

BETHLEHEM CITY COUNCIL MEETING
10 East Church Street - Town Hall
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania
Tuesday, February 4, 2025 – 7:00 PM

PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

1. ROLL CALL

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

President Colón recognized Boy Scout Troop 318 from Bethlehem in attendance tonight to work on members' Citizenship and Community badge.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

January 21, 2025

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

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

Action Needed

Resident Harry Faber emphasized that his remarks during the January 21 meeting related to Palestine and the genocide in Gaza. He said these words are important to use because Israel's genocidal policy is to try to wipe away the history of Palestine. Mr. Faber also suggested that Council take some sort of action in response to President Trump's policies involving U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). He believes that Allentown City Council, for example, is expected to consider creating sanctuary city status.

Fearful Times

Karen Vasquez shared her experience as a daughter of undocumented immigrants. She has lived in Bethlehem since she was 5. That is when she began to fear the police because she knew her parents' secret of being undocumented. She was afraid they would be deported. She is grateful for her life in the United States but fearful that it could end at any time. That deep trauma has resurfaced this month with President Trump's actions. Many in this country share these feelings. She appealed to Council to consider passing an executive order directing police not to comply with ICE orders unless they are supported by judicial warrants that pertain to a person convicted of a felony involving violence. She also urged Council to adopt a welcoming cities policy.

Displeasure Expressed

Resident Arthur Curatola again expressed displeasure with what appears to be his banishment from performing comedy or music by ArtsQuest and other venues within the City.

Appeal to Empty Trash Cans More Often

A man identified only as Shawn asked Council whether trash cans along the D&L Trail could be emptied more often. He said he spoke on behalf of some people who live in a homeless encampment in the area. They do their best to clean up after themselves using these trash cans. There is a need to empty the trash cans more often.

Adopt a Policy/Open Bathrooms to Homeless

Resident Valerie Noonan supported Ms. Vasquez's comments and noted that Allentown is proposing adopting a welcoming cities policy and to limit city cooperation with ICE. She would support similar initiatives in Bethlehem. She is also aware that Bethlehem already does a number of things that fall under welcoming cities criteria. This is good, but she said we have learned that anything that is not codified can be stripped away quickly. She would like to see a policy put in place. Ms. Noonan also supported Shawn's comments regarding the homeless. She added that unlocking public bathrooms would be of help.

Enact Laws

Resident Tommy Parisi was also concerned about ICE and deportations. He urged Council not to go along with President Trump's orders on deportations. City resources should not be used voluntarily to do so. Among the suggested actions is that the City should not obtain or keep information concerning individuals' immigration or citizenship status. He urged Council to codify these protections into City law.

Keep People Safe

Regina Padilla was born and raised in Bethlehem but currently lives in Allentown. She has Mexican and Puerto Rican roots. She asked that Council make Bethlehem a welcoming city and limit cooperation with immigration officials. She has experienced name-calling and being told to get out of this country. We should keep all residents safe regardless of documentation.

Protect Immigrant Community

Resident Deirdre Jayko supported the immigrant community and urged Council to do all it can to protect them regardless of documentation. They are a valuable part of our community.

Limit Assistance to ICE

Resident Leah Tagliarino also supported the immigrant community. She said the City should limit its support of ICE and that Bethlehem should be a welcoming community to all people regardless of documentation status.

Freedom Rally Announced

Resident Jordan Bold announced that he will be holding a freedom rally at 1 PM on Sunday, February 16 in the Rose Garden. He invited all to voice their opinions.

Become Sanctuary City

Daniel Carapezzi asked Council to sponsor measures to affirm its commitment to immigrant residents and make itself known as a sanctuary city that will protect its residents from the raids of ICE.

Affordable Housing

Resident Tina Cantelmi spoke on affordable housing. She said it is unfortunate that affordable housing units typically are rentals. This makes it difficult for the tenant to save money toward owning their own home. She wondered whether policies could be shifted to promote units that are owned. Ms. Cantelmi also encouraged that affordable housing be located in areas where walkability to services is realistic. Many in this situation do not own cars.

Do Not Cooperate with ICE

A woman who identified herself as Willow spoke on behalf of the immigrant community. She does not believe the City should be collaborating with ICE. President Trump has made it clear that he will take every opportunity to expand deportation and has spoken about revoking the status of legal immigrants. We need to be ready for this reality and to resist.

Snow Removal/Immigration

Resident Mary Jo Makoul said tertiary streets were poorly maintained during the recent snowstorm. She complimented the maintenance on primary streets, but said tertiary streets are ignored. If secondary streets can receive attention, she believed it possible to make a pass on tertiary streets. Ms. Makoul also said some sidewalks were not shoveled for 10 days. Enforcement is needed. She also said she is a descendant of immigrant parents and great-grandparents. Requirements for gaining naturalization citizenship were stricter. There must be some control to maintain safety and financial fairness to existing citizens. She urged Council not to approve legislation to become a welcoming city.

Resist Trump's Actions

Resident William Scheirer said the Trump administration is heartless and arrogant in threatening deportation. He also spoke of other actions taken by the President in his first few days in office, including the reduction in foreign aid. He called on people to resist.

Supports Sanctuary City Status

Braylon, a Lehigh University student, reminded that Bethlehem is a city based on immigrants. He said there is no difference between those decades ago and today. He added that the fact that many of today's immigrants are Black or Brown does not make their status a crime.

He also said that immigrants pay taxes toward the services they may receive. These are also people who contribute to the community by working. He implored Council to codify protection status.

Enact 'Concrete Policies'

Jasmine Bau identified herself as a Lehigh University staff member who is of Chinese descent but is a U.S. citizen. Black and Brown immigrants are those most targeted right now, but she believes that will be just the start. She urged all to fight racism by introducing "concrete policies."

Contributing Members of Society

A woman who identified herself only as Regina said she is a seventh-generation Bethlehem resident. ICE raids and actions behind them are not within the spirit of why Bethlehem was founded. Obtaining immigration status is a long and difficult process. She believes that no person should be illegal. We must protect our people, regardless of documentation. They contribute to our community by paying taxes and working. It is additionally traumatic to the entire community to have this level of unease with threats and actions taken by ICE at the direction of the President.

Welcoming City Policies Safer

A woman who identified herself as Michelle, a social worker and nurse, referred to welcoming cities policies recently passed in Erie and Alexandria, VA. In these cities, it is the policy of the local agency to abide by the federal law. She also cited documentation released today from California that police departments have said it is in their best interests to pass a welcoming city law because officers report that they get better interactions with the community and they are safer in the community when they have good working relationships within their communities and that people can talk with police without fear of deportation.

Pass an Executive Order

Victoria, who identified herself as a Lehigh University student, implored Council to pass an executive order to not give ICE information about a person's legal status. She comes from an immigrant family. She is of legal status, but she worries that members of her family could be deported. Her community is living in fear of deportation.

Illegal Status Often Not a Choice

Lashidi Amin, also a Lehigh student, said the immigration process is long and complex and comes down to a lottery system where the selection process is done by chance. Many illegal, undocumented aliens are not this status by choice. This is done to survive. She asked Council to have empathy.

Decisions Affect Lives

Ruben Gomez is a Columbian son of an immigrant and the grandson and great-grandson of immigrants. He predicted that the federal government deporting undocumented immigrants is only the first step. He fears that the citizenship his father and other relatives have obtained will be revoked. It should not matter how people got here. They are here now and decisions made affect the lives of these human beings.

Speak Up Now

Evelyn, a resident and Lehigh student, said she is scared as a trans woman under this federal administration. She implored Council to protect the most vulnerable and least protected community members. She read the words of pastor Martin Niemoller that warned that groups not rising up against hate will someday have no one left to defend them.

History Repeating Itself?

Alex Marguilles, another Lehigh Student, read a headline that President Trump has begun deporting migrants to Guantanamo Bay. The 13th Amendment states that involuntary servitude is legal for prisoners. History repeats itself. We must take as much action as we can to resist this.

Sanctuary City/Bathrooms for the Homeless

Bethlehem resident Camron urged Bethlehem to become a sanctuary city and for Council to protect the vulnerable. He also raised concerns for the homeless living in encampments under the Minsi Trail and Fahy bridges. Bathrooms should be open 24 hours a day.

Strong Support

Resident Chris Devlin took issue with words used earlier: "differences of opinion." He only heard one person support a stronger need for citizen documentation. The vast majority present support the immigrant community. He added that stereotypes exist involving immigrants. He stated that his partner moved here from Columbia when she was 9 and went through the process of becoming a citizen. Today she is a civil engineer.

Safe and Welcoming Place for All

Resident Tyler Katz identified himself as being Jewish and queer and wanted to stand up for the rights of immigrants and the marginalized community. He shuddered to think what it would mean if those fleeing oppression were turned away. Bethlehem needs to be a safe and welcoming place for all.

Concerns for the Department of Education

Resident Peter Hoshnoski said it is a shame that this country has reached this point and has not learned from history. He originally intended to attend tonight to learn more on the status of lead in City pipes. But returning to current events involving deportation, he also warned of the threatened dismantling of the U.S. Department of Education. This is an attack on education.

History has shown that some civilizations were torn down through tearing down the intellectuals. An ignorant society is susceptible to those in power.

Urges Sanctuary City Status

Melanie Atiyeh favors making Bethlehem a sanctuary city. Her parents recently became American citizens. She is glad they have this protection.

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

Historic Significant

Connie Postupack, Chairwoman of the Historical & Architectural Review Board (HARB), offered insights into the Board's recommended rejection of a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for 555 Main Street, known as the Woolworth Building. She offered the historical background of the Woolworth lunch counter in Greensboro, N.C., and its significant to the Civil Rights Movement. According to historic preservation law, "The goal of historic preservation is to keep properties and places of historic and cultural value in active use, accommodating appropriate improvement to sustain viability while maintaining the key character defining features which contribute to their significance as cultural resources." HARB denied this application based on Bethlehem's guidelines for height, proportion and materials. The outside appearance also lacked detail consistent with the district.

