

BETHLEHEM CITY COUNCIL MEETING
10 East Church Street - Town Hall
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania
Tuesday, March 17, 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, Collen Laird (GoTo Meeting) and Ms. Leon, 7.

CITATIONS HONORING: Thomas Benner, Jr. - WSR, Waste Water Treatment Plant
Allan S. Burghardt - Assistant Fire Chief

PUBLIC HEARING - Intermunicipal Liquor License Transfer Application - Ride 'Em Cowboy, Co., 217 Broadway

The request was to transfer liquor license No. R-8050 from Easton Meat & Produce Corp., 250 Line Street, Easton to Ride 'Em Cowboy Co., 217 Broadway, Bethlehem. Nicolo Baratta, Esquire represented the applicant and outlined operational plans with a focus on hours of operation, patron and neighborhood safety, parking, bartender training, and noise control at the former Firehouse bar - Item 10 G. There were no comments from the public.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

February 17, 2026

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

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

Mark Will-Weber

Mr. Will-Weber again urged Council to obtain a timeline from Edward Boscola, Director of Water and Sewer Resources, as to when customers might be offered apps to monitor their water usage. He was aware of high bills incurred by two restaurant owners and said they likely would have been warned sooner and could have avoided higher usage if apps had been offered.

Amanda Chiles

Amanda Chiles said she is homeless and presented a petition signed by 47 other homeless people who authorized her to speak on their behalf. Ms. Chiles thanked Bethlehem for the many resources it offers to support the homeless. This has made life easier but she further asked for a year-round emergency shelter and some form of transitional living.

William Scheirer

Mr. Scheirer recalled that a Council member supported granting a Certificate of Appropriateness for 33 W. Walnut Street on February 17 in part because the Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB) recommended approval. Mr. Scheirer believed this logic was faulty, however, because Council's vote on the adjacent new parking garage more than a year prior sent a signal to HARB as to what is acceptable, particularly in terms of height in the Historic District. The acquiescence of HARB on building height for the latest proposal was due to the acceptance by City Council of the garage height.

Harry Faber

Mr. Faber spoke against American aggression and imperialism. Israel and the United States are engaged in an illegal war of aggression, the same behavior the Nazi officials were charged with in the Nuremberg Trials following World War II.

Arthur Curatola

Mr. Curatola said the United States must stop supporting Israel or any country that condones killing innocent people. Cities should withhold money from the federal government until it stops aiding other countries that kill people.

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

Lou Jimenez

Mr. Jimenez, president of fire Local 735, spoke on agenda Item 10 O – Temporary Help – Fire. He acknowledged that there are times when temporary help is needed to move a project forward, in this case uploading data to the new First Due records management system. To date, some firefighters have volunteered to do this work. Mr. Jimenez said the real solution is to increase the number of budgeted firefighters. At most, a 90-day limit should be set on the proposed temporary help solution.

4. OLD BUSINESS

A. Members of Council

President Leon announced that the February 24 Committee of the Whole meeting for Council to receive ethics training was postponed because of technical difficulties. A new date has been set for 3 PM on May 12.

B. Tabled Items

C. Unfinished Business

5. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Callahan

Mr. Callahan said he sent a memo to the Bethlehem Parking Authority solicitor requesting details about pipes that were installed for fire suppression at the new Walnut Street Garage. He has not received a reply. He proposed arranging a committee meeting to seek these answers. Mr. Callahan has been told that the brand of sprinkler piping that was specified in the contract was not installed. He wanted to ensure that the City got what it paid for, not something substandard. He seeks explanation.

President Leon

President Leon noted Ms. Chiles' earlier comments including that the emergency shelter can only operate during six months of the year because of zoning restrictions. Laura Collins, Director of Community and Economic Development, was asked for details about this and related matters. Ms. Collins said a zoning variance could change City permissions but the Bethlehem Emergency Shelter (BES) is in a period of transition since its executive director has moved on. About \$2 million out of \$6 million has been raised toward a new shelter. BES also would have to transition a volunteer-run six-month operation to a more complex full-year operation. Meanwhile, the City's Packer Avenue shelter is fully funded and is moving forward with design and engineering.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

A. *Business Administrator – Appointment of Delegate and Alternate Delegate*

Eric Evans sought authorization to reappoint Linnea Lazarchak as primary voting delegate and himself as alternate voting delegate to serve as Bethlehem's representatives to the Northampton County Tax Collection Committee – Item 10 A.

B. *Director of Water and Sewer Resources – 2026 01 GC 2 MG Reservoir Replacement – Preload, LLC*

Mr. Boscola recommended an Agreement for \$3,480,000 for Preload, LLC to construct a concrete reservoir – Item 10 B.

C. *Director of Water and Sewer Resources – 2026 01 EC 2 MG Drinking Water Reservoir Replacement – Brendan Stanton, Inc.*

Mr. Boscola recommended an Agreement for \$352,600 for Brendan Stanton, Inc. to perform electrical work associated with the replacement water tank – Item 10 C.

D. *Director of Public Works – 2026 19 Pavement Study and Design – GPE Corporation*

Mr. Alkhal recommended an Agreement with GPE Corporation for \$73,095 to provide analysis and design for pavement restoration for specified sections along 15th Avenue and Avenues A and C – Item 10 D.

E. *Director of Water and Sewer Resources – Hill-to-Hill Bridge – PennDOT Authorization*

Mr. Boscola recommended an Agreement with PennDOT to relocate a City water main affected by improvements to the Hill-to-Hill Bridge – Item 10 E.

- F. *Director of Water and Sewer Resources – 2026 06 Water Infrastructure Replacement – R-III Construction, Inc.*

Mr. Boscola recommended an Agreement with R-III Construction, Inc. to replace and/or extend water mains in various locations for \$548,189.20 – Item 10 F.

- G. *Business Manager DCED – Memo – Records Destruction Resolution*

Tiffany Wismer sought approval for records destruction in accordance with the Municipal Records Retention Act. A Resolution will be placed on the April 7 agenda.

- H. *Director of Public Works – Memo – 2026 20 Golf Course Maintenance Barn Design – TL Engineering d/b/a ELFRETH*

Mr. Alkhal recommended an agreement with TL Engineering d/b/a ELFRETH to design a multi-level steel maintenance building to replace the existing deteriorated barn at the golf course. The cost is \$75,645 – Item 10 H.

- I. *Fire Chief and Emergency Management Coordinator – Emergency Operations Plan*

Chief Griffin sought approval to submit an update to the City's Emergency Operations Plan to the state – Item 10 I.

- J. *Director of Public Works – 2026 10 – ADA 90 Curb Ramps – Baseline Contracting, Inc.*

Mr. Alkhal recommended a contract with Baseline Contracting, Inc. of Coplay for materials and installation of 90 ADA curb ramps throughout the City for \$723,950 – Item 10 J.

- K. *Director of Public Works – 2026 04 – Street Overlays – ADA 33 Curb Ramps – Heidelberg Materials Northeast, LLC*

Mr. Alkhal recommended a contract with Heidelberg Materials Northeast, LLC of Flourtown for materials and installation of 33 ADA curb ramps, milling and overlays at specified locations throughout the City for \$1,407,207.20 – Item 10 K.

- L. *City Solicitor – Use Permit Agreement – Touchstone Theatre – America Dreams/Festival Unbound 2026*

Mr. Spirk recommended a Use Permit Agreement with Touchstone Theatre for America Dreams/Festival Unbound – Item 10 L.

- M. *City Solicitor – Use Permit Agreement – American Association of University Women (AAUW) – 2026 AAUW Book Fair*

Mr. Spirk recommended a Use Permit Agreement with the American Association of University Women to hold its 2026 AAUW Book Fair – Item 10 M.

N. *Director of Public Works - Donation Agreement - Aquatic Club of Outdoor Fitness Equipment*

Mr. Alkhal recommended an Agreement with the Bethlehem Aquatic Club to receive outdoor fitness equipment to be placed at the Monocacy Park Complex - Item 10 N.

7. REPORTS

A. *President of Council*

Motion by Kwiatek, seconded by Callahan, to combine 7 A1 through 7 A3. AYE: Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Amann, Callahan, Colón, Leon, 7. Motion passed.

7 A1. - Councilmanic Appointment - Valerie Noonan - Reappointment to the Bethlehem Human Relations Commission.

7 A2. - Councilmanic Appointment - Karen Davison - Reappointment to the Bethlehem Human Relations Commission.

7 A3. - Councilmanic Appointment - Marilyn Kelly-Cavotta - Reappointment to the Bethlehem Human Relations Commission.

Sponsors Leon, Laird. AYE: Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Amann, Callahan, Colón, Leon, 7. Resolutions 2026-031 through 2026-033 passed.

B. *Mayor*

Motion by Colón, seconded by Callahan, to combine 7 B1 through 7 B9. AYE: Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Amann, Callahan, Colón, Leon, 7. Motion passed.

7 B1. - Administrative Order - Steven G. Thompson - Appointment to the Bethlehem Human Relations Commission.

7 B2. - Administrative Order - Donna Mugavero - Appointment to the Bethlehem Fine Arts Commission.

7 B3. - Administrative Order - Carol Parker - Appointment to the Bethlehem Fine Arts Commission.

7 B4. - Administrative Order - Sue Berkenstock - Reappointment to the Bethlehem Fine Arts Commission.

7 B5. - Administrative Order - Sharon Brown - Reappointment to the Bethlehem Fine Arts Commission.

7 B6. - Administrative Order - James A. DePietro - Reappointment to the Bethlehem Fine Arts Commission.

7 B7. – Administrative Order – Adam Ercolani – Reappointment to the Bethlehem Fine Arts Commission.

7 B8. – Administrative Order – Barbara Fraust – Reappointment to the Bethlehem Fine Arts Commission.

7 B9. – Administrative Order – Stephanie Powell-Watts – Reappointment to the Bethlehem Fine Arts Commission.

Sponsors: Leon, Laird; AYE: Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Amann, Callahan, Colón, Leon, 7. Resolutions 2026-034 through 2026-042 passed.

C. *Committee Reports*

7 C1. *Finance Committee – Mr. Colón*

Mr. Colón announced that the Finance Committee met at 6 this evening. Six agenda items were reviewed and were passed on to Council and appear on this agenda for consideration.

8. ORDINANCES FOR FINAL PASSAGE

None.

9. NEW ORDINANCES

9 A. *Bill No. 13-2026 – Budget Adjustments – Sewer Capital Fund*

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

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, AMENDING
THE 2026 SEWER CAPITAL BUDGET.

AYE: Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Amann, Callahan, Colón, Leon, 7. Bill No. 13-2026 passed on First Reading.

9 B. *Bill No. 14-2026 – Budget Adjustments – Water Capital Fund*

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

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

AYE: Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Amann, Callahan, Colón, Leon, 7. Bill No. 14-2026 passed on First Reading.

9 C. *Bill No. 15-2026 – Budget Adjustments – Water Fund Budget*

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

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

AYE: Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Amann, Callahan, Colón, Leon, 7. Bill No. 15-2026 passed on First Reading.

9 D. *Bill No. 16-2026 – Budget Adjustments – OSFC Grant – Fire – General Fund*

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

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

AYE: Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Amann, Callahan, Colón, Leon, 7. Bill No. 16-2026 passed on First Reading.

9 E. *Bill No. 17-2026 – Budget Adjustments – EMS 2025 OSFC Grant – Fire – General Fund*

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

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

AYE: Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Amann, Callahan, Colón, Leon, 7. Bill No. 17-2026 passed on First Reading.

10. RESOLUTIONS

A. *Approve Resolution – Appointment of Delegate and Alternate Delegate*

Sponsors: Leon, Laird; Appointments of Linnea Lazarchak as delegate and Eric Evans as alternate delegate to the Northampton County Tax Collection Committee. AYE: Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Amann, Callahan, Colón, Leon, 7. Resolution 2026-043 passed.

B. *Approve Resolution – 2026 01 GC 2 MG Reservoir Replacement – Preload, LLC*

Sponsors: Leon, Laird; Agreement with Preload, LLC to construct a replacement reservoir. AYE: Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Amann, Callahan, Colón, Leon, 7. Resolution 2026-044 passed.

- C. *Approve Resolution – 2026 01 EC 2 MG Drinking Water Reservoir Replacement – Brendan Stanton, LLC*

Sponsors: Leon, Laird; Agreement with Brendan Stanton, Inc. to provide electrical work associated with a replacement reservoir. AYE: Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Amann, Callahan, Colón, Leon, 7. Resolution 2026-045 passed.

- D. *Approve Resolution – 2026 19 Pavement Study and Design – GPE Corporation*

Sponsors: Leon, Laird; Agreement with GPE Corporation to analyze and design street restoration for specified portions along 15th Avenue and Avenues A and C. AYE: Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Amann, Callahan, Colón, Leon, 7. Resolution 2026-046 passed.

- E. *Approve Resolution – Hill-to-Hill Bridge – PennDOT Authorization*

Sponsors: Leon, Laird; Agreement with PennDOT to relocate a City water main affected by improvements to the Hill-to-Hill Bridge. AYE: Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Amann, Callahan, Colón, Leon, 7. Resolution 2026-047 passed.

- F. *Approve Resolution – 2026 06 Water Infrastructure Replacement – R-III Construction, Inc.*

Sponsors: Leon, Laird; Agreement with R-III Construction, Inc. to replace and/or extend water mains in various locations. AYE: Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Amann, Callahan, Colón, Leon, 7. Resolution 2026-048 passed.

- G. *Approve Resolution – Intermunicipal Liquor License Transfer – Ride ‘Em Cowboy Co.*

Sponsors: Leon, Laird; Agreement with Ride ‘Em Cowboy Co. to transfer liquor license R-8050 from 250 Lime St., Easton, to 217 Broadway, Bethlehem. AYE: Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Amann, Callahan, Colón, Leon, 7. Resolution 2026-049 passed.

- H. *Approve Resolution – 2026 20 Golf Course Maintenance Facility Design – TL Engineering d/b/a ELFRETH*

Sponsors: Leon, Laird; Agreement with TL Engineering d/b/a ELFRETH to design a building to replace an existing barn at the golf course. AYE: Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Amann, Callahan, Colón, Leon, 7. Resolution 2026-050 passed.

- I. *Approve Resolution – Emergency Management Coordinator – Emergency Operations Plan*

Sponsors: Leon, Laird; Authorized to adopt the City of Bethlehem Emergency Operations Plan developed to outline basic operations and procedures to be implemented in the event of a coordinated emergency response. AYE: Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Amann, Callahan, Colón, Leon, 7. Resolution 2026-051 passed.

J. Approve Resolution – 2026 10 – ADA 90 Curb Ramps – Baseline Contracting, Inc.

Sponsors: Leon, Laird; Agreement with Baseline Contracting, Inc. to provide ADA curb ramps. AYE: Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Amann, Callahan, Colón, Leon, 7. Resolution 2026-052 passed.

K. Approve Resolution – 2026 04 – Street Overlays – ADA 33 Curb Ramps – Heidelberg Materials Northeast, LLC

Sponsors: Leon, Laird; Agreement with Heidelberg Materials Northeast, LLC to provide ADA curb ramps, milling and overlays. AYE: Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Amann, Callahan, Colón, Leon, 7. Resolution 2026-053 passed.

L. Approve Use Permit Agreement Resolution – Touchstone Theatre – America Dreams/Festival Unbound 2026

Sponsors: Leon, Laird; Agreement with Touchstone Theatre to execute a Use Permit Agreement with Touchstone Theatre for the America Dreams/Festival Unbound Event. AYE: Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Amann, Callahan, Colón, Leon, 7. Resolution 2026-054 passed.

M. Approve Use Permit Agreement Resolution – American Association of University Women (AAUW) – 2026 Book Fair

Sponsors: Leon, Laird; Agreement with the American Association of University Women (AAUW) to execute a Use Permit Agreement for the 2026 AAUW Book Fair. AYE: Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Amann, Callahan, Colón, Leon, 7. Resolution 2026-055 passed.

N. Approve Resolution – Donation Agreement – Aquatic Club of Outdoor Fitness Equipment

Sponsors: Leon, Laird; Agreement with the Bethlehem Aquatic Club to receive outdoor fitness equipment at Memorial Pool to be acquired and installed at the expense of the club. AYE: Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Amann, Callahan, Colón, Leon, 7. Resolution 2026-056 passed.

O. Approve Resolution – Temporary Help – Fire

Sponsors: Leon, Laird; Authorized to create a temporary help account to create a limited part-time position to help convert the records management system.

Ms. Daniels asked how long this position would be needed.

Chief Griffin estimated 90 days. It is necessary to transfer data to a new state-compliant records system. Some data has not migrated automatically, so extra time is needed for certain aspects. This work was being done by five firefighters who volunteered to do so but they have not been able to achieve needed progress. This position should expedite those efforts. He added that this temporary help would not impact the number of firefighters or firefighting efforts. This is administrative only. President Leon suggested that more discussion should take place if the need arises to extend this request beyond 90 days.

AYE: Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Amann, Callahan, Colón, Leon, 7. Resolution 2026-057 passed.

Motion by Amann, seconded by Colón, to combine Items 10 P through 10 R: AYE: Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Amann, Callahan, Colón, Leon, 7. Motion passed.

P. *Certificate of Appropriateness – HCC – 1506 Calypso Avenue* to install a new, 4-foot-high split rail fence with black mesh in the front and side yards.

Q. *Certificate of Appropriateness – HCC – 305 East Fourth Street* to remove an upper level “picture window” on the west (side) façade and cover the resulting opening with siding to match existing siding.

R. *Certificate of Appropriateness – HCC – 307 East Fourth Street* to paint the briquette façade to match the color of new siding.

Sponsors: Leon, Laird; AYE: Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Amann, Callahan, Colón, Leon, 7. Resolutions 2026-058 through 2026-060 passed.

S. *Certificate of Appropriateness – HARB – 415 Long Street* to install cellular PVC trim around all windows, install new trim around the front door, and paint the aluminum siding.

Sponsors: Leon, Laird; AYE: Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Amann, Callahan, Colón, Leon, 7. Resolution 2026-061 passed.

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned 8:31 PM.

ATTEST:

Tad J. Miller
City Clerk