

BETHLEHEM CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
10 East Church Street - Town Hall  
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania  
Tuesday, December 1, 2020 - 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.

President Waldron pointed out that Mayor Donchez is with us as well on our GoToMeeting so he is here even though no one from the Administration is currently in Town Hall.

CITATIONS

*Honoring Thomas Bush*

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

*Honoring David Cimera*

President Waldron read the Citation for David Cimera on the occasion of his retirement from the Bethlehem Police Department after over 30 years of service and stated the Citation will be mailed to him.

*Honoring Mark DiLuzio*

President Waldron read the Citation for Mark DiLuzio on the occasion of his retirement from the Bethlehem Police Department after over 30 years of service and stated the Citation will be mailed to him.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

None.

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

President Waldron announced we do not have anything on our agenda this evening that is directly related to the 2021 budget but he will note that Council has been getting a lot of input from members of the community reaching out to us, specifically on the topic of police funding.

He does not believe we have any amendments to the Mayor's proposed 2021 budget on Public Safety of anything related to the Police Department from Members of Council. He asked City Clerk Robert Vidoni if that is correct.

Mr. Vidoni stated correct as to the Police Department. We do have a potential amendment that came in for the Fire Department but nothing for the Police Department.

President Waldron remarked as of this evening no Members of Council have submitted any amendments to alter the proposed budget for the Bethlehem Police Department and the deadline that he had asked for those amendments to come in was yesterday, Monday, November 30, 2020. He had an opportunity to talk to a few Members of Council and from his understanding there is no will much to the rumor that Council wants to defund or eliminate the Bethlehem Police Department, there is no will on Council to do so. President Waldron wanted let people know who are home and listening or watching this meeting be assured that it is our intention as Bethlehem City Council to continue to support all the employees of the City of Bethlehem including the Police Department. If you want to take a look at the budget for the Police Department from 2020 to 2021 there is an increase in that Police Budget and that is mostly in part due to what he believes is a 3% increase due to a contract requirement which is what the Administration proposed and he believes City Council will be supporting. He believes that every employee, almost 600 employees in the City of Bethlehem will be receiving an increase in their salary other than elected officials whose salary remains consistent as to the 2020 budget. President Waldron remarked he wanted to let people feel a little more assured that City Council will not be amending or making any changes to the 2021 budget for the Bethlehem Police Department.

*Bethlehem Police Department*

Scott McGowan, 4101 Gloria Lane informed he appreciates President Waldron clarifying about the Police Department budget. His daughter attends Nitschmann Middle School and his wife works downtown and is a nurse at the hospital and gives COVID tests at Lehigh. His father was a steelworker at Bethlehem Steel and his father was a cop in Brooklyn. His parents left New York in the 1970's when it had gotten bad with crime and moved out this way. What shook us recently was our daughter who came home from school learning that her schoolmate was shot through her door. He is not sure if they caught the perpetrator or not but that caused a lot of psychological affects here with our daughter and security at home. With being health professionals and essential workers we are very insecure about the world we are living in at the moment and seeing a lot of unrest. Mr. McGowan added he wanted to make sure that he communicated to Council and thank you for supporting our police. We go downtown and we went to Christkindlmarkt this weekend and of course Musikfest. For example during Musikfest having police presence there is a huge deal. We were there two years ago where there was no police presence in a certain pocket and clearly something was going to happen and a brawl broke out with 6-8 women rolling in the street. We grabbed our daughter and ran away to get away from the melee there. There are opportunists who look for opportunities where there are no police so they just wanted to make sure to express their concerns to Council from our home here. We wish there would be more support for our police. His grandfather was a cop in Brooklyn and having police presence is for the safety of our community. He wanted to thank all the police for what they do especially in these difficult times.

Michele Dahlgren, 4645 Kathi Drive, stated she has been listening from the beginning of this meeting and is glad to hear we are talking about rumors here and not some of the things that have been going on in the country. She is a long-time resident and grew up in Bethlehem. She went to Bethlehem Catholic and after that she went to Lehigh University and then served in the Air Force and got out as a Captain. She loves our country and she is still here in our city and she loves our little city. Ms. Dahlgren does support the police and thinks they have a lot of honor and should have a lot of respect and support from all of us. She just wanted to thank Council and added this is a great time to support our police and make sure that they have the expenditures they need for training and accountability. They are our first and last line of defense for many reasons in our city. Ms. Dahlgren added her daughter is a student at Lehigh University and her car broke down and the first person on the scene was a police officer who got her on her way again. She is glad her opinion was not able to be put forward in a negative way but in a positive way to say thank you. She really does support our police force. We are in a nice area of the Lehigh Valley and we can show real leadership to the rest of the country if we go in a positive direction.

Bud Hackett, 201 East Macada Road, remarked he has comments related to the budget. But he was not sure if you opening comments would want to put them off. He asked if they are willing to take comments on the budget.

President Waldron noted Mr. Hackett can give a comment on any subject that he would like to. We do not have the budget on our agenda this evening so that would be up to you if you want to proceed with that.

Bud Hackett informed there is a story this morning in the Morning Call newspaper and it is a story about the Allentown budget process, similar to Bethlehem. There is a comment from the City Controller and he provides some advice to the Allentown City Council which he thought was interesting. He says "It would be my recommendation that Council proceed with very light feet in how they take money from various funds within the city. Next year will not be a very flush year." It was interesting that for a much larger budget in a neighboring city there was a full report, 46 pages from the Controller kind of warning Council about how much they spend. Mr. Hackett had a chance to look at the Mayor's budget although he has not looked at it as closely as Council has. It seems to be a reasonable continuation of last year's budget. But it really includes a significant increase in taxes. He has watched a lot of these meetings since June and July and City Council has spent much of the past six months listening to and being pressured by a number of different people. He thought it was a relatively small number of extremely vocal individuals and groups. The essence of what he heard is those folks want city programs and operations to change. You heard a lot of voices that said we should reallocate funds within the city to more social programs. Mr. Hackett remarked there is no shortage of important issues that folks in and outside of the community are pushing the city to address. The issues of homelessness, affordable housing, drug abuse, gangs, mental illness, and pedestrian bridges, there are more and more demands for Council's activity. He is not honestly certain in preparing these remarks what the city's core mission is. But in his mind the mission is all about Public Works, Public Safety, maybe addressing some but not all of the quality of life issues for those residents in the city. It is not the city's role, in his opinion to try to solve all the problems of the world for our community. Mr. Hackett pays his taxes and makes contributions to organizations that help people so he is paying twice. Yes, he knows there will be votes for elected officials who are placating or maybe pandering to all the vocal groups that are demanding change. He does respect people's rights to

speaking out, we live in a democracy and that is so important for us all. But here are the cold hard facts, we do not have the money in the \$84 million dollars and the list of expenditures in this budget, we do not have the money to do all the things that special interest groups are demanding. Look what happened in Allentown when city and school taxes got so high, people just moved out. There was no longer enough money to pay for the schools. You have Council Members who work for the schools. As people moved out Allentown started to see more investors buying homes and renting them out and Allentown became a very attractive place for low income folks to move to. The same things happened in Reading, even worse, higher taxes moved people out of the city and that created a lot more demand for expensive social programs. With the higher concentration of lower incomes the city found itself with staggering social problems and costs addressing those needs. Mr. Hackett remarked that 2020 has been a devastating year for so many of us. The Feds dropped \$4 to \$6 trillion dollars into the economy to prop up the economy with direct payments to so many. He does not know what it would be like if we did not have that infusion of cash and that was by an Administration that was supposedly a fiscal conservative. It is time for Bethlehem to stop thinking of how it can spend more money at least for this year. There will be a lot of support for elected officials who begin to start thinking more about how Bethlehem can become a more balanced in its approach to governing and spending.

Marta Gabriel, 10 West Langhorne Avenue, noted she wanted to begin by thanking all of you for your service to the city. As elected officials you give a lot of your time and it is appreciated by residents. She lives on West Langhorne Avenue and is nearly a life-long resident of the Lehigh Valley and has lived in Bethlehem the past few years. The reason she is calling today is that she heard there was possibly an effort or initiative to defund our police and she was concerned about that. She noted that President Waldron did say that is not the case earlier in his comments so she is happy to hear that. She thinks the Bethlehem Police Department is an exceptional department. Having attended Lehigh University and Moravian College she has had great interactions whenever she did run into them when she was a student. In more recent years professionally and personally she has had terrific interactions with them. She believes they enjoy a great reputation in the Lehigh Valley and are one of the best police departments in the Lehigh Valley. Ms. Gabriel wants to make sure that they are funded and as said earlier possibly a little bit more funding because she does value their service. Our public safety is paramount so anything that you can do to support them she as a taxpayer and resident of Bethlehem supports Councils efforts as well.

Bill Scheirer, 1890 Eaton Avenue, remarked he has one comment on this issue of defunding the police. He pointed out that defunding is an unfortunate word and he thinks a better word would be focusing. It should be focusing the police on what they do well and leaving the social work for others who are trained for that. In that regard it is interesting he learned recently that emergency medical services are only half a century old and before that the police would take people to the emergency room. That gives us a little perspective on the whole issue. Mr. Scheirer explained just a change of terminology would be helpful.

Lucy Lennon, 1021 Beverly Avenue, explained she is speaking today in total and heartfelt support of our police department. We are extremely blessed by the past and present leadership and body of the Bethlehem Police Department. These are men and women who work hard to keep our city a safe and secure community. Among the 17,000 police departments nationwide only 800 carry the designation of the Commission of Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies and Bethlehem is one of them. Statewide only 120 of 1,184 departments are accredited and once

again Bethlehem is one of them. Nationwide only 4% have dual accreditation and Bethlehem is one. If you want local statistics on Bethlehem itself there were 24 complaints in 2019 out of 61,471 calls that is a percentage of 0.0394, broken down even simpler it is an average of 5,000 plus or minus calls a month with 2 complaints a month. Ms. Lennon continued to say the average arrests in Bethlehem as of right now age 18-25 getting arrested between Noon and 3:00 in August. These are the statistics and facts that represent the Bethlehem Police Department. She will not even go into the amount of time and effort these men and women put in on their own in the community through volunteering, fundraising, food drives, social programs, and toy drives. Do you want to cut the police and fire departments while raising our taxes 5% during a pandemic where our merchant community is struggling so and our residents are struggling also? If you are looking for funding how about taking back some of the department head raises which some are up to 10%. Our City Forester is jumping from \$66,000 to \$74,000, our Zoning Officer is jumping from \$75,000 to \$84,000 and the Recreation Director is getting an \$8,000 raise to \$77,000. This is only 3 and throughout the budget there are department heads on every floor getting a raise. As you sit there and you are supposed to be representing the City of Bethlehem and our residents, she hopes you will look a little deeper into the budget, cut some of these raises and you have the funding for the social programs you want and do not cut our police and fire department. You cannot judge the men and women that do this job, they keep the beautiful historic neighborhoods quiet, answer the crazy calls, deal with the people that are dangerous, some are mentally ill and some are just having a bad day but they know how to deal with it and that is what they get trained to do. Ms. Lennon stressed if you do not support your own Bethlehem Police Department as a City Council person you really should be ashamed of yourselves. She is ashamed that some of you that do not represent and speak out on the good kind people of our Bethlehem Police Department. She wishes the Police Department good luck, safe days and nights and all the hard working city employees who despite the adversity of what she is hearing in the public and some of you Council Members, they are doing a great job and they make our city a great place to live.

#### *Armory Construction*

Diana Rodriguez, 315 Rauch Street, informed she is not sure if Council remembers but at the October 6, 2020 Council meeting some neighbors from Rauch Street brought up some concerns about the part of the Armory Development after having issues with vibrations in their homes. Since then the drilling, noise, and dust has continued. At some point the developer, Boyle, fenced off a part of the privately owned alley and dug it up a little bit. On another day the electricity was put out from our homes in the middle of the day. Now people are actually working from home without the courtesy of a previous warning. By now it is clear to us that we will continue dealing with the hazards of having a construction of this size so close to our homes. However, she felt hopeful when Mr. Waldron acknowledged that the process of this construction was not going to be easy and actually mentioned that the city, the developer, and the neighbors should all work together to minimize any problems that may arise. Mr. Waldron suggested that they get in touch with Alicia Karner which we did and we thank you for that suggestion. She did email us the maps of the construction and the landscaping which we were happy about. However, we asked her to set up inspections throughout the length of this construction and a few months maybe after just to make sure our homes which are so old will be okay. Her answer was that the city does not inspect homes on a periodic basis. So we are still very sad that after the city approved construction of this magnitude, then they wash their hands and leave us at the mercy of whatever might happen. She is asking the city today if you have any knowledge of the reason why the city cannot commit to do simple inspections. If everything goes well and nothing

happens which is what we are hoping for that would be wonderful, but if something might happen why is it up to the neighbors to spend thousands of dollars to deal with the damage or to hold the developers accountable. Is it too much to ask that after placing such a burden on this community that the city takes a few steps to protect the homes in the surrounding neighbors? She wonders shouldn't this be a common practice anyway that when a construction of this size is approved that they follow up with the neighbors around especially in historic neighborhoods. In addition we also asked Ms. Karner for a copy of the traffic impact study and about the steps the city or the developer would take to solve some of the traffic impacts on some of the alleys like the one we live in on Broad Street that either have no sidewalks where people walk have to share with trucks and cars. There will be more traffic after these apartments are built. She said that they would have to fill out a right-to-know application. Ms. Rodriguez is confused by this because this is supposed to be public information. We are wondering why there are so many obstacles for us to see something that will impact our lives for the years to come. She was wondering if there is a way that we can have the city do these inspections to make sure our homes will be okay and if there is an easy way to have access to this traffic study.

Trisha, 503 W. Fourth Street, stated she is once again voicing support of the people's budget brought forth by Lehigh Valley Stands Up and to urge City Council against the originally proposed budget that was a plan to increase funding to the Bethlehem Police Department. Countless studies have shown that more police funding does not mean a safer community. In order to truly build a safe and healthier community the city needs to invest in the people, not the punishment of people. To quote former Dallas Police Chief David Brown "We are asking our cops to do too much in the country. Every societal failure, we put that on the cops. Not enough mental health funding, let the cops handle it. Here in Dallas, we have a lose dog problem, have the cops chase these dogs." Policing was never meant to solve all those problems. Even as a woman who has been taught her whole life to fear men, just as any woman has, that fear that rules her life that she so intimately familiar with pales in comparison to the fear she sees in the eyes of children in her neighborhood when they see cops around in daylight. Having seen how traumatizing police presence can be combined with the statistics of police brutality even in cases where victims did nothing wrong has made it so that she will do everything in her power to avoid calling the police at all costs. She urges Bethlehem City Council to keep a closer look at the city's people's needs and leave them the budget because our community would prosper if these much needed funds were allocated to other causes besides policing.

Dominique, 22 W. Fourth Street, informed she is calling again, on the need to defund the police, on behalf of Lehigh Valley Stands Up. She is a Lehigh University student and is 20 years old and she has seen from her time in Bethlehem the past 3 years the impact the police have had on our local community and also the community as a whole. Defunding the police will not only help us to invest in our communities and create a safer space but also allow for a more thorough and more supportive opportunity for people who are mentally ill, people who struggle with domestic violence or other such things that the police are not actually trained for. We do put too much pressure on the police to do things they are not properly trained for. As a student right now she has been in such situations and does not believe in calling the police, she does not feel comfortable calling the police as a mentally ill woman. She urges the community and Council to consider what this police budget means. There are many other places where this money can be divested and many opportunities that we could open to people who are at risk. It is very hard to reorganize our thoughts when we have been raised up in a society that believes the police are one of the only ways we can protect ourselves and our community when in fact that is not the case.

She wanted to reinstate the need and necessity to defund the police and that this can be a very positive thing.

George Roxandich, 435 W. Third Street, informed he wanted to take time to read some messages in support of the Bethlehem Police Department received by a petition by Lehigh Valley Good Neighbors Alliance. There were about 7,000 people that responded to this in support. Tina H. says "Law enforcement is crucial in order to keep us a functioning society. Without law enforcement officers responding to calls for domestic abuse, DUI's, break-ins, etc. who is there to stand between the innocent and the criminal." Peter F. says "A city without law enforcement is a city I will never visit nor will I spend any of my money there." Peter from Easton currently he says he visits Bethlehem for the restaurants and stores but that will no longer happen. Dawn M. says "This is ridiculous. What the heck are people supposed to do if they need help and there are no police to protect them?" Mark A. says "Police need all the support they can get in today's age. Better funding is better training." (The call was dropped).

Michael Stauffer, Cayuga Street, stated he is very happy at what he heard in the opening statements by President Waldron that there will not be a defunding of the police but he thought he heard a 3% increase covering salaries or expenses. Our police deserve this. He grew up in a military family and he lived in 8 different states by the time he graduated from high school. He moved to Bethlehem about 40 years ago. He can say that the Bethlehem Police Department is the finest police department that he has ever encountered or been around. He was in the Marines when he got out of high school and was on different bases and has interacted with a lot of different law enforcement organizations and we have the finest police department in the state. Mr. Stauffer informed he is very proud of them. He added that Bethlehem is built largely on tourism since Bethlehem Steel shut down 40 years ago. We have become a tourist driven economy and we can have the best festivals, and fairs, and Musikfest and other things but if the people are not safe it is all for naught. He is strongly approving and extremely happy that we are not going to be defunding our police. Mr. Stauffer added that the proof is really in the pudding, he is reading articles virtually every day about our major cities in this country, Portland, Seattle, New York City, Chicago, etc. where there has been a direct correlation between the defunding and the devaluing of the police by city governments where there has been mass retirements and the crime has spiked upward. New York City used to be a great place to take a family and walk around for the day. He will not take his family up there and he added there has been a mass exodus of residents from there. He disagrees with the caller who called before and said that reallocating funds creates a safer society, he completely disagrees with that. The more police we have on the street the safer our streets are and the better our community is.

George Roxandich, 435 W. Third Street, continued speaking. He stated he can go on and added that he has two pages of comments about people supporting the police and talking about how important the police department is and how well the Bethlehem Police Department functions. He stated while there are no current motions to defund or restructure the police department it is obvious that the sympathies of many of the Council Members is with the radical groups that are looking to undermine or restructure the police force. It is stunning to him that City Council for example would make one of these radical groups with no practical experience or knowledge of policing de-facto sub committees of the Council. To a few of the comments he heard earlier, anyone afraid to call the police should not call the police. They can call whoever they feel more comfortable calling. Let's see how long it takes them to get a response. Sending a social worker to a domestic violence call, police do not even like to go to them because they are so

volatile, often times they turn violent quickly and you would have both sides against you. And now you are going to send someone in there with words of comfort, this can be totally unpredictable. You would need somebody that can defend themselves and that is the police department, they are trained to do that correctly. Mr. Roxandich added some more comments, Susan P. says "Born and raised in Bethlehem and loves the police and always felt safe." Christine B. says "I am a Bethlehem resident and fully supports the Bethlehem Police Department. I hope our law enforcement officers know that we truly appreciate them. The people that believe we need to defund our police need to go away." There is no way around this; the folks that are trying to defund the police department have other agendas in their minds. Many of these young activists became activists because they were conditioned to be activists. It is very easy to be pulled into these organizations and we are seeing examples of that all over the country.

Greg Ragni, 2955 Oakland Road, informed that much has been made in the current environment of the tone with which political statements are made and how much words matter especially when coming from those who represent us. If by simply relaying quotes that City Council Members have made to their constituents upsets those constituents, maybe the Members of Council should think more deeply about what they are saying before they say it. He will spare the Members of Council the pain of hearing their own quotes tonight in favor of letting you hear the voice of the people. Over 7,000 citizens signed a petition to defend the Bethlehem Police Department from defunding and thousands of them also left heartfelt comments which should be heard by their elected representatives on Council and by the law enforcement employees who work as a team to protect our community. Patrick C. of Bath says "Because after this terrible decision to defund the police is made, governments will soon see the wisdom in reversing that decision that only after innocent people are hurt or killed. As a 911 dispatcher I can tell you that there is only a thin line between us and the worse most violent people on the planet. That line is formed by police officers and who benefits more from defunding, criminals. They would sooner remind us all why police are needed." Tim F. of Bethlehem says "Bethlehem Police do a wonderful job. We need to keep our undercovers out there. If we do not crime will get worse, these men and women of our police force put their lives at risk every day, do not make it worse by making them understaffed and underappreciated. DO NOT DEFUND OUR POLICE." Lauren M. says "I have 7 years of direct experience with the operations of the Bethlehem Police Department. Over the past 20 years BPD officers have saved hundreds if not thousands of lives by providing lifesaving interventions amid violent situations and medical emergencies. In these two decades they have returned hundreds if not thousands of missing children and endangered persons to their homes and locked up thousands of domestic abusers, sexual predators, violent gang members, etc. They have gotten hundreds of illegal guns off of your streets and recovered millions of dollars of stolen property. In all this time despite those officers sustaining many severe injuries in the line of duty Bethlehem Police Officers have killed one man who was firing at police officers before being killed by return fire. BPD has already been defunded with pensions cut from a top rate of 70% to a flat rate of 50%. You have the finest police department in Pennsylvania protecting your community which is in my opinion the finest midsized city in Pennsylvania. Please do not cave." Steve S. says "Police are amazing humans that provide a desperately needed service to protect civility from chaos. He is not trying to live in a real life purge movie." Casey E. says "I back the blue. Police and their families fill an extremely important role in our community that simply cannot be fulfilled any other way." Maryanne K. says "I grew up in a small town in Pennsylvania. Our local police were a respected and huge part of our communities. Take a look at Seattle, Portland, New York, Chicago, Minnesota, need I go on. How dare you even think about not supporting them in every possible way, shame on you



and start looking for a new job now because all of my Pennsylvania family will vote your butts right out of office." Mr. Ragni stated hopefully from those voices of your constituents you get the idea. It sounds from your original statement that you do and we are pleased to hear it.

Glenn Nelson, 711 W. Broad Street, noted that people tonight have been saying they would be scared with fewer police on the streets, we hear you, that is what everyone says to our side. But those of us who support defunding that had to exist in states of fear because of the police. We heard that if you are not a criminal you supposedly have nothing to fear from the police. This absurd claim completely ignores the unarmed who have been killed by police or those killed for minor offenses where those petty offenses have been used to justify the act of murder. Punishment for the crime must not exceed the crime itself yet Michael Brown was shot for allegedly stealing from a convenience store. George Floyd was murdered for allegedly using a counterfeit 20 dollar bill. Eric Garner was strangled to death for allegedly selling loose cigarettes. None of these lives were granted due process to even establish criminality. They were killed extra-judicially by their local governments; they were deprived of their constitutional rights to the assumption of innocence. Mr. Nelson remarked as we can see this very argument is unpatriotic at its core since it attacks the very foundational document of our republic, particularly the section we Americans hold most dear, our Bill of Rights and the protections for Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness. We claim to live in a free society here in America but in the same breath we give power to the police to kill over being disobeyed regardless of the justice of the order or the character of the individual officer. We place these imperfect humans with all the feelings of power in a position where they are deemed infallible. An officer's word is given more credibility in a court of law than a citizens despite the fact that we know police regularly manipulate facts to win cases. There are practices here in Lehigh County where our judges disproportionately jail defendants of color and our DA refuses to investigate police misconduct. In addition, as a Jew Mr. Nelson is alarmed by the degree to which white supremacists have been allowed to infiltrate the ranks of police? The FBI themselves have issued reports on this widespread and troubling national problem. They kneel on necks, they shoot to kill, they strangle and in case after case officers walk away with scarcely a blemish to their record. They violate the most sacred of commandments the prohibition of taking human life. This is not a minor issue; this is a matter of life and death. Those of us that have butted up against this institution know that all too well. Yet, we hear from citizens who claim we would be less safe without police but this is an argument that is too often made in poor faith. A few weeks ago a caller noted Bethlehem is an "unsafe city". By any metric this is a false claim but even if it were not it would actually cut against the idea that the police are the solution. We have been raising police budgets for decades here and have seen negligible changes in crime rates. Mr. Nelson remarked we are supposedly both unsafe and in need of more police while also being kept safe by already historic policing levels. Bethlehem cannot be both safe and unsafe. He would argue that we are safe and it is because our police are funded at levels more appropriate to our crime rate than Allentown for instance. Allentown has a much larger police budget than we have and also a higher crime rate. Philadelphia dwarfs both budgets combined and sees a murder a day. As we put more money in police we actually see outcomes worse in relation to crime. By giving so much of the city's money to the police there has been opportunity lost; other departments are asked to do more with less year after year. Our city lacks critical services but as those entities fail to provide for the needs of health and human services challenges we have to look for other ways our government can meet the needs of the people. We cannot continue to write blank checks for ineffective parts of the budget when we have people living with hardships in a pandemic depression. People are out of jobs, they are getting sick and losing their federal safety net, they are getting evicted from their homes and

people want to act like we are coming down too hard on police simply because we are demanding that the department not be rewarded with a raise for moderate to poor return on investment. If Council refuses to act in meaningful ways to address human suffering it will only continue to erode the trust the people have in the legitimacy of their government. As far as he can see from the budget Bethlehem values police and little else, not firemen, not the ambulance corps, not the health and welfare of our citizens. Prove us wrong by taking action now but you will prove us right with continue silence, lack of transparency, and monetary support for a racist violent and inefficient institution that is not compatible with life in a free society. Mr. Nelson noted on our side he has witnessed individuals calling in repeatedly to express concerns for the civil rights of our fellow citizens. We have been calling in the face of Council inaction. We are not personally attacking any individual officer but rather the institution. Many of us have been hardened in fact by Chief Kott's appointment and her willingness to take on this problem even if we do not see eye to eye on what the policy solution will look like. What we do agree on is that Bethlehem has an opportunity to be at the forefront of presenting policies that improve lives. We came over the summer and made 4 hours of public comment and were told to come back during the budget season so here we are and we like to see some indication that the politicians who said we hear you in June have taken our concerns to heart and are taking action. We do not expect you to abolish police tomorrow instead we want to incremental steps to reinvent in our community while divesting from the police department, collect data and results and letting data dictate where we go. Mr. Nelson stated everyone he works with is committed to individual freedoms laid out in our Bill of Rights; all of us are committed to the ideals laid out in the Constitution. George Floyd lost his life and liberty simultaneously, did that look like freedom to you? So while the opposition claims to be the bearers of American liberty ask yourselves does what they defend look like liberties to you. If it were done to you would you feel free? All lives even blue lives cannot be said to matter until black lives do.

Sebastian, 341 Spring Street, Apt. B, informed he understands Council was not looking to talk about the proposed budget at this time but his comments do pertain to that. His concern with a lot of the comments that have been voiced on the side of the defunding of the police may be taken in poor stride given what the City Council is proposing here. They are proposing a budget increase of 3% to count for inflation which is understood as the national average so to ensure that the police officers that are paid by the city continue to have a living wage. His concern is that the budget as a whole over the previous budgets has become inflated with other costs that are unnecessary. You are looking at a \$1.1 million dollar increase from 2016 to 2021 and there are portions of the budget which account for things such as tactical gear, police body cameras, and other items which seem to be not effective in addressing the issues of crime concerns in our population and our community. In 2018 we saw a pretty significant spike in crime which was not associated with anything to his knowledge from his short readings he has done. The police budget in years prior had taken measures to reduce their budget but since then has increased it to account for that anomaly of a spike. The way they accounted for that was allowing a significant increase in general overtime. At that time Police Chief Mark DiLuzio had commented going back to basic policing which he saw as stopping and talking to people on the streets. He does not think that defunding the police is asking for police to stop doing those things which are good or police but just to hold in some of the additional expenses that are not seen on nationwide studies, things like cameras that are instituted and are not shown as being effective in reducing crime. He asks that the listeners to his comments recognize that when sometimes people are asking for defunding of police it is not to take away their livelihoods or the salaries of

the police officers but to refocus our attention on the police budget as a whole and how it serves our community.

