

BETHLEHEM CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
10 East Church Street - Town Hall  
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania  
Tuesday, January 7, 2025 – 7:00 PM

PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

1. ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order by President Colón. Present were Bryan G. Callahan, Grace Crampsie Smith, Hillary G. Kwiatek, Colleen Laird, Rachel Leon, Kiera Wilhelm, and Michael G. Colón 7.

President Colón announced that Mayor Reynolds would not be present this evening because he was attending a meeting involving the Bethlehem Area Vocational-Technical School.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

December 17, 2024

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

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

*New Year, New Appeal*

Resident Harry Faber noted that the year has changed to 2025, but the killing in the Middle East continues. He called on Council to condemn the genocide there and demand that federal tax money be spent on Americans, not the genocide, death and destruction.

*Enforce Ordinances*

Resident Jo Daniels observed that South Bethlehem has deteriorated in the 50 years that she has lived there. The South Side has a bad reputation primarily because of how it looks. This could be improved with the enforcement of City ordinances associated with tall weeds, overflowing garbage, property maintenance issues, etc. She suggested that some of the money received in lieu of developers providing affordable housing could be used for enforcement. Businesses are attractive, but residential landlords and some homeowners need to be held accountable. She asked what can be done to improve enforcement to clean up these matters.

*Support “Red Flag Law”*

Resident Mark Will-Weber stated his support for state Rep. Jeanne McNeill’s proposed “Red Flag Law” that would require municipal authorities or utility companies to notify customers if their water usage increased by 50 percent in one month. This would warn customers of potential problems leading to wasted water and high utility bills. He was concerned that this bill might not pass in the Legislature. Consequently, Mr. Will-Weber urged Council to enact similar

legislation of its own protecting Bethlehem water customers. He reasoned that Bethlehem enacting its own “Red Flag Law” would satisfy everyone because it would limit wasting water and prevent customers from paying for water usage without benefit.

#### *Safety Concerns*

Resident Kathy Orendach raised safety concerns in the 500 block of North New Street. She found a bullet was fired into her car while parked behind her apartment. There also was a shooting at Long and East Walnut Streets in August of 2023. Besides her own safety, she stated concerns for neighbors and students at nearby Moravian Academy. An investigation is ongoing as to her shooting incident. She values where she lives and the possessions she has earned. She does not want to see anyone hurt and wants to feel safe.

President Colón said he was glad to hear that the police are involved. He encouraged her to speak with Chief Michelle Kott or Council members afterward.

#### *Stepping Forward*

Resident Katherine Grasso volunteered to serve on an authority, board or commission. She has particular interest in planning and zoning.

#### *Another Accident*

Resident Mary Jo Makoul noted that problems at the intersection of Pennsylvania and Eaton Avenues and Union Boulevard are being addressed. She hoped for similar progress at Club, Eaton and Hanover Avenues and West Broad Street. She said there was another accident on January 1 that snapped a utility pole in half. She knows that the fate of the proposed Hanover Apartments may play a role in when, or if, improvements will be made to this intersection but hoped that no fatalities will occur in the meantime.

#### *Appeal Continues*

Resident Terry Kloiber continued discussion on the intersection and provided a photograph of the recent accident. She reminded Council that the court appeal continues on the proposed five-story apartment plan. Neighbors primarily object to the proposed five stories instead of three stories.

#### *Hanover Apartments/Block Watch/Pharmaceutical Headquarters*

Resident William Scheirer noted that the former Bennett Toyota lot, where Hanover Apartments is proposed, is zoned Limited Commercial with a five-story limit. The Zoning Ordinance requires that there be mixed commercial space with residential use. The developer sought, and received, a variance from zoners not to include commercial space. The developer’s interpretation is that they may now provide five stories of housing, replacing commercial space with more housing. Mr. Scheirer believed that it would be equally logical that if no commercial space is provided, the developer cannot build multi-family housing. Mr. Scheirer also offered that a Block Watch program used to cover the North New Street area involved in Ms. Orendach’s concerns. If still active, this might be of some assistance. Mr. Scheirer also applauded word that a

German pharmaceutical company has purchased 119 Technology Drive, which was previously proposed for an apartment complex.

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

*Supports Contract*

Resident William Scheirer supported entering into a contract with Artefact, Inc. to provide historic property reviews, Items 6C and 10C on tonight's agenda. CEO Christine Ussler used to be the City's historic officer.

4. OLD BUSINESS

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

5. NEW BUSINESS

*Ms. Kwiatek*

Ms. Kwiatek said the concerns raised by Ms. Orendach are similar to some previously raised by other residents. She asked Chief Kott for an update.

Chief Kott said the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board has held a hearing for a nearby business to review activity there. Police patrol the area more frequently when circumstances permit. An increased presence during peak times has helped over the past two weekends. A detective has been assigned to the case, but she asked for the community to report incidents to police in an effort to catch criminals and curb crime.

*Ms. Crampsie Smith*

Ms. Crampsie Smith addressed concerns raised by Ms. Daniels. Ms. Daniels referenced certain money that comes to the City involving affordable housing. Ms. Crampsie Smith said the only properties in which the City receives a fee in lieu of the developer providing affordable housing are located within the Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance (LERTA) zone, not all property in the City. She also asked the Administration to address enforcement concerns involving, weeds, trash, snow, etc.

Laura Collins, Director of Community and Economic Development, agreed that these are important quality of life issues. Some of these matters are handled by her department and others are not. She believes the inspectors do an excellent job. Most enforcement begins with complaints. The City responds to complaints, and other circumstances may come to light if they are found during home inspections. She also advised that matters involving citations have lag time, since the owner must be given time to remediate the situation and time may be added with the scheduling of hearings. Ms. Collins suggested that complaints be made by contacting the City's

Service Center at 610-865-7000. They will then be logged and directed to the proper department. Some of the areas of responsibility have changed over the years.

*Mr. Callahan*

Mr. Callahan asked if it would be possible to put a notice in the City's newsletter to advise residents that they should call the Service Center with complaints. He suggested continuing to run such notices in subsequent newsletters. (Editor's Note: It was determined that a notice has been running in the City's newsletter.)

*Ms. Leon*

Ms. Leon recommended Community Action as a great resource to contact regarding the stated South Side issues. Neighborhood cleanups are regularly scheduled and are a good place for conversations to be held so that problems can be tracked and projects prioritized. She also reminded that police have a program whereby anyone with camera footage of crime or suspicious events is asked to share it with police. Residents can be part of the solution.

## 6. COMMUNICATIONS

### A. *Director of Water and Sewer Resources – Memo – 2025 01 Annual Engineering Services – Steven G. Lowry & Associates, Inc.*

The Clerk read a January 2, 2025 memorandum with an attached Resolution from Edward Boscola, Director of Water and Sewer Resources. Mr. Boscola recommends a contract with Steven G. Lowry & Associates, Inc. of Mechanicsburg to provide assistance in all hydraulic evaluations for the water distribution system, assistance in planning the capital budget, develop standards for system design, evaluate impact of proposed developments, water quality investigations, SCADA and data analysis, cost estimating, and review of hydrant flushing program. The cost of the one-year contract is \$68,000. There are two optional yearly renewals at a cost of \$68,000 each.

President Colón stated that Resolution 10 A is on the agenda.

### B. *Director of Water and Sewer Resources – Memo – 2025 02 Predictive Maintenance for Wastewater Treatment Plant – ITR, LLC*

The Clerk read a January 2, 2025 memorandum with an attached Resolution from Edward Boscola, Director of Water and Sewer Resources. Mr. Boscola recommends a contract with the ITR, LLC of Bethlehem to perform predictive maintenance on equipment at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. The cost is \$10,200 for a contract that would run throughout 2025. Five annual renewal options are offered at the same annual price of \$10,200.

President Colón stated that Resolution 10 B is on the agenda.

### C. *Housing and Community Development Administrator – 2024 47 Historic Environmental Reviews – Artefact, Inc.*

The Clerk read a December 30, 2024 memorandum from Robert Vidoni, Housing and Community Development Administrator. Mr. Vidoni recommends a contract with Artefact, Inc. of Bethlehem to provide historic property reviews for many federally funded projects through the Community Development Block Grant and other programs. The term of the contract is two years running from January 1, 2025 through December 31 of 2026 and at a cost of \$19,140. The contract is based on an average cost per unit. An option exists for a second two-year contract to run through December 31, 2028 at the cost of \$19,720.

President Colón stated that Resolution 10 C is on the agenda.

*D. Kolb, Vasiliadis, Florenz & Recchiuti, LLC – Petition – Zoning Map Amendment Request*

The Clerk read a December 30, 2024 communication from Attorney Michael Recchiuti on behalf of BPG Investments II, LLC with a Petition requesting an amendment to the City's Zoning Map involving 11-15 West Garrison Street. The current zoning for this property is RT, or High Density Residential. The request is to change the zoning classification to become part of the adjacent Central Business District. The petitioner intends to propose a 70-unit apartment building with commercial/retail spaces on the first floor.

President Colón said he would accept a motion and a second to schedule a Public Hearing for February 18, 2025 to consider the requested zoning map amendment.

Ms. Leon made a motion, seconded by Mr. Callahan, to schedule a Public Hearing at 7:00 PM on February 18, 2025 to consider the requested zoning map amendment involving 11-15 West Garrison Street.

Voting AYE: Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon, Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, and Mr. Colón, 7. The Resolution passed.

*E. Health Director – Memo – Records Destruction Request*

The Clerk read a November 21, 2024 memorandum with a proposed Resolution from Health Director Kristen Wenrich, requesting the Destruction of Records from the Health Bureau. Ms. Wenrich has reviewed the Municipal Records Retention Act, and the records listed on the exhibit accompanying the memo fall within the categories where destruction is permitted.

President Colón stated that a Resolution will be placed on the January 21, 2025 City Council agenda.

7. REPORTS

*A. President of Council*

*7A1. Councilmanic Appointment – Hillary Kwiatek – Bethlehem Library Board*

President Colón appointed Hillary Kwiatek to the Bethlehem Library Board. The appointment is effective through January of 2028. Ms. Leon and Ms. Crampsie Smith sponsored Resolution 2025-001 to confirm the appointment.

President Colón said that he consulted with Josh Berk, the executive director of the library, and Lynn Rothman, chairwoman of the Environmental Advisory Council, in identifying those interested in serving and whether they would be good fits as representatives.

Ms. Kwiatek announced that she will abstain from the vote, since she is the appointee. She also noted that the vacancy arose because Ms. Leon has accepted a role as a representative to another board. She added that Mr. Berk wishes to have a Council member as a representative. Her appointment would continue that tradition in Ms. Leon's absence. (Ms. Kwiatek provided a City Council Disclosure of Conflict of Interest form that will be attached to the minutes.)

Voting AYE: Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon, Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, and Mr. Colón, 6; ABSTENTION: Ms. Kwiatek, 1. The Motion passed.

*7A2. Councilmanic Appointment – Christie Jacobsen – Bethlehem Library Board*

President Colón appointed Christie Jacobsen to the Bethlehem Library Board. The appointment is effective through January of 2028. Ms. Leon and Ms. Crampsie Smith sponsored Resolution 2025-002 to confirm the appointment.

Ms. Laird has worked with Ms. Jacobsen and believed she would be a great asset to this board.

Voting AYE: Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon, Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, and Mr. Colón, 7. The Motion passed.

*7A3. Councilmanic Appointment – Ron Williams – Bethlehem Library Board*

President Colón appointed Ron Williams to the vacated seat of Jane Kenealy Gill on the Bethlehem Library Board. The appointment is effective through January of 2026. Ms. Leon and Ms. Crampsie Smith sponsored Resolution 2025-003 to confirm the appointment.

Voting AYE: Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon, Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, and Mr. Colón, 7. The Motion passed.

