

BETHLEHEM CITY COUNCIL MEETING
10 East Church Street - Town Hall
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania
Tuesday, August 18, 2026 - 7:00 PM

PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

1. ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order by President Rachel Leon. Present were Justin Amann, Bryan G. Callahan, Michael G. Colón, Jo C. Daniels, Hillary G. Kwiatek, and Colleen Laird (via GoTo Meeting), 7.

CITATIONS HONORING: Firefighter David Falco

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

August 4, 2026

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

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

Harry Faber

Mr. Faber raised concern about data associated with Flock Safety license plate readers. It would be best not to contract with this company to avoid any misuse of this gathered data that could enable civil rights violations.

Daiyana Rodriguez

Ms. Rodriguez followed up on an email that was sent to City officials by the Mount Airy Neighborhood Association (MANA) that asked several questions related to affordable housing and zoning laws concerning density and spacing. They recognize that there is an affordable housing crisis, but it seems that expensive housing is being built at the expense of natural resources. If zoning changes are to be made as part of the affordable housing initiative, MANA members want to know if the changes will apply only to alley houses or will be applied across the board and will open the door to undesirable consequences. They also are concerned that regulations on small streets will be reduced and would make firefighting maneuverability more difficult. They support some development infill but are concerned that green spaces will be decreased. These spaces are necessary to confront global warming.

Mary Jo Makoul

Ms. Makoul said that bicycle routes throughout the City sound good but this encourages more use by many who are not following laws or safe practices, such as not stopping at stop

signs. She also suggested more traffic enforcement along Grandview Boulevard and noted recent flooding concerns along this roadway as well.

William Scheirer

Mr. Scheirer said when it comes to affordable housing, society has been dealing with the symptom rather than focusing on the cause. The symptom is the shortage but the cause is Wall Street, suggesting that profit is driving the shortage and related cost difficulties.

Erwin Schaffer

Mr. Schaffer said that a three-story apartment building is planned three blocks from his North Boulevard home, and a school is five blocks away. He is concerned about traffic congestion and that pedestrian safety will be further jeopardized by adding these new units. He opposes the apartment building proposal.

Stephen Antalics

Mr. Antalics said single-family housing was the core of South Bethlehem for many years, but much of this housing has been converted to student housing. He further encouraged Council to stop approving high-rise residential buildings which only makes things worse.

Terry Kloiber

Ms. Kloiber said that Grandview Boulevard neighbors have been told that the City will not provide the requested flashing stop signs at Grandview Boulevard and Florence and Glendale Avenues intersections. Flashing signs are only offered for new intersections. She asked whether this might be done at least as a temporary measure.

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

Stephen Antalics

Mr. Antalics raised pedestrian safety concerns for the upcoming Dominican Festival. He was concerned that participants may not understand signals at the busy intersection of Hayes and Third Street. He believes the traffic light at Hayes Street is green at a time when the pedestrian light says to walk. The light at Fourth and Webster Streets is red in all directions while the pedestrian light indicates permission to walk. This is much safer.

4. OLD BUSINESS

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

5. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Callahan

Mr. Callahan referred to Mr. Antalics' observation about declining single-family home ownership on the South Side and suggested that the City could pressure Lehigh University to require juniors to live on campus in addition to freshmen and sophomores. The university has land on which it could build more dormitories. This would free up houses that could be converted back to single-family housing.

Ms. Leon responded that Lehigh, in its long-term planning, is considering offering more on-campus housing.

Ms. Kwiatek

Ms. Kwiatek said she has attended steering committee meetings in recent weeks for the Complete Streets Plan and the Stefko Boulevard Project. Suggested improvements were offered to increase safety. She is looking forward to implementation.

Ms. Laird

Ms. Laird said she responded to the MANA email referenced by Ms. Rodriguez. She is working to answer their questions.

Ms. Leon

Ms. Leon said additional conversation could be had after this meeting to discuss MANA's questions. She also asked the procedures for requesting a traffic study, specifically for the Grandview Boulevard area.

Public Works Director Michael Alkhal said accidents, complaints, neighborhood concerns, or development could trigger a traffic study.

Ms. Leon also addressed Mr. Shaffer's concerns about a proposed apartment house along North Boulevard. She said she did not believe that the plan has come before Council, so she asked Director of Community and Economic Development Laura Collins about this project.

Ms. Collins believed that the Planning Commission reviewed this matter as a sketch plan. She believed the developer pulled back on the proposal. There is not an active plan at this time.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

A. *DCED Business Manager – Amend Community Development Block Grant Fund – Program Income – Reclassification*

DCED Business Manager Tiffany Wismer recommended reclassifying five existing cash accounts within the Community Development Block Grant Fund budget into distinct revenue and

expense accounts. The change would result in the creation of five new revenue and five new corresponding expense accounts as shown in the proposed ordinance. – Item 9 A.

B. Deputy Director of Economic Development – 2026 34 Enterprise Zone Renewal – Taggart Associates

Deputy Director of Economic Development Sean Ziller recommended an agreement with Taggart Associates to provide professional services to support the City's upcoming Enterprise Zone Renewal. The cost is \$19,950. Completion is to be done by December 31, 2026. There are no renewals. – Item 10 A.

C. City Solicitor – Use Permit Agreement – ArtsQuest – Dominican Festival

City Solicitor John F. Spirk, Jr. recommended executing a Use Permit Agreement with the Dominican Festival and joining party ArtsQuest for the Dominican Festival 2026. – Item 10 B.

D. Director of Public Works – City Streets Cartway and Right-of-Way (ROW) Widths

Director of Public Works Michael Alkhal recommended an Ordinance and its exhibit describing the legal cartway and right-of-way widths of all City streets affected by the Linden Street Two-Way Conversion project, the Broad Street Corridor Improvements project, and the Stefko Boulevard Corridor Improvements project.

Motion to place the ordinance on the September 1 Council agenda: Kwiatek, Colón. AYE: Callahan, Colón, Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Amann, Leon, 7. Motion passed.

E. Director of Water and Sewer Resources – DEP Consent Order and Agreement – Bethlehem WasteWater Treatment Plant NPDES Permit No. PA0026042

Director of Water and Sewer Resources Edward Boscola recommended a Consent Order and Agreement between the City and DEP in response to violations of the discharge permit at the wastewater treatment plant. – Item 10 C.

7. REPORTS

A. President of Council

Ms. Leon said a survey is being conducted by Community Action Bethlehem involving The Greenway, specifically how it is used and traffic flow at the Hayes Street intersection. She encouraged community participation.

B. Mayor

Mayor Reynolds addressed Mr. Callahan's comments about Lehigh University housing. He said the university is currently going through the land development process for 400 new on-campus housing units. He added that at least dozens of the converted single-family homes being rented to students are currently vacant and that the market may be shifting. There has been encouragement by the City for the owner to rent these to families. This has happened with a few

units. He is hoping that the dynamic is shifting that could again restore at least some single-family residences. Mayor Reynolds followed up on Ms. Kwiatek's comment, adding that the Complete Streets Plan is expected to be presented within the next few months.

C. Committee Chairs

7 C1. Ms. Kwiatek said the Community and Economic Development Committee met on August 11 in Town Hall to hear proposed zoning text amendments regarding yard setbacks and data centers. The yard setback agenda item was postponed because of a sudden illness by committee member Jo Daniels, who proposed those amendments. A presentation was made on amendments to the City article regulating data centers. The committee voted to advance the proposed amended ordinance for Council's consideration.

Motion to schedule a Public Hearing on this matter after comments are received from the City's Planning Commission and the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission on October 6: Colón, Kwiatek. AYE: Callahan, Colón, Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Amann, Leon, 7. Motion passed.