Carrie, Oakland Road, stated the topic of police defunding has been an emotional one for so many of us in Bethlehem this year. The events witness across our nation as well as those playing out in our own town has been both riveting and troubling. Many of us have been reminded of just how important and invaluable our men and women in blue are to us. Accountability is at the core for everyone but she said this from the start, everyone, not just the police must be accountable for their own actions and recognize that we each contribute and represent 50% of the equation when we deal with another human being, every day and in every way we choose. We choose how we respond to every moment and every individual so choose well. She thought it worth mentioning although ours are the most highly trained professional and accredited police 911 is not your only option if you do not want to encounter a police man or woman. It is also worth mentioning that if you are in a mental health crisis, both Northampton County and Lehigh County are equipped with 24/7 hotlines with people who are trained to help you through it. Mental health assistance is offered at the county level for residents and although Councilwoman Negrón made the questionable comment that 911 is not working for us she would offer that the majority of our community feel quite the opposite. If you would like the Northampton County Crisis Intervention number it is 610-252-9060 and the number for Lehigh County Crisis Intervention is 610-782-3127. They can assist regardless of your income or insurance. On a separate note she would like to thank former Police Chief Mark DiLuzio for his decades of service to the Bethlehem community. Along those same lines she would like to share some comments left about the Bethlehem Police on the defend the police petition. Many of our men and women in blue may not have the opportunity to read them but they should be able to hear the support coming from citizens. Jade K. says "Bethlehem City Police is one of the best police departments in the Lehigh Valley. Their professionalism and compassion is beyond reproach". Lillian M. of Bethlehem says "We need to support the police. When they get the 911 call they do not know who needs help, they respond no matter who it is. They are willing to risk their lives every day. They do not know if they are going to be ambushed or if they are going to save a child's life. Remember all those who are petitioning against the blue, if you need help who will respond to your call. Oh, that is right; you will have the city leaders to back you up. Back up your police." Betsy W. says "Best policing practices include more training, more interaction with neighbor community organizations, and more time working with youths and in schools. It all costs more money but it is the only way to build the interactive trust that we need." Jim F. of Bethlehem says "I stand with our police department; they have always been transparent and have brought about stability to the City of Bethlehem. I am against the current move to defund the department and stand with our officers against this attack." Ellen H. says "Defunding the police department means less protection for the majority of voters and tax paying citizens who rely on them. Crime will increase significantly and the only ones who will benefit are the ones violating the laws. Increase funding for police and add funding for other programs if needed. The very loud minority do not state for the silent majority."

Alison Mickel, 1204 W. Market Street, mentioned there are no amendments on the table and tonight we are not talking about the budget but she has been disturbed by a lot of the comments made tonight. She is confused by the comments tonight as well. There were a lot of comments voicing nostalgia for Bethlehem's past with people saying they have lived here for 40 or 50 years and saying Bethlehem used to be so safe. She wanted to point out that the proportion of the budget that goes to the police has increased over time so their nostalgia is actually for a

time in which police received less funding in the city budget. So talking about continuously increasing the police budget, fully funding that is wild considering their nostalgia for the past in Bethlehem when police received less funding. In fact there is no statistical link between the amount of funding that a police department receives and the crime rate in that city. If anything increasing police funding leads to a slight increase in the crime rate. Ms. Mickel added there have also been a number of people who called voicing that they are already have alternatives in the city. She wanted to point out that a number of those alternatives end up calling the police inevitably. If we are really proud of these alternatives to police we should be funding them and provide them with the resources they need to respond to crisis. She mentioned the repeated claims that we have the finest police in the country. She is not sure how that is being measured but she has looked at the Bethlehem crime rate, the statistics provided by the city. She will reiterate as she has before that Bethlehem Police Officers are 5 times more likely to use force against people of color. They use force against nearly a dozen minors a year and most of the time the use of force is justified just in the service of affecting an arrest, not a self-defense protection or anything like that. That to her does not sound like the finest police in the country and in fact that statistic that says they are 5 times more likely to use force against people of color is embarrassing to be proud of but it is not something we should be proud of. Ms. Mickel is disheartened to hear that the Council is backing down from even considering any reduction in the police budget. She hopes they will reconsider that because these statements in support of the police have been confusing and contradictory and problematic.

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

A. *Director of Community and Economic Development – Records Destruction*

The Clerk read a memorandum dated November 20, 2020 from Alicia Karner, Director of Community and Economic Development requesting Council to consider a resolution for the destruction of records from the Community and Economic Development Department listed in the attached exhibit. The Director has reviewed the municipal records retention act and the records fall within the categories where destruction is permitted.

President Waldron stated the resolution can be placed on the December 15, 2020 agenda.

B. *Director of Public Works – New Ordinance – Stormwater Collection and Management User Fee*

The Clerk read a memorandum dated November 20, 2020 from Michael Alkhal, Director of Public Works with an attached proposed ordinance establishing a new article of the Codified Ordinances, Article 929, titles Stormwater Collection and Management User Fee.

President Waldron stated Bill 39-2020 is on tonight's agenda for First Reading. It is listed as item 9 A.

C. *Business Administrator – Recommendation of Award – Pennoni Associates – Energy Procurement*

The Clerk read a memorandum dated November 20, 2020 from Business Administrator Eric Evans recommending a contract with Pennoni Associates for Energy Procurement Services. The term of the contract runs through December 31, 2025. The cost is \$186,000 for the full five year term.

President Waldron stated Resolution 10 B is on the agenda.

D. *Director of Public Works – Recommendation of Award – CMR Construction Inc. – Catch Basins Removal and Replacement*

The Clerk read a memorandum dated November 23, 2020 from Michael Alkhal, Director of Public Works recommending a contract with CMR Construction for work related to catch basin removal and replacement. The term of the contract runs until December 16, 2020. The increase is for \$13,055 and the total new cost will be \$105,055. There are no renewals.

President Waldron stated Resolution 10 C is on the agenda.

7. REPORTS

A. *President of Council*

B. *Mayor*

C. *Committee of the Whole*

President Waldron announced The Committee of the Whole met earlier tonight at 5:30 PM to discuss the Administration's proposed stormwater collection and management user fee ordinance. The meeting was for informational purposes only and no actions were taken. The proposed ordinance is on tonight's Council agenda for First Reading.

8. ORDINANCES FOR FINAL PASSAGE

A. *Bill No. 38-2020 – Wage Equality Ordinance*

The Clerk read Bill No. 38-2020 – Wage Equality Ordinance, sponsored by Mr. Callahan and Dr. Van Wirt and titled:

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

PENNSYLVANIA, ADOPTING NEW ARTICLE 748 OF THE  
CODIFIED ORDINANCES ENTITLED WAGE EQUITY

Mr. Callahan remarked as he said a few weeks ago he proposed this ordinance to establish a new article designed to combat widespread gender based inequalities by prohibiting employer inquiries into prospective employee wage history as well as employer reliance on such wage history for determining compensation. In the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania women are paid 79 cents for every dollar a man makes, according to a United States Census Bureau 2015 report. Women of color are paid even less. African American women are paid only 68 cents to the dollar paid to a man, Latinas are paid only 56 cents to the dollar paid to men, and Asian women are paid 81 cents to the dollar paid to men. The gender wage gap has narrowed by less than one half a penny per year in the United States since 1963 when Congress first passed the Equal Pay Act. That was the first law aimed at prohibiting gender based pay discrimination. Since women are paid on average lower wages than men, basing wages upon a worker's wage at a previous job only serves to perpetuate gender wage inequalities and leave families with less money to spend on food and housing and other essential goods and services. The premise of this ordinance is that salary offers should be based upon the specific job responsibilities of the position sought and not based upon the prior wages earned by the applicant so as to avoid the perpetuation of gender wage inequalities that first start coming out of college. In hypothetical situations you have two individuals that graduate from the same university with the same grades and go out into the workforce and generally a woman is offered \$10,000 to \$12,000 dollars less than a man for the same job offer. Mr. Callahan explained what happens is that when they move onto another job employers are asking a prospective employee their prior wages and based on that a new offer is made so this just keeps on perpetuating wage inequality among women when it comes to equal pay to a man. Mr. Callahan had proposed this about a year ago and went through a time period where it went to our committee and it was reviewed by the Bethlehem Human Relations Commission and they did not want to deal with it and since then we went around them and went to Northampton and Lehigh County Human Relations Commission which will be formed. Because of that we got some movement on this. Mr. Callahan thanked Dr. Van Wirt and Ms. Negrón for helping him move forward on this. He hopes there are enough votes on this tonight to pass.

Dr. Van Wirt remarked that Mr. Callahan forgot 50% of the ordinance so she thought she would include the other significant part of this ordinance which is a prohibition on the banning of the sharing of wage information. This is a tactic achieved by employers when they do want to suppress wages. Employers can either contractually or through their Human Resources Department forbid the sharing of information among employee people. This is a traditional way also of suppressing wages for historically disenfranchised groups. This ordinance has a second part to it which is the prohibition on banning the sharing of wage information. This ordinance would make it unlawful employment practice for an employer to require an employee to sign a contract or waiver that would prohibit the employee from disclosing or sharing information about the employees' wages, salary or enumeration or in any manner to forbid the disclosure or sharing of wage, salary, or enumeration information by employee or to retaliate in any way against an employee for disclosing or sharing wage, salary or enumeration information. Dr. Van Wirt noted the critical difference here is the first part of this ordinance deals with people who are interviewing and they are not employed by the person who is doing the interview. The second part is for people who already work for a company and this give them the mechanism to fight

against this form of wage suppression. She wanted to make sure it was clear that there are two parts to this ordinance and this is the second part.

Voting AYE: Mr. Reynolds, Dr. Van Wirt, Mr. Callahan, Mr. Colón, Ms. Crampsie Smith, and Ms. Negrón, 6. Voting NAY: Mr. Waldron, 1. Bill No. 38 - 2020 now known as Ordinance No. 2020-24 was passed on Final Reading.

9. NEW ORDINANCES

A. *Bill No. 39-2020 – Stormwater Collection and Management User Fee*

The Clerk read Bill No. 39-2020 – Stormwater Collection and Management User Fee, sponsored by Mr. Colón and Mr. Waldron and titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,  
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,  
PENNSYLVANIA, ESTABLISHING A USER FEE  
FOR STORMWATER COLLECTION AND MANAGEMENT

President Waldron remarked as he noted earlier this was the sole topic of the Committee of the Whole meeting at 6:00 pm this evening before the Council Meeting. Almost everyone was able to make it to that meeting to hear the presentation by Mr. Alkhal and Mr. Dorner about what this fee will entail. Essentially this is something the City has been thinking about for years now and this will be implemented to take place in January, 2021. President Waldron noted that Mr. Alkhal is not here but he is watching on YouTube and he can call in if we would like to ask him any questions. We did have an opportunity to review this thoroughly at the Committee of the Whole Meeting earlier.

