clerk read Bill No. 53-2025 Capital Budget for Water Utilities, sponsored by Ms. Kwiatek and Ms. Crampsie Smith and titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, ADOPTING
THE 2026 CAPITAL BUDGET FOR WATER UTILITIES

Voting AYE: Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon, Ms. Wilhelm, and Mr. Colón, 7. Bill No. 53-2025 passed on First Reading.

9H. Bill No. 54-2025 – Bill No. 54-2025 Adopt 2026 Capital Budget for Sewer Utilities

The Clerk read Bill No. 54-2025 Capital Budget for Sewer Utilities, sponsored by Ms. Kwiatek and Ms. Crampsie Smith and titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, ADOPTING
THE 2026 CAPITAL BUDGET FOR SEWER UTILITIES

Voting AYE: Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon, Ms. Wilhelm, and Mr. Colón, 7. Bill No. 54-2025 passed on First Reading.

9I. Bill No. 55-2025 – Bill No. 55-2025 Adopt 2026 Community Development Block Grant Budget

The Clerk read Bill No. 55-2025 Community Development Block Grant Budget, sponsored by Ms. Kwiatek and Ms. Crampsie Smith and titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA,
ADOPTING THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
BLOCK GRANT BUDGET FOR 2026

Voting AYE: Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon, Ms. Wilhelm, and Mr. Colón, 7. Bill No. 55-2025 passed on First Reading.

9J. Bill No. 56-2025 – Bill No. 56-2025 Adopt 2026 Storm Water Fund Budget

The Clerk read Bill No. 56-2025 Storm Water Fund Budget, sponsored by Ms. Kwiatek and Ms. Crampsie Smith and titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, ADOPTING

THE STORM WATER FUND BUDGET FOR 2026

Voting AYE: Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon, Ms. Wilhelm, and Mr. Colón, 7. Bill No. 56-2025 passed on First Reading.

9K. *Bill No. 57-2025 – Bill No. 57-2025 Fix 2026 Tax Rate for All City Purposes*

The Clerk read Bill No. 57-2025 Tax Rate for All City Purposes, sponsored by Ms. Kwiatek and Ms. Crampsie and titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, FIXING
THE TAX RATE FOR ALL CITY PURPOSES
FOR THE YEAR 2026

Voting AYE: Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon, Ms. Wilhelm, and Mr. Colón, 7. Bill No. 57-2025 passed on First Reading.

9L. *Bill No. 58-2025 – Bill No. 58-2025 Capital Plan Funding 2026-2029 – Budget Adjustment Ordinance – General Fund*

The Clerk read Bill No. 58-2025 Capital Plan Funding 2026-2029 – Budget Adjustment Ordinance – General Fund, sponsored by Ms. Kwiatek and Ms. Crampsie Smith and titled:

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

Voting AYE: Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon, Ms. Wilhelm, and Mr. Colón, 5; NAY: Mr. Callahan and Ms. Crampsie Smith, 2. Bill No. 58-2025 passed on First Reading.

9M. *Bill No. 59-2025 – Bill No. 59-2025 Amending Article 112 – Campaign Finance Repeal Ordinance*

The Clerk read Bill No. 59-2025 Amending Article 112 – Campaign Finance Repeal Ordinance, sponsored by Ms. Kwiatek and Ms. Crampsie Smith and titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, AMENDING
ARTICLE 112 OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES,
ENTITLED “CAMPAIGN FINANCE REPORTS”.

President Colón said he has circulated a memo with a proposed related additional amendment. In addition to the other amendments being considered, he made a motion, seconded by Ms. Leon, to add Section 4 listing an effective date of February 2, 2026. He explained that

adding this date would allow the 2025 reporting period to be completed before making the change, effective beginning with the 2026 cycle.

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

Voting AYE: Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon, Ms. Wilhelm, and Mr. Colón, 7. Bill No. 59-2025 passed on First Reading.

10. RESOLUTIONS

A. *Approve Resolution – PA Department of Community and Economic Development Statewide Local Share Account Grant – West Broad Street Construction*

Ms. Kwiatek and Ms. Crampsie Smith sponsored Resolution No. 2025-177 that authorized to request a statewide Local Share Assessment grant through the Commonwealth Financing Authority and authorized the Mayor and Controller to execute all agreements and documents as are deemed to be necessary and/or related thereto.

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

B. *Approve Resolution – Pa Department of Community and Economic Development Statewide Local Share Account Grant – Bethlehem Emergency Shelter*

Ms. Kwiatek and Ms. Crampsie Smith sponsored Resolution No. 2025-178 that authorized to request a statewide Local Share Assessment grant through the Commonwealth Financing Authority and authorized the Mayor and Controller to execute all agreements and documents as are deemed to be necessary and/or related thereto.

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

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned 10:15 PM.

ATTEST:

Tad J. Miller
City Clerk