8. ORDINANCES FOR FINAL PASSAGE

8A. Bill No. 24-2026 – General Obligation Refunding Notes, Series of 2026

Sponsors: Amann, Laird. The Clerk read the Bill titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM, LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON COUNTIES, PENNSYLVANIA, AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE ISSUANCE OF GENERAL OBLIGATION NOTES, SERIES OF 2026 (THE "NOTES") IN THE MAXIMUM AGGREGATE PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF \$25,000,000; PROVIDING THE PROCEEDS OF THE 2026 NOTES SHALL BE APPLIED TO CARRY OUT THE REFUNDING OF ALL OR A PORTION OF THE CITY'S (A) OUTSTANDING GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS, SERIES A OF 2017 (TAX-EXEMPT) (THE "2017A BONDS"); (B) GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS, SERIES B OF 2017 (TAX-EXEMPT) (THE "2017B BONDS"); (C) GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS, SERIES E OF 2017 (THE "2017E BONDS"); AND (D) GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS, SERIES OF 2019 (THE "2019 BONDS") PURSUANT TO A REFUNDING PROGRAM; DETERMINING THAT SALE OF THE NOTES SHALL BE A PRIVATE SALE BY NEGOTIATION UNDER THE ACT, AND DETERMINING THAT THE NOTES SHALL BE NONELECTORAL DEBT OF THE CITY; FIXING THE INTEREST PAYMENT DATES, DENOMINATIONS AND REGISTRATION, TRANSFER AND EXCHANGE PRIVILEGES OF THE NOTES AND PROVIDING FOR BOOK ENTRY BONDS; PROVIDING FOR MAXIMUM PRINCIPAL AMORTIZATION, MATURITIES AND INTEREST RATES FOR THE NOTES; ESTABLISHING THE REDEMPTION PROVISIONS OF THE NOTES; ACCEPTING A BID FOR PURCHASE OF THE NOTES AND AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF THE NOTE PURCHASE CONTRACT; DESIGNATING A PAYING AGENT AND REGISTRAR; DESIGNATING A PLACE AND METHOD OF PAYMENT OF THE NOTES AND INTEREST THEREON AND MAKING CERTAIN COVENANTS WITH RESPECT TO THE TAX EXEMPT STATUS OF THE NOTES; ESTABLISHING THE SUBSTANTIAL FORMS OF THE NOTES; DESIGNATING A SINKING FUND DEPOSITORY; COVENANTING TO PAY THE PRINCIPAL OF AND INTEREST ON THE NOTES AND PLEDGING THE FULL

FAITH, CREDIT AND TAXING POWER OF THE CITY TO SUCH PURPOSE; ESTABLISHING SINKING FUNDS FOR THE NOTES AND AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING PAYMENT THEREFROM; SETTING FORTH CERTAIN RIGHTS OF THE PAYING AGENT AND NOTEHOLDERS IN THE EVENT OF DEFAULT AND OTHER RIGHTS OF THE PARTIES WITH RESPECT TO THE NOTES; PROVIDING FOR THE CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH THE ORDINANCE MAY BE AMENDED OR MODIFIED; PROVIDING FOR THE TERMS, CONDITIONS AND COVENANTS WITH RESPECT TO THE INSURER, IF ANY, FOR THE NOTES; AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING SPECIFIED OFFICERS OF THE CITY TO DO AND PERFORM CERTAIN SPECIFIED, REQUIRED OR APPROPRIATE ACTS; DECLARING THAT THE DEBT TO BE INCURRED IS WITHIN THE LIMITATION IMPOSED BY THE ACT UPON INCURRING OF SUCH DEBT BY THE CITY; AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING PROPER OFFICERS OF THE CITY TO DELIVER THE NOTES UPON EXECUTION AND AUTHENTICATION THEREOF, UPON RECEIPT OF PROPER PAYMENT OF THE BALANCE DUE THEREFOR, AND ONLY AFTER SPECIFIED APPROVAL, AS REQUIRED, OF THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA; PROVIDING FOR COMPLIANCE WITH SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION RULE 15c2-12; COVENANTING TO PAY OVER AT SETTLEMENT SUFFICIENT MONIES TO PROVIDE FOR THE PAYMENT OF THE 2017A BONDS, 2017B BONDS, 2017E BONDS AND 2019 BONDS (COLLECTIVELY REFERRED TO AS "PRIOR BONDS") IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REFUNDING PROGRAM; AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING CERTAIN OTHER ACTIONS AND APPROVING DOCUMENTATION WITH REGARD TO THE REFUNDING PROGRAM, PROVIDING FOR THE ISSUANCE OF IRREVOCABLE INSTRUCTIONS TO THE PAYING AGENTS FOR THE PRIOR BONDS TO CALL SAID PRIOR BONDS FOR REDEMPTION, AND ESTABLISHING THE FORM OF SUCH IRREVOCABLE INSTRUCTIONS AND THE NOTICE OF REDEMPTION; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY OF PROVISIONS OF THE ORDINANCE; PROVIDING FOR REPEAL OF ALL ORDINANCES OR PARTS OF ORDINANCES SO FAR AS THE SAME SHALL BE INCONSISTENT; PROVIDING WHEN THIS ORDINANCE SHALL BECOME EFFECTIVE.

AYE: Callahan, Colón, Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Amann, Leon, 7. Bill No. 24-2026, now known as Ordinance 2026-24, passed on Final Reading.

9. NEW ORDINANCES

9A. Bill No. 25-2026 - Amend Community Development Block Grant Fund – Program Income – Reclassification

Sponsors: Kwiatek, Leon. The Clerk read the Bill titled:

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

AYE: Callahan, Colón, Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Amann, Leon, 7. Bill No. 25-2026 passed on First Reading.

10. RESOLUTIONS

A. *Approve Resolution – 2026 34 Enterprise Zone Renewal – Taggart Associates*

Sponsors: Kwiatek, Leon; Authorized an agreement with Taggart Associates to provide professional services to support the City's upcoming Enterprise Zone renewal. AYE: Callahan, Colón, Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Amann, Leon, 7. Resolution 2026-139 passed.

B. *Approve Use Permit Agreement – ArtsQuest – Dominican Festival*

Sponsors: Kwiatek, Leon; Authorized a Use Permit Agreement with the Dominican Festival and adjoining party ArtsQuest for the Dominican Festival 2026. AYE: Callahan, Colón, Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Amann, Leon, 7. Resolution 2026-140 passed.

C. *Approve Resolution – DEP Consent Order and Agreement – Bethlehem WasteWater Treatment Plant NPDES Permit No. PA0026042*

Sponsors: Kwiatek, Leon; Authorized an agreement with the Department of Environmental Protection to settle violations of The Clean Streams Law of Pennsylvania, as amended, and enforced under the City of Bethlehem National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Permit No. PA0026042 and that the Mayor, Controller and Solicitor shall execute the Consent Order and Agreement on behalf of the City of Bethlehem.

Ms. Leon asked for an explanation of these circumstances.

Edward Boscola, Director of Water and Sewer Resources, explained what the Consent Order Agreement (COA) is and its history. A COA is a negotiated settlement between the City and the DEP. There are documented recurring violations of the NPDES permit involving the wastewater treatment plant that led to this. Penalties were issued, and the agreement sets forth a corrective plan to restore the system to compliance. The City has had a 20-year improvement program that it has been working on. The initial phase was to upgrade elements of the plant handling solids. This, to some extent, exacerbated problems with the elements treating liquids. This led to several of the violations. The second improvement phase should correct this. Mr. Boscola said the violations are concentrated within the past five or six years. Since October, there has been just one of this type of violation.

Mr. Boscola said that another category of violations involves sanitary sewer overflows (SSO). A blockage occurs and backs up in a manhole and flows into the street. Causes can be rags, grease, tree roots, other obstructions, or the failure of a pump station. This is also covered in the COA. Mr. Boscola said the City also has been working to address SSO violations, which have declined since 2024. There have been just two since then.

The COA brings with it a one-time \$26,900 penalty. Future violations would incur \$500 per discharge incident and \$1,000 per SSO occurrence. He believes these occurrences would be low, given the direction toward progress.

Mayor Reynolds said the sewage system had longtime capital needs that spanned decades. The City for a long time did not have the money to pay for upgrades. In the 1990s, the

City took on an incredible water and sewer debt to be able to make improvements. More recently, the City began taking on corrective projects that have been outlined by Mr. Boscola. The first phase was the most expensive and has been completed. Bethlehem is working toward accomplishing the second phase.

Ms. Kwiatek asked whether DEP has been fining the City all along.

Mr. Boscola said no. DEP looks for trends and does not fine or come down on municipalities until a trend leads to a COA.

Ms. Kwiatek noted that some of the violations deal with tardy reporting. She asked whether this can be tightened up to comply.

Mr. Boscola said this has been reinforced with the staff.

Ms. Kwiatek said that these corrections seem to have the City on the right path, but this COA seemed to “drop out of the sky”, coming as a surprise. She suggested setting up a reporting schedule to Council during the COA duration. She will propose a resolution that will require regular reporting to Council. This is meant to address Council’s oversight duty, not be punitive.

Mr. Boscola said that part of the COA requires the City to submit a progress report to DEP twice annually. He asked if copying Council on the submission would satisfy the concern.

Ms. Kwiatek preferred to receive monthly reports that her intended proposed resolution would require.

It was noted that the COA would end following six successive months without a violation. Ms. Kwiatek asked whether the clock resets every time a violation takes place within the six months.

Mr. Boscola said the timeframe is DEP’s “boilerplate” language. He believes that if significant progress is shown, the matter would be further negotiated.

AYE: Callahan, Colón, Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Leon, 6; Absent at the time of the vote: Amann, 1. Resolution 2026-141 passed.

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:43 PM.

ATTEST:

Tad J. Miller
City Clerk