Reasons for Denial

Diana Hodgson, another HARB member, said the recommended denial of a COA for 555 Main Street was based on Bethlehem design guidelines not being met as well as building form and massing. It was further denied because of the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, which requires that a property be reused as it was historically or be given a use requiring minimal change. Also, each property is to be recognized as a physical property of its time, place and use. Adding unrelated features shall not be undertaken. Adding three stories to this iconic building would not fit with HARB's purpose of attempting to maintain the architectural integrity of Bethlehem.

Maintain Charm

Resident Mary Rose Wilson lives in the Historic District and supports HARB's recommended rejection of the COA. She wants to maintain the historic charm of Main Street. As a resident of the district, she knows the standards that she must abide by. All of those within the district must do so as well. She also does not believe that another 25 apartments are necessary. Ms. Wilson further believed this project would add to area parking congestion.

Respect Preservation

Historic District resident Michael Bianco reminded that HARB exists to preserve the historic nature of the City. In its view, this project does not reflect those goals. He asked that

Council accept this recommendation. This is about respecting HARB and the residents of the Historic District by maintaining the historic character.

Is This the Right Place for Apartment?

Resident Tyler Katz urged keeping the historic nature of the Woolworth Building and noted concerns about modifying the historic building to include a modern addition. He believes that more affordable housing is needed to help those mentioned earlier living under bridges, but he questioned whether transforming the Woolworth Building into apartments is the right solution.

Offer to Continue Review

HARB member Nick Nikolov advocated the process of public review. A wide range of guidelines is considered by experts in several related fields. He recognizes that HARB is in an advisory role to Council, but unless the process is deemed faulty in some way, the project should be referred back to HARB if there is disagreement with the Board's recommendation. HARB would work with the architect and applicant.

Budget Adjustments

Braylon, the Lehigh student, noted budget adjustments on tonight's agenda. He saw that the affordable housing budget would be decreased while the amount for the Halloween Parade would be increased. He conceded that these were not large amounts, but the concept, considering importance, would set a bad precedent.

President Colón said the budget adjustments reflect budget changes and money for the fourth quarter of 2024. Actual spending does not change. This will be further explained later in the meeting.

Same Standards for All

Historic District resident Scott Hummel said that he will be on the next HARB agenda. He, too, must go before the Board and meet historic guidelines for alterations as should the owners of the Woolworth Building. These guidelines are put in place for all and are among the reasons that he and others choose to live in the Historic District.

Historic Precedent?

Resident William Scheirer said he fine-tuned comments he made last meeting concerning the Woolworth Building proposal. He asked how history will remember the decision that Council will make on this project. Will Council disregard the HARB recommendation as it did with the Walnut Street Garage or will it accept their recommendation? Overriding HARB on this project would set a precedent for Main Street. "The historical context of the Moravian buildings will have been lost," he predicted, "and Bethlehem will have a reduced quality of life."

Help for Homeless

Resident Arthur Curatola said he had a solution as to how the City can help a lot of the homeless people.

President Colón asked what agenda item Mr. Curatola was relating his comments to, reminding that this section of Public Comment relates to agenda items.

Mr. Curatola said his idea has to do with the budget and the agenda involves matters of expenses and City money.

After much back and forth, President Colón asked Mr. Curatola to yield the floor if he could not relate his comments more directly to an item listed on the agenda, as is governed by Council Rules.

Not Good Urban Planning

Resident Valerie Noonan said she is a supporter of affordable housing, but she is also a fan of good urban planning. She does not believe the 555 Main Street project is that. This would increase traffic and parking congestion on Main Street.

4. OLD BUSINESS

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

5. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Leon

Ms. Leon ask Public Works Director Michael Alkhal how often trash containers are emptied in the parks and the areas along the D&L Trail referenced earlier in the meeting.

Mr. Alkhal said at least twice weekly.

Ms. Leon asked whether additional trash bins are provided.

He did not recall the use of additional trash bins.

Ms. Leon also asked Police Chief Michelle Kott if she wanted to provide the Department's stance on current immigration and deportation matters.

Chief Kott hoped her comments would "dispel some rumors and quell some fears." The Department's mission is to maintain the safety of all, regardless of immigration status. There should not be a need for fear that reporting crimes or seeking help could result in deportation. Immigration enforcement is up to federal agencies. BPD will enforce all federal warrants and court orders, but it does not routinely inquire about immigrations statuses. Nor does it participate

in ICE's 287(g) program, which allows selected state and local law enforcement officers the ability to enforce federal immigration laws. Trust between the police and the community is essential. She added that a lot of orders and policy changes have occurred over the past few days making the situation fluid.

Ms. Leon asked the Mayor for the Administration's position on this matter.

Mayor Reynolds thanked community members who spoke this evening. He estimated that the Administration is spending 90 percent of its time dealing with the "chaos going on in Washington and what it means for families and for what it means for the City of Bethlehem." Information is constantly changing. He has been in contact with Chief Kott and City Solicitor John F. Spirk, Jr. The Mayor said that BPD is CALEA certified and hires quality officers who understand what it means to use discretion and common sense but uphold the law. The idea of community policing is at the center of who we are. We want to be a place where people are safe. We must uphold federal responsibilities but also create a culture where people are treated with dignity.

Ms. Leon also asked whether officers are trained to discuss these matters with the community.

Chief Kott said recent training provides instruction for officers to relate to the unhoused population. Some of this includes dealing with those who are undocumented. This will be further emphasized given current events. She wants all officers to be on the same page, including information about dealing with ICE and what officers can and cannot do. CALEA certification prohibits police from searching suspects based on a number of classifications.

Ms. Laird

Ms. Laird noted recent news of impersonation of a police officer on the Temple University campus. She asked if there is a means for a person to verify whether BPD has authorized officers to be conducting operations.

Chief Kott said many law enforcement agencies follow this practice. She would encourage someone seeking verification to contact 911, the Northampton County non-emergency number or the Bethlehem Service Center to verify the authenticity of a Bethlehem police officer claiming to have a federal warrant.

Ms. Laird also asked about an accident in West Bethlehem involving a vehicle crash during a police pursuit. She noted that the agency was the Pennsylvania State Police, not City police. But she asked about the rules involving high-speed pursuits.

Chief Kott said Pennsylvania State Police has jurisdiction statewide. The City cannot restrict an active pursuit by the State Police. Hellertown and Lower Saucon police generally cancel their pursuits upon crossing the City line. As for BPD, the CALEA certification prohibits pursuits under most conditions. A case-by-case evaluation would have to be made between the officer and a supervisor that would include the severity of the infraction, whether the area is densely populated, weather conditions, etc. to determine whether a pursuit is initiated and continued.

Ms. Laird also asked Director of Water and Sewer Resources Edward Boscola for an update on the letters that were sent a few months ago to water customers trying to identify those with lead pipes.

Mr. Boscola said there has not been a lot of feedback, probably fewer than a couple of hundred responses out of 37,000 customers. The City must identify as many lead service lines as it can by 2027. It will have 10 years, by 2037, to replace all known lead service lines. He added that Bethlehem's lead levels have been well below the federal standards for the last 35 years when the level was set. The City adds a corrosion inhibitor to neutralize the lead concern.

Ms. Laird also read about a sinkhole that was reported today in northeast Bethlehem. She asked about the fluctuation in temperatures and how much that is affecting the ground and buried pipes.

Mr. Boscola said this occurs to some degree every winter, but this has been a particularly challenging winter because the temperature has fluctuated so much between very cold and very warm. The freezing and thawing disturbs the ground and puts stress on the pipes creating breakage. Those experiencing damage should contact their insurance company and talk to the City about filing an insurance claim.

Mr. Callahan

Mr. Callahan asked the Mayor if ICE officers make raids in the City, what would his direction be to Chief Kott and officer as to how to respond?

Mayor Reynolds said that should be a question for Chief Kott.

Mr. Callahan said he is asking the Mayor this question because he oversees the chief and her Department.

President Colón intervened saying that Mr. Callahan may ask the question he wants and the Mayor can direct the question as he sees fit.

Chief Kott said it depends on whether there is a judicial warrant or court order. BPD will do whatever is best for public safety for the City of Bethlehem.

Mr. Callahan said if ICE has the court order and asks for BPD assistance, what is the directive from the Mayor?

Chief Kott said she could not speak for the Mayor but repeated that officers will react with what is best for public safety. BPD cannot deport people. It cannot exercise any immigration laws. BPD involvement would be limited. If anything, she believed the action would be traffic control and perhaps figuring out if there is legal reason for ICE to be present. She would want to be certain it was not an impersonation or hoax. She has met with the Mayor and Solicitor Spirk. It is clear BPD must adhere to federal law.

Mayor Reynolds added that the police will follow federal law.

Mr. Callahan said that the statement read by Chief Kott was obviously prepared in advance. But it did not directly answer what several from the audience asked tonight: Will any City resources be used to assist ICE if they come in with warrants, such as jail space or use of police vehicles? What would his position be?

Mayor Reynolds said the City will respond in the best way in which a situation presents itself. Circumstances may vary according to the circumstances that arrive. There is also daily change in what the federal government is calling for. Chief Kott and Mayor Reynolds repeated that if a judicial warrant or court order are in place, Bethlehem must cooperate.

Ms. Crampsie Smith

Ms. Crampsie Smith clarified an audience question about a decrease in affordable housing funds. She said a Finance Committee meeting was held earlier this evening to discuss this matter and others. This involves funds that are used and received between October and December of the previous year. The budget is already prepared for 2025 around September. Some of the actions at tonight's Finance Committee meeting were to reconcile the budget to reflect actual spending for the year. It does not mean that less money was spent for housing. It means that some of the budget may have been spent in the last quarter, so the budget numbers may decrease to reflect actual numbers instead of projections.

Ms. Crampsie Smith asked Chief Kott about the police working with groups including the Bethlehem Area School District relating to immigration. The chief said these conversations were held in order to be proactive rather than reactive.

Ms. Wilhelm

Ms. Wilhelm thanked Chief Kott and the Mayor for their planning on these immigration matters.

Ms. Kwiatek

Ms. Kwiatek thanked Chief Kott and Mr. Alkhal for looking into traffic safety concerns in West Bethlehem.

Mr. Callahan

Mr. Callahan asked if there is any update on the unspecified building project next to the Walnut Street Garage.

Mayor Reynolds said the new parking garage is on schedule to open on time in November. As for adjacent development, there is no update. No plans have been filed and there have not been discussions.

Mr. Colón

President Colón thanked Mr. Boscola's department for an orderly and efficient water repair made recently in his neighborhood. He also asked the Administration for continued updates involving federal funding as it becomes available.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

A. *Director of Human Resources – 2025 07 – DOT-Regulated Random Testing Agreement – St. Luke's Hospital Occupational Medicine*

The Clerk read a January 2, 2025 memorandum with an attached Resolution from Human Resources Director Michelle Cichocki. Ms. Cichocki recommends a contract with St. Luke's Hospital Occupational Medicine for the administration and compliance reporting of Department of Transportation drug and alcohol testing as mandated by the federal Department of Transportation. The cost is \$7,000 per year, and the contract would run through December 31, 2025.

President Colón said Resolution 10 A is on the agenda.

B. *Director of Public Works – 2025 11 Linden Street Two-Way Conversion – Pennoni Associates*

The Clerk read a January 28, 2025 memorandum with an attached Resolution from Public Works Director Michael Alkhal. Mr. Alkhal recommends a contract with Pennoni Associates, Inc. of Bethlehem to provide the preliminary engineering design for the Linden Street Two-Way Conversion project from Fairview Street to Church Street. Final design and construction services agreements will be negotiated and awarded after completion of the preliminary design. The cost is \$196,575.53. Work is to be completed within 365 days upon issuance of the Notice to Proceed. There are no renewals.

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

C. *Director of Public Works – General Reimbursement – Linden St. Grant Agreement – PennDOT*

The Clerk read a January 29, 2025 memorandum and proposed Resolution from Public Works Director Michael Alkhal. The memorandum seeks authorization to execute a General Reimbursement Grant Agreement for Federal-Aid Highway Projects. The City has been awarded \$206,000 in federal funding to be used toward preliminary design and environmental clearance for the Linden Street Two-Way Conversion Project. A Resolution is required to receive this money.

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

D. *City Solicitor – Amendments to Civil Service Bd Rules and Regs – Fire Dept. (2025)*

The Clerk read a January 24, 2025 memorandum with an attached Resolution from Assistant City Solicitor Matthew Deschler. Attorney Deschler requests Council's review and approval of proposed amendments to the Rules and Regulations of the Civil Service Board

relating to the Fire Department. Attorney Deschler notes that the Civil Service Board voted 3-0 at its January 21, 2025 meeting to recommend enactment of these amendments.

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

E. *Director of Public Works – 2025 13 Climate Action Plan Support – WSP USA, Inc.*

The Clerk read a January 29, 2025 memorandum with an attached Resolution from Public Works Director Michael Alkhal. Mr. Alkhal recommends a contract with WSP USA, Inc. of Bethlehem to provide assistance in transitioning the Climate Action Plan implementation and coordination responsibilities to the Sustainability Manager. The cost is \$20,000. Work is to be completed by December 31, 2025. There are no anticipated renewals.

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

7. REPORTS

A. *President of Council*

B. *Mayor*

Mayor Reynolds reported on the news conference that he held on Wednesday to discuss the consequences of the federal funding freeze. He estimated that about \$40 million has been awarded to the City over the next few years. The Health Bureau, for example, is 80-90 percent funded by federal funds. This is the No. 1 priority of the Administration to stay on top of this situation. Much of the money comes in as reimbursements to the City, so a lot of money already has been paid by Bethlehem. Another example is that the Bethlehem Housing Authority pays for five police officers. If federal reimbursement is frozen, repayment is delayed or perhaps lost. An additional problem with the freeze is that small businesses get caught in the middle. The Lead and Healthy Homes program is one example. If money gets delayed, the small business owner's payment for abatement is held up by the federal government. This may jeopardize their future participation and erodes trust.

The Mayor also announced this year's Community Recovery Fund event two weeks ago. In addition to hearing success stories from the funding provided, this event also brings people together from the nonprofit groups that has led to collaboration. A meeting also was held on Thursday to update the South Bethlehem Community Center. Some private partners have discussed funding possibilities, and state and federal officials have been approached to inquire about potential funding. This center has the potential to be a hub of services and recreation.

C. *Grace Crampsie Smith, Chair – Finance Committee*

Ms. Crampsie Smith reported that the Finance Committee met at 6 tonight to discuss 15 proposed Ordinances involving year-end budget adjustments and additions and 2 Resolutions involving golf course rates and transfers to cover negotiated salary increases.

8. ORDINANCES FOR FINAL PASSAGE

None.

9. NEW ORDINANCES

9A. *Bill No. 1-2025 – Budget Adjustment – Non-Utility Capital Fund*

The Clerk read Bill No. 1-2025 – Budget Adjustment – Non-Utility Capital Fund, sponsored by Ms. Crampsie Smith and Ms. Leon and titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA,
AMENDING THE 2025 CAPITAL BUDGET FOR NON-UTILITIES.

Voting AYE: Ms. Leon, Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird and Mr. Colón, 7. Bill No. 1-2025 passed on First Reading.

9B. *Bill No. 2-2025 – Budget Adjustment – Sewer Capital Fund*

The Clerk read Bill No. 2-2025 – Budget Adjustment – Sewer Capital Fund, sponsored by Ms. Crampsie Smith and Ms. Leon and titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA,
AMENDING THE 2025 CAPITAL BUDGET FOR SEWER UTILITIES.

Voting AYE: Ms. Leon, Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird and Mr. Colón, 7. Bill No. 2-2025 passed on First Reading.

9C. *Bill No. 3-2025 – Budget Adjustment – Water Capital Fund*

The Clerk read Bill No. 3-2025 – Budget Adjustment – Water Capital Fund, sponsored by Ms. Crampsie Smith and Ms. Leon and titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA,
AMENDING THE WATER CAPITAL FUND BUDGET FOR 2025.

Voting AYE: Ms. Leon, Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird and Mr. Colón, 7. Bill No. 3-2025 passed on First Reading.

9D. *Bill No. 4-2025 – Budget Adjustment – Water Fund*

The Clerk read Bill No. 4-2025 – Budget Adjustment – Water Fund, sponsored by Ms.

Crampsie Smith and Ms. Leon and titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA,
AMENDING THE WATER FUND BUDGET FOR 2025.

Voting AYE: Ms. Leon, Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird and Mr. Colón, 7. Bill No. 4-2025 passed on First Reading.

Ms. Laird made a motion, seconded by Ms. Crampsie Smith, to consolidate voting on agenda items 9E through 9M as a group, since they all involve the General Fund and were considered earlier tonight by the Finance Committee.

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

9E. *Bill No. 5-2025 – Budget Adjustment – General Fund*

The Clerk read Bill No. 5-2025 – Budget Adjustment – General Fund, sponsored by Ms. Crampsie Smith and Ms. Leon and titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA,
AMENDING THE GENERAL FUND BUDGET FOR 2025.

Voting AYE: Ms. Leon, Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird and Mr. Colón, 7. Bill No. 5-2025 passed on First Reading.

9F. *Bill No. 6-2025 – Budget Adjustment – Fire Grant – General Fund*

The Clerk read Bill No. 6-2025 – Budget Adjustment – Fire Grant – General Fund, sponsored by Ms. Crampsie Smith and Ms. Leon and titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA,
AMENDING THE GENERAL FUND BUDGET FOR 2025.

Voting AYE: Ms. Leon, Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird and Mr. Colón, 7. Bill No. 6-2025 passed on First Reading.

9G. *Bill No. 7-2025 – Budget Adjustment – Halloween Donation – General Fund*

The Clerk read Bill No. 7-2025 – Budget Adjustment – Halloween Donation – General Fund, sponsored by Ms. Crampsie Smith and Ms. Leon and titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA,
AMENDING THE GENERAL FUND BUDGET FOR 2025.

Voting AYE: Ms. Leon, Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird and Mr. Colón, 7. Bill No. 7-2025 passed on First Reading.

9H. *Bill No. 8-2025 – Budget Adjustment – Police Radios – General Fund*

The Clerk read Bill No. 8-2025 – Budget Adjustment – Police Radios – General Fund, sponsored by Ms. Crampsie Smith and Ms. Leon and titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA,
AMENDING THE GENERAL FUND BUDGET FOR 2025.

Voting AYE: Ms. Leon, Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird and Mr. Colón, 7. Bill No. 8-2025 passed on First Reading.

9I. *Bill No. 9-2025 – Budget Adjustment – Health Immunizations – General Fund*

The Clerk read Bill No. 9-2025 – Budget Adjustment – Health Immunizations – General Fund, sponsored by Ms. Crampsie Smith and Ms. Leon and titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA,
AMENDING THE GENERAL FUND BUDGET FOR 2025.

Voting AYE: Ms. Leon, Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird and Mr. Colón, 7. Bill No. 9-2025 passed on First Reading.