*7A4. Councilmanic Appointment – Benjamin Guthrie – Environmental Advisory Council*

President Colón appointed Benjamin Guthrie to the Environmental Advisory Council. The appointment is effective through January of 2028. Ms. Leon and Ms. Crampsie Smith sponsored Resolution 2025-004 to confirm the appointment.

Voting AYE: Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon, Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, and Mr. Colón, 7. The Motion passed.

*7A5. Councilmanic Appointment – Katie Trembler – Environmental Advisory Council*

President Colón appointed Katie Trembler to the Environmental Advisory Council. The appointment is effective through January of 2028. Ms. Leon and Ms. Crampsie Smith sponsored Resolution 2025-005 to confirm the appointment.

Voting AYE: Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon, Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, and Mr. Colón, 7. The Motion passed.

*7A6. Councilmanic Appointment – Steven C. Olshevski – Environmental Advisory Council*

President Colón appointed Steven C. Olshevski to the Environmental Advisory Council. The appointment is effective through January of 2028. Ms. Leon and Ms. Crampsie Smith sponsored Resolution 2025-006 to confirm the appointment.

Voting AYE: Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon, Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, and Mr. Colón, 7. The Motion passed.

*7A7. Annual City Council Report for 2024*

President Colón provided the Annual City Council Report for 2024:

Twenty twenty-four was an exciting year. It was a year that saw Bethlehem, Pennsylvania join the likes of Athens, Venice, London, and Rome as cities on the world stage of UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The Historic Moravian Bethlehem District, as part of the transnational site Moravian Church Settlements, in 2024 was named an historic destination and joined world-renowned landmarks such as the Acropolis, the Roman Forum, Vatican City, and the Great Wall of China.

Much credit belongs to the Bethlehem World Heritage Council and Commission along with the Bethlehem Area Moravians, Central Moravian Church, Historic Bethlehem Museums & Sites and Moravian University. For its part, City Council was pleased to support the efforts in any way possible that led to Inscription on July 26. We are proud to help our city celebrate this momentous achievement.

In addition to brimming with pride over our City's history, Council also in 2024 supported actions toward ensuring Bethlehem's future. Council's Committee of the Whole met to review plans to demolish and reconstruct the Walnut Street Garage. Council also held Public Hearings to approve a zoning map change and street vacation to make way for the garage. Demolition has taken place, and the garage's replacement is anticipated in time for the 2025 Christmas season with additional adjacent development being planned.

Council also continues to support efforts to reduce homelessness and create affordable housing. Council endorsed efforts to apply for grant money toward the Gateway on 4th and authorized two contracts to enhance the Pembroke Choice Neighborhood Project. The first was for a traffic study to review the Pembroke Road and Stefko Boulevard corridor. The second was to conduct a market study to evaluate the demand for affordable market-rate rental and for-sale housing.

Additionally, Council has reviewed intentions for making significant street changes

including restoring two-way traffic to Center and Linden Streets. Major renovations also are planned to make much of East and West Broad streets pedestrian and bicycle friendly and generally more appealing. Council also has authorized refurbishment at the Waste Water Treatment Plant and replacement of a 2-million-gallon reservoir drinking tank.

Meanwhile, grants, contracts, and other authorizations involving City parks and recreation have frequented Council agendas. Bethlehem reached a milestone late in the year with the final purchase of land that will close the Greenway Trail Gap, which completes a dream several years in the making. Council passed Resolutions authorizing Phase II of improvements to the Monocacy Trail. And, it authorized work to be done to make significant improvements to Saucon Park, the Rose Garden and Fairview Park, as well as a complete makeover of Friendship Park. In addition, Council authorized a study of the City's entire parks system to provide a comprehensive prioritization of future needs.

In all, Council held 24 regular meetings. It conducted 13 committee meetings, 3 of which were Committee of the Whole meetings including one on ethics training for Council and the Administration. Council also held a Curative Amendment hearing lasting 7 ½ hours over two nights to consider proposed changes to the Limited Commercial Zoning District. The year's body of work led to the passage of 61 Ordinances and 280 Resolutions. Key legislation passed included a new article to curtail the use of illegal dirt bikes and all-terrain vehicles on City streets with intentions of improving safety and reducing nuisances, and amending the Animal Ordinance to ban the sale of pets from puppy mills within the City.

Looking ahead, 2025 promises to be another busy year. Efforts will continue to help the homeless and promote affordable housing as well as working to complete initiatives that were started in 2024 and preceding years as well. And, as always, Council will continue to work with the Administration and all City departments to bring the residents and businesses of Bethlehem the services that they have come to expect. Let's get started.

*B. Mayor*

7B1. Administrative Order No. 2025-01 Cynthia E. Gutierrez Luna – Board of Health

Mayor Reynolds reappointed Cynthia E. Gutierrez Luna to the Board of Health. The reappointment is effective through January of 2030. Ms. Leon and Ms. Crampsie Smith sponsored Resolution 2025-007 to confirm the reappointment.

Voting AYE: Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon, Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, and Mr. Colón, 7. The Motion passed.

Business Administrator Eric Evans reported in Mayor Reynolds' absence. He said that the City and the SEIU bargaining unit reached agreement on a four-year contract late in 2024. This is for non-uniformed employees and paramedics. The new contract through 2028 was ratified by the union membership on December 19. (Contracts for police and fire run through 2026.)

Mr. Evans also provided updates regarding some final financial numbers for the end of 2024. Highlights included real estate tax revenue of \$35 million which was on target, Earned Income Tax of \$11.8 million compared to the same amount in 2023, and Act 511 taxes under the



Local Tax Enabling Act that met or exceeded budget projections. Some savings also were realized including \$380,000 in unused personnel costs. Mr. Evans said there were no bad surprises.

C. Community and Economic Development Committee Chair

Ms. Kwiatek announced that a Committee meeting will be held at 6 PM on January 21 in Town Hall to discuss proposed changes to the Residential Permit Parking program.

8. ORDINANCES FOR FINAL PASSAGE

None.

9. NEW ORDINANCES

None.

10. RESOLUTIONS

A. *Approve Resolution – 2025 01 Annual Engineering services – Steven G. Lowry & Associates, Inc.*

Ms. Leon and Ms. Crampsie Smith sponsored Resolution No. 2025-008 that authorized to execute an Agreement with Steven G. Lowry & Associates, Inc. to perform hydraulic evaluations for the water distribution system and other specified related work.

Voting AYE: Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon, Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, and Mr. Colón, 7. The Resolution passed.

B. *Approve Resolution – 2025 02 Predictive Maintenance for Wastewater Treatment Plant – ITR, LLC*

Ms. Leon and Ms. Crampsie Smith sponsored Resolution No. 2025-009 that authorized to execute an Agreement with ITR, LLC to perform predictive maintenance at the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Voting AYE: Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon, Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, and Mr. Colón, 7. The Resolution passed.

C. *Approve Resolution – 2024 47 Historic Environmental Reviews – Artefact, Inc.*

Ms. Leon and Ms. Crampsie Smith sponsored Resolution No. 2025-010 that authorized to execute an Agreement with Artefact, Inc. to conduct historic site reviews as necessary.

Ms. Crampsie Smith asked what type of properties get reviewed and whether this is a new requirement.

Ms. Collins said this is not new. This review is required to receive CDBG and other federal funding. Artefact, Inc. is the incumbent contractor. This will be a new two-year contract with the same firm.

Voting AYE: Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon, Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, and Mr. Colón, 7. The Resolution passed.

*D. Certificate of Appropriateness – HCC – 2024.12#850 – 117 East Fourth Street*

Ms. Leon and Ms. Crampsie Smith sponsored Resolution No. 2025-011 that authorized to install two (2) signs on the front façade of the building; one wall sign and one with dimensional letters mounted on the entrance canopy.

Voting AYE: Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird, Ms. Leon, Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, and Mr. Colón, 7. The Resolution passed.

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned 8:16 PM.

ATTEST:

Tad J. Miller  
City Clerk