

SPECIAL PURPOSE EMERGENCY BETHLEHEM CITY COUNCIL MEETING

10 East Church Street - Town Hall

Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

Saturday, March 21, 2020 - 9:00 AM

PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

1. ROLL CALL

President Waldron called the meeting to order. Present were Bryan G. Callahan, Michael G. Colón, Grace Crampsie Smith, Paige Van Wirt and Adam R. Waldron, 5. Olga Negrón and J. William Reynolds were absent, 2.

*Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update*

President Waldron remarked there are only a few here on the dais but the other Council Members are scattered throughout the audience keeping our spacing and distancing but we do have a quorum. The purpose of this meeting is to pass a resolution we were not able to pass at our last meeting on Tuesday, March 17, 2020 because we did not have a quorum at that meeting. We only have one agenda item for today which is consideration of a resolution of the Joint Declaration of Disaster Emergency by the City Council of the City of Bethlehem and the Mayor.

*Declaration of Disaster Emergency Resolution*

The Clerk read the Declaration of Disaster Emergency Resolution which does three main things. It declares an emergency per the referenced disaster emergency proclamation, it activates the City's formal emergency management plan, it also authorizes the Council President and the Mayor to sign the attached referenced proclamation and it links the duration of the emergency period to match the emergency period set by the Governor.

President Waldron explained we have no public with us today, which he believes is a good thing. However, we have some folks watching at home. He will recognize Robert Novatnack, Emergency Management Director after Mayor Donchez makes a statement.

Mayor Donchez thanked Health Director Kristen Wenrich, Emergency Management Director Bob Novatnack and Business Administrator Eric Evans for doing an outstanding job in addition to all the department heads, Police Chief Mark DiLuzio and all of the City personnel for their understanding and cooperation. There will be things we will be implementing coming this Monday. In addition, we have had several memos and press releases and two new YouTube videos. City Council should have received the new memos and press releases. This is a very fluid situation and is changing sometimes hourly. Starting Monday Public Works will be split into two shifts from 7:00 am to 3:00 pm and then 3:00 pm to 11:00 pm. It is up to the department heads to determine personnel who will be doing the two shifts. City Hall will remain open with the drop off boxes remaining where you come in on Church Street for the foreseeable future. Police, Fire, and EMS will practice social distancing and will continue to operate. They have had constant communication with Mayor O'Connell of Allentown and speak two or three times a day. We are trying to be both on the same page and that has been working well with cooperation from

the Mayor of Allentown and also the Health Director of Allentown. The memorandum from the Governor sent out yesterday to everyone now has been extended to Monday morning for enforcement at 8:00 am, that press release was sent out early this morning and also on social media. Mayor Donchez added he met with the Parking Authority and we issued a press release and he believes it was the right thing to do at least until April 3, 2020. We will be opening up the garages to the public for free parking, the booting of vehicles will be suspended until further notice, suspending citation and late fees until April 3, 2020. We will extend this if necessary. Street Cleaning enforcement is suspended until further notice. They will only be issuing tickets and citations for violations on public safety that includes double parking, parking by fire hydrants, etc. We are also internally discussing some other options and taking additional steps with personnel. As of today, that gives a good summary of where we are at. Mayor Donchez stressed everything is on the table, it just depends on how many more cases we get. We have been in contact with hospitals, colleges and universities, and Wind Creek Casino. That is his report and he turned then to Mr. Evans for any comments he would want to make.

Mr. Evans informed as far as daily operations we typically think of a 5 year plan, operationally and through capital plans. We have projects and initiatives that are normally on a 6 to 18 month timeline and that timeline has shifted really quickly. The word the Mayor had used is fluid, it became an hourly issue where everything was coming at us 500 mph, as it was for everyone across all communities and across the world. Our mission became two things, number one to protect our employees and number two, to remain operational. There are a number of things the government needs to do to continue to do, we cannot just close out and close the doors. Based on information we are gathering from public health departments and information that was given to us by the Governor we have made adaptations as quickly as we could. Mr. Evans thanked the City employees, they have been incredibly resilient through the week, and attendance has been good. There of course has been a lot of anxiety as we have all felt but at no time were there any issues, everyone is working together realizing what the mission is that we serve the residents of the City of Bethlehem. During the week we had conversations that got to the level of what we have been talking about with these missions we have currently in place. On your way out or in you may have seen the restricted access. By early in the week we knew we wanted to keep City Hall restricted to outside visitors, meetings were cancelled internally and we started to pull back from external meetings, moving to phone and email. There is a single point of drop off out front. We want our residents to have the feeling that City Hall is open and not have the doors shuttered or locked so anyone who wants to come in did not get any farther than 5 feet inside the door. They are then met with someone who was instructed to keep social distance behind a desk that was placed there so they can meet, greet, instruct and inform citizens, and then turn them around and back outside. Mr. Evans pointed out there are bins by the door with department names on them that can be picked up from time to time so departments could continue to be transactional. The number one thing we needed to do and have done in the past few days was to split everyone up and keep distance which is hard to do inside City Hall and outside in the field. So each department worked and has different needs, we became very liberal which we had to, it was moving quickly enough. We tried to establish policy in the City for consistency but we have different groups with different responsibilities and different functions within City Hall. We fully understand that on the front line is our health and that is the most important thing. Through Administration there are still things that need to be done like purchasing, we still need to have the supply chain going so we do need them here. Also, Financial Services needs to be here although things will slow down and we understand that. We do need people in certain areas so each group was given the responsibility or task to split up their

staff and that results sometimes with people coming in every other day and sometimes every couple of days to make sure that they can clear out that area but still keep production moving inside the City. Mr. Evans stressed it is a day to day situation with scheduling City employees. He thanked all the Unions, the FOP, the IAFF, and the SEIU, they were all very understanding. We called them to the table and once we established the changes that the supervisors and department heads wanted to make in the best interest of keeping things like the water department, water filtration and the Wild Creek reservoir moving and with the safest way to split them up and keep distance. We brought the Unions in to explain what we wanted and what we needed and they were very understanding and cooperative. That has been all good so far and took us into the end of the week. There was a lot of moving this week and we expect that to continue but he thinks that next week we will take a little bit of a step back and next time we meet we will talk about going forward. Hopefully we can steady the ship and then talk about some of the financial changes and ramifications but it is too early for that at this point.

Health Director Kristen Wenrich remarked that it feels a little unusual to be here on a Saturday morning. She noted that days are running into one another in trying to keep track of the ever changing guidance. It has been the biggest challenge at this point. The Department of Health is really seeing new guidance, new health alerts, as Dr. Van Wirt can attest to. There has been a lot of confusion. They changed the isolation and quarantine recommendations this week, so we are trying to get a handle on that, as well as the Health Department's role. We were working the communicable disease investigations with COVID-19 as we would with any other communicable disease where we investigate the individual that was reported positive, have their contacts identified and then we notify the contacts. The Department of Health because of the volume they are seeing and because some health departments are so inundated they have backed off of that recommendation. At this point we are still moving forward with the way we have always proceeded where if we interview an individual who is positive we get their contacts and we are personally reaching out to those contacts and making sure they get the correct information. Our concern is if we leave it up to that individual who is positive to locate their contacts and provide them with the information we are concerned about the information that would be relayed and that it would be relayed accurately. At this point, the plan is to continue investigations as we always have done unless the case volume gets to a point that we cannot handle it, we will have to develop guidance to give to the individuals are positive to then follow through for contacts. At this point, that will remain our policy until further notice. Ms. Wenrich added the Department of Health has been updating their case counts, they typically update their case counts at Noon daily but they are falling behind because we are receiving information through the disease and surveillance system that we utilize. All positive and negative cases will come to that system and we are checking it multiple times a day so we can stay on top of the positives in our jurisdiction. The testing numbers that were reported as of yesterday at Noon are that Pennsylvania was at 268 cases and 10 more are in Northampton and 2 more in Lehigh, but we had been already working on a case in Lehigh that had not been in that case count. So again, they are looking at least a day behind in the reporting numbers. Currently in Bethlehem we have 2 cases in Lehigh County. We also are involved in an additional case with the employee at Wind Creek Casino and that individual did not reside in the City but given the fact that Wind Creek was in the City of Bethlehem we assisted Wind Creek with the notification and press releases going out. So we worked with them to be able to identify the employees who had been working the day that the individual who was infected with COVID-19 was working and then we were able with surveillance video to identify close contacts of customers that were there at Wind Creek. All of those individuals have been notified. We started receiving calls yesterday so we are guiding

those individuals through the process of what they need to do regarding quarantine and testing. Mental health is a concern and it is something we have talked about and certainly with people being under quarantine now and individuals potentially losing their jobs. During this situation we are really concerned about the mental health and well-being of individuals being cooped up in their homes. Social isolation was already an issue and it will be even more so during this time. That is something we want to focus on the next week. The Department of Health put out a hotline number and we are going to be in contact with the County to see what we can do. So if folks are feeling the stress then they will have someone to talk to. Ms. Wenrich noted another concern is the homeless population. We did work with Lehigh County to submit the unmet needs request with the concern of the homeless population is if someone tests positive they need to be isolated and their close contacts need to be quarantined. Right now there is no place for those folks to go so we are working with the County to try to identify a site if the need arises, which she feels it will then we have a site to put those individuals who need to be quarantined so they are not spreading it throughout the community. It has been reported that Lehigh University is up to 3 cases but have made it clear that these students were not on campus. They were individuals that were on spring break and never returned to campus after spring break, they are at home. That has been in the news as well.

President Waldron thanked Ms. Wenrich for the information. It was only 4 days ago that we were here but it feels like so much longer because this is moving so quickly and the guidelines are changing. He appreciates that Ms. Wenrich came in on a Saturday although she might have been here anyway at this point.

Ms. Crampsie Smith thanked Ms. Wenrich for all her hard work during this trying time. She asked with mental health if the County Mental Health Crisis Intervention is boosting up their services with availability and increased workers.

Ms. Wenrich stated she does not know but that is one of the reasons why she wants to reach out to them. She knows they are currently operating but does not know if they have any enhancements.

Ms. Crampsie Smith noted that is a great resource. They are necessary and probably will boost up their services.

Mr. Callahan thanked everyone for their hard work and noted that we are in an unprecedented time right now. He just wanted to thank Ms. Wenrich for all the work she is doing. He cannot imagine the stress that everyone is under with the amount of hours being put in. He added to thank all the department heads and everyone else involved in this.

Dr. Van Wirt noted that she has been in communication with Ms. Wenrich and she is thankful for all the guidance and time that Ms. Wenrich has given in terms of her role as a nursing home doctor and the risk this presents to all of our citizens in nursing homes. She asked if we as a City are coordinating with the hospital networks to understand their statuses in terms of how they are dealing with their ER units and even the blood supply. For example she received an email that St. Luke's was in a shortage of RH negative blood and that we could still donate blood as citizens observing the 6 foot rule by making an appointment at Miller Keystone Blood Bank and setting up a time to go in so you are not inundating them all at once. She wondered what our coordination efforts are with the hospitals.

Ms. Wenrich noted that we are fortunate that an infrastructure was already in place for an emergency preparedness response. She explained there is something called the Healthcare Coalition and that has been a coalition put together a few years ago to respond to any type of public health emergency type of situation. That group has been coordinating calls daily, the healthcare people are on those calls. She is personally in touch with those healthcare networks. One of the conversations she had this past week was the need for a call center just because of the call volume. It was determined from the healthcare network at this point that they feel they can handle the calls coming in because they have redeployed staff. We are not looking at assisting with that at this point in time but that is a possibility. We have stayed in contact with them on a daily basis just as far as what they are seeing with testing and concerns and issues they may have. That is a daily communication sometimes multiple times a day. At this point any unmet needs as far as supplies the healthcare council needs to be informed and then it goes to our local county EMA and then it goes to PEMA. So there is a process in place if they have any other needs from the hospital system, they are all aware of that. The requests as you can imagine are astronomical, they get over 200 requests a day in the State for unmet needs. They are trying to pinpoint the areas in need. That is of course a concern and will remain a concern as our numbers increase. Ms. Wenrich added that the public needs to keep in mind that with the tests that are currently going to commercial labs only 5% are coming back positive. She knows there is a lot of panic out there from the public. She had a loved one that was tested and she understands that panic that someone close to you or someone you came into contact got tested but only 5% of those tests going to commercial labs are actually coming back positive. We are also working with the bureau of labs, the higher risk population's tests are going to the bureau of labs because turn-around time is faster. So if you have someone in a congregate care setting such as a nursing home that is symptomatic they want to have those tests sent to the bureau of labs so we can get a fast turn-around time. If there is a healthcare worker that is symptomatic, those tests can be sent to the bureau of labs as well. The tests that are going there about 15% are coming back positive. She stressed to keep that in mind that the majority of tests come back negative. She noted that some nursing homes have type A influenza now, so that makes it a bit of a challenge right now. They have workers and residents who are positive for flu.

Dr. Van Wirt noted it has been the worse flu season she has seen in practicing for 20 years.

Ms. Wenrich mentioned as to the blood supply question that was also brought up during our call this week with the healthcare council. She knows that is something that Miller Blood Bank is on top of, trying to communicate that out to the general public. There have been hospitals that have delayed procedures because they do not have enough of a blood supply, none locally but further out in the region.

President Waldron noted to follow up on the flu, how would someone differentiate between the flu and the coronavirus? Obviously if someone gets a headache and fever they will think it is COVID-19 and not the seasonal flu. What are the differences between those two and how do you eliminate one versus the other.

Ms. Wenrich noted that is difficult because the symptoms mirror one another. Respiratory panels are being run for patients so that is being run and then if we can identify if the person is positive for flu A then that is the explanation and if they are not seeing any positives in the respiratory panel then they are doing the COVID-19 testing. She does not know if Dr. Van Wirt has anything to add but they are running both respiratory panels and then the COVID testing.

Dr. Van Wirt stated there is no clear guidance in terms of exactly how to run it. But in nursing homes because we are at an elevated risk if a person has influenza symptoms, fever and a cough first we call the Pennsylvania Department of Health and then they usually expedite the test if they agree with us. She has tested one person and that turned out to be negative and the turnaround was 24 hours because we called the Department of Health and then we also sent out the viral count at the same time. For lower risk individuals in the common population you would rule out the flu first by sending off the viral panel and then if there is no other explanation for why they are having the symptoms they would consider running the COVID panel.

President Waldron remarked there is that lower bar for the testing of the flu.

Ms. Wenrich noted that turnaround time you can get a lot faster. She pointed out that now we are getting into allergy season as well so there will be more people presenting the sniffles and a cough. That is a concern because people will assume even though it might be allergies that they may have contracted COVID-19. There are a lot of things that are still floating around in the community that are not COVID-19 but there is a heightened awareness and concern. That is where it is important to consult with your healthcare provider. That is why the healthcare networks are doing the triaging where folks can call over the phone, email or do the tele-medicine and triage and figure out exactly what they think is occurring and if that person is recommended for testing.

President Waldron noted that now all daycares are closed and just about everything else is closed folks are at home right now kind of quarantined in their house and people are feeling very isolated. If you are one of the few who still have to work sometimes people will rely on childcare whether that is another family member or a grandparent. That is a bit challenging for folks who need to work and find a place for their kids but do not want to potentially expose someone who is in the higher risk category like an older person to be in charge of a child and providing childcare. A lot of families are stretched thin with resources. He asked if she could talk about that a bit whether it is necessary to separate older folks. For instance in his family his mother has decided to stay away from my kids and understandably so because she wants to make sure that she stays well and vice versa. He does not know if that is a practice that you would necessarily push for.

Ms. Wenrich said she would and added that makes it much more challenging for families that have to work with someone who would typically watch that child and now they cannot. She is in the same position where she is social distancing from her in-laws and her parents. Luckily her children are old enough and she does not need to worry about childcare. It is a concern and has been stated through research that although we have not seen a high number of children with COVID-19 but they can be carriers. The elderly population is a vulnerable population so it is not advised for you to have the elderly taking care of children during this time which really puts the crunch on families as far as childcare. She did read early on in the week and again because things are evolving she did read that childcare facilities could apply for a waiver so if they had a certain percentage of children there where the parents were healthcare workers or mandated to work that they could remain open. But to be honest she had not had a chance to look and see if that guideline has changed based on Governor Wolf's decision to close all non-essential businesses. That had been an option early on in the week.

President Waldron remarked that is something he wants to talk about with the Chiefs, the non-essential businesses and what that will look like in our City.

Mr. Novatnack queried if access to the Emergency Operation Plan was cleared through our IT department for Council Members.

Mr. Vidoni stated for our office, we have hard copies that are available. They do not have external access to it, our office has access to it.

Mr. Novatnack remarked he will try this week to get Council access to the City's operation plan.

President Waldron noted we are not on that shared data base, we would need a physical hard copy.

Mr. Novatnack noted the physical hard copies you have had in the past are probably outdated. There are many phone number changes that are confidential in here but Mr. Vidoni can get you whatever you need. There are also parts of the emergency operation plan that fall under the Health Department and Ms. Wenrich has those that are kept with her. The main reason for this is continuity of government, if something does happen we will still function. We are three deep in every position so if something would happen the government can still function and decisions can be made at different levels even though maybe a key person is out of the loop. That is covered in this book and that is another reason that we sign the declaration also, to continue that. Mr. Novatnack explained the Mayor did declare a disaster and that is why we are here today. There are a few key points about that. The first one is the reason that you do this is "The primary benefit to the local declaration is to allow for municipalities to bypass normal procurement procedures and to address emergency needs." That is already happening, the buying of supplies, things are going out for bid. We can look at contracts and Union issues and things can be changed and they are being changed with shifts being changed and without any problems with Union contracts. That is one of the big reasons that you declare a disaster declaration. The other one would be if any federal money and resources become available the declaration helps us meet that local need which is really important. He mentioned with unmet needs they experienced something yesterday that they were not too happy about. We did request masks and hand sanitizer. They are at the point now where we are working with a local distillery up in New Tripoli and also with our purchasing agents to purchase products that are in short supply. We did put in for 1,000 masks and Police got a box of 20 and Fire got 50 and EMS got around 100. So he will have to resubmit again, they asked for 1,000 and only got 100 or some masks. He will be reapplying this week, that is one of the problems we are seeing here with cleaning supplies and hand sanitizers and masks but we will keep plugging away to try to get more. Mr. Novatnack believes if more cases show up here our needs will be addressed. He pointed out that Montgomery County has been a focus because of the number of cases they have and also that is where they are doing the drive thru clinics. We will keep looking at the unmet needs for the City of Bethlehem. Our workforce is out there with Police, Fire and EMS functioning as normal. There are a few people off sick at this time but no confirmed cases of any of our employee with COVID-19, some of off sick with the flu but we will keep an eye on those. As for his department downstairs the Service Center is working and covering all needs even if we are short a person. Our volume of calls are not higher right now but we see many questions, concerns and complaints and we are dealing with them here. All of 911 calls will still go through Northampton County. As he said the other night for the City of Bethlehem we have not missed a call, we have not been late to a call, we send the same amount of people to a call. We just assess the call upon arrival, especially if it is someone that has COVID-19. We always practice for this

with all the Chiefs and he explained that there are four levels in the City of Bethlehem and in the County. Level Four is a normal day that is how we operated a month ago, police are out on calls, fire is going out on calls and everything is being addressed. With Level Four there are no major problems, there might be water main breaks or gas leaks but everyone is doing their normal job. Mr. Novatnack explained we have now dropped down to a Level Three in the City of Bethlehem. He noted that means we secured our Comm. Center, Law Enforcement is down there with their communications, the County did the same too they secured their site. That means no visitors, no Police go in except the supervisors and administrators. We are sort of isolating them down there so there is less chance of spread of anything or distractions. That is so they are more focused on what is happening and addressing the calls that are coming in. He noted that Mr. Evans talked about what we did at our entrance to City Hall which was a great decision. Also there are parts of our Records Room where there are sensitive materials, those areas are off limits to the regular City employees. So we did lock down parts of the City. The Counties are mirroring this and also Allentown and other places are doing the exact same thing, this is Level Three. What also has to happen by Emergency Management guidelines, anything that happens that we know about that is pertinent to what is going on now, the healthcare issues, we have to inform Mayor Donchez, Administration staff and Council. That is why we are here today for Council, any department you would need to come in here to answer questions, they would come here to answer those questions. If you had a Fire question Chief Warren Achey would stand here and if you had a Police question you would hear from Chief Mark DiLuzio. That is how this works with information being very open with talking about what is happening in the City of Bethlehem. We are getting great reports from Ms. Wenrich and her staff and we will be hearing from Chief DiLuzio today. This is Level Three and where we are at right now. We are right on the border of Level Two and Level Two basically is a shutdown of City Hall. We did this during Hurricane Sandy if you remember about 8 to 9 days until we came back online. We had no power, no elevators, no computers, nothing was working. At that time we had done this and we had the same lockdown with just essential staff Police, Fire and EMS. There were not very many calls because the roads were still blocked with trees down and there was no electricity with Hurricane Sandy. This is different, this is human contact that is causing this issue right now. We are not at Level Two yet but we will see because this is changing daily if not hourly. That decision will be made and level heads will think of how we can do this if we are going to do it but we are not there yet. Mr. Novatnack explained Level One is the worst case scenario that means the whole City is shut down and probably the whole state is shut down and probably the Country is shut down, no one is going anywhere. At that point law enforcement would be out and the military would be called in but we are not at that level at all yet. But that would be the worst case scenario at Level One. He just wanted everyone to understand the four levels and if you have any questions do not hesitate to call. So we are on Level Three teetering on Level Two.

President Waldron noted on that move to Level Two there is definitely an argument that we could be at that point now but he understands the threshold might be the triggering of shutting down City Hall and sending away all non-essential employees that would keep only public safety and health at this point. He queried if there is one event that would trigger that move from Level Three to Level Two. His thought would be if a City employee tests positive.

Mr. Novatnack stated possibly but he thinks it will be driven more by the State than by us. We are handling Bethlehem rather well with organized communication the lines are open between everyone with what is going on. There are cases in Bethlehem but not a lot as Ms. Wenrich stated that there are 5% that are positive cases. He believes it will be driven by the State,



they say we are shutting down that is when we will be on board with the State. He does not think we should do it before the State does it. We talk internally all the time about it how we will handle it if an employee in City Hall tests positive because other Cities do have employees test positive. He heard one Police Department had 5 police officers test positive in the last 24 hours and almost 100 of the other police that worked with them are now being looked at and some are told not to come to work. But we are not there, our forces are going out and doing a good job. We are looking at tweaking schedules. Chief DiLuzio and Chief Achey have contingency plans and Mr. Decker has plans for his staff and Ms. Wenrich has plans for her staff, how they will have people in here because Health has been critical with this. But with City Hall we will keep it open as we are now and flex it as we go as we meet with the Mayor every day.

President Waldron asked if this chart with the four activation levels mirror the County or the State.

Mr. Novatnack stated yes, it is almost the exact same document. He noted that 12 years ago when he got involved in this he had his own plan, he always thought that Number One is okay, Number Two is bad, Number Three is the worst but he had to correct and adapt to the State and this is the policy throughout Pennsylvania.

President Waldron asked if the State is at Level Three at this point.

Mr. Novatnack informed the Counties is at Level Three, he deals with the Counties but the State is there also. His next point of contact is the Counties and they are at Level Three now at their Comm. Centers and also with their employees.

President Waldron remarked ultimately it is the decision of the Administration whether we move to Level Two and nothing is needed from Council.

Mr. Novatnack noted if you go down to the Communications Center right now the doors are marked, it is labeled what level we are at and that is what we have to do according to our policies here. When it goes down, we will probably follow the State but the Mayor will say this is what we are doing and Mr. Novatnack and the department heads are in agreement and then Council will be informed. You will know the second we know that we are going to that level. That will probably be the shutdown of City Hall but we are not there yet, just to be clear.

Dr. Van Wirt remarked this has clearly diverted some resources around in terms of what is done. She has been hoping that the Bethlehem Service Center can be of use to our citizens when they have concerns about something they are seeing. She does not want them to inundate the Service Center and overwhelm resources that could be used somewhere else but at the same time it seems like an optimum place to have the citizens be able to call. In fact like if Monday at 8:00 AM when there is a mandatory shut down and citizens are seeing things that they feel do not jive with that order, is there a way they can interact with you through that Service Center. Maybe the app itself, so it is not taking up valuable phone time of your employees so she asked if he has any advice for the citizens in terms of trying to be helpful in this setting so that we are all doing the same thing.

Mr. Novatnack stated yes, we have an uptick in calls now, many complaints about businesses that are still open even when it was not mandatory. He stated people should call the

Service Center number 610-865-7000. What they do is they have a running list, they give some advice out with things on the list and they defer them to different departments. If it is a health issue they will get in touch with the representatives from the Health Department. If it is law enforcement they deal directly with them because it is not a 911 call. These are citizen's concerns and we are addressing every one of them as they come in. We are compiling a list of them so that we could have a question and answer blog put out eventually on the sites that we have. We are handling all that through the Communications Center. The calls are on an uptick but we are handling them all as they come in here. Many questions we also divert to the Department of Health especially if they are really deep into the COVID-19 questions that we cannot answer. We give them the proper contacts in Harrisburg that they can reach out to. Part of the problem was that some of the waits on those phone calls are long that are going to the Department of Health but we are doing the best we can to accommodate those folks that call. We give as much information as we can.

Mr. Colón noted we were talking before about childcare and that some daycares are open with a waiver program for medical personnel. He knows that also applies to first responders and there are about 20 daycares in the Lehigh Valley that are open. He assumes that has been shared with all of our City personnel for Fire, Police, and EMS.

Mr. Novatnack remarked he heard from his daughter who is involved who lives in Nesquehoning that hers is going to be open on Monday because of the people who work in the hospital network. He does not have that list but that would be a great resource for us to have for our staff. That will be the issue, when the kids are home in that certain age group the parents will want to be home.

Mr. Colón stated they can talk after the meeting, he has the list and he can forward it to Mr. Novatnack. It does apply to both medical personnel and the families of first responders. He believes it is between the ages of 5 and 12.

Mr. Novatnack thanked Mr. Colón.

Ms. Crampsie Smith stated once again thanks for all the work in these daunting times. She knows that the medical profession is spread thin and she is concerned about some Police Departments that have some people test positive. She asked if there are any plans if we have employees especially like the emergency responders, if some are tested positive and if we have to quarantine and if we are down on staff. This will get worse rather than better so do we have a plan and can we call in people who are retired or subs.

Mr. Novatnack reported they would not call anyone who is retired right now but there is mutual aid. Chief DiLuzio and Chief Achey will deal with that issue, if we need to reach out to the resources outside of the City. Also, our EMT's are the same and many of our paramedics work part time other places too. They are getting pulled in different directions for resources. The bottom line is that they are looking at schedule changes also, maybe 12 hours on and 12 hours off for the paramedics, keeping them separate. There are different things taking place. Chief DiLuzio and Deputy Chief Meixell have their own plan and have been discussing it on a daily basis, how they are going to cover if their shifts start going down. Mr. Novatnack has witnessed bringing guys that are non-uniform, like vice and investigators, will be dusting off their blue uniform and badge and are going out. He will let Chief DiLuzio explain what they are doing.

Mr. Novatnack added that Chief Achey has a great plan how he would handle it if a Fire Station would go down to 6 firefighters in it and how he would backup that station and fill it. Chief Achey told him that they have talks with Allentown. We have done it before with bad fires over near Nitschmann, we have a major fire over at Monocacy Creek and Moravian. They come in and help us out and then they go back home. So they will share resources in the event of an emergency. Police, Fire and EMS and our Health Department must function, the citizens have to see them out and they respond to every call. As he said earlier, we have not missed a call. We have been there in the same time as we always had been, there are no delays, no reduction of staff, just assessing a little differently if it is a medical call, everything is being taken care of at this time.

Ms. Crampsie Smith noted that is reassuring.

Police Chief Mark DiLuzio stated good morning and happy first Saturday of Spring, that is just a positive note for today. As we all know this is a fluid situation, this pandemic and it changes daily. The Bethlehem Police Department is updated by our Health Bureau every day and we also receive reports from the CDC, also federal, state and other local agencies. We place this information out to all of our officers on our power DMS system. It is mandatory that they read them daily and they sign for it, so he does not get a no from anybody. All our officers do have the information, they are educated on this virus and educated on everything going on around the Country, State and in the Counties. We have added a few extra protocols and procedures to our daily operations. Officers prior to, during and after shift wipe down their cruiser cars with cleaners. They wash their hands repeatedly, after every call. The cruisers all have personal cleaning items in them for the officers when they are out on the road. Chief DiLuzio explained other than the normal PPE devices we issued additional gloves, eye protection devices, masks and also full face protection to all the officers via their cruisers. We have proper supplies needed at this point. We are requesting additional supplies through emergency management. As you heard we received a box of 20 masks and that is like spitting on a fire, getting 20 from Northampton County is like nothing, he has 20 plus cops out on an 8 hour shift. We are the eighth largest City in Pennsylvania with 180 something police personnel, we do need more than 20 masks. But we are getting supplies through the private sector in Bethlehem. We have businesses stepping up and forwarding us hand cleaner and other things which is helping us out a lot. But we do need some help with getting supplies for Police Officers. He pointed out that areas of the Police Department have been posted and restricted. Our Desk Sergeant area is still open 24 hours a day and we continue to engage citizens and handle all the issues that we do on a normal day. The area is constantly wiped down and cleaned. We initiated an email program in which you can file non-emergency police complaints. Something like a minor theft, maybe someone stole a statue out of your yard or something like that, the minor calls in the City with no medical calls, no emergency calls, no person on person calls. That can be utilized by the public so they do not have to have contact with an officer. We have tried to limit our contacts down. As for staffing we have no issues so far. We are at a Level Three emergency level, shifts are being filled without any manpower issues. We monitor manpower daily along with staffing needs and call volume. We are working with EMS and Fire and have plans in place to aid each other. Chief Novatnack had mentioned a Police Department in which some officers have the virus and the rest had to stay home to quarantine themselves. We do have plans in place for that if that would happen. Also as President of the Northampton County Chiefs of Police with cooperation with the DA's office in Northampton County we do have a mutual aid agreement drafted by the Northampton County DA Terry Houck in which all departments can render mutual aid under

Title 42. We also have municipal aid agreements with State Police and Allentown Police. So in reference to answering emergency calls if we would have a spike in these cases and people went down among the ranks with manpower we do have plans in place to respond to any calls in the City that we need to. We have no excessive sick right now and are doing very good at this point. Chief DiLuzio informed he wants to let the citizens know that the Police are out there and we are answering your calls. We are doing very good at this point and keeping track of all our expenses during this because after this is all over as we do in everything including Musikfest and any major event in the City, his department does a critique of itself. Chief DiLuzio noted they do this to see what they can improve the next time and that is very important in this because we will get through this and life will return back to normal. He mentioned there were some questions about the people calling in about businesses staying open. We do have a plan in place for that as Chief Novatnack indicated and that will be addressed by some officers. If we have a complaint we will go there and verify if the business is open or closed and make a list and that list will be forwarded to other departments in the City that handle that, permits, licensing or whoever the Mayor deems fit that they go to. There was another question about mental health issues and we are all heard the term "cabin fever" and he thinks there will be some of that as we get into this a little more but we do have mental health issue throughout the year. This should not be anything different for officers, although we might see a spike in that. But we do work with the Health Bureau constantly and the Northampton County Crisis along with Lehigh County Crisis during the year. If you were wondering about that, those needs will be addressed.

