



CITY OF BETHLEHEM

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To: Michael G. Colon, President of City Council

From: Eric R. Evans, Business Administrator

RE: Article 141: Sister City Commission

Date: February 24, 2025

Enclosed for Council's review and action are proposed amendments to Article 141: Sister City Commission. Please contact me with any questions. Thank you for the consideration.

Cc: J. William Reynolds

John F. Spirk, Jr.

Janine Santoro

BILL NO. _____ - 2025

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-_____

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, AMENDING
ARTICLE 141 OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES
ENTITLED SISTER CITY COMMISSION,
BY REPEALING THE EXISTING ORDINANCE AND
REPLACING IT IN ITS ENTIRETY.

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM HEREBY ORDAINS AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Article 141 of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Bethlehem, titled Sister City Commission, is hereby repealed in its entirety and replaced as follows:

ARTICLE 141

Sister City Commission

- 141.01 Purpose, Establishment
- 141.02 Appointment, Term and Vacancy
- 141.03 Duties and Procedures
- 141.04 Self-Sustaining Operations

141.01 PURPOSE, ESTABLISHMENT.

In order to celebrate shared history and create opportunities for cross-cultural collaboration, the Sister City Commission of the City of Bethlehem is hereby established. The City of Bethlehem has established six (6) Sister Cities: Tondabayashi, Japan (1972), Schwäbisch Gmünd in Baden-Württemberg, Germany (1991), Murska Sobota, Slovenia (1996), Corfu, Greece (2013), Foiano di Val Fortore, Italy (2018), and Patillas, Puerto Rico (2024). Each Sister City shall have its own committee, with flexibility to design its own mission and goals.

141.02 APPOINTMENT, TERM AND VACANCY.

The Sister City Commission of the City of Bethlehem is to be composed of no more than two (2) members from each of the six (6) recognized Sister Cities, to be appointed by the Mayor subject to the approval and confirmation of Council, and who shall serve without compensation. All appointments shall be for three-year terms. Any vacancy shall be filled for the unexpired term in the same manner as original appointments. The commission may meet as needed in accordance with the Sunshine Act.

141.03 DUTIES AND PROCEDURES.

To establish a new sister city relationship, an agreement between administrations of both the City of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania and the new city should be signed and be publicly announced. Once established, it is recommended that each Sister City committee establish by-laws, craft a mission statement, elect officers, hold regularly scheduled meetings, create an IRS approved non-profit in order to conduct business operations for the activities it intends to pursue.

141.04 SELF-SUSTAINING OPERATIONS.

Sister City Committees are intended to be self-sustaining with regard to staffing, planning, and financing activities it chooses to engage and pursuit. In the case a Sister City intends to request funding from the City budget to support its mission, it will be required to submit a bank account statement, annual budget, and proposal letter describing use(s) for the funding, to the Mayor's office, before the Labor Day holiday.

SECTION 2. That all ordinances and sections thereof that are inconsistent with this Ordinance are hereby repealed.

Sponsored by _____

Passed finally in Council this _____ day of _____, 2025.

President of Council

ATTEST:

City Clerk

This Ordinance approved this _____ day of _____, 2025.

Mayor

ARTICLE 141

Sister City Commission

- 141.01 Establishment; appointment, term and vacancy.
- 141.02 Officers and rules of procedure.
- 141.03 Duties.

141.01 ESTABLISHMENT; APPOINTMENT, TERM AND VACANCY.

There is hereby established the Sister City Commission of the City of Bethlehem to be composed of no more than twenty members, to be appointed by the Mayor subject to the approval and confirmation of Council, and who shall serve without compensation.

Members of the Commission are required to be residents of the City of Bethlehem; provided, however, that up to five (5) members shall not be required to be residents of the City. Commission members shall primarily be individuals who have visited Tondabayashi, Japan or who have demonstrated a personal interest in developing a stronger relationship between Bethlehem and its Japanese Sister City. Of the original appointees to the Commission, one-third shall serve for terms of three years, one-third for two years and one-third for one year, respectively. Thereafter, all appointments shall be for three-year terms, which will expire on October 1 of the third year of the term. Any vacancy shall be filled for the unexpired term in the same manner as original appointments. The Mayor, with the approval of Council, may remove any member without cause assigned. (Ord. 3032 §1. Passed 10/22/85; Ord. 3271. Passed 6/6/89; Ord. 3617. Passed 5/17/94; Ord. 4046 Passed 12/5/00)

141.02 OFFICERS AND RULES OF PROCEDURE.

The Sister City Commission shall elect one of its members as Chairman, may elect such other officers within their group as it may deem necessary, and may adopt such rules of procedure as are necessary to accomplish the duties prescribed in Section 141.03. (Ord. 2327 §2. Passed 11/28/72.)

141.03 DUTIES.

The Sister City Commission shall:

- (a) Work with the Sister City Commission of Tondabayashi, Japan to promote better understanding, exchange cultural interests, promote trade interest, tourism, and exchange general ideas.
- (b) Prepare and submit periodic reports of its activities to the Mayor and Council and from time to time to make recommendations to the Mayor and Council in connection with the achievement of its objectives. (Ord. 2327 §3. Passed 11/28/72.)
- (c) Oversee a Student Exchange Program between Bethlehem and its Japanese Sister City of Tondabayashi. The Bethlehem Sister City Commission will interview the applicants and select the students. Students residing outside the City of Bethlehem may be selected only when the list of students who reside within the limits of the City of Bethlehem and who meet the criteria for selection has been exhausted. (Ord. 3271. Passed 6/6/89.)