

BETHLEHEM CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
10 East Church Street - Town Hall  
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania  
Tuesday, January 5, 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.

*Late Start*

President Waldron announced they had a late start to this meeting as we had to finish up a Committee of the Whole Meeting in which we discussed the My Bethlehem App. The Committee of the Whole Meeting that was scheduled from 6:30 pm to 7:00 pm ran a little long and that meeting was cut off by the GoToMeeting App.

PUBLIC HEARING

Prior to the consideration of the regular Agenda items, City Council will conduct a Public Hearing to accept public comment on the proposed Zoning Text Amendment - Commercial uses on the first floor in CB and CL Zoning Districts. This zoning amendment was proposed by the Administration.

*Communication 6A - City Planning Commission - Zoning Text Amendment - Commercial uses on the First Floor in CB and CL Zoning Districts*

The Clerk read a memorandum dated October 28, 2020 from Darlene Heller, Director of Planning and Zoning, with an attached proposed zoning ordinance amendment to revise the first floor commercial storefront requirement in the CB and CL zoning districts. At their October 8, 2020 meeting the City Planning Commission voted unanimously to recommend that City Council support the proposed Zoning Ordinance amendment.

*Communication 6B - Lehigh Valley Planning Commission - Zoning Text Amendment - Commercial uses on the First Floor in CB and CL Zoning Districts*

The Clerk read a memorandum dated December 11, 2020 from Samantha Smith, Chief Community Planner of the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission concerning their review of the proposed zoning ordinance amendment to revise the first floor commercial storefront requirement in the CB and CL zoning districts. The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission found that this minor proposal is not a matter of regional concern and is generally consistent with the Regional Plan.

Darlene Heller, Director of Planning and Zoning remarked this is a straight forward ordinance. There already is an ordinance in place that requires first floor storefronts in the CB and CL zoning districts to include only restaurant, retail, or personal service uses. We enacted that in 2018 and it is really there to engage the streets, we want to have a lot of activity on the streets in the downtown and have storefront uses that are storefront uses that engage the public. It has been successful. We were challenged, there were questions about whether or not there was some ambiguity in the ordinance about whether or not these provisions would apply if there were residential uses above or offices uses above or mixed use. So this ordinance amendment is really to clarify that those provisions apply no matter what the upper store uses are. It applies to all buildings in CB and CL. We did however make another revision to CL, that is mainly commercial or limited commercial which would be East and West Broad Street and East Fourth Street and we found that it was a little too restrictive in those neighborhood areas. A lot of those areas have smaller law offices or architectural offices or realtors and those uses are appropriate in the neighborhood commercial zones. We did loosen it up a little bit in CL and one of the sections within the ordinance amendment goes back to state that you need to have a commercial use on the first floor but it is not so restrictive that it is retail, restaurant, or personal service. We are clarifying in the CB, the Central Business Zoning District that those provisions still apply. Ms. Heller explained they think that is important for the vitality of the downtown and we think it is important to keep it and clarify it so it is not questioned in the future. Ms. Heller added Alicia Karner, Director of Community and Economic Development is in this call as well and she has some additional information, a fire study that the Community and Economic Development Department did related to retail analysis.

Ms. Karner remarked they have gotten a lot of questions as to whether or not this is something that we should continue to include in our zoning ordinances in the past few years, not just because of the pandemic but before that. She thought it was important to make sure Council has an awareness of the study we did that concluded in December, 2019. She wanted to provide information as to why it is important to make sure that our first floor commercial spaces in our downtowns are geared towards retail restaurant development specifically. We found that on the north side we have capacity for an additional 210,000 square feet which really equates to 40 to 45 new retail stores and 20 to 30 new restaurants. This is when factoring in not just city residents but our retail trade area. We could see substantial increase. We have the ability to support as a greater community that well of retail and restaurant opportunities on the north side. Ms. Karner explained on the south side we could see another 180,000 additional square feet which is 30 to 40 new retail stores and 20 to 25 new restaurants. Insuring that those first floor spaces which are prime for retail restaurant establishments is what we are trying to do with this amendment.

Ms. Crampsie Smith thanked Ms. Heller and Ms. Karner and noted this is a good proposal. Our hearts are breaking for the current businesses with what they have gone through with COVID. She hopes we do see a rebirth eventually and we can get not only the existing restaurants and stores up again but also get new businesses going. She queried about how many offices will be affected by this now and will they be grandfathered in or given a deadline when they will have to leave.

Ms. Heller explained existing uses are grandfathered, that is correct and they can continue as long as they need to. If an existing say attorney's office moves out another attorney's office could move in there. So it does not hurt existing businesses at all. We are just looking to supplement open space or changes with retail or restaurant uses.

Ms. Crampsie Smith noted if there is an attorney or financial office, if they move out then will this move into effect but could another attorney's office go in?

Ms. Heller stated yes, but it could not change to another professional office, it could continue as the same type of office.

President Waldron asked if there was any feedback from the stakeholders or push back on this change.

Ms. Karner stated they received support from the Chamber of Commerce and individual downtown businesses for the clarification of the ordinance. They were the forces behind the creation of the ordinance a few years ago and they do support it.

Ms. Negrón asked if this will only affect Broad Street or will it affect any other area of the city as well.

Ms. Heller stated the clarification of the uses is in CB in the two core downtown areas. So the restaurant, retail, and personal service use applies specifically to CB. In the CL zoning district we loosened it up a little bit so that you are still required to have commercial storefront use on the first floor but it does not have to be specifically retail, restaurant, or personal services.

Ms. Negrón does not have a map so her question is which one is CB and CL, is it only Broad or is it also Main Street or Third Street. She does not have a map so she does not know where this is.

Ms. Heller remarked generally we are familiar what the core downtown areas are, those are CB. She just mentioned East Broad and West Broad as examples of what limited commercial might be. She added East Fourth Street, east of the downtown that is CL, Linden Street is CL and there are other areas of the city that have more neighborhood commercial designation.

Ms. Negrón informed that is what she thought. When we are talking about changes to downtown of only businesses she has gotten feedback from people on Fourth Street especially. She added that Fourth Street and Third Street are very different. We should not have that on Fourth Street and nobody would listen to her. She heard no we should not have different in different areas, it was said that they should all be the same, but she said no. Ms. Negrón is glad this is happening that this change is happening to accommodate what is happening in that area.

*Public Comment*

None.

President Waldron stated the Zoning Amendment Ordinance will be placed on the January 19, 2021 agenda for First Reading.

President Waldron adjourned the Public Hearing at 7:29 pm.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

None.

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

*Upset about 5% tax increase*

Dee Teague, 213 East Garrison Street, informed she wanted to speak about the 5% tax increase. She was shocked when she heard that the City of Bethlehem was going to increase the real estate tax. She would not fathom that our municipal government was going to do this at this critical time. When she checked lately, we are still in a pandemic, people lost their jobs and businesses. There are people who lost jobs and cannot pay their rent and mortgage and cannot put food on the table. Ms. Teague believes this is crazy to have this increase at this critical time. There are people who are next to living on the street. Where is your compassion and sensitivity during this time, to increase the real estate tax when people are desperately struggling at present? She is sure some would say the 5% increase is not much but when you do not have food to put on the table for your family and you cannot pay your mortgage or your bills and are scared of losing your home that is a lot. Ms. Teague knows things do go up but she just thought this was not the time to do something of this nature. Everybody is under the gun. She is just shocked with what is going on with our government and everything else but she thought our City of Bethlehem would not dare think of doing something like this. But she guesses there are a lot of ways to put a knee on a person's neck when they are down and out.

*Chimney Swift Birds*

Jennie Gilrain, 417 Cherokee Street, informed she wanted to share an uplifting story in the midst of difficult times. A group of citizens from all walks of life are joining forces to save tens of thousands of Chimney Swifts which is a bird in sharp decline by saving their urban habitat, the Masonic Temple chimney at 202 Wyandotte Street in south Bethlehem. The developer and property owner John Noble has agreed to save the chimney while demolishing the building around it in order to save the birds. Ms. Gilrain visited the demolition site this afternoon to see the chimney still standing. The western wall has been ripped away and the steel beam has been cut flush to the chimney's edge, so far so good. However, in the end if the exiting chimney cannot be saved Mr. Noble has agreed to build a duplicate roosting tower on the property 60 feet to the north of the original and the Lehigh Valley Audubon Society is raising money to support this effort through a Save Our Swifts GoFundMe charity. According to Peter Saenger, local Audubon President this level of cooperation between developers and conservationists is extremely unusual and highly commendable. Ms. Gilrain calls this "Miracle on Wyandotte Street." Secondly, the Lehigh Valley Audubon Society and Bethlehem Area Public Library have applied for a Lehigh Valley Engage Humanities Consortium Grant to support a series of public forums to facilitate discussion about the relationship between development and conservation in our city. Ms. Gilrain invites Members of Bethlehem City Government, the Department of Community and Economic Development, and the Environmental Action Committee to join the panel. She also invites the public to participate in the forums and more on this when we find out if we got the grant. Finally, in light of the tremendous community effort to save our swifts she would like to make a formal request to the Member of Council and Mayor Donchez. As many cities around the world and throughout the United States have named particular bird species as their own and just as so many years ago the State of Pennsylvania named the Rough Grouse the bird of Pennsylvania she

proposes we name the Chimney Swift the bird of Bethlehem. The Chimney Swift is not only a beautiful aerial acrobat but a welcome insectivore consuming twice its body weight in bugs each day. Thank you for considering embracing this bird as Bethlehem's own and she looks forward to your reply.

*Upset about 5% tax increase*

Richard Ellis, reported he is calling about the 5% tax increase. Council passed the tax increase and during this time the City of Easton and Salisbury and other places are not increasing their taxes. The city increased taxes for the Hirko lawsuit and that was earmarked and instead of refunding taxpayers the money they just spent it. In 2017, 2018, and 2019 they raised taxes. Mr. Ellis explained this year he is getting a 1.3% increase in his social security and half of that increase is going to go to Bethlehem for taxes and the new tax of \$50 dollars for the water runoff. With inflation being low it is time for the city to stop taxing and spending. He is a registered voter and is one of the 30% that vote every 6 months and he will remember Ms. Smith, Ms. Negrón, and Mr. Waldron who are up for re-election in 2022, they will not get his vote. We seniors deserve better. He asked if there are any comments.

President Waldron thanked Mr. Ellis for his comments this evening.

*Staying Healthy*

Artie Curatola, 813 Laufer Street, noted putting this meeting on YouTube is good but there are only 21 people watching. Back with what Ms. Negrón was saying and others were talking about, we need to get business happening again. As long as there is social distancing and people wear masks this should not be a problem. Not just masks and social distancing there is also proper hygiene and also taking nutritional supplements. There are also multi-vitamins and minerals. You need to strengthen your immune system, we need to eat well, no sugar, no pasta, no junk food and drink ample amounts of water and also no alcohol, coffee, tea, soda, or juice, nothing that has sugar to it. Mr. Curatola added to take on half a teaspoon of baking soda three times a day, get proper sleep and rest and avoid stress at all cost, if not, you will lower your immune system. Maybe we can have people come into Town Hall as long as they are 6 feet away, wear a mask like you are doing. We need to have more people involved in the city. We are called the Christmas City but how about getting a few blocks together and making it Retro City, a block of the roaring twenties, the jazz era, the 1960's, the 1970's, the 1980's, and the 1990's. We could have a lot of entertainment and pull our city out of the red. This is his idea for the city to use. Mr. Curatola hopes that 2021 will be a more prosperous and happy New Year for everybody.

*Save the Chimney Swifts*

Ed Gallagher, 49 W. Greenwich Street, noted he wanted to take a moment to reinforce Ms. Gilrain's call about the "Miracle on Wyandotte Street." Also to reinforce the idea that there is a fundraising campaign going on that the Lehigh Valley Audubon Society has a GoFundMe page and the top post on his Bethlehem Gadfly Blog will also take you to the GoFundMe page. Mr. Gallagher wanted to encourage everybody listening and everybody involved in the city to help out with the fundraising on the save our swifts.

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

None.

5. OLD BUSINESS

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

6. COMMUNICATIONS

C. *Fire Chief – Records Destruction Resolution*

The Clerk read a memorandum dated December 29, 2020 from Fire Chief Warren Achey requesting Council to consider a resolution for the Destruction of Records from the Fire Department listed in the attached exhibit.

President Waldron stated the resolution can be placed on the January 19, 2021 Council agenda.

D. *Director of Water and Sewer Resources – Recommendation of Award – Steven G. Lowry & Associates, Inc. – 2021 Annual Engineering Services for Department of Water and Sewer Resources Water Engineering – Hydraulic Model Calibration*

The Clerk read a memorandum dated December 30, 2020 from Edward Boscola, Director of Water and Sewer Resources recommending a contract with Steven G. Lowry & Associates, Inc. – for 2021 Annual Engineering Services for Department of Water and Sewer Resources Water Engineering – Hydraulic Model Calibration. The term of the contract runs until December 31, 2021. The cost is \$22,900. There are no renewals.

President Waldron stated Resolution 10 A is on the agenda.

E. *Director of Water and Sewer Resources – Recommendation of Award – Entech Engineering, Inc. – Wastewater Treatment Plant Air Quality Permit Renewal*

The Clerk read a memorandum dated December 30, 2020 from Edward Boscola, Director of Water and Sewer Resources recommending a contract with Entech Engineering, Inc. for Wastewater Treatment Plant Air Quality Permit Renewal services. The term of the contract runs until December 31, 2021. The cost is \$5,000. There are two (2) additional yearly renewal options.

President Waldron stated Resolution 10 B is on the agenda.

F. *Director of Water and Sewer Resources – Recommendation of Award – Emerson Process Management Power & Water Solutions, Inc. – Open Enterprise Software Upgrade*

The Clerk read a memorandum dated December 30, 2020 from Edward Boscola, Director of Water and Sewer Resources recommending a contract with Emerson Process Management

Power & Water Solutions, Inc. for Open Enterprise Software Upgrade. The term of the contract runs until December 31, 2021. The cost is \$39,739.01. There are no renewals.

President Waldron stated resolution 10 C is on the agenda.

- G. *Director of Water and Sewer Resources – Recommendation of Award – Emerson Process Management Power & Water Solutions, Inc. – 2021 Licensed Software Support for SCADA System at Water Treatment Plant, Water Distribution Control, Wastewater Treatment Plant*

The Clerk read a memorandum dated December 30, 2020 from Edward Boscola, Director of Water and Sewer Resources recommending a contract with Emerson Process Management Power & Water Solutions, Inc. for 2021 Licensed Software Support for SCADA System at Water Treatment Plant, Water Distribution Control, and Wastewater Treatment Plant. The term of the contract runs until December 31, 2021. The cost is \$48,401.40 for site-specific software support along with hourly fees detailed in the contract request. There are no renewals.

President Waldron stated resolution 10 D is on the agenda.

- H. *Director of Water and Sewer Resources – Recommendation of Award – S. C. Engineers, Inc. – 2021 Annual Consulting Services for the Industrial Pretreatment Program, WIMS Database, and Miscellaneous Assignments*

The Clerk read a memorandum dated December 30, 2020 from Edward Boscola, Director of Water and Sewer Resources recommending a contract with S. C. Engineers, Inc. for 2021 Annual Consulting Services for the Industrial Pretreatment Program, WIMS Database, and Miscellaneous Assignments. The term and expense budget is not to exceed \$50,000. The term runs until December 31, 2021. There are two (2) additional yearly renewal options.

President Waldron stated resolution 10 E is on the agenda.

- I. *Councilwoman Negrón – Resolution in support of the Safe Interactions Act and the Human-services Emergency Logistic Program Act.*

The Clerk read a memorandum dated December 30, 2020 from Councilwoman Olga Negrón with an attached proposed resolution in support of the federal legislation proposed by U. S. Senator Bob Casey, the Safe Interactions Act and the Human-services Emergency Logistic Program Act. In addition to related provisions, these bills would aim to reduce calls to 9-1-1 call systems regarding non-criminal emergencies, reduce interactions between police and people with disabilities, and provide training to law enforcement on interacting with people with disabilities.

President Waldron stated resolution 10 F is on the agenda.

## 7. REPORTS

- A. *President of Council*

*Committee of the Whole Meeting*

President Waldron announced there was a Committee of the Whole Meeting earlier this evening; we met earlier to discuss the My Bethlehem App which is an enhanced update to the city's existing service center app. The My Bethlehem App is currently available on Apple devices in the App store and on Android devices in Google Play, in the search bar search for My Bethlehem App. This meeting was held for informational purposes only and no actions were taken by Council.

1. *Annual Report*

President Waldron presented his Annual Report for 2020, as follows:

**2020 Bethlehem City Council President's Report**

During 2020, Bethlehem City Council held 23 regular meetings and 26 Committee and budget meetings, adopted 217 Resolutions, and passed 36 Ordinances. Below are some highlights from City Council's 2020 legislative year.

In 2020, our City government cooperated to adapt to the Covid-19 pandemic in order to continue providing high quality services to our residents. Council instituted various policies and procedures to maintain citizen participation in Council meetings while protecting the health and safety of the public, elected officials, and City Staff.

Council commends the Mayor, the Health Bureau, and Emergency Management for their exemplary leadership and tireless work during the Covid pandemic. The Community and Economic Development Department also worked hard throughout this economic and health crisis to support struggling City businesses and vulnerable individuals and populations. All the City's other Departments and Bureaus came together to adapt and serve our citizens during a very long and challenging year.

In order to increase transparency, City Council started live streaming Council meetings in 2019 to allow citizens to watch remotely. In 2020, City Council continued live streaming the meetings and began allowing citizen participation over the phone. Council thanks the City's Information Services Bureau for their continued help with this project.

In 2020, Council approved the appointment of the first female Chief of the Bethlehem Police Department, Dr. Michelle Kott, and looks forward to her continued leadership of our excellent police force.

City Council reviewed and took action on several financial matters during 2020. Council approved the 2021 budget and approved the issuance of general obligation bonds to refinance existing bonds and notes in order to reduce the City's debt service costs. Council also passed an ordinance, proposed by the Administration, that increased general parking violation fines and overtime parking fines. Moreover, Council passed an Administration-proposed ordinance that established a user fee for stormwater collection and management.

Additionally, in the Finance Committee, Council reviewed and approved budget adjustments and authorized several rounds of funding through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, also known as the CARES Act.



After review in the Human Resources and Environment Committee, Council passed an ordinance establishing a new article of the Codified Ordinances titled Wage Equity. This new law was designed to prevent the perpetuation of gender-based wage inequality by prohibiting employers from asking about prospective employees' wage histories or relying on wage histories for determining compensation. The law also prohibits employers from forbidding an employee from sharing information about their compensation.

The Public Safety Committee reviewed Bethlehem Police Department use of force policies and enforcement statistics. The committee also discussed the Community Engagement Initiative which focuses on systemic racism, discrimination, race-based inequities, social justice, mental health, addiction, poverty eradication, inclusionary housing, education, and fair policing practices. Additionally, the Public Safety Committee held a meeting to discuss enforcement of the City's marijuana possession law.

Council conducted its third Financial Accountability Incentive Reporting hearing to evaluate the effectiveness of economic development incentives and increase transparency. These annual hearings are conducted in the Community Development Committee to review administration reports submitted to Council pursuant to Article 349 Economic Development Incentive Reporting and Evaluation, established in 2018.

The Community Development Committee also reviewed proposed laws and zoning amendments related to housing inspections, student housing, and short term lodging.

Additionally, Council held its bi-annual ethics training with the Pennsylvania State Ethics Commission. Council also held a Committee of the Whole meeting to discuss the interaction of the Police Department, Health Bureau, Recreation, and the Department of Community and Economic Development.

In connection with the City Administration's continuing efforts to reduce blight and maintain and improve City housing stock, Council passed an Administration-proposed ordinance establishing Article 1738, titled Residential Rental Units, in connection with a new residential inspection and licensing program.

After review in the Public Works Committee, Council approved the sale of several parcels of City land in order to save money on maintenance and streamline the City's property inventory.

Council approved various grants and grant applications related to multimodal transportation, coronavirus relief, golf course improvements, sewer infrastructure, and authorized several economic development Redevelopment Assistance Capital grants.

Council considered proposed zoning amendments brought forward by the Administration in connection with student housing, first floor commercial uses, and short term lodging. Council also reviewed several privately proposed zoning amendments.

Council also adopted a resolution supporting legislation amending the Worker's Compensation Act in order to provide first responders with compensation and care related to post-traumatic stress injuries.

Council adopted a resolution encouraging the Administration to investigate options for helping to protect the economic survival of our residents and local businesses during the dual health and economic crises caused by the Covid pandemic.

Additionally, Council adopted a resolution encouraging the investigation of food delivery app business practices that harm local food service establishments and asking the City to consider measures to lessen the harm to these local small businesses.

Also related to the Covid pandemic, Council adopted a resolution urging the Pennsylvania General Assembly, Lehigh County, and Northampton County to quickly allocate any unspent Coronavirus relief funds to support small businesses and those within our vulnerable communities who have been significantly impacted by the pandemic

Council worked to address the widespread nuisance of fireworks by adopting a resolution urging our state legislators to repeal or amend the Fireworks Law of 2017, and asking the Administration to investigate possible solutions. Council also adopted an Administration-proposed resolution in support of banning the sale and use of consumer fireworks in Pennsylvania.

Council also authorized a number of contracts, use permit agreements, and certificates of appropriateness, and approved Councilmanic Appointments and Administrative appointments to various City boards, commissions, and authorities.

Adam R. Waldron  
President of Bethlehem City Council  
January 5, 2021

*City Council in 2021*

President Waldron remarked that is basically what Bethlehem City Council did in 2020. He added that 2021 will probably be more of the same as far as the daily work that Council does as well as the flexibility that is required not only of Council and their staff. But as well as the all the Administration and generally everyone who works for the City of Bethlehem as well as the citizens of the city as we adapt to what seems like weekly or monthly changes to our daily life during this pandemic. He thanked everyone for being part of what was a banner year in the City of Bethlehem in regards to what has been asked of the employees and residents of Bethlehem. We will continue to have our meetings in this format indefinitely. If Members of Council feel comfortable to come in they are welcome to join him and Mr. Vidoni. He is happy to see everyone on the GoToMeeting which has worked pretty well other than this evening which hopefully is the exception and not the rule. President Waldron did want to make several remarks as he concludes his term as Council President, this will be his fourth and final year as Council President. He did want to make sure as we transition into a new year that everyone is on the same page as far as expectations in regards to Robert's Rules and Council Rules. President Waldron noted it is his intention to continue to try to manage the meetings as he has in the past and never be stricter than is necessary for the good of the meeting. This is a small Board in the terms of Robert's Rules and the rules permit great flexibility and he will continue to allow public comment not only from speakers who are calling in and try to be flexible and work with those folks but as well as Members of Council when we are deliberating on topics as well as under New

Business. His goal is to try to be as consistent as possible. Admittedly that is challenging because there are many different nuances to public comment as well as the conversations we have in Council Meetings. He would ask that any callers who call in try to respect our rules and the time that everyone is putting in here as well as Members of Council. One thing he wanted to talk about and point out as far as repetition, he does not think it is helpful to belabor points. He thinks to make a point regardless if you do not agree with that is something he will continue to permit. It is important to hear all perspectives especially ones that you do not agree with but he thinks it is not helpful to anyone to repeatedly hear the same conversation over and over again. President Waldron has talked to Solicitor Spirk just to make sure he is on the right track and is following Council's Rules and Robert's Rules as best as he can. He asked Solicitor Spirk to be his check in that regard. President Waldron remarked a few things that they have talked about under Council's Rules which is not something that comes up often but to reference City Council Rules personal insults and personal attacks or individual name calling are definitely things we want to try to avoid, just based on the rules but also out of respect. Members of the public shall address the presiding officer or Council as a whole. He does realize this is a small Board so some of the rules of Robert's Rules, of Council's rules are a little bit conflicting. But we will try to be as consistent as we can with those. When we are talking about deliberating Robert's Rules as well as City Council's rules ask that members speak no more than twice on a specific topic. Under New Business where there is a lot more informal discussion there is no rule specific to anyone repeating themselves but he would ask that we try to be thoughtful about everyone's time that is involved and try to keep our remarks germane to the point at hand and not combative. President Waldron pledges to be no stricter than is necessary for the good of the meeting. He would hope that as we transition in 2021 which will be an interesting time nationally in our politics but also locally, it is unavoidable the fact that there are public elections that will be happening in the City of Bethlehem for Council and Mayor, he would like to keep the politics of those individual races outside of the room of these Council Meetings and focus on the business at hand that is trying to move the City of Bethlehem forward. He would hope that this call for civility would be something that we can use as a reminder that we live in a really great city and if we are able to respect each other and respect the citizens of Bethlehem that will go a long way in showing that City Council and all the City of Bethlehem is really thoughtful about how they run their business and public meetings. Also, that we are a community that is proud to work together. President Waldron just wanted to touch a little on that before we continue on. That is his report for the business of 2020. He is trying to set the tone of civility, decorum, and respect for each other as we move forward in 2021 because he believes that is lacking on a national level and if Bethlehem can do their part to try to make things better we should all be a part of that. Thank you for allowing him to give the time to give those remarks.

B. *Mayor*

*COVID update*

Mayor Donchez stated he wanted to give a COVID update from Kristen Wenrich, Health Director. The City of Bethlehem as of yesterday we have had 4,631 positive and 92 deaths in the city. The city held its first clinic on December 30, 2020 and vaccinated 100 individuals. Multiple clinics are scheduled each week from now until the end of March. The Health Department is currently vaccinating people in the 1a priority category. Today, we did vaccinate 280 individuals. Mayor Donchez wanted to take the opportunity to thank Kristen and her Health Department workers; they are working 7 days a week basically doing an outstanding job. We have gotten

excellent cooperation from the School District, from both hospitals, and especially from Lehigh and Moravian College. We will be giving vaccines out at Moravian College at Johnston Hall. The category right now is 1a. We will also be using a facility later on at Lehigh University. We are working closely with the City of Allentown's Health Department. Mayor Donchez thanks Kristen and Chief Novatnack for doing an outstanding job.

8. ORDINANCES FOR FINAL PASSAGE

None.

9. NEW ORDINANCES

None.

10. RESOLUTIONS

A. *Approve Contract – Steven G. Lowry & Associates, Inc. – 2021 Annual Engineering Services for Department of Water and Sewer Resources Water Engineering – Hydraulic Model Calibration*

Ms. Negrón and Mr. Waldron sponsored Resolution No. 2021-001 that authorized to execute a contract with Steven G. Lowry & Associates, Inc. for 2021 Annual Engineering Services for Department of Water and Sewer Resources Water Engineering – Hydraulic Model Calibration.

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

B. *Approve Contract – Entech Engineering, Inc. – Wastewater Treatment Plant Air Quality Permit Renewal*

Ms. Negrón and Mr. Waldron sponsored Resolution No. 2021-002 that authorized to execute a contract with Entech Engineering, Inc. for the Wastewater Treatment Plant Air Quality Permit Renewal services.

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

C. *Approve Contract – Emerson Process Management Power & Water Solutions, Inc. – Open Enterprise Software Upgrade*

Ms. Negrón and Mr. Waldron sponsored Resolution No. 2021-003 that authorized to execute a contract with Emerson Process Management Power & Water Solutions, Inc. for the Open Enterprise Software Upgrade.

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

D. *Approve Contract – Emerson Process Management Power & Water Solutions, Inc. – 2021 Licensed Software Support for SCADA System at Water Treatment Plant, Water Distribution Control, Wastewater Treatment Plant*

Ms. Negrón and Mr. Waldron sponsored Resolution No. 2021-004 that authorized to execute a contract with Emerson Process Management Power & Water Solutions, Inc. for the 2021 Licensed Software Support for SCADA System at Water Treatment Plant, Water Distribution Control, and Wastewater Treatment Plant.

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

E. *Approve Contract – S. C. Engineers, Inc. – 2021 Annual Consulting Services for the Industrial Pretreatment Program, WIMS Database, and Miscellaneous Assignments*

Ms. Negrón and Mr. Waldron sponsored Resolution No. 2021-005 that authorized to execute a contract with S. C. Engineers, Inc. – 2021 Annual Consulting Services for the Industrial Pretreatment Program, WIMS Database, and Miscellaneous Assignments.

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

F. *Approve Resolution in support of the Safe Interactions Act and Human-services Emergency Logistic Program Act*

Ms. Negrón and Mr. Reynolds sponsored Resolution No. 2021-006 that supports the Safe Interactions Act and Human Services Emergency Logistics Program Act, both introduced by U. S. Senator Bob Casey, and urges the U. S. Congress to enact such legislation as soon as possible in order to further racial justice and potentially help reduce the number of interactions between the police and individuals with disabilities in crisis.

Ms. Negrón thinks many times we are requested to do things and there is a lot we wish we had the power to do but we do not. She always gets excited when things happen at the state or federal level where some of these changes really happen. There are some measures we can take as members of our local government but more needs to be done at other levels. She was appreciative of Senator Casey when he presented these two bills. She is hoping that other Members of Congress will join him and make changes. This will make it safer for people of color and safer for people with disabilities. It will also make a change in interactions with police. She mentioned earlier that Lehigh and Northampton Counties are doing great work with crisis intervention and with drug and alcohol. She added that Northampton County put some CARE Act money in the Spanish Radio Station, the phone number for the Northampton County Crisis intervention. That is something she appreciated because it is important that we continue to share information that members of our community might not know. Both Counties are doing a wonderful job with the services but working in collaboration with the police departments which is helpful. That is perhaps why we have not had incidents as we have seen in other places. This will help us move in the right direction and she hopes that all Members of Council support this.

Ms. Crampsie Smith thanked Councilwoman Negrón for proposing this resolution. It is definitely needed and she is grateful that Senator Casey is proposing this and she hopes this does get passed in the Senate. She has had a lot of experience in working with individuals with disabilities, and developmental disabilities, autism spectrum disorder and she has already spoken with Chief Kott about that. This is one area that people do overlook as far as their interactions with law enforcement. Ms. Crampsie Smith noted that one in six children from 3-17 years of age have developmental disabilities of some sort including autism spectrum disorder and the

numbers for autism spectrum disorder are increasing all the time. Right now it is 1 in 54 children and males are 4 times more likely to have ASD than females. When she worked 20 years ago in Lehigh County in Developmental Disabilities we saw a lot of our clients have very adverse interactions with law enforcement. As a result we started the SPORE Program (Specialized Program for Offenders in Rehabilitation & Education) which was a very specialized program with criminal justice system and people with disabilities. Ms. Crampsie Smith had spoken to Chief Kott and she had already spoken to people in that program. This is something that she hopes we can look to doing, we need more training for the police on these areas because the number of children with ASD has grown significantly and now they are young adults and adults. We have to have our police officers and emergency responders know about the diagnosis and best approach to work with individuals with these diagnosis. She thinks this is something we really need to focus on. Ms. Crampsie Smith knows that Chief Kott is aware and is focusing on it and she thanks Councilwoman Negrón for proposing the resolution.

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

G. *Certificate of Appropriateness – 117 East Third Street (The Blind Barrel)*

Ms. Negrón and Mr. Waldron sponsored Resolution No. 2021-007 that granted a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace the signage on the awnings at 117 East Third Street (The Blind Barrel).

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

11. NEW BUSINESS

*Community Development Committee Meeting*

Chairwoman Van Wirt announced a Community Development Committee Meeting on Tuesday, January 19, 2021 at 6:00 pm. There is one agenda item, discussion of three proposed bills related to enabling third party inspections in the city. Due to COVID this will be a virtual meeting and instructions for public comment over the phone will be posted online on the City Council Meeting page.

*Callers contact information*

Mr. Callahan remarked he does not know the callers that called in tonight but he would ask Mr. Vidoni for their information because he does want to tell them he does feel their pain and that he did not vote for the 5% increase. As he said during the budget meetings we have to seriously look at the amount of taxes we keep raising every year because if we do that we will start pushing out low income housing out of the city. As those two callers stated every time we have a tax increase it makes our city more expensive to live in. Mr. Callahan believes everyone on this Council is for affordable housing and for making people have a livable city at a livable rate. He pointed out that probably next year during budget time if we do not seriously make some cuts and start looking at development and do not push development away from the City of Bethlehem into Easton and Allentown, we will be hitting some tough times in the next few years. Mr.

Callahan would just ask that Mr. Vidoni forward the contact information to him for those people who called tonight.

*Affordable Housing/Task Force*

Ms. Crampsie Smith noted since Mr. Callahan brought this up it is unfortunate because she does feel for the callers and everyone else would agree it is difficult to make the decisions we had to this year for the budget. She struggled with it but the flip side is that she does not want to see us having to do a huge tax increase next year that would be even more adverse for our citizens. This is all about balancing things out. She wanted to bring up an overview, as she said a few months ago we developed an Affordable Housing Task Force in Bethlehem. She is a member of the task force that also includes Mike Perrucci, Dennis Benner, Alicia Karner, Allen Jennings, Dana Hanchin with the Mid-Atlantic Affordable Housing, Neil Koplun, and Becky Bradley from Lehigh Valley Planning Commission. While this is still in the works she just wanted to give a little update. Basically, we are trying to raise the awareness of all the different entities on the fact that there is a housing crisis in America, Pennsylvania, and in Bethlehem. When she talks about affordable housing she thinks it is important to define that we are talking about housing for people that are middle class, not people that are low income and subsidized housing. In the city when she was walking around campaigning and even now everyone she talks to says they have an issue with the housing, it has become high end luxury condos and rentals in the city. This is not what our city was built upon. We have had about 5 meetings so far and at every meeting we just have people come and present. We had Becky Bradley come and present data from the Planning Commission which was enlightening. Dana Hutchen from HDC Mid-Atlantic presented on what it is like to do an affordable housing project such as the Artist's Lofts on the south side of Bethlehem. The next meeting we will have the private developers talk about the process in doing private development and the challenges that they have. We do know they have challenges also. Then we are going to have representatives from State College and Pittsburgh talk about their inclusionary housing ordinance which they have passed. After that time we are going to talk about all the different presentations we saw, different resources explore different strategies and try to come up with best practices on how we can address the lack of housing that is affordable for the middle class and working class in the City of Bethlehem. Ms. Crampsie Smith noted she will then bring recommendations to Council. She wanted to give an update on this task force and she hopes that she can count on Council Members to support us in these efforts.

President Waldron thanked everyone for joining us and have a Happy New Year, hopefully better than the last.

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 pm.

ATTEST:

Robert G. Vidoni, Esq.  
City Clerk