9J. *Bill No. 10-2025 – Budget Adjustment – Police Organized Crime – General Fund*

The Clerk read Bill No. 10-2025 – Budget Adjustment – Police Organized Crime – General Fund, sponsored by Ms. Crampsie Smith and Ms. Leon and titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA,
AMENDING THE GENERAL FUND BUDGET FOR 2025.

Voting AYE: Ms. Leon, Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird and Mr. Colón, 7. Bill No. 10-2025 passed on First Reading.

9K. *Bill No. 11-2025 – Budget Adjustment – Pole Replacement – General Fund*

The Clerk read Bill No. 11-2025 – Budget Adjustment – Pole Replacement – General Fund, sponsored by Ms. Crampsie Smith and Ms. Leon and titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA,
AMENDING THE GENERAL FUND BUDGET FOR 2025.

Voting AYE: Ms. Leon, Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird and Mr. Colón, 7. Bill No. 11-2025 passed on First Reading.

9L. *Bill No. 12-2025 – Budget Adjustment – Emergency Solutions Grant – General Fund*

The Clerk read Bill No. 12-2025 – Budget Adjustment – Emergency Solutions Grant – General Fund, sponsored by Ms. Crampsie Smith and Ms. Leon and titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA,
AMENDING THE GENERAL FUND BUDGET FOR 2025.

Voting AYE: Ms. Leon, Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird and Mr. Colón, 7. Bill No. 12-2025 passed on First Reading.

9M. *Bill No. 13-2025 – Budget Adjustment – LERTA Affordable Housing – General Fund*

The Clerk read Bill No. 13-2025 – Budget Adjustment – LERTA Affordable Housing – General Fund, sponsored by Ms. Crampsie Smith and Ms. Leon and titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA,
AMENDING THE GENERAL FUND BUDGET FOR 2025.

Voting AYE: Ms. Leon, Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird and Mr. Colón, 7. Bill No. 13-2025 passed on First Reading.

9N. *Bill No. 14-2025 – Budget Adjustment – St. Luke's Hospital Donation – Golf Fund*

The Clerk read Bill No. 14-2025 – Budget Adjustment – St. Luke's Hospital Donation – Golf Fund, sponsored by Ms. Crampsie Smith and Ms. Leon and titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA,
AMENDING THE GOLF FUND BUDGET FOR 2025.

Voting AYE: Ms. Leon, Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird and Mr. Colón, 7. Bill No. 14-2025 passed on First Reading.

9O. *Bill No. 15-2025 – Budget Adjustment – Community Development Block Grant Fund*

The Clerk read Bill No. 15-2025 – Budget Adjustment – Community Development Block Grant Fund, sponsored by Ms. Crampsie Smith and Ms. Leon and titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA,
AMENDING THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
BLOCK GRANT FUND BUDGET FOR 2025.

Voting AYE: Ms. Leon, Ms. Wilhelm, Mr. Callahan, Ms. Crampsie Smith, Ms. Kwiatek, Ms. Laird and Mr. Colón, 7. Bill No. 15-2025 passed on First Reading.

10. RESOLUTIONS

Mr. Callahan made a motion, seconded by Ms. Leon, to vote on Resolutions 10A through 10H as a group.

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

A. *Approve Resolution – 2025 07 – DOT-Regulated Random Testing Agreement – St. Luke's Hospital Occupational Medicine*

Ms. Crampsie Smith and Ms. Leon sponsored Resolution No. 2025-018 that authorized to execute an Agreement with St. Luke's Occupational Medicine for administration and compliance reporting of Department of Transportation drug and alcohol testing.

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

B. *Approve Resolution – 2025 11 Linden Street Two-Way Conversion – Pennoni Associates*

Ms. Crampsie Smith and Ms. Leon sponsored Resolution No. 2025-019 that authorized to execute an Agreement with the Pennoni Associates, Inc. to provide preliminary engineering design for the Linden Street Two-Way Conversion project.

Ms. Crampsie Smith asked the source of the funds associated with this Resolution and 10F. She was concerned that this money could be held up by current concerns over federal funding.

Mr. Alkhal said these projects are on the Lehigh Valley Transportation Improvement Program. He does not believe that these projects involve federal funds.

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

C. Approve Resolution – Controller’s Office – Records Destruction

Ms. Crampsie Smith and Ms. Leon sponsored Resolution No. 2025-020 that the disposal of public records in the Controller’s Office, as set forth in Exhibit A, is hereby authorized.

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

D. Approve Resolution – Increase Rates – Golf Season

Ms. Crampsie Smith and Ms. Leon sponsored Resolution No. 2025-021 that authorized that the golf fees listed in Exhibit A shall be effective for the 2025 golf season.

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

E. Approve Resolution – SEIU Collective Bargaining

Ms. Crampsie Smith and Ms. Leon sponsored Resolution No. 2025-022 that the SEIU collective bargain unit’s contract has been renegotiated for a new term and transfers are needed for SEIU labor contract settlement which includes TAMS, NC, and contract employees’ salary increases for 2025 and whereas the administration anticipated the wage increases and has recommended sufficient budget transfers into salary accounts and that no other funding sources will be necessary, now be it further resolved that the wage increases shall be effective for 2025.

