

BETHLEHEM CITY COUNCIL MEETING
10 East Church Street - Town Hall
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania
Tuesday, January 20, 2026 - 7:00 PM

PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

1. ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order by President Rachel Leon. Present were Justin Amann, Bryan G. Callahan, Michael G. Colón, Jo C. Daniels, Hillary G. Kwiatek, Colleen Laird, Ms. Leon, 7.

CITATIONS HONORING: Lynn Fryman Rothman, Environmental Advisory Council
Charles Skrip, WSR/WWTP

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

January 5, 2026

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

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

Keith Dow

Mr. Dow urged the Mayor and Council to encourage Wind Creek Casino to repair the lighting on the stacks at the former Bethlehem Steel facilities.

Mark Will-Weber

Mr. Will-Weber appreciated language included in the budget that offering downloadable water apps for customers will be a goal of the City's. He encouraged Council and the City to bring this to fruition as soon as possible.

William Scheirer

Mr. Scheirer complimented Public Works for snow clearing efforts during the weekend snowstorms.

Michael Ohare

Mr. Ohare said the Bethlehem Co-op is still not open after five years. The co-op has received several million in federal, state, and local funding and yet it is in debt and recently announced it will not declare an opening date. He asked Council to investigate and suggested perhaps that plans should be scrapped and the building used for another purpose such as a homeless shelter.

Stephen Antalics

Mr. Antalics urged President Leon or newly elected Council members to make a motion to add the cost of four additional firefighters to the budget and significantly fund this by eliminating two new positions approved for DCED.

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

None.

4. OLD BUSINESS

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

5. NEW BUSINESS

A. *President Leon – Ethics Training*

President Leon announced that the state Ethics Commission will provide remote ethics training at 6 PM on Tuesday, February 24 in Town Hall for elected officials and department heads.

Mr. Callahan

Mr. Callahan revisited his prior suggestions to charge college students a set fee for emergency services the City offers. He asked Fire Chief Matthew Griffin to provide monthly reports that would track the number of fire and ambulance calls involving college students. Chief Griffin said an attempt could be made but off-campus addresses may be difficult to pinpoint. Mr. Callahan also asked for a list of amounts that nonprofits are paying the City in lieu of taxes. Mayor Reynolds offered two cautions: that all nonprofits would have to be included and that landlords of residential renters already are paying taxes to cover their tenants. Mr. Callahan also suggested a practice whereby some municipalities are recovering emergency services costs from insurance companies for motor vehicle accidents. He said he wanted to start now to find funding to restore the four lost firefighter positions so there would not be a need to scramble at budget time.

Mr. Callahan also asked about the SteelStacks lighting circumstances. Mayor Reynolds does not believe an agreement exists in which Wind Creek must maintain the lighting but he believed it would be seen as a promise that was made by the prior casino owner that transferred with the sale.

Mr. Colón

Mr. Colón recalled that Council in 2012 passed a resolution seeking an in lieu of taxes fee from nonprofits. He asked the Clerk to research the minutes and resolutions to confirm the actions taken. Copies should be emailed to Council for its knowledge of prior related discussions on the same topic.

Similarly, Ms. Leon believed the suggestion of charging college students \$50 apiece for emergency services protection was addressed at budget time. Council Solicitor Stephanie Steward repeated her answer offered at that time. Essentially, fees may be charged for a service but cannot be charged in advance to support the service. On a related matter, Solicitor Steward said that insurance companies can be assessed for emergency services related to motor vehicular accidents but this requires having an ordinance in place. This may be an area to be explored.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

A. *Business Administrator – 2026 03 Information Officer/Communication Support – Lehigh Valley With Love Media*

Eric Evans recommended a three-year contract with Lehigh Valley With Love Media for \$18,000 per year to serve as the City's Information Officer and provide communication support – Item 10 A.

B. *Director of Water and Sewer Resources – 2026 05 WWTP Primary Digester PD-3 Gas Cover Replacement Eng. – CHA Consulting*

Edward Boscola recommended a contract with CHA Consulting, Inc. to provide engineering and inspection services associated with replacement of the wastewater treatment plant's primary digester PD-3 membrane gas cover at a cost of \$66,700 – Item 10 B.

C. *Director of Community and Economic Development – 2026 11 Choice Neighborhood Implementation Grant – Collabo Planning + Design*

Laura Collins recommended a contract with Collabo Planning + Design to collaborate with other agencies to prepare and submit a Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant application. The cost will be split and is not to exceed \$40,000 – Item 10 C.

D. Director of Water and Sewer Resources – 2026 07 WWTP Hot Water Loop Bio-Gas Analysis PSA – Engineering Services

Mr. Boscola recommended a contract with Colliers Engineering and Design, Inc. to provide engineering services in determining the feasibility of upgrades to the wastewater treatment plant to improve the efficiency of existing steam boilers and the hot water circulation system. The cost is not to exceed \$59,900 – Item 10 D.

E. Director of Water and Sewer Resources – 2026 09 Emerson License Software Support – Emerson Power & Water Solutions

Mr. Boscola recommended a three-year contract with Emerson Power & Water Solutions to provide software support to the City's water and sewer facilities. The annual cost is \$66,225.30 – Item 10 E.

F. Director of Water and Sewer Resources – 2026 12 Wastewater Rate Study – Gannett Fleming Valuation and Rate Consultants

Mr. Boscola recommended a contract with Gannett Fleming Valuation and Rate Consultants, LLC to provide a wastewater rate study costing \$19,000 to project rate levels and charges for the next five years. The study will form the basis for future sewer rate adjustments – Item 10 F.

