

BETHLEHEM CITY COUNCIL MEETING
10 East Church Street - Town Hall
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania
Wednesday, November 5, 2025 - 7:00 PM

PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

Vice President Rachel Leon welcomed members of Cadet Troop 830 from East Hills Moravian Church.

1. ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order by Vice President Leon. Present were Bryan G. Callahan (via GoTo Meeting), Grace Crampsie Smith, Hillary G. Kwiatek, Colleen Laird, Kiera Wilhelm, and Ms. Leon, 6; ABSENT: Michael G. Colón, 1.

PUBLIC HEARING

Vice President Leon stated that prior to the consideration of the regular Agenda items, City Council will conduct a Public Hearing to accept comment on the request for the intermunicipal transfer of restaurant liquor license No. R-61034 obtained by Cigar Page - Bethlehem, LLC for a restaurant at 1010 Harvard Boulevard, Bethlehem, Northampton County, Pennsylvania.

Vice President Leon called the Public Hearing to order and stated she will now recognize a representative from the applicant to address this matter.

Anthony Brichta, Esquire, of Norris McLaughlin of Allentown, represented Cigar Page - Bethlehem, LLC, which seeks to transfer a liquor license from the Spring Mineral Restaurant & Bar, LLC at 702-706 Main Street in Northampton Borough to 1010 Harvard Avenue in Bethlehem. This would be a newly built structure that would serve as a bar, restaurant, cigar sales location, and corporate headquarters. An October or November 2026 opening is envisioned. Combined indoor and outdoor seating would total 200-225. Hours of operation would be 11:00 AM to 10:00 PM daily Mondays through Wednesdays, 10:00 AM to 10:00 PM Thursdays through Saturdays, and 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM on Sundays. The establishment occasionally would offer live music. Owners hope to employ about 75 workers. All associates working in their restaurants would be certified under the Responsible Alcohol Management Program.

Council Comment:

Ms. Crampsie Smith asked whether smoking would be permitted throughout the establishment.

Attorney Brichta said the owners would pursue a Clean Air Indoor exemption for cigar retail sales as long as they are meeting a minimum threshold of tobacco sales. The majority of the facility would be available for smoking.

Ms. Crampsie Smith knows that this area has mostly commercial and industrial uses but asked whether any residences would be impacted.

Attorney Brichta referred to Exhibit A showing the neighborhood. He agreed that this is predominantly a commercial and industrial area. There are residences but not in the immediate area.

Ms. Kwiatek asked for the distance to Princeton Avenue homes. She said it looks as if there could be nearby backyards.

Attorney Brichta said he does not know measurements but believed there would be sufficient distance between the buildings. He added that neighboring property owners were notified of this intention, as required.

Ms. Wilhelm asked whether the business owners would consider offering local products for sale.

CEO Keith Meier said they would consider granting this request.

Ms. Laird noted the Clean Air exemption. She asked whether the business opening would proceed if the exemption were not to be granted.

Attorney Brichta believed the exemption would be necessary to operate; however, the applicant appears to meet all requirements and approval is expected.

Ms. Laird asked whether added considerations would be made for those who work in this smoking environment.

Attorney Brichta said it is common in facilities like this one to have significant air filtration systems. They are not designed to have small smoky rooms. This is to minimize second-hand smoke and generally related unpleasant conditions. This particular facility has a high second-floor mezzanine with high ceilings.

Mayor Reynolds consulted with Director of Community and Economic Development Laura Collins and Chief Building Inspector Michael Simonson to learn that there are additional code requirements related to the air filtration system. This would be a part of the process also.

Public Comment:

None.

Vice President Leon announced that Resolution 10 A is on the agenda for tonight and adjourned the Public Hearing at 7:17 PM.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

October 21, 2025

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

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

Carriage Ride Information

Korie Kalavoda is the owner of Bethlehem Carriage Company. Her company has provided Christmas season rides in the City for nearly 20 years. There has been increased concern in recent years nationwide about the use of working animals. She wanted to address this. Her company goes well beyond industry standards to provide proper care for the horses. Misinformation has been spread by groups outside of Bethlehem. She assured Council that these conditions are not present when it comes to Bethlehem Carriage Company.

Character Reference

Resident Terry Kloiber has known Ms. Kalavoda's family and is familiar with the family farm and the carriage company operations. She endorsed tonight's presented representations.

Supports Water App

Resident Mark Will-Weber said he was present tonight to keep the issue of downloadable water apps in the City's consciousness and said he would continue to do so. He continued to urge the City to offer customers the ability to monitor their water usage to notify them of leaks and other waste that leads to unintended high water bills. The City does not offer this feature at this time.

Upgrade Fire Personnel

Firefighter Kyle Dolton thanked the City for investing in new apparatus in recent years. Upgrades show a commitment to public safety. He hoped that that same focus can be brought to personnel in the coming years. In particular, Engine Company 9 on Catasauqua Road continues to operate without a supervising officer. He said that 32 out of 72 firefighters have fewer than two years of experience. The 15 recruits that will come through the fire academy will have zero. This highlights the need for mentorship and supervision. The officer position is one that was lost many years ago for cost-cutting reasons. He asked that it be restored.

Offer More Guidance

Resident Arthur Curatola said that military veterans and the homeless should be given more guidance to seek help of various kinds that they need to secure housing, medical insurance, and other services. He encouraged Bethlehem officials to set a good example for other communities by offering this assistance.

Distribution Questioned

Resident Mary Jo Makoul has recently inquired about not receiving the fall/winter Bethlehem information booklet. Her neighborhood has not received these. She contacted the

Mayor's Office and asked for three copies for her and two neighbors but she suggested the City look into its distribution method.

Party Affiliation an Obstacle

Resident Stephen Antalics said that Bethlehem is best served if Council members are its best representatives. He does not believe that those serving now or those just elected yesterday are the City's best. Mr. Antalics attributed much of this to a candidate's political party. Democrats have long held a significant majority in Bethlehem giving little chance to quality Republican candidates.

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

None.

4. OLD BUSINESS

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

5. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Leon

Vice President Leon said she would accept a motion and a second to set the date for adoption of the 2026 Budget on Tuesday, December 16, 2025, at 7 PM in Town Hall.

Ms. Kwiatek made a motion, seconded by Ms. Wilhelm, to set the date for adoption for Tuesday, December 16, 2025 at 7 PM in Town Hall.

Voting AYE: Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, and Ms. Leon, 6. The Motion passed.

Vice President Leon next read the dates for budget-related Council meetings as follows:

Monday, November 10, 2025 - 6:00 PM

First Budget Meeting

- 1. Water Fund Revenue and Expenses
- 2. Water Capital Budget
- 3. Sewer Fund Revenue and Expenses
- 4. Sewer Capital Budget
- 5. Public Works Department
- 6. Liquid Fuels Fund
- 7. Storm Water Fund
- 8. Non-Utility Capital Fund

Wednesday, November 12, 2025 - 6:00 PM

Second Budget Meeting

1. Golf Course Enterprise Fund
2. Administration
3. Council, Mayor, Treasurer, Controller, Law Bureau
4. General Fund Revenue
5. General Expenses
6. Civic Expenses
7. Debt Service

Tuesday, November 18, 2025 - 7:00 PM

City Council Meeting

First Reading of 2026 Budget Ordinances

Thursday, November 25, 2025 - 6:00 PM

Third Budget Meeting

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

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

Final Budget Meeting

(This meeting will only occur if necessary)

Monday, November, 2025 - 6:00 PM

Backup Budget Meeting

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

Ms. Crampsie Smith

Ms. Crampsie Smith asked the status of the supervisor position with Engine Company 9 and whether the position is vacant.

Mayor Reynolds said this is not a vacant position. This subject has been part of an ongoing conversation. He told Fire Chief Matthew Griffin several months ago that if the chief believed under special circumstances that a supervisor was needed at that location that they could fill that role as needed for certain shifts. However, this is not a simple matter because of multiple shifts in a workday, so if there were a permanent position, four new supervisors would be necessary. The Mayor said a clearer picture should emerge when the Department gets back to full staffing. The City has increased its hiring by sending cadets to two academy classes the past few years. The City some months ago put out a Request for Proposals (RFP) to review staffing. RFPs were due last Friday.

Chief Griffin explained that Engine Company 9 is staffed with two firefighters and no officer present. The officer working out of Engine Company 6 on Broad Street covers calls for service for Companies 6 and 9.

Ms. Crampsie Smith referred to the October 29 Public Safety Committee meeting at which details were explained involving a study commissioned by the fire union. She was unclear as to the purpose of the union and City studies and whether they overlapped or were independent of one another.

Mayor Reynolds said he also was confused. The Administration's Budget Address was on Thursday and the Public Safety Committee meeting was the day before. He did not have information about the union's study beforehand. He and fire leadership were asked to answer questions for which they had no information. The RFP was put together perhaps six or eight months ago. There has not been a study like this since perhaps 1998 that included call volume, staffing, paramedic calls and more. He added that the union was involved in putting out the RFP. Staffing is one piece of the RFP but there are other issues that also must be addressed including equipment and facilities.