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

F. Approve Resolution – General Reimbursement – Linden ST. Grant Agreement – PennDOT

Ms. Crampsie Smith and Ms. Leon sponsored Resolution No. 2025-023 that authorized to execute an Agreement with PennDOT for the purpose of acceptance of federal funds.

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

G. Approve Resolution – Amendments to Civil Service Bd Rules and Regs – Fire Dept. (2025)

Ms. Crampsie Smith and Ms. Leon sponsored Resolution No. 2025-024 that approves the amendments to the Rules and Regulations recommended by the Civil Service Board of the City of Bethlehem on January 21, 2025, which are attached to this Resolution as Exhibit “A” and which shall take immediate effect.

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

H. Approve Resolution – 2025 13 Climate Action Plan Support – WSP USA, Inc.

Ms. Crampsie Smith and Ms. Leon sponsored Resolution No. 2025-025 that authorized to execute an Agreement with the WSP USA, Inc. to provide support with the ongoing transition of Climate Action Plan implementation and coordination responsibilities to the Sustainability Manager.

Ms. Crampsie Smith noted that a Sustainability Manager is in place. She asked if this request for funding will be the final need for a consultant.

Mr. Alkhal said this portion is to assist with the transition to the Sustainability Manager, and it may not be necessary to spend all of the requested \$20,000. It is believed this would be the last use of a consultant for this matter unless a case-by-case situation would arise.

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

I. Approve Resolution – HARB – 555 Main Street – Woolworth Building (HARB Denial)

Ms. Crampsie Smith and Ms. Leon sponsored Resolution No. 2025-026 that authorized to construct additional stories above the existing building.

Julie Bernstein of Kaplin Stewart law firm represents the applicant, Rubel Street II, L.P. The building is in need of major repairs, and the intention is to preserve the existing building and to construct a two-story addition for a total height of three stories to the rear. The addition would not be taller than neighboring Main Street Commons. This would provide additional housing while preserving the retail use on the ground floor. She recognized that the use is permitted by right and stated that the action tonight is consideration as to the Historic District elements.

Lead architect Todd Chambers said the original proposal used a more contemporary design that would have differentiated the new portion of the building from the old. Windows and colors were more contemporary in nature, but still kept with the rhythm and scale of Main Street. HARB generally provided positive feedback at its December meeting, but expressed concerns about the window design, the color tone of the addition, and the setback of the addition. Mr. Chambers agreed to amend the design accordingly. He added that a maximum height of 150 feet is permitted in the CB District compared to the 60-foot building being proposed, which was done in consideration of surrounding properties. HARB at its January 8, 2025 meeting acknowledged that its recommendations were incorporated into the revised plan but voted to deny a recommendation. HARB cited several deficiencies in the plan but did not recommend changes that could bring the plan into compliance. As such, he does not believe that HARB followed its own guidelines.

Mr. Callahan asked whether there is a concern over any deadline.

Developer Lou Pektor said there is not a particular deadline, but it costs him money as the building continues to sit empty. He has developed other downtown buildings over the years and has been able to work with the City to mutual satisfaction. However, with this project, he agreed to provide the suggested changes and then those were not good enough.

Mr. Callahan said he would like to have more time to review the developer-provided packet and talk to HARB members for their rationale. He added that the windows look too modern for Main Street.

Mr. Pektor said there is time to try to work with the City in hopes of agreeing on a project.

Ms. Laird asked the development representatives if they were aware of any recommendation that they have not met.

The three believed that all recommendations have been addressed.

Ms. Laird asked about Council's responsibilities if it were to deny the COA.

President Colón said that HARB was to provide the aspects of what a project would require to gain approval if it were found to be deficient. Council, if it were to deny a COA, also would have to offer what it would take to gain its approval.

Ms. Laird asked whether Council could send the application back to HARB and suggest that the Board and the developer talk further to try to reach agreement.

President Colón recalled that Council took similar action on a project with the City's Historic Conservation Commission. He suggested that the application be returned to HARB along with a memo asking for what changes could be made to the plan that would win a favorable recommendation to Council.

Ms. Laird made a motion, seconded by Mr. Callahan, to send the application back to HARB along with the suggested memo.

President Colón said he would confer with Council Solicitor Stephanie Steward to draft the memo addressed to the HARB Chairwoman referring consideration back to that Board. Asked for clarification as to the action sought, President Colón said it would either be for reconsideration and a positive recommendation or the required recommendations from HARB as to what would need to be done to be favorably approved.

Attorney Bernstein raised the additional concern that if the unfavorable recommendation from HARB was based on the height of the addition and that position does not change, their return before HARB likely would be a waste of time. She said the proposed height is permissible in the CB District.

President Colón said that, according to the City's Ordinance, HARB must provide instruction as to what it would take to receive the COA. Council will evaluate that response once received.

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

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned 11:19 PM.

ATTEST:

Tad J. Miller
City Clerk