G. City Solicitor – Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement – Hanover Township – Yard Waste Facility Usage

Solicitor John F. Spirk, Jr. recommended Amendment 2 to an Agreement for Hanover Township, Northampton County, residents to continue using the City's Yard Waste facility – Item 10 G.

H. City Solicitor – Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement – Fountain Hill – Yard Waste Facility Usage

Solicitor John F. Spirk, Jr. recommended Amendment 2 to an Agreement for Fountain Hill residents to continue using the City's Yard Waste facility – Item 10 H.

I. Chief Code Official – Article 1701 – PA Uniform Construction Code

Michael Simonson recommended adopting the Pennsylvania Uniform Construction Code requirements, the 2021 International Code Suite, as amended – Item 9 A.

J. Director of Human Resources – Records Destruction

Michelle Cichocki sought approval for records destruction in accordance with the Municipal Records Retention Act. A Resolution will be placed on the February 3 agenda.

K. City Solicitor – Lease Agreements – Bethlehem Tempo, LLC

Solicitor Spirk recommended entering into a Lease Agreement with Bethlehem Tempo, LLC for the organization to sell food and beverages to patrons of an adjacent hotel and use of a specified area as a driveway for the pickup and drop-off of hotel guests. Rent shall be \$100,000 for the first 25 years and \$4,000 annually for years 26-50. Additional rates apply if the term is extended – Item 10 I.

L. Administrator Housing and Community Development – 2026 13 Community Development Professional Services – Michael Baker International

Robert Vidoni recommended an Agreement with Michael Baker International to provide technical assistance required for HUD-administered federal funding related to the CDBG and HOME programs and other potential sources. The cost is \$112,409 with options for two additional years totaling \$242,000 – Item 10 J.

7. REPORTS

A. *President of Council*

Motion to combine Items 7 A1. through 7 A4.: Colón, Callahan. AYE: Amann, Callahan, Colón, Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Leon, 7. Motion passed.

7 A1. – Councilmanic Appointment – Megan Lysowski – Environmental Advisory Council

7 A2. – Councilmanic Appointment – Vibhor Kumar – Environmental Advisory Council

7 A3. – Councilmanic Appointment – Mandy Tolino – Environmental Advisory Council

7 A4. – Councilmanic Appointment – Steven Olshevski, Chair – Environmental Advisory Council

Sponsors: Leon, Kwiatek; AYE: Amann, Callahan, Colón, Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Leon, 7. Resolutions 2026-003 through 2026-006 passed.

President Leon said Council committee assignments and liaisons have been distributed. (Attached to original minutes.) She also announced initiating “President’s hours” outside of Council meetings. She proposed holding these one hour before City Council meetings to see how this time and format work. She envisioned that this would, for example, allow a person who would otherwise be uncomfortable addressing a full room to be heard in an informal atmosphere.

B. Mayor

Mayor Reynolds announced that the City received a \$250,000 grant from the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources toward the construction of Greenway facilities off of New Street next to the Comfort Suites hotel. The Mayor also addressed the earlier comments about the Bethlehem Co-op. City representatives meet with organizers on a regular basis. Advice and other assistance have been offered but the co-op board runs the organization.

8. ORDINANCES FOR FINAL PASSAGE

8A. *Bill No. 01-2026 – Bethlehem Housing Authority (BHA) – 2025 Choice Neighborhood Implementation Grant – General Budget Transfer*

Sponsors: Leon, Wilhelm. The Clerk read the Bill titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, ADOPTING
THE GENERAL FUND BUDGET FOR 2026

AYE: Amann, Callahan, Colón, Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Leon, 7. Bill No. 01-2026, now known as Ordinance No. 2026-01, passed on Final Reading.

9. NEW ORDINANCES

9A. *Bill No. 02-2026 – Article 1701 – PA Uniform Construction Code*

Sponsors: Leon, Kwiatek. The Clerk read the Bill titled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON,
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, AMENDING
ARTICLE 1701 OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES
ENTITLED Pennsylvania Uniform Construction Code,
BY ADOPTING THE 2021 PENNSYLVANIA UNIFORM
CONSTRUCTION CODE.

AYE: Amann, Callahan, Colón, Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Leon, 7. Bill No. 02-2026, passed on First Reading.

10. RESOLUTIONS

A. *Approve Resolution – 2026 03 Information Officer/Communication Support – Lehigh Valley With Love Media*

Sponsors: Leon, Kwiatek; Agreement with Lehigh Valley With Love Media to provide Information Officer and communication services. AYE: Amann, Callahan, Colón, Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Leon, 7. Resolution 2026-007 passed.

B. *Approve Resolution – 2026 05 WWTP Primary Digester PD-3 Gas Cover Replacement Eng. – CHA Consulting, Inc.*

Mr. Amann advised that he would be recusing himself from this vote because he received a campaign donation in excess of \$500 from an employee of this company.

Sponsors: Leon, Kwiatek; Agreement with CHA Consulting, Inc. to provide engineering and inspection services. AYE: Callahan, Colón, Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Leon, 6; ABSTENTION: Amann, 1. Resolution 2026-008 passed. (Mr. Amann's Conflict of Interest Form is attached to the original minutes.)

C. *Approve Resolution – 2026 11 Choice Neighborhood Implementation Grant – Collabo Planning + Design*

Sponsors: Leon, Kwiatek; Agreement with Collabo Planning + Design to provide grant application services. AYE: Amann, Callahan, Colón, Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Leon, 7. Resolution 2026-009 passed.

D. *Approve Resolution – 2026 07 WWTP Hot Water Loop and Bio-Gas Analysis – Engineering Services*

Sponsors: Leon, Kwiatek; Agreement with Colliers Engineering and Design, