

**CITY OF BETHLEHEM**  
**City Council Memorandum**

**SUBJECT:** Unspent Coronavirus Relief Funds

**TO:** Bethlehem City Council

**FROM:** J. William Reynolds, Member of Council

**DATE:** October 30, 2020

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The United States Congress passed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act in response to the unprecedented national health and economic crises caused by the Coronavirus pandemic. Through that program, the Congress created a \$150 billion Coronavirus Relief Fund for states and localities to address unforeseen financial needs and risks created by the pandemic. However, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania currently holds approximately \$1.3 billion in unspent Coronavirus relief funds and if the money is not allocated by December 1, 2020, the funds will be disbursed to county-level governments including Lehigh and Northampton Counties.

Attached is a proposed resolution urging either the Pennsylvania General Assembly, or Lehigh and Northampton Counties, to allocate the unspent Coronavirus relief funds to support small businesses and those within our vulnerable communities significantly impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic, such as economically disadvantaged communities and students, restaurants, and minority-owned small businesses.

I would ask the Members of Council to please consider the attached resolution at the November 4, 2020 City Council meeting.



J. William Reynolds, Member Council

CC: Mayor

**RESOLUTION NO. 2020-**

**Resolution urging the Pennsylvania General Assembly, Lehigh County, and Northampton County to quickly allocate any unspent Coronavirus relief funds to support small businesses and those within our vulnerable communities who have been significantly impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic**

WHEREAS, in response to the unprecedented national health and economic crises caused by the Coronavirus pandemic, the United States Congress passed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act that created a \$150 billion Coronavirus Relief Fund for states and localities to address unforeseen financial needs and risks created by the pandemic;

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania currently holds approximately \$1.3 billion in unspent Coronavirus relief funds and if those funds are not allocated by December 1, 2020, the funds will automatically be disbursed to 60 of the State's counties, including Lehigh County and Northampton County;

WHEREAS, beyond the public health challenges created by COVID-19, the pandemic has severely damaged the City's restaurants, retail establishments, and small businesses, including family and minority-owned small businesses, and the economic challenges caused by the Coronavirus pandemic will likely get worse as temperatures drop and outdoor activities are further constrained;

WHEREAS, the Coronavirus pandemic has created serious economic hardship for our residents, including in our most vulnerable communities, by exacerbating pre-existing housing and food insecurity issues and the pandemic has further highlighted dramatic inequities related to high-speed wireless access, especially for economically disadvantaged students forced into online schooling where learning is increasingly dependent on access to new technology and high-speed internet connections; and

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Bethlehem believes it is vital for the \$1.3 billion in unspent Coronavirus funds to be spent on supporting those within our vulnerable communities and businesses that have been impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic, such as economically disadvantaged communities and students without access to essential learning technologies and internet connections, restaurants, and small businesses, including minority and family-owned small businesses.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT:

RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of Bethlehem urges the Pennsylvania General Assembly to allocate the unspent Coronavirus relief funds to support those within our vulnerable communities and businesses impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic, such as economically disadvantaged communities and students, restaurants, and small businesses, including minority-owned small businesses; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that in the event the unspent Coronavirus funds are allocated to county-level governments in the Commonwealth, the City Council of the City of Bethlehem urges the Lehigh County Board of Commissioners and Northampton County Council to quickly allocate the unspent Coronavirus relief funds to efforts in support of vulnerable communities and businesses impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic, such as economically disadvantaged communities and students, restaurants, and small businesses, including minority-owned small businesses.

Sponsored by \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

ADOPTED by Council this      day of      , 2020.

\_\_\_\_\_  
President of Council

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk