

BETHLEHEM CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
10 East Church Street - Town Hall  
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania  
Tuesday, January 16, 2024 – 7:00 PM

PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

1. ROLL CALL

President Colón called the meeting to order. Present were Grace Crampsie Smith, Hillary G. Kwiatek, Colleen S. Laird, Rachel Leon, Kiera L. Wilhelm, and Michael G. Colón, 6; Absent: Bryan G. Callahan, 1.

PUBLIC HEARING

President Colón stated that prior to the consideration of the regular Agenda items, City Council will conduct a Public Hearing. This Public Hearing is to review and accept public comment on the proposed use of funds to be received under the 2023 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) in the amount of \$39,617.00.

President Colón called the Public Hearing to order. He noted that a Communication was read at the January 2, 2024 Council meeting that outlined the proposed use of funding to upgrade the Police Department's computer hardware, software, and peripherals. He stated he will now recognize a representative from the applicant to address this matter.

Deputy Chief Scott Meixell said this is a federal grant received annually.

**Council Comments**

Ms. Wilhelm asked how the allotment is determined.

Deputy Chief Meixell said it is based on crime statistics.

Ms. Leon noted the inclusion of replacement of laptop mounts in patrol vehicles. She wondered whether these are for use in existing vehicles or in new vehicles as they are received.

The Deputy Chief said both, in a sense. If some of these mounts can be reused when switching out vehicles, they will be. Otherwise, some may be used in the new vehicles.

Ms. Laird asked what the average life expectancy is for these computers.

Deputy Chief Meixell estimated five to six years.

Ms. Kwiatek asked how much the \$39,617 grant covers of the total computer cost of the project. She wondered if more funding is being added.

The Deputy Chief said that computer-related purchases are never ending. Computers need to be replaced. This will include laptops, software, and other equipment.

## **Public Comments**

### *Budget Question*

Resident Jeffrey Zettlemoyer asked if this grant money will be shown as a separate line item in the budget or if it would be commingled with other income and expenses.

President Colón said that question likely will be answered when Council votes on this matter at its February 6 meeting.

President Colón announced that a Resolution will be placed on the February 6, 2024 Council Agenda and adjourned the Public Hearing at 7:10 PM.

President Colón moved on to the regular Council meeting business.

## **2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

January 2, 2024

Prior to consideration of the January 2, 2024 minutes, President Colón addressed resident Stephen Antalics' request made January 2 that certain details of his comments be included in those minutes. President Colón cited Robert's Rules of Order in stating that minutes are to reflect "what was done at an official meeting, not what was said at an official meeting." He added that the minutes are not intended to be a transcript of a meeting but are to capture the official actions of a meeting. He offered this as a point of clarity.

Following that statement, the minutes were approved as presented.

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

### *Remembering the Words of Dr. King*

Resident Jeffrey Zettlemoyer offered some words of Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr. King once said that, "If I cannot do great things, I can do small things in a great way." He also said, "It is always good to make a difference wherever you live." He stressed the differences in us, but he also stressed that we are all together. Mr. Zettlemoyer compared this to City Council and noted some differing opinions stated at the last meeting and said this can be good for democracy, but he appealed to Council to "work for the common good."

### *Various Concerns*

Resident Mary Jo Makhoul said she recently attended her first Historical Architectural Review Board meeting. She was pleased that the Board rejected two plans for the Walnut Street Parking Garage in part because of height restrictions. She believes the garage could be structurally sound and still viable with proper maintenance. Ms. Makhoul also urged Council to put issues raised by residents on the agenda. She said the current system of referring residents to discuss concerns with department heads after meetings often does not resolve issues. Ms.

Makhoul thanked the City for the installation of an additional storm drain at Grandview Boulevard and Ritter Street; however, the flooding continued during a recent storm. The correct solution is to replace the entire length of the 4-foot diameter pipe and remove a hump in Grandview Boulevard. She also invited Council, the Mayor, and all residents to attend a town hall meeting that she is organizing at 9:00 AM on January 27 in the Borderline Restaurant.

#### *Disputed Statements*

Resident Mark Will-Weber commented on a few statements made in recent months by Director of Water and Sewer Resources Edward Boscola. Mr. Will-Weber believes the reported low delinquency rate is attributable to immediate threats to customers. For example, he said he was getting bills with penalties attached despite the fact he was contesting the initial bill. He added that the City can threaten to send a bill collector, shut off your water, or file a lien against your property. Mr. Will-Weber said that Mr. Boscola also touted the Department's willingness to work with customers to satisfy bills. He said that was not his experience. This really means the City is willing to put you on a payment plan, which only spreads the debt over a longer period.

#### *Supports Garage Plan*

Resident Megan Lysowski believes that the Bethlehem Parking Authority has a great plan to use money wisely. She believes that either the proposed plan with 590 spaces or the one with 530 spaces would provide adequate parking and make room for more housing. If the garage were to be identically replaced, it would cost more money and provide no more housing. She urged Council to support an option with less parking that includes housing.

#### *Stick to Original Footprint*

Resident Frank Filiciotto said that in his opinion, and that of nearly everyone he has spoken with, there is no doubt that the Walnut Street Garage needs to be replaced. He also believes that architectural appropriateness and adequacy of parking are key to the design and plan, but that the reduction in footprint of the replacement garage to 58 percent of the original flaws the plan. Reduction of the footprint has led to a taller design in order to offer adequate parking, which he also does not see as desirable. Mr. Filiciotto added that he circulated petitions to nearby residents and businesses. A majority of residents oppose the plans largely based on height. Most of the businesses also oppose the plans but because of the reduction in offered parking spaces. He believes the need for parking will only worsen if Bethlehem is awarded a World Heritage Designation in 2024 bringing anticipated added tourism. Mr. Filiciotto urged Council to replace in-kind the garage using its original footprint and relocate the "white box", or undetermined future development, elsewhere.

#### *Caution Offered*

Resident Stephen Antalics recounted a situation in which a Bethlehem City Council Solicitor was removed from his position some years ago. He said a Council Member wanted the Solicitor removed and was very domineering in gaining the support of other Council Members to accomplish this. He asked Council to think about these tactics.

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

*Support for Contract*

Resident Megan Lysowski encouraged Council to support the contract on tonight's agenda with Traffic and Planning Designs for designing improvements for East Broad Street. The firm put together the Activate Broad Street plan in 2021. She recommended making a modification to the plan by replacing an intended curb with a floating curb bump-out so a bike lane could be added in the future.

*Questioning the Hiring Process*

Resident Stephen Antalics spoke to Resolution 10 I, appointment of a Solicitor for Council. He made clear that he does not have a problem with the listed candidate, Stephanie J. Steward. However, he said he has a problem with the process. Mr. Antalics said, historically, Council has had prospective Solicitor candidates state their qualifications from the podium in Town Hall. This was very transparent. After the presentations, an Executive Session was held to choose the Solicitor. However, Mr. Antalics said he did not believe there was an announcement or advertisement for this current opening, but the agenda lists there is expected action tonight to make an appointment. Mr. Antalics said he spoke minutes ago about a qualified candidate. He called that attorney who said he knew nothing about the current opening nor was he contacted. Mr. Antalics asked why the urgency and wondered who knew there was an opening. He said this smacked of secret government.

*Water Main Break Concern*

Resident Martin Romeril said he hoped that Council would look into the third water main break in the unit block of East Market Street in the past 10 years or so. This has led to the closing of the historic Trinity Episcopal Church at 44 East Market. He does not know why these mains keep breaking but hopes it will not become common across the City.

5. OLD BUSINESS

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

6. COMMUNICATIONS

A. *Fire Chief – Memo – Records Destruction*

The Clerk read a December 18, 2023 memorandum with a proposed Resolution from Fire Chief Warren Achey, requesting the Destruction of Records from his department. Chief Achey 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 a Resolution will be placed on the February 6, 2024 City Council Agenda.

*B. Director of Water & Sewer Resources – 2024 01 Annual Consulting Services WWTP*

The Clerk read January 16, 2024 memorandum with an attached Resolution from Edward Boscola, Director of Water and Sewer Resources. Mr. Boscola recommends a contract with S.C. Engineers, Inc. of Allentown to perform annual consulting services at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. The contract will run from January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024 and the amount is not to exceed \$20,000. There are four additional annual renewal options, each at up to \$20,000.

President Colón stated Resolution 10 A is on the agenda.

*C. Director of water and Sewer Resources – 2024 02 Update of Capital Value and Depreciation of the City's Water System*

The Clerk read a January 16, 2024 memorandum with an attached Resolution from Edward Boscola, Director of Water and Sewer Resources. Mr. Boscola recommends a contract with Gannett Fleming Valuation and Rate Consultants, LLC of Harrisburg to perform an update of the Capital Value and Depreciation of the City's Water System. The contract will run from the Notice to Proceed until April 15, 2024. The cost will be \$7,500.00 There are four additional annual renewals at \$7,500.00 each.

President Colón stated Resolution 10 B is on the agenda.

*D. Director of Water and Sewer Resources – 2024 03 GIS Utility Data Verification and Mapping*

The Clerk read a January 16, 2024 memorandum with an attached Resolution from Edward Boscola, Director of Water and Sewer Resources. Mr. Boscola recommends a contract with Colliers Engineering & Design, Inc. of Allentown to perform GIS Utility Data Verification and Mapping. The contract will run from the Notice to Proceed until December 31, 2024. The total cost is \$77,900. There are no renewals.

President Colón stated Resolution 10 C is on the agenda.

*6 E. Business Administrator – 2024 04 KSA&D – Memo – Production of City Newsletter*

The Clerk read a January 2, 2024 memorandum with an attached Resolution from Business Administrator Eric Evans. Mr. Evans recommends a contract with KSA&D of Allentown to create two newsletters for the City in 2024. It is anticipated that advertising will pay for printing costs; however, the memo estimates an annual total mailing cost of \$15,636. There are three renewals with the estimated annual mailing cost of \$15,636.

President Colón stated Resolution 10 D is on the agenda.

*6 F. Director of Public Works – 2023 10 Monocacy Way Trail Phase II design*

The Clerk read a January 3, 2024 memorandum with an attached Resolution from Michael Alkhal, Director of Public Works. Mr. Alkhal recommends a contract with LVL Engineering Group of Bethlehem to perform the Monocacy Way Trail Improvements Project Phase II including paving 3,000 feet of the recreational trail from Schoenersville Road to Union Boulevard. The estimated cost is \$88,802 and work is to be completed by December 31, 2025. There are no renewals. LVL Engineering submitted the lowest responsible proposal among four firms.

President Colón stated Resolution 10 E is on the agenda.

*6 G. Director of Water and Sewer Resources – 2024 09 WWTP Secondary Digester Gas Cover Replacement Engineering*

The Clerk read a January 8, 2024 memorandum with an attached Resolution from Edward Boscola, Director of Water and Sewer Resources. Mr. Boscola recommends a contract with D’Huy Engineering, Inc. of Bethlehem to provide professional engineering services to assist the City with replacement of the Wastewater Treatment Plant’s secondary digester gas cover, which has reached the end of its useful life. The contract will run through December 31, 2024. The total cost is \$37,500. There are no renewals.

President Colón stated Resolution 10 F is on the agenda.

*6 H. Director of Public Works – 2024 05 East Broad Street Improvements Design*

The Clerk read a January 5, 2024 memorandum with an attached Resolution from Public Works Director Michael Alkhal. Mr. Alkhal recommends a contract with Traffic Planning and Design, Inc. of Pottstown to design improvements to East Broad Street including center islands, curb bump-outs, pedestrian refuge islands, ADA ramp upgrades, improved streetscapes, and lighting. The contract will run through December 31, 2025. The total cost is \$93,875. There are no renewals.

President Colón stated Resolution 10 G is on the agenda.

*6 I. Director of Water and Sewer Resources – 2023 53 WWTP Electrical Repairs*

The Clerk read a January 10, 2024 memorandum with an attached Resolution from Edward Boscola, Director of Water and Sewer Resources. Mr. Boscola recommends a contract with Brendan Stanton, Inc. d/b/a BSI Electrical Contractors of Montgomeryville to replace multiple aging electrical components and systems at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Substantial and final completion are expected by July 5, 2024. The total cost is \$405,540. There are no renewals.

President Colón stated Resolution 10 H is on the agenda.

**7. REPORTS**

*A. President of Council*

*7A1. Councilmanic Appointment – Benjamin Felzer – Environmental Advisory Council*

President Colón appointed Benjamin Felzer to the Environmental Advisory Council through January of 2027. Ms. Leon and Ms. Kwiatek sponsored Resolution 2024-001 to confirm the appointment.

President Colón thanked Mr. Felzer for his continued willingness to serve, adding that he brings a lot of knowledge and expertise as an educator to the volunteer position.

Ms. Wilhelm noted that she is the Council liaison to the EAC and echoed the words of President Colón. She has worked with Mr. Felzer for the past two years. He also brings leadership support to the EAC Chairwoman.

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

#### *New Council Year*

President Colón again welcomed Mr. Callahan and Ms. Laird to Council. He recognized that there have been some points raised about Council Rules and Robert's Rules of Order as to how meetings were run. He admitted that he is not always the most rigid with rules. This is because he tries not to run a rigid meeting. Still, he is cognizant of Robert's Rules and Council Rules if that lighter touch is not working on a given evening. The President addressed certain ones that have not been strictly enforced, especially keeping in mind that some new Council Members have come aboard. One is limiting individual Council Members to two responses on a single agenda item unless Council agrees otherwise by unanimous consent. He has not invoked this rule and does not believe it has been a problem, but he asked all to be aware of its intent. The President added that there will be, from time to time, split votes. He hoped that all could move on from differing opinions to continue to work together. President Colón also reminded that speakers should address the Chair or Council as a whole when making their points rather than having direct confrontations. He added that New Business is generally where these answers are provided. Moving forward, he asked that motions to table a matter be withheld until after each member of Council has had the opportunity to speak on an item. He said some updates will be forthcoming.

#### *Passing of a Leader*

President Colón acknowledged the death of Pastor Hopeton Clennon. He said he would reserve additional remarks and open the floor to Council on this topic under New Business.

#### *B. Mayor*

##### *Kudos to Mr. Felzer*

Mayor Reynolds offered comments regarding Mr. Felzer's service to the EAC. He said he has been a huge help and leader toward the implementation of the City's Climate Action Plan. He was a huge advocate of CAP as it was being introduced and has made a large impact in its implementation.

*7B1. Administrative Order – Jennifer Kerchner – Sister City Commission*

Mayor Reynolds appointed Jennifer Kerchner to the Sister City Commission effective through January of 2027. Ms. Leon and Ms. Kwiatek sponsored Resolution 2024-002 to confirm the appointment.

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

*7B2. Administrative Order – John Rivera – Sister City Commission*

Mayor Reynolds appointed John Rivera to the Sister City Commission effective through January of 2027. Ms. Leon and Ms. Kwiatek sponsored Resolution 2024-003 to confirm the appointment.

Ms. Leon asked whether the number of Sister City Commission representatives would grow because another Sister City partnership is being considered or whether the size will remain the same.

Mayor Reynolds said that has not yet been discussed, but it can be.

Ms. Laird observed that Mr. Rivera lives in Fogelsville and asked whether there is a City residency requirement or preference.

Mayor Reynolds said it varies. There is not a residency requirement for the Sister City Commission. Some of the authorities, boards, and commissions have a residency requirement or on necessitating ownership of a City business, but not this one.

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

*MLK Events*

Mayor Reynolds noted fantastic Martin Luther King, Jr. events on Monday. One was a parade to the memorial. Also, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People sponsored another event at the Church of the Nativity. As to the latter, he said this was one of the better attended events over the many years that it has been held. The message of hope and social justice was inspiring and center on youth. He thanked the organizers of both events.

*Public Safety Updates*

He also offered public safety updates. Of the four new paramedic positions supported in the 2024 budget, two new paramedic supervisors have been hired. Interviews are being conducted for two additional paramedics. The additions are expected to reduce response times and make City paramedics more available for service to Bethlehem residents. He thanked City Council for supporting these additions. On Thursday, the eight new firefighters will arrive for work. Most will then train at the Fire Academy. The Mayor also said that applications have increased for police positions. Five started this month at the Police Academy and are expected to



graduate in June. There are now five openings on the force. In last January, the total number of applicants was 119. This January, there were 193. Mayor Reynolds commended the efforts to enlarge the pool of applicants.

*Next Opening Doors Meeting*

January 24 will be the next Opening Doors community meeting in the Fowler Center at Northampton Community College. This will be a strategy session with community partners, but it is an open meeting. The idea with the Opening Doors initiative is to have occasional meetings throughout the year and will focus on different stages as they arise such as acquired funding, land purchase, etc.

*Budget Update*

Mayor Reynolds said that budget numbers are presented using the best available information at the time. These can change, but he was happy to report that there were no bad surprises to finish out December. Specifically, the City is self-insured and finished ahead of the threshold for 2023.

*Remembering Bishop Clennon*

Mayor Reynolds also spoke of the passing of Bishop Clennon, saying he “represented the best of our community.” He got to know him personally as well as with both their involvement involving the World Heritage Designation. He said that Bishop Clennon worked at Central Moravian Church, but it was clear that he cared about everyone and considered all people to be important. Mayor Reynolds said that Bishop Clennon had a knack for “saying the perfect thing, in the perfect room, where everybody knew exactly what he meant, and everyone left feeling a little bit brighter and more inspired.” He added that Bishop Clennon saw the World Heritage possibility as more than an opportunity to increase tourism, but also as a celebration of community, of what the Moravians were about. He really wanted all of that to shine through. Bishop Clennon also would ask what the designation would mean in terms of housing affordability and welcoming new people into our city. Mayor Reynolds added that Bishop Clennon was not born here, but he walked into one of the most tradition-filled places in the City and did so in a way that he understood that he was new, but the values and experiences that he brought to his job were universal. He was an inspiration to all and will continue to be.

8. ORDINANCES FOR FINAL PASSAGE

None.

9. NEW ORDINANCES

None.

10. RESOLUTIONS

A. *Approve Resolution – Contract – 2024 01 – SC Engineers Annual Services*

Ms. Leon and Ms. Kwiatek sponsored Resolution No. 2024-004 that authorized to execute all documents and agreements with S.C. Engineers, Inc.

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

B. *Approve Resolution – Contract – 2024 02 – Update of Capital Value and Depreciation of the City's Water System*

Ms. Leon and Ms. Kwiatek sponsored Resolution No. 2024-005 that authorized to execute all documents and agreements with Gannett Fleming Valuation and Rate Consultants, LLC.

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

C. *Approve Resolution – Contract – 2024 03 – GIS Utility Data Verification and Mapping*

Ms. Leon and Ms. Kwiatek sponsored Resolution No. 2024-006 that authorized to execute all documents and agreements with Colliers Engineering & Design, Inc.

Ms. Kwiatek asked Mr. Boscola for more detail about GIS mapping and what it does.

Mr. Boscola said GIS stands for Geographic Information System. It is a software platform that provides maps showing all of the City's utilities – water, sewer, and storm water. This is the second phase of a multi-phase upgrade to the platform. The first phase was to upgrade the software package. This phase will involve “leg work” to add data currently on paper for electronic use.

Ms. Kwiatek said this sounds important, and she is glad to hear that the mapping system is being modernized. She referred to the resident comment earlier in the meeting about the water main break along East Broad Street and asked about the age of the City's water mains and what the process is for monitoring the conditions of the system.

Mr. Boscola said the GIS will help the City understand the buried infrastructure. It also will capture the historical information including the age of a main, when it was replaced, etc. This will help in knowing the age of mains and which should be replaced. Mr. Boscola said that the water mains are aging and expensive to replace. It will take a “multi-decade effort to replace” in terms of cost. The start of installation for much of the system was 100 years ago. This will be a tool to begin a capital replacement plan in the future. It will show the age of pipes, where the breaks have been, and aid in prioritization for replacement.

Mayor Reynolds said that as the system was built, there was no uniformity the materials used for piping. Different materials have different life spans. It has been difficult to track. This tool will help. He added that this is just one department that needs to convert from paper to

digitalization to modernize. It will take an investment up front, but he predicted financial and efficiency savings in the end.

Ms. Crampsie Smith asked whether this will help to predict whether a break might occur.

Mr. Boscola clarified that the GIS is not a monitor or sensor. It can predict problems based on age and material of the pipe.

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

*D. Approve Resolution – Contract – 2024 04 – KSA&D – Production of City Newsletter*

Ms. Leon and Ms. Kwiatek sponsored Resolution No. 2024-007 that authorized to execute all documents and agreements with KSA&D.

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

*E. Approve Resolution – 2023 10 – Monocacy Way Trail Phase II design*

Ms. Leon and Ms. Kwiatek sponsored Resolution No. 2024-008 that authorized to execute all documents and agreements with LVL Engineering Group.

Ms. Laird said she was excited to see a replacement of some of the boards. She asked whether the specifications require a paved recreation pathway. She was concerned with water runoff flowing into the Monacacy River.

Public Works Director Michael Alkhal said the amount of paving is not significant enough to impact the water quality or the amount of runoff. The primary reason for choosing paving was less anticipated maintenance. Screening tends to wash out.

Ms. Wilhelm also asked about the footbridge planks. She said the wood becomes slippery.

Mr. Alkhal said the thought was to replace with wood. But, the raised concerns about the wood can be evaluated.

Ms. Crampsie Smith noted that ADA ramps will be included. She wanted to be sure that the path will be accessible to carriages, wheelchairs, etc.

Mr. Alkhal said at the appropriate locations, specifically at intersections and crossings.

She asked what material will be used for the path itself.

Mr. Alkhal said most of the path will be bituminous pavement, except for the wood bridge.

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

*F. Approve Resolution – Contract – 2024 09 – WWTP Secondary Digester Gas Cover Replacement Engineering*

Ms. Leon and Ms. Kwiatek sponsored Resolution No. 2024-009 that authorized to execute all documents and agreements with D'Huy Engineering, Inc.

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

*G. Approve Resolution – Contract – 2024 05 – East Broad Street Improvement Design*

Ms. Leon and Ms. Kwiatek sponsored Resolution No. 2024-010 that authorized to execute all documents and agreements with Traffic Planning and Design, Inc.

Ms. Wilhelm asked whether there are plans for floating curbs and whether bicycle lanes are anticipated.

Mr. Alkhal said he has made this suggestion to be considered. Design work has not yet begun. If it is feasible and effective, he believed it would be incorporated into the design.

Ms. Wilhelm also asked whether there have been conversations with the Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority concerning providing improved and covered bus shelters along this corridor.

Mr. Alkhal said he would make note of that to make the inquiry.

Ms. Laird said she is extremely excited to see this work getting started along the length of Broad Street. She asked if these improvements will be connected with the Northside Alive project. That project has included a Walkability Committee.

Mr. Alkhal said he was certain that coordination and communication would be welcome. He believes there must have been some input already. The planning for East Broad Street is far along, but they could double check on the Northside Alive input. He added that there may be some additional public meetings on this matter to gain input.

Mayor Reynolds complimented Mr. Alkhal's project planning including coordination with the improvements being planned for West Broad Street. Northside Alive efforts also will be considered. He added that the desire to walk and bicycle throughout Bethlehem is increasing and more accommodations are being made.

Ms. Kwiatek supported Ms. Lysowski's earlier comments about the need for a bike lane on the east side of this project. She noted that when the plan was received, a bike lane was only included on the west side. The thinking was that if a cyclist came down West Broad Street toward the center of the City, they would veer off onto Market Street or another street running parallel to Broad Street, but she disagreed with that. She believes the streets should be built to accommodate

bicyclists as well as cars. She believes that having a full east-west bike route is the beginning of creating a truly bikeable city.

President Colón thanked Mr. Alkhal for his responsiveness to modifying the original plans after suggestions and comments were received involving changes.

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

*H. Approve Resolution – Contract – 2023 53 – WWTP Electrical Repairs*

Ms. Leon and Ms. Kwiatek sponsored Resolution No. 2024-011 that authorized to execute all documents and agreements with Brendan Stanton, Inc. d/b/a BSI Electrical Contractors.

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

*I. Approve Council Appointment – Stephanie J. Steward – Solicitor for Bethlehem City Council*

Ms. Leon and Ms. Kwiatek sponsored Resolution No. 2024-012 that authorized the Councilmanic Appointment of Stephanie J. Steward as Solicitor to City Council be executed by the President of Council.

President Colón offered some history involving Council choosing its Solicitor. He was not present when Council in the mid-1980s began the practice of having its own attorney for guidance. He believed this would be just the sixth Solicitor in about 40 years. President Colón said the Solicitor works at the discretion of Council. Council is not bound by any selection process. This will be the third appointment in the more than a decade in which President Colón has been attending Council meetings, and the selection process has been different for each. He added that Attorney Steward comes with “a remarkable background in her municipal work.” The President also noted that Attorney Steward worked in the same law office as former Council Solicitor Brian Panella prior to his election to the Northampton County bench. He believes the “continuity” will be a benefit to the City.

Ms. Wilhelm agreed with President Colón’s comments. She also was impressed with a telephone conversation that she had with Attorney Steward as well as her experience in social services prior to her experience in law.

Ms. Crampsie Smith added that Attorney Steward and the Goudsouzian law firm are held in high regard, especially within municipal law.

Ms. Kwiatek said one of the elements that stood out to her in reviewing Attorney Steward’s resume was the level of research that she has conducted, particularly with regard to municipal affairs. She is looking forward to being able to “tap into that.” She said often when Council has considered enacting new legislation, it would have been helpful to know the experience of other municipalities. “We need that keen research eye to understand how it fits in with our current ordinances and in response to the Commonwealth’s laws,” she said.

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

G. *Certificate of Appropriateness – 310 Brodhead Avenue*

Ms. Leon and Ms. Kwiatek sponsored Resolution No. 2024-013 that granted a Certificate of Appropriateness to allow four wall signs and two neon “open” signs already installed at the rear of the property (fronting on Shawnee Street) for an auto detailing business at 310 Brodhead Avenue.

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

11. NEW BUSINESS

*Committee Meeting Announcement*

President Colón announced that the Committee of the Whole will meet at 6:00 PM on Monday, January 29, 2024 in Town Hall. There is one agenda item: discussion on the Walnut Street Parking Garage project. No votes will be taken that evening.

*More Comments on Bishop Clennon*

President Colón elaborated on his earlier thoughts on Bishop Clennon. Like Mayor Reynolds, President Colón related personal experiences in which Bishop Clennon offered words of hope, encouragement, and love. That was just the type of person he was. He wished his family the best.

*Help for Those on a Fixed Income/Kudos to Police Team*

Ms. Leon said she attended an event at Litzenberger House in which a property tax rebate program was announced. She believed that this will help residents on a fixed income. The income level has been changed for applying to this program, and the minimum rebate amount has risen. She encouraged contact state representatives and senators for those who need help. The website is [pa.gov/ptrr](http://pa.gov/ptrr). Ms. Leon also commended Officer Burton and K9 Bean for reuniting a young man and his family.

*Research Needed for Upcoming Parking Garage Meeting*

Ms. Leon also noted the upcoming Committee of the Whole meeting and asked for all information possible relating to the Walnut Street Parking Garage project. Among the information she was looking for was financing on the original Walnut Street garage, possibly the HARB ordinance, and comparisons involving cost options involving the various project options being proposed.

President Colón said he discussed with Director of Community and Economic Development Laura Collins providing background information to Council and that some was

sent earlier today. He said he would coordinate with the Clerk's Office additional materials that might be helpful.

Mayor Reynolds said Ms. Collins provided a summary of the conversations that have occurred over about the past six years that have gotten us to this point. This is a summary of information that already has been made public.

*Water Main Break Update?*

Ms. Crampsie Smith asked about the status of the previously mentioned water main break along Market Street that particularly impacted the church.

Mr. Boscola said there was a break along East Market Street on December 26. Rather than involving a main, this break involved a lateral to a fire hydrant in front of the church. It was repaired that day. The church received substantial damage. Feedback on the structural evaluation has not yet been received to determine the level of damage and a cost estimate.

Ms. Crampsie Smith asked if there have been multiple breaks in the area and whether there have been other issues such as sinkholes.

Mr. Boscola said that section of street has had problems over the past several years, prompting the City to replace the water main back in 2022. Unfortunately, when a main is replaced, not all of the laterals are. If the laterals appear to be in good shape, they are connected to the new main, which was the situation in this case. Because of the history of problems on this street, the City is looking into hiring a geotechnical consultant to do some scans to see if other problems such as voids or sinkholes might exist.

Ms. Crampsie Smith asked if there is a timeframe.

Mr. Boscola believed in spring.

*Decorum Questioned/Question about Town Hall Meeting*

Ms. Laird said she is grateful for public comment and participation, but she raised concerns about one comment in which a resident imitated an ethnic accent as an anecdote. She considered this "intolerant and disrespectful behavior" that cast a shadow on valuable work and discourse being done in Council Chambers. She requested that the public continue to attend and present ideas but reminded that the public forum should be welcoming for everyone and that thoughts should be voiced without causing harm.

Ms. Laird also asked a question about Ms. Makhoul's earlier invitation to all to attend a town hall meeting.

President Colón suggested that Ms. Laird could follow up with Ms. Makhoul after the meeting.

*Moment of Silence*

President Colón also asked for a moment of silence in honor of Bishop Clennon.

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned 8:50 PM.

ATTEST:

Tad J. Miller  
City Clerk