Ms. Negrón informed she does not have a question but wanted to comment. She feels that the Administration should have taken a closer look at how to set the fees that homeowners have to pay. She does not think that what they presented to us, it is just like a blanket; she does not think it is fair. This needs to be more just, because we have families with different incomes. We have the elderly that have set incomes to families working for \$10 dollars an hour and this will be a challenge. We have some that might be able to pay more so she thinks this needs to be revisited. We talked about this and Mr. Alkhal mentioned that it would take him a long time to do the numbers again. Ms. Negrón knows this needs to be done and it is an important piece of our infrastructure but it needs to be fair as well. She worries that we have been going through a lot of harm this year, it has been really tough for many in our community economically, job wise, and health wise. This also will not get better any time soon. It will still get much worse. She feels it is her responsibility to make sure that this is taken a look at. It is the easiest way out to make the fee the same and she does not think it should be that. She knows that Councilwoman Crampsie Smith mentioned the City of Carlisle that has tiers and while some households are paying \$120 dollars a year some are paying \$30 and she thinks that is fair. She thinks we need to take a closer look at how to charge this fee and make it more equitable so she will not be supporting this tonight. She hopes they can work something out.

Ms. Crampsie Smith agrees with Councilwoman Negrón and what we talked about in our Committee of the Whole Meeting previously this meeting. It is important if we can have some

type of tiered system as she has mentioned that they have in Carlisle. She will be willing to help broker that with the people she knows in Carlisle can talk to Mr. Alkhal and others involved to talk about how they went about this system. Ms. Crampsie Smith noted she has met with Mr. Alkhal and the Public Works Department regarding this. She knows this is a necessity and needs to happen and has been in the works planning for many years. It does have a lot of very good environmental impacts that are positive. She will be supporting this but she does want our Public Works Department to look at a tiered system once they get this up and going to immediately looking at doing this so it is more based on the square footage on the IA's of the property. That will correlate with the income of the people in the community.

Mr. Reynolds added that since we are voting on this for the first time tonight and we have two weeks until the second vote that will at least allow Mr. Alkhal some time to investigate at least the potential feasibility of this and if it is something that could be done. As Councilwoman Crampsie Smith said he does think this is a necessity and in order to stay in line with our MS4 permit it is something we really do not have a choice about but that does not mean that we cannot gather more information the next two weeks to see about the feasibility. It might be difficult for technology reasons to do but right now we do not know. This was just brought up tonight at the Committee of the Whole Meeting. Mr. Reynolds pointed out one of the good things about passing this twice would be the fact that it would give us time to get some information. In two weeks we would not be able to get all the details but it would be something the Administration and Mr. Alkhal could come back to let us know if this is something that could be done. He noted Carlisle is smaller than Bethlehem and he does not know their technology but these are things we might be able to get some general answers to in the next two weeks so we can be more informed about this on December 15, 2020 at the next Council Meeting.

Mr. Callahan thinks we need to be honest with the taxpayers. He understands the revenue that is needed but we should just tell the truth to the residents and taxpayers. He also understands we have some entities that own large tracts of land who do not pay taxes and this is a way to get some revenue out of them but they do have in kind services like Lehigh University and Moravian College that do provide the city and we can negotiate with them to provide more in kind services. We are raising taxes 5% on our residents now and we are going to tell them we are going to tax them for the rain that falls on their property. As of now Mr. Callahan will be voting no for this.

Mr. Reynolds remarked as we talked about at the Committee of the Whole for an hour and a half this is a situation that this is something that we do not really have a choice about at the end of the day. He added that Mr. Alkhal talked about how he had met with all of the largest rate payers here and how it is not about taking revenue and putting it in our General Fund or something else, it is specific for projects that are associated with stormwater. This is something that Allentown and Easton are doing. If we do not do this as Mr. Alkhal talked about, it is a situation that if we do not do it and are not in compliance with their MS4 permit there are serious consequences. There is not another way to take care of these projects that are mandated by the Federal Government if we do not do this. Mr. Reynolds explained if we take a look at this rationally it is a situation that we can look at who is paying it but at the end of the day it is not that we are choosing to do this. We really do not have a choice as far as maintaining the MS4 permit which we have talked about extensively before. Nobody is happy about this but we should not act as if we have a choice about whether or not we want to do some version of this fee.



Dr. Van Wirt remarked she was torn about this, the need to not want to put any more burdens on our low income homeowners versus the need to be a responsible city and to address pressing environmental needs as well as the burden we are under by the Feds for regulating stormwater. She thinks her suggestion is reasonable, and she thinks this can be done before the next vote, that we designate a certain percentage of cash reserves that are left over at the end of the year which we seem to have them in every fund. A certain percentage of those be set aside once we hit a level for our low income homeowners to apply for relief. If we had only \$6,000 in that cash reserve fund that could provide 100 families with relief from this burden. She knows Mr. Alkhal is watching and she does not think this a difficult thing to do, is to try and see how we can set up this relief for our families before the next vote. She will be supporting this tonight because this is something as a city must do for both regulatory burden and for the environment.

Mr. Colón informed he will be supporting this tonight but he echoes the comments made at the Committee of the Whole Meeting by other Members of Council. He would be curious and appreciate Mr. Alkhal looking into what it would look like to have a different pay structure as was mentioned previously. We are not Carlisle but that being said he cannot speak to the feasibility or practicality of it, Mr. Alkhal would have to look into this and report back to us, which he had acknowledged. Mr. Colón stated he will be supporting this tonight and is also curious to see what Mr. Alkhal comes back to us with about how we could potentially be able to apply a different pay structure instead of the blanket one that is outlined in the ordinance.

President Waldron noted he did have the opportunity to talk to Mr. Alkhal after the Committee of the Whole Meeting earlier tonight in the hallway and he did ask that if possible we pass this tonight under First Reading. We will have an opportunity to have a little more conversation over the next two weeks before Second Reading on December 15, 2020 and if there is a majority of the will of Council to also pass it under Second Reading so that way the fee structure as it is could be instituted in January, 2021. If you look in our budget book the fee is budgeted to start in January, 2021. So to stay on the Administration's intended timeline they would want this ordinance passed this year. That was their hope to do that and then potentially sit down over the next month or so and sit down with the consultant to get some information about what a multi-tiered structure would look like or how they could assess each individual property. President Waldron remarked as we talked about in that meeting there are 19,500 residential plus whatever commercial and industrial there is so you could say 20,000 different parcels and each one of those would need to be individually assessed at that fee rate. So it is a heavy lift to do that whether that is through our in-house GIS system or through the consultant. It is not that simple unfortunately as just plugging in some numbers and figuring out where everybody falls. He does understand the need to try to push this through in order to try to have it done by the end of the year. However, it is worth having a conversation about if there is a way to make this a little bit more fair to different property owners who may have smaller sized properties versus larger ones. He is sympathetic to that but he does see the argument to passing it this evening and having more time for the Administration to talk about what our options might be before the Second Reading in two weeks.

Voting AYE: Mr. Reynolds, Dr. Van Wirt, Mr. Colón, Ms. Crampsie Smith, and Mr. Waldron, 5. Voting NAY: Mr. Callahan, Ms. Negrón, 2. Bill No. 39-2020 was passed on First Reading.

## 10. RESOLUTIONS

A. *Approve Records Destruction – Controller’s Office*

Mr. Colón and Mr. Waldron sponsored Resolution No. 2020-201 that authorized the disposition of the Controller’s Office records, as stated in Exhibit A.

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

B. *Approve Contract – Pennoni Associates – Energy Procurement*

Mr. Colón and Mr. Waldron sponsored Resolution No. 2020-202 that authorized to execute a contract with Pennoni Associates for Energy Procurement services.

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

C. *Approve Contract – CMR Construction Inc. – Catch Basins*

Mr. Colón and Mr. Waldron sponsored Resolution No. 2020-203 that authorized to execute a contract with CMR Construction Inc. for Catch Basins removal and replacement.

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

*Motion – Considering Resolutions 10 D through 10 F as a group – Certificates of Appropriateness*

Dr. Van Wirt and Mr. Callahan moved to consider Resolutions 10 D through 10 F as a group.

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

D. *Certificate of Appropriateness – 505 East Fourth Street*

Mr. Colón and Mr. Waldron sponsored Resolution No. 2020-204 that granted a Certificate of Appropriateness to install new window decals at 505 East Fourth Street.

E. *Certificate of Appropriateness – 409-411 Wyandotte Street*

Mr. Colón and Mr. Waldron sponsored Resolution No. 2020-205 that granted a Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish, construct and renovate portions of the buildings at 409-411 Wyandotte Street.

F. *Certificate of Appropriateness – 15 East Fourth Street*

Mr. Colón and Mr. Waldron sponsored Resolution No. 2020-206 that granted a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace the door and awning at 15 East Fourth Street

Voting AYE on Resolutions 10 D through 10 F: Mr. Reynolds, Dr. Van Wirt, Mr. Callahan, Mr. Colón, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Negrón, and Mr. Waldron, 7. The Resolutions passed.

11. NEW BUSINESS

*Climate Action Plan Meetings*

Mr. Reynolds remarked next Wednesday, December 9, 2020 will be our final Climate Action Plan public meeting, there will actually be two of them, one is from 12:00 pm to 1:30 pm and the other is he believes from 5:00 pm to 6:30 pm or it could be 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm, he will check on that. He would encourage if you have the opportunity to attend one of those two. The last couple we had and this has probably been helped by the pandemic, they have had very large crowds as far as all the institutions that have been a part of the Climate Action Plan process. This is a wide cross-section of every large institution in the City of Bethlehem. We are wrapping up soon. He can say from reading the latest draft that he received today, it is impressive what we have accomplished as a group and what will be brought forward in the coming weeks. If you have an opportunity to attend one of the two meetings, it is the same meeting so you do not have to attend both.

President Waldron remarked Mr. Vidoni announced the second meeting is from 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm.

*Finance Committee Meeting*

Chairman Reynolds announced a Finance Committee Meeting will be held before the December 15, 2020 Council Meeting at 6:00 pm to discuss the 2019 City Audit.