Ms. Crampsie next asked for a timeline involving the RFP.

Business Administrator Eric Evans said the seven RFPs received will be evaluated the third week of November. Interviews are expected to occur the second week of December. The RFP is to be completed within five months of the award of the contract.

Ms. Crampsie Smith asked whether the union will be involved in choosing the firm to perform the RFP.

Mayor Reynolds said the union has been involved in drafting the RFP; whereas, the City has not been involved in the union's study. The union can state its opinion during the interview process.

Ms. Crampsie Smith asked whether, in the interest of saving time and money, these two studies could be integrated.

Mayor Reynolds said he did not believe so. The union paid for its own study, which may be through a particular lens. It will be a piece of information. But the crafting of the RFP has been comprehensive as to the type of information being sought. There should not be conflicting restrictions. He believes it should be independent.

Ms. Laird

Ms. Laird asked the responsibilities of the shared fire officer.

Chief Griffin said the officer is in charge of day-to-day operations of the station. They are the first arriving officer on a call for the district. If there are overlapping incidents, the officer would respond to the initial call. An officer from another station would have to be dispatched to the second incident.

Mr. Callahan

Mr. Callahan asked Mayor Reynolds to provide a list of all consultants hired by the City during his four-year tenure as well as their cost.

Mayor Reynolds believes he has provided this in the past but said he would attempt to track that down and provide it to all of Council.

Ms. Wilhelm

Ms. Wilhelm thanked Ms. Kalavoda for her information. She has not heard any complaints about Bethlehem Carriage Company. She believes that people wonder about the treatment of working animals. She also congratulated winners in yesterday's election including Mayor Reynolds, Controller George Yasso, and Council members Justin Amann, Jo Daniels, Hillary Kwiatek, and Rachel Leon. Ms. Wilhelm, who did not seek re-election, said that, as a constituent, she will be in good hands and knows that Ms. Kwiatek and Ms. Leon are hard-working and effective Council members.

Ms. Laird

Ms. Laird reminded of the Northside Alive Neighborhood annual meeting tomorrow from 6-8 at the YMCA. The final virtual public meeting will be held on November 12 for the 40-in-10 Bethlehem master parks plan. Recommendations will be reviewed.

Ms. Leon

Ms. Leon said she might have misinterpreted the study discussed during the October 29 Public Safety meeting. She thought that the one offered by the union was more collaborative between the union and the Administration.

Mayor Reynolds said the union asked for GIS data. That was provided by the Administration. He was unsure if there were other data requests, but the Administration did not have much involvement in that study. Instead, he believes the City's approach is more comprehensive and collaborative among fire leadership and the union. He does not want to demean what the union did but wanted to be clear that there was not much collaboration involving the union's study. He also said the union did not owe the Administration that. He was just trying to answer the question.

Ms. Leon also appreciated the information provided about the horses and the carriage rides.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

A. *Director of Community and Economic Development – Memorandum – Construction Fees and Staffing*

The Clerk read an October 29, 2025 memorandum, and proposed Ordinance from Chief Building Inspector Michael Simonson and Director of Community and Economic Development Laura Collins. Mr. Simonson and Ms. Collins recommend revisions to City Article 1702 involving fees for the enforcement of the Pennsylvania Uniform Construction Code as specified in the memo. The memo also proposes raising these fees to cover the cost of hiring two additional employees to handle the increasing workload of the Code Enforcement Bureau.

Vice President Leon stated that Ordinance 9 A is on the agenda.

B. Director of Health – Memorandum – Food Code Regulation – Health Fees

The Clerk read an October 29, 2025 memorandum, and proposed Ordinance from Health Director Kristen Wenrich. Ms. Wenrich recommends revisions to City Article 1113 involving food code regulations and fees. Fees were last raised in 2014. Meanwhile, operational costs have increased and responsibilities have expanded, meaning that the fees charged no longer cover the Health Bureau's costs for providing the services. A proposed increase would set fees comparable to those of local municipalities and allow for cost recovery of licensing and inspection services.

Vice President Leon stated that Ordinance 9 B is on the agenda.

7. REPORTS

A. President of Council

None.

B. Mayor

Mayor Reynolds congratulated successful Council candidates. He noted the diverse group of elected officials and said it represents who we are and who we want to be. The Mayor announced the following events:

- Northside Alive Neighborhood meeting from 6-8 PM at the YMCA;
- 40-in-10 virtual meeting on November 12;
- Southside Tomorrow meeting from 5-7 PM on November 13 at the Fowler Center;
- Complete Streets public meeting on November 19 from 6-8 PM at the YMCA;
- Climate Action Plan meeting November 20 from 9-10 AM;
- Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony at 4:30 PM on November 28; and
- Walnut Week on November 17 through the garage opening on November 20.

The Mayor thanked Council for allowing this new approach to parking by setting different rates for short- and long-duration parking and being open to building a smaller-size parking deck that is more efficient and saves money. This money has been and will continue to be returned to the community by the Parking Authority including the recent purchase of \$340,000 for new light poles on Broad, Main, and Walnut Streets.

C. Public Safety Committee Chair – Ms. Leon

Vice President Leon reported that the Public Safety Committee met at 2 PM October 29 in Town Hall to discuss the IAFF-initiated study on fire staffing levels. The staffing study was reviewed. Findings and related information were taken under advisements. No votes or decisions were made.

8. ORDINANCES FOR FINAL PASSAGE

8 A. *Bill No. 44-2025 – City Street Cartway and Right-of-Way Widths*

The Clerk read Bill No. 44-2025 – City street Cartway and Right-of-Way Widths, sponsored by Ms. Wilhelm and Ms. Leon, and titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, LISTING
CARTWAY AND RIGHT-OF-WAY WIDTHS FOR
CERTAIN CITY STREETS.

Voting AYE: Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, and Ms. Leon, 6. Bill No. 44-2025, now known as Ordinance 2025-42, passed on Final Reading.

9. NEW ORDINANCES

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

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

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

Voting AYE: Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, and Ms. Leon, 6. Bill No. 45-2025 passed on First Reading.

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

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

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

Ms. Crampsie Smith asked whether these fees affect vendors at farmers markets. She was told yes. She next stated that some vendors work at more than one farmers market and wondered whether they would have to pay at each.

Health Director Kristen Wenrich said a license can be obtained to cover various locations. This would cover the administrative fee as well as the inspection charge. She added that the process does not change, only the amount for the fees being charged.

Ms. Crampsie Smith noted that it has been many years since these fees were raised but she noted the current state and federal government shutdowns that include some funding. She asked whether these fee increases would conflict with that or when they would take effect.

Ms. Wenrich said that would be a year from now.

Ms. Wilhelm asked how much money the increases are expected to raise.

Ms. Wenrich said about \$43,000 more than the current \$160,735.

Voting AYE: Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, and Ms. Leon, 6. Bill No. 46-2025 passed on First Reading.

10. RESOLUTIONS

A. *Approve Resolution – Intermunicipal Liquor License Transfer – Cigar Page – Bethlehem, LLC*

Ms. Wilhelm and Ms. Crampsie Smith sponsored Resolution No. 2025-174 that authorized the proposed transfer of Pennsylvania restaurant liquor license No. R-61034 to Cigar Page – Bethlehem, LLC at 1010 Harvard Avenue, Bethlehem, Northampton County, with the understanding that said transfer must be approved at a later date by the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board.

Ms. Laird asked the City Administration if it knows how many smoking, food, and alcohol establishments are within City limits.

Mayor Reynolds said he does not know at this moment but the Administration will search for those numbers.

Ms. Laird also asked whether there are initiatives within the Climate Action Plan or through the Health Bureau that seek to limit the number of food and beverage businesses that limit smoking.

Ms. Collins could not recall anything specific. She noted there are different types of businesses that are regulated by different agencies, none of which is the City.

Voting AYE: Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, and Ms. Leon, 5; NAY: Ms. Laird, 1. The Resolution passed.

B. *Certificate of Appropriateness – HCC – 23 East Third Street*

Ms. Wilhelm and Ms. Crampsie Smith sponsored Resolution No. 2025-175 that authorized to install backlit letters within the sign band as signage for a new commercial tenant.

Voting AYE: Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, and Ms. Leon, 6. The Resolution passed.

C. *Certificate of Appropriateness – HCC – 14-36 West Third Street*

Ms. Wilhelm and Ms. Crampsie Smith sponsored Resolution No. 2025-176 that authorized to construct a rooftop outdoor seating area, pergola, and glass railing, and receive approval to use alternate façade materials including brick, pre-cast details, and carport finishes.

Voting AYE: Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, and Ms. Leon, 6. The Resolution passed.

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned 8:33 PM.

ATTEST:

Tad J. Miller
City Clerk