President Waldron thanked Chief DiLuzio and noted that it seems like they are taking the necessary precautions to protect the officers in his department. He asked about separating patrol officers and even with the pre-meetings of a platoon. He imagines officers are probably one per vehicle at this point.

Chief DiLuzio stated yes, usually one per vehicle even on a normal day.

President Waldron remarked that sometimes with trainees there can be two in a vehicle.

Chief DiLuzio noted that is correct, if you are probation and are still being trained you have to be with an officer.

President Waldron remarked there is really no way around that.

Chief DiLuzio responded that there is no way around that at this point.

President Waldron asked at the beginning of a shift is the platoon getting together still for a briefing.

Chief DiLuzio remarked they do get together and they spread out among themselves just like we do here.

President Waldron asked if there is a way to minimize any of those meetings or are they vital to the work you are doing.

Chief DiLuzio stated they are vital at this time because it gets all the information out, they get their assignments, they get their car assignments so it is necessary at this point. We distance ourselves as much as we can but we still have to perform our jobs.

President Waldron queried how many are typically at those meetings.

Chief DiLuzio informed there are 15-20 a shift, that is just uniform officers on patrol. The other units do not go to those meetings.

President Waldron mentioned on the enforcement side of this obviously the Governor came down with a sweeping closure of almost all businesses at this point. It is a stressful and challenging time for folks from the amount of anxiety and stress that is out there as well as the financial insecurity that almost every family is facing. People need to keep paying bills and to keep food on the table. Understandably so people are going to want to keep income coming in but at the same time the new law for now from the Governor is that all businesses have to close and that is for a very purposeful reason, to prevent people being in contact with each other because of the spread of COVID-19. President Waldron would question what the process is if somebody sees a barber shop open or a restaurant that is not adhering to take out only. What should someone do if they want to be a thoughtful member of the community to address that?

Chief DiLuzio remarked if you are a citizen just let us know. He believes that with many of these businesses he has told his officers to use commonsense. Many of these businesses if they are open and you stop in there and talk to them they will say sorry and close their doors. There is no need to enforce. He noted that enforcement under the Governor's order comes under Administrative code 1929 (he thinks this is the correct section) or it could be enforced through City Ordinances. Hopefully it will not get to that. They need to exercise commonsense because this is something we have not seen in our life time.

President Waldron mentioned people are nervous about how they are going to provide for their families and he can understand folks wanting to keep operating if only a trickle to try to keep their business afloat during these uncertain times. We really do not know how long this will last, if it will be a week or two or two months, there is no way of saying. People are really concerned about where that money will come from. His hope is as Chief DiLuzio said, that officers would go in and let folks know they are in violation and they need to close as opposed to issuing a citation and potentially taking more time and resources away from not only the Police Department but as well as these individuals who are just trying to get by in these challenging times.

Chief DiLuzio noted that he is in agreement on that line of thinking. He has family that has businesses so we are all on the same page with this.

President Waldron remarked if a citizen wanted to contact the Police Department what is the best way if it is not a 911 call.

Chief DiLuzio suggest to the public to call our Service Center at 610-865-7000, talk to one of our dispatchers and provide the information. We will check it out and handle it like we spoke about.

Mr. Colón mentioned going back to mutual aid and the assisting of other departments, are those agreements just with the municipalities that are adjacent to the City of Bethlehem or would that be Allentown or Easton which of course does not butt up against Bethlehem but because of the size of their jurisdiction. It does work both ways so Allentown could come here if something would happen to our officers but we could also be sending officers to other municipalities if they were to need the assistance.

Chief DiLuzio explained to an extent Mr. Colón is correct. He pointed out that most of these mutual aid agreements even without this pandemic on a normal night like last summer there was a huge problem in Jordan Park in Allentown and they called for immediate outside assistance. Certain Bethlehem officers went over there, State Police came in, and Whitehall Police came in. It is usually the bordering municipalities, the ones that touch the borders. With Bethlehem, Fountain Hill, Lower Saucon, Bethlehem Township, Allentown on the west side, we all work together. You would not see a Bethlehem officer responding to Forks Township that is not going to happen, that would be for the State Police and they have other law enforcement agencies. This is to cover the ones that border us if something happens and manpower is low and we need immediate help, someone else can come in and help and then return to their jurisdiction just like we do now.

Mr. Colón noted it would be based on per call, not necessarily that we would have a cruiser from Allentown patrolling west Bethlehem, it would be based on call volume.

Chief DiLuzio remarked it may never happen but once in a while you get a huge crowd situation or something like that and have to call them in or you get a shooting. We have seen a few of them where we assisted Bethlehem Township and Freemansburg when there was a police shooting. That goes on normally. He added that you would not see another township cruiser in Bethlehem, we would go to the State Police. There is a protocol on how you request mutual aid but we are not even close to that at this point. But with emergency management the plans go into that, the Mayor is aware of them and we would be talking to him and the legal department if that happens.

Dr. Van Wirt asked if the masks they received are N95 or surgical masks.

Chief DiLuzio stated they are N95.

Dr. Van Wirt wondered if his men and the EMT's fit tested and provided with those annually.

Chief DiLuzio stated yes and that they carry them normally because during the course of the year you also have the flu that affects us during the winter. We also have some other cases that we work with.

Dr. Van Wirt noted her stomach sank when she heard the number of masks they received because in her world the first thing they do when someone has a cough is to put a surgical mask on them and that prevents the droplets as much as possible from going out. She asked if they have that type of protection as well for the men.

Chief DiLuzio advised they can use the masks that they have but usually with this they are putting oxygen on the person right when they get there. They put a type of oxygen mask on them especially if it is a respiratory issue.

Dr. Van Wirt said she hopes you have the amount of surgical masks you need to cover the people who your responders may be coming into contact with.

Chief DiLuzio explained they do right now, they have an adequate supply. When looking at how this progresses if this continues to go up or if it starts to level off. The private sector is helping us, there are a lot of donations coming in, which is great. He is sending out many thank you notes to people each day.

Dr. Van Wirt asked if they are reusing the N95's. She stated that she has one.

Chief DiLuzio remarked he may be wrong on this but they recommend to use them 4 times and that they do not recommend using the past 5 times.

Dr. Van Wirt believes the recommendations are fluid. She checks the CDC website and she gets emergency emails from both the Pennsylvania Department of Health and the CDC and the guidelines even on reuse of equipment are totally fluctuating, fluid and terrible really.

Chief DiLuzio agrees that it changes every day.

## 2. RESOLUTION

President Waldron stated they will move on to the one agenda item which is the Resolution.

Mr. Callahan and Mr. Colón sponsored Resolution No. 2020-053 which is a joint declaration of disaster emergency by the City Council of the City of Bethlehem and the Mayor of the City.

Voting AYE: Mr. Callahan, Mr. Colón, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Dr. Van Wirt, and Mr. Waldron, 5.

Mr. Novatnack noted just to be clear when we request unmet needs he has to go through the Counties and they were not able to secure them either. They had to divide and ration them out, so the Counties did their best. He was in touch with Northampton County last night and they got a limited amount. The Counties are doing what they can but they just are not getting enough from Harrisburg. Mr. Novatnack added that the DCED will enforce the business violations. At our center downstairs when they get complaints about some business being open or there is a problem with a business they will reach out to that business, they will get an email and in working hours they will probably also get a phone call. If it becomes blatant with staying open then law enforcement will get involved but much of that is handled by the DCED, Alicia Karner's department. They do a great job in sending their folks out and they address problems as they arise before they get out of hand. Mr. Novatnack queried what are we doing for City employees? There are a few things. Besides locking down the front door and locking down certain areas here the cleaning has been ramped up at City Hall, they are taking care of all the

hard surfaces. Cleaning supplies are available at are local business including Ackroyd Hardware and other places, we send vehicles over and pick those supplies up, our maintenance guys. So they are taking care of all the hard surfaces, even where we are sitting here right now in the rotunda, this was all taken care of. In addition to that with the handwashing side the Health Department has been actively involved and also making sure people are social distancing. With the cruiser cars, every one of them has hand sanitizer inside them with the vehicle number on them so it does not go somewhere else and stays with that vehicle the whole time. Local businesses have actually stepped up. Mr. Novatnack pointed out that as he sat here he received a text that the Social Still on the south side will ramp up and provide hand sanitizer, he will be going over there today. So they will be helping us out with an unmet need along with another distillery that is up in New Tripoli called Eight Oaks, they will also be helping us out. By just making those contacts with the private sector, it has been wonderful. Mr. Novatnack added that Wind Creek is going to help us out, we are trying to get a hold of equipment they have stockpiled, even masks that they have. It has been a great partnership between the City and private businesses. They are stepping up and reaching out to us. In taking care of the employees here we have a plan in place, there is hand sanitizers in each department, so everything is being addressed as best we can. He added that there are some Police Departments that have hand washing stations outside their doors because they are the ones out dealing with the public so they will wash their hands before they come in the doors. We will be seeing if we can do that. He pointed out that we do that during Musikfest, we have a hand washing station at the Northampton County command post. There are many ideas, we are moving forward and trying every day to get the right things for the City. Things will change, even when this is over, things will change for us.

President Waldron asked as we progress here to keep us informed as best you can. This may be the last time we are in this room for a while. We have a Council Meeting on April 7, 2020 and the likelihood of us having that meeting is pretty uncertain at this point. He does see a lot of value in these updates. Even if we are not having a Council Meeting considering an agenda as long as he can he is willing to come in here and he will volunteer Mr. Vidoni to do that as well. We can spread ourselves out at the dais. President Waldron added he did get a text message from his mother, she is watching on YouTube that he and Mr. Vidoni are sitting too close together, it is not quite 6 feet. But even if you are updating Council and Council is only he and Mr. Vidoni, we do have people watching at home and this information is extremely valuable to let folks know what is happening in the City and what the City is doing to move through these challenging times. We will keep our April 7, 2020 meeting on the agenda for now but we may need an emergency update before that. President Waldron thanked everyone for the hard work that the Administration is doing as well as the department heads and all the way down to every individual who is a part of this team that will help us get through these really tough times. Then eventually we have the really challenging recovery that will be required of everyone as we move forward here. So thanks for joining us on this Saturday morning. President Waldron remarked that Mayor Donchez thinks this is the only time he can remember that Council had a meeting on a Saturday. But that is what it is going to take as we move forward in the next weeks and months.

### 3. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:07 am.

ATTEST:



Robert G. Vidoni, Esq.  
City Clerk