*Police*

Ms. Crampsie Smith stated she wanted to respond to most of the callers tonight who called in about the defunding of the police. She feels once again that she has to set the record straight. It is really important that the public is aware that no one on this City Council has ever proposed eliminating the police and unfortunately that has been the message that has been sent out to our community over the last few days and weeks and that is very unfortunate. Yes, she would say that many of us on City Council since the death of George Floyd in June have been very moved by the hurt and pain that people of color have experienced and we have noted that but it does not mean we are anti-police. In her own personal and professional life she has had many friends as well as clients and students who had been victims of systemic racism. She sees that and it hurts and it pains her and she has sympathized with them but she can do both, she can sympathize with people of color and the hurt and pain they are feeling and she can also support police. They are not mutually exclusive things and that needs to be clear to the community and the individuals and the groups that are spreading these falsehoods about her and her fellow Council people. Ms. Crampsie Smith thinks it is important that the public knows that she believes it was February this year that she proposed and it was every Council Member voted in favor of a resolution whereby we requested that the State Legislature include coverage for PTSD for first responders including policeman under the Workmen's Comp Act. That was again another instance of our support for our police and our first responders. She comes from a family of police; many years ago she was really upset about what was happening in our country as far as the anti-police movement and the killings of innocent individuals by police. She enrolled in the Bethlehem Police Citizens Academy because she wanted to get a better feel for what it was like to be a policeman in this day and age. Ms. Crampsie Smith advised she grew up with a police chief

and she has family members who are policemen but she did not know what a City of Bethlehem policeman is going through today. She took that initiative as another indicator of her support of the police so she would wrap her head around what it is like to be a policeman or policewoman in this city and what she could do to support them better. That really needs to be noted. Ms. Crampsie Smith remarked that many Council Members including herself have been meeting with the police and different department heads and community groups since June to try to look at ways that we can improve the quality of the services by police within our city and most importantly the quality of training and preparedness of the police within our city. Again, that is another indication of our concern for the police and the community that the police are serving. The biggest concern she has with this whole situation are the falsehoods that have been circulated by individuals and groups such as the Lehigh Valley Good Neighbors Alliance. They have instilled fear needlessly in our community at a time when we should be supported and encouraging of others, especially those that are most vulnerable like the elderly, crime victims, those with PTSD, etc. Really good neighbors do not incite fear but rather they support and lift their neighbors up. Finally, she will say this again, she can speak from personal experience. From the time she was born until she was 21 years old she lived with a police chief. She saw her father get hurt and have a heart attack in the line of duty and almost die when she was 10 years old. She saw the stress that job took on him and she saw him go to an early grave because of the stress of his job. So quite frankly she is appalled and angered by the individuals and the groups that try to say that she and her fellow Council persons do not support the police. Her father was a police chief and quite frankly she feels like these people are spitting on his grave by saying that she does not support the police. You can insult and attack her personally but do not attack her family and that is what you are doing. Not only was her father a police chief, God rest his soul, but she has three nephews who have been and continue to be active as police. Her nephew retired after 20 plus years as a State Policeman, her other nephew is actively a detective in a city the size of Bethlehem and her other nephew is on the SWAT team at the U. S. Capital in D. C. She sees the sacrifices they make every day to protect citizens like us and she has nothing but complete respect, love and admiration for them. Ms. Crampsie Smith stated in summary she would ask that the individuals and groups that are spreading these falsehoods please consider the ramifications of your actions. The one thing that is most upsetting is you are instilling fear needlessly to the innocent citizens of our city and she would appreciate if that would stop.

Mr. Callahan agrees with the comments just said by Ms. Crampsie Smith. He thinks all of us agree that when the unfortunate death of those individuals over the summer by the hands of police departments in other cities, in some of those cases he believes that was murder and he thinks the District Attorneys in those districts and states are taking many of those police officers to trial for a murder. He is totally in support of the police in our city but he also understands why the Black Lives Matter Movement came up, he also supported that movement and was a several rallies and marches at that time. He does not know the groups that Ms. Crampsie Smith are talking about but all of us heard after the July 7, 2020 meeting when a lot of people spoke on both sides of the issue. There were some residents in the city that were concerned at some of the comments that were made at that July 7, 2020 meeting. Mr. Callahan added that President Waldron is correct with his comment earlier tonight that no one on Council right now is making any amendments to defund the police department. Let's be honest, that was definitely not the case at the July 7, 2020 meeting. Here were some of the comments made at that meeting. "We demand the defunding, dismantling, and abolition of the Bethlehem Police Department." These are callers and people that spoke at that meeting. "We are protesting the very existence of the police. There needs to be complete dismantling of the police as it stands." "We are not asking for

better relationships between the cops and the community, you need to defund the police department." " You are asking the community to form a relationship with the Bethlehem Police Department, an evil and inanimate system." Mr. Callahan stated based on those comments that were made at that meeting there were some comments made by Council Member Reynolds that said "I have the same goals as a lot of what has been said tonight. That was my idea behind my resolution for Community Engagement Initiative. It is designed to create public pressure to change the city and our police department." Mr. Callahan stated that was a direct quote from Councilman Reynolds. He then gave a direct quote from Dr. Van Wirt. "You were heard tonight. I did not understand what defund the police meant. Our power of the budget is huge here. We start our budget talks in the fall and we are the people who approve the police budget. If we are going to have meaningful change and that includes how we budget the money for the police department that has got to start happening now." Those are the comments made and that is the genesis of some of the phone calls that were coming in tonight. He does not know about any threats or anything else. He apologizes to Ms. Crampsie Smith if anybody attacked her but that was the genesis of the concern from the people who called in tonight and felt there were some pretty radical comments made at that July 7, 2020 meeting and there were some comments made by Council Members that backed up those comments. He is just quoting from the record. Nobody should be inciting any type of violence against anybody or any type of fear. We are talking about the Bethlehem Police Department; we are not talking about some police department in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Florida, Washington D. C., or New York. Our police department has not had any real issue except the Hirko settlement and that was because of the National Accreditation Program that we had to go through. So the comments he heard that people had called his house, they were very concerned about some of the comments made by Mr. Reynolds and Dr. Van Wirt. After the comments were made at that meeting, that is where the genesis of this came from. He is sure Mr. Reynolds and Dr. Van Wirt can speak for themselves now but those were direct quotes from the minutes of the City Council Meeting. He just wanted on the record that those comments were made by those two individuals.

President Waldron stated he is sure they can speak for themselves, but Mr. Callahan is doing a really good job speaking for them and he is picking and choosing different quotes and taking things out of context which is not fair to the speaker, those who called in as well as your fellow Council Members. When you mix and match different quotes from callers and Council Members that may or may not have anything to do with each other but if you are reading off a sheet of paper you can make quotes out of context look pretty damning. That is exactly what Mr. Callahan is doing right now and inciting a lot of the rhetoric that is going on.

Mr. Callahan stated he would ask anybody.

President Waldron noted he is speaking and that Mr. Callahan had his opportunity to speak.

Mr. Callahan pointed out that you can go to the minutes and the video tapes of that meeting and anyone can watch that context themselves.

President Waldron asked why Mr. Callahan feels it is appropriate to jump in when someone else is talking. Everyone let Mr. Callahan speak, he was not answering a question, he was jumping in. Everyone let Mr. Callahan have an opportunity to speak and now he thinks that everyone else might want to respond to that in order to clear the record. After a lot of the rhetoric

that has been going on and the emails we have been getting, there were a few dozen, and the Facebook posts that have been circulating there has been a lot of misinformation and a lot of quotes being taken out of context. President Waldron stated he had an opportunity to correspond with a few people who have emailed in to let them know what the intentions of City Council are and they thanked him for clarifying the record. They said they were misinformed because they heard much of the same thing that Mr. Callahan is saying right now which is an intent to try to separate him from the rest of his fellow Council Members as if he is the only one who is standing up for the police department. Clearly, everyone in this Council supports the police department, there are no proposals, there are not ordinances to defund as he stated at the beginning of the meeting. President Waldron imagines that the Police Department budget will pass 7-0 which is an increase from the 2020 budget and he does not think anyone on Council has any indication of defunding the police department, but supporting it 100%.

Mr. Callahan thinks what happened was at the following City Council Meeting there was a lot of push back at that time. If you go back and look at that meeting on July 7, 2020 he was the only one at that time, he is not trying to differentiate himself from any Council Members, he said very plainly at the very beginning of that, we are not defunding the police department. He was very clear, and that is the exact quote he had. That was the quote that night. He thinks what happened was after the next Council Meeting came to us there was a lot of push back and those Council Members had a reprioritization of their thoughts. Mr. Callahan believes that Dr. Van Wirt's comments were very clear; it is the power of the budget. He did not understand what defund the police department meant; the power of the budget is huge here. We start our budget talks in the fall and we are the people who approve the police budget. "If we are going to have meaningful change and that includes how we budget the money for the police that has to start happening now." That is a direct quote. He is not putting words in anybody's mouth. If anyone thinks the context is wrong please go and check the July 7, 2020 video. Ms. Reynolds comments started at 1:15:35.

President Waldron asked if Mr. Callahan wants to give his fellow Council Members a chance to speak.

Mr. Callahan stated he will be done in 5 seconds. He added that Ms. Van Wirt's comments begin at 2:07:24 and you can judge for yourself on the context.

Mr. Reynolds does appreciate Mr. Callahan's comments because he thinks that the other 6 of us probably have a better idea where some of this fake controversy came from and how it got pushed to this point. He knows in his own conversations with the other Members of City Council in the past couple of days, he thinks we all had our suspicion and that is clear now. He appreciates the comments made by Mr. Waldron and he appreciates the comments made by Ms. Crampsie Smith. He would say that when you go back to that meeting this is like a Trump tactic to somehow pick and choose and say one caller called in at 7:15 and said that and somebody said something 2 hours later. That is right out of the Trumpian playbook about how to try to have these conversations. Many things were said that night and he knows when he and Ms. Crampsie Smith brought forth their Community Engagement Initiative the idea was that a lot of people are feeling pain right now. We are trying to hear different people's perspectives. Many of the comments that night, some we would agree with and some we would disagree with. But when you say something like he did, like you agree with the priorities of what a lot of the speakers had said, you go back and listen to people talk about systemic racism and people's different

perspectives on how they feel on different things in society, it was clear then and now that there are people who want to be heard and their feelings want to be heard. Just because if you have 15-20 people that speak and say different things and someone says they agree with a lot of what was said tonight, you do not have to own every comment that somebody made. But at the same time the conversation that has been going on in this country is about what systemic racism is, about how do we build stronger bonds within our community, how do we support mental health, how do we get there. Obviously the devil is always in the details as far as whether or not those things happen at the federal level, the state level, or the local level. Mr. Reynolds pointed out a lot of this comes down to whether or now we have an understanding that different people have different perspectives. He had a conversation today with a police officer who called him and he was talking to him about a few situations that came up in the past few weeks where he felt as if it was a difficult thing for him to do the right thing because the infrastructure of what was involved in the system just was not there. This was not a negative conversation, it was simply his perspective. A lot of what we have been talking about over the past 6 months is not low information, not slogans, not how do we make people look bad or how do we hope that other people do not pay attention to the whole conversation but how do we move past that for the betterment of society. Mr. Reynolds stated that is what the Community Engagement Initiative was about and what a lot of these conversations have been about. He appreciates the comments of Ms. Crampsie Smith and Mr. Waldron but it does not do anybody any good to talk about these issues as far as you have a 4 hour meeting and then somebody says they agree with this and they do not agree with that. He noted that is not a serious way to look at these issues.

Ms. Negrón informed she is very upset right now and has a few comments about different topics. She wanted to start by saying thank you to Councilman Reynolds and more so thank you to Councilwoman Crampsie Smith. Thank you for sharing your words, thank you for calling the group that is spreading fear, especially among the elderly. We are getting emails from the elderly and are scared because these people are spreading lies. Apparently we know who is the terror of that Lehigh Valley Good Neighborhood Alliance now; she is very upset because this is not fair. As a woman of color that have been hurting by everything that has been happening to our nation, she will say what she said before. She worked for the City of Allentown and she was a neighborhood coordinator and served one of the advisory councils under Governor Rendell, the Commission of Crime and Delinquency. She revised grants for the police department, 20 police departments across the Commonwealth apply for funding for the police departments to make them better. She revised those grants and she approved 16 police department grants for 5 years. She learned because they visited those municipalities and took a look at those police departments. We knew what worked and what did not work. She knows that we can do better and she knows how to do it better. It is appalling to her just like Councilwoman Grace Smith said, that somebody would just come up and say this is what they are doing; it is wrong, stop the lies. She is happy that we have a brand new Chief of Police and she is very proud of her. She knows that under her leadership we are going to do a whole lot better. Ms. Negrón also wants to talk about something that people are confused about and that is the role that we have as Members of Council. First of all, if you want to fire me go ahead, she does not pay for her rice and beans with the \$185 dollar check that she gets from City Council and she spends hours doing work for City Council. So you have to stop threatening for something that has no value. Wake up and smell the coffee, it is wrong. You need to understand that the City has some roles and some of you mentioned it when you called. We have some roles as Members of Council; we have services that we need to provide. We cannot just eliminate 50 police officers and hire 50 case workers; it does not work like that. We are not in the case worker business. She is glad that she saw the Health

Bureau and the Police Department working together and allocating some money from case management. She is glad she had conversations with Pine Brook with counseling services because they are doing work similar to that with Allentown and now they are thinking about allocating extra money to the Allentown Police Department to have case workers. You also need to understand that Northampton County and even Lehigh County have a great crisis program. She sent an email and had a great conversation with the Mayor and she sent that to Mr. Vidoni and she hopes he sent that to all of you. Northampton County has a number 610-829-HELP so that anybody that is going through mental health treatment they know that number, their parents know that number and when their love ones are in crisis they do not call 911, they call 610-829-HELP because a case worker will go to their home and will help them out. There are systems in place that we have. She had a conversation with the County; we need to do a better job sharing this information with members of our community because unless you are already in that system getting mental health treatment from the County, you do not know about it. Something else that the County has been doing since 2015 is an incredible six hour training that includes the escalation for individuals in a mental health crisis and they do that with our police department and they will continue doing it. They do this 3 times a year for six hours, which is incredible powerful training. Ms. Negrón asked Mr. Vidoni to share this email that she shared with the Mayor and with Chief Kott to the Members of Council. She was hoping they would get this before the meeting but she apologizes if they did not. It has a lot of good information that people who are not involved in the system want to know. We do have a great program both in Northampton and Lehigh County with crisis 24/7. If you need to go to the hospital they will call an ambulance and take you to the hospital. We have a great service we do not need to reinvent the wheel for something that the city is not meant to do, that is what the county does and it is a great program. She will continue providing this information for individuals who do not know so they can understand there is a role for mental health that is needed, drug and alcohol, mental health. The same thing with the Mental Health Board and the Drug Board. Individuals that are being arrested and have something related to mental health or drug abuse, they do not go to a regular court, they go to mental health court or drug and alcohol court and they get treatment according to their needs. Perhaps because of the training and great work the Counties are doing with mental health we haven't seen the same issues with people of color seen around the nation and police. We do have a lot of work to do. She is very hopeful and has been working directly with Chief Kott in programs and services we can implement and continue especially training because need to continue that. Ms. Negrón reiterated she is really appalled that some individual took it upon himself to take notes and words and scared half of the city, that is ridiculous and it has to stop. She also wanted to talk about the stormwater collection and management fee ordinance that we have today. She tried to raise her hand before the vote but did not have a chance to speak. She thinks that is a great program and a great idea, she hopes that they try to change the differences in sizes according to the individuals and to the incomes. It is the fair thing to do. If that is not possible to be done then we will have money because as Dr. Van Wirt said, we always have money left over in every line item in the budget and then we can give some relief for those families that are low income. That would be the right thing to do. Ms. Negrón is hoping the Administration can do this. If they are not able to do what they should have done at the beginning at least they can take the advice of Dr. Van Wirt into consideration. She understands we have to do this, it is a reality. It has to be done but it has to be fair. She is not happy that was not taken into consideration. Some people are making six digit salaries and will say it is only \$60 dollars but that is not the same for everybody. There are lot of people struggling out there and \$60 dollars could be food for a whole week for a family. Ms. Negrón is concerned about the pension issues. The few times that we talked about the budget we are clear that every year it will



be increasing and pensions are a big part of it. This keeps on growing just like the salaries and by the way we will need to take a closer look at the rate of salaries across the board. She saw increases of \$3,000 and some are \$11,000 and you are getting paid more than most of your constituents ever will see. This is outrageous and we really need to take a look at that. Just like with overtime, she knows that during COVID we put a freeze on overtime, no overtime unless it is really necessary. Well, we should keep that freeze of overtime for another year because this is outrageous. Another issue is the requirement of having police presence at a number of events on city property that has wine or beer, now they are required to have a police officer. She does understand at Musikfest we do need police presence. She organizes the Puerto Rican Parade and Festival for 10 years and she always wanted to have police officers there and she even hired a private security company aside from the police because she wanted to make sure that everything was safe and for 10 years it went beautifully with no incidents. It was a fun event with beer and the police and everybody had fun. But when you are talking about a small event like the Rose Garden wants to have wine and they have to hire police, she does not understand that. How about the Touchstone Theater, she helped them last year and this year too and in order to keep social distancing they did it outside this year. They said they will have wine and beer and were told they needed to hire police officers if you will have wine and beer in a city park. Really? She goes there and has a glass of wine and three bottles of water that is exactly what people do. There was not even 150 people and it is required a police officer to be hired to take money from a non-profit because there is wine and beer. Now we will make this harder on them to do this. Then, when she had a conversation with Eric Evans he said that is overtime, that is not the taxpayer's money but this non-profit organization does not have this kind of money. That is why they want to sell beer and wine so they can make a couple of bucks more. Ms. Negrón noted once that overtime has been put in there, then it goes to their pension which keeps on growing and growing. Go right ahead, find another way to give some overtime to all employees so the pension keeps on growing, that is taxpayer money and you are not even thinking about it. You are not allowing small non-profits to thrive to do some of the work that the city should be doing because it is community development and you are making it harder on them to do so. While doing that it is increasing the pensions that we the taxpayers have to pay. So we need to rethink that overtime that is happening. Just like this year we decided there will be across the board no overtime because of money, let's keep that a year longer. Between those salaries ranking up \$11,000 to \$15,000 every year to the overtime she does not know what we are going to do. We have to keep an eye on this. She asked the Administration to reconsider the work that the smaller non-profits are doing whether it is a jazz festival at the Ice House or wine tasting at the Rose Garden or the using of the Greenway with some wine and they need a police officer in there just in case someone gets in trouble after that one glass of wine. We have to think about what we are doing. She asked the Administration to rethink how we are treating our smaller non-profits as they do community development and are trying to make a couple of bucks here and there. We can keep it safe, if they are having a small event we need to lay back a little bit and give them a break.

Dr. Van Wirt stated thank you to most of her fellow Council Members for their words tonight which are to promote healing and unity. She wanted to particularly thank Grace Crampsie Smith with her touching words about her family experience and the dichotomy that is a good Council Member which is that you can do both things at once and indeed that is a definition of a good Council Member, being able to see both sides of the coin. Normally, she does not respond to Mr. Callahan's flame throwing tactics because it just adds fuel to the napalm. But she is outraged at this behavior from the Lehigh Valley Good Neighbors Alliance and its tactics as

well as Mr. Callahan driving a wedge that does not exist in between Council Members and causing such pain and fear among our fellow citizens. She finds this height of irresponsibility especially galling because it is for naked political ambition. His words have been divisive and inflammatory, self-serving, and distorted. Dr. Van Wirt informed she is so disappointed that this is the tactic to take when what we need after such a bruising political year is unity and to find someone using a painful topic for their own gain she finds reprehensible and she is embarrassed. She is willing to talk to any Council Member or any citizen who has questions about anything she has said but for him to take words and to distort them she finds that reprehensible. That is all she has to say tonight.

Mr. Colón mentioned what he heard a lot of tonight was a lot of fear but not a lot of understanding. Councilwoman Van Wirt just said about perspectives and as Council Members we are tasked with looking at things from everybody who calls in and understanding that life looks a lot different depending on what lense you are looking at it from. This heightened sense of fear that we heard tonight and going back to some of the emails we got when he had a chance to respond to a few of them that he knows because he went to school with their children or something like that, he asked where this is coming from or what is driving this. And this idea that this nefarious clandestine undermining of our police department and our sense of feeling safe and drumming up the sense that looming around the corner is City Council with a plot to push Bethlehem over cliff into chaos and this anecdotal notions of other cities, this idea if it were not for Council being called out that we were ready to unplug the energy of Bethlehem. There are those conversations going back to over the summer where we try to understand where people were coming from that there are a lot of people who feel they are walking around with targets on their backs whether real or perceived. There are people who say they cannot call the police then there are others who feel they cannot go to bed at night because they do not know if there will be someone there to call if they need help, or to the brave men and women who punch a clock every day and put on a badge feeling that they are not being supported. Mr. Colón sees a lot of fear but not a lot of understanding. We are talking about conversations that happened 5 months ago, something else that happened a lot more recently is that we all lauded an appointment that came before us with our new Chief of Police, Chief Kott that passed unanimously without question. Not only did everyone vote in favor of Chief Kott but everyone sung her praise, justly so given her experience in the department, her education, and we look forward to see what Chief Kott can do. She was thrust into this position in a difficult time, not only because of COVID-19, everything being online, the talks about policing were right in the beginning or shaping up to start the budget season which we know requires a lot of attention for the nuance that goes into all that. For her to come into that position during budget season provided some challenges. He alluded to previous Council Meetings having a Public Safety Committee Meeting, at request of the Administration and this will be after the new year. We should have conversations about hiring practices within the police department, promotions within the police department, what police responses look like, the policies that have to do with police responses. There is a lot of merit looking at this. Mr. Colón does want us to look at that and also visit the pilot program with the Health Bureau that Chief Kott and Kristen Wenrich, Health Director and others are trying to put together and institute new programs and talk about how effective they are. They discuss if we grow this, what can we do, what do we change. He said at a budget hearing that previous to tonight and this fury of emails that we had already established at a budget hearing that we were not taking any positions away from the police department. Councilman Waldron stated he asked for amendments by yesterday and they never came in to change anything with the police department. These conversations will continue to happen. Councilwoman Negrón talked about

pensions, we brought that up before. If we want to have these robust services like a police department, they are not free; there is a cost of doing business associated with that. So when we talk about maintaining our policing levels, we talk about incremental tax increases and other things sometimes you cannot have one without the other and it is a matter of understanding comprehensively how we operate a city, what services we are tasked into providing. Also, what goes into that and where do we get our money from. He invites as other Members of Council have already anyone interested in learning anything to tune in and do not just take something from a Facebook post, get it from a source and tune into a Council Meeting. Maybe email somebody and say I am reading this on Facebook and can you elaborate but instead we are getting emails with people telling us not to do something that we have not had discussions to do. He knows there are things taken from 5 months ago and he can say it is just a matter of understanding, knowing where we are today, what we are actually voting on, what people like Chief Kott, Members of the Administration, Members of Council are doing providing understanding the people who think different than you, not that they are trying to plunge us into an anarchy state but they want to look at different ways to accomplish certain goals. That will not happen overnight, these things do not happen with the flick of a switch. Mr. Colón informed he and his colleagues are willing to keep having these conversations. He looks forward to after the new year addressing some of the things he has talked about as related to Chief Kott and some of the practices of the department and hope that we as a Council outside of some of the forces that be in the community or social media to continue to offer understanding of each other and the different perspectives. We need to try to diminish fear out there because it does not feel good for any of us to know that those who turn to us to make good decisions to think that we are behind closed doors in the shadows plotting to turn Bethlehem into some kind of chaotic city. There is nothing to support that. Mr. Colón appreciates the words that all of the Members of Council have spoken before him.

Mr. Callahan agrees with some of the comments of Mr. Colón and Ms. Crampsie Smith as far as having empathy and being able to see things from both sides of the issue. He explained that he does not know any of the callers that called in and wonders why he got blamed for that. He had nothing to do with that. He is just trying to correct the record and he added do not just listen to the quotes he read from the minutes of that meeting. He encourages all the residents to look at the July 7, 2020 video of the meeting and you make up your own decision. He is not putting words in anybody's mouths. Look at this and when you watch it you will have a good understanding of where that meeting was going. It was not until after that meeting, the first meeting in August when there was push back and everyone kind of stepped back from some of their comments at the July 7, 2020 meeting that is all he is saying. For everybody to pretend that those comments were not made is very disingenuous. Again, he encourages everyone to go look at the July 7, 2020 City Council Meeting and make up your own mind. Mr. Callahan does not know anyone that called tonight, he also does not know anybody that called at the August meeting and had the push back but had there not been the push back some of the more liberal people on our Council might have gotten away with this. Some of them are a little more influential on Council than others. That is all he is saying. Mr. Callahan mentioned when it comes to our police safety some of the comments that those two Council Members made that night were not welcome.

Ms. Crampsie Smith thanked everyone for supportive comments and everyone for their comments, she concurs with most everyone. These are very difficult subjects and obviously for her the systemic racism and support or lack of for the police are very emotional issues for her. It

is important that we keep in mind in June, July, and August and thereafter many of us on Council we verbalize and have empathy for what people of color have been going through and what they continue to go through and the fact that there is systemic racism. Most importantly we all need to remember, especially Councilman Callahan that right now no one is proposing doing any change in the budget for the police and that is the bottom line. If we continue try to hash and rehash what was said at those meetings, and there was nothing wrong said at those meeting in her mind and again it is not mutually exclusive to support police and also empathize and sympathize what people of color have and continue to go through. Ms. Crampsie Smith noted the bottom line is right now no one is looking to defund the police or most importantly eliminate the police and the rhetoric that is being said even now feed into the irrational falsehoods of the individuals and groups that are perpetuating the needless fear in our community and our innocent citizens. It is vital that we all work together to dispel that because we are here to represent the citizens of this community and we need to make sure that they are safe and are free from fear and needless anxiety. We need to do that together and not feed into the irrational falsehoods of some of the people that were calling in and the people in that group, the Lehigh Valley Good Neighbor Alliance, or whatever it is, that is the bottom line.

Mr. Reynolds added as he said before, when we look at the depth of these issues as they are talked about across the country we should be better, most of us are, but we should be better than talking about these issues with this type of reactionary emotion that does not involve the nuance that the situations deserve. What most people on City Council are trying to do as has been stated is understand that more than one perspective here is okay and that is what our job is. Two things can be true at the same time. Mr. Reynolds stated in many ways his behavior is sad and embarrassing but he looks at the fact that if Mr. Waldron or somebody else has a comment that one of use disagrees with there is a way for us to disagree with that with still understanding that what people want here is what is best for the City of Bethlehem and also have empathy for other people on Council and what they are going through throughout the pandemic. He will give one example here. Mr. Reynolds noted that Dr. Van Wirt has been working through the pandemic as a doctor and every time he talks to her she is exhausted. Grace Crampsie Smith has been working as a Guidance Counselor through this and is exhausted about this. He talked to Olga Negrón today about the struggles she has been facing with the pandemic. Mr. Reynolds feels the same way about Mr. Waldron and Mr. Colón, we have had similar conversations and he sees his wife who is a physician. People are stressed out right now and they are tired and exhausted and that is just because of the pandemic, let alone these deep, deep societal issues. We need to be better than just reactionary, emotional, cut and paste, trying to prove that we are better than this person because of this comment and things like that. These issues did not get here by thoughtful processing. Our job is to come together and try to find ways to respond to these issues with nuance understanding that our job is to balance perspectives. Our job is to understand that there is a perspective of people that serve us that deserve to be heard and also a perspective of people that if they tell us their feelings that they fear the police, we might not need to agree with that, that might not be our experience but it is our job to balance this together. The level of dialogue here just should be higher. Mr. Reynolds is disappointed too. He thinks that Councilwoman Crampsie Smith hit it on the head as far as the need to balance our feelings on these issues from different perspectives. That was a heartfelt speech that we all could relate to. It is unfortunate that this period of New Business got taken in a different direction. He does appreciate the comments of Mr. Waldron, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Negrón, Dr. Van Wirt, and Mr. Colón because they are all right on.

Mr. Callahan stated to Mr. Reynolds that he agrees with him about the reactionary emotional responses. He thinks if you look at his comments after those comments were made, he plainly said we are not defunding the police department. Our police department is not those police departments in those other states and cities. His point is that some of you reacted as Mr. Reynolds stated very reactionary and emotional responses to what was being said that night instead of thinking through the process. Mr. Callahan stated right away that we are not defunding the police department, those were not the comments made by yourself and Dr. Van Wirt. That is all he is saying, he is not trying to embarrass anybody. But everyone is trying to back walk this like these comments were not made and they clearly were made. He felt that they were reactionary and emotional responses from you. If anyone is offended by him quoting minutes from the City Council Meeting he apologizes but he encourages any city resident to watch the July 7, 2020 Council Meeting and see for yourself.

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:39 pm.

ATTEST:

Robert G. Vidoni, Esq.  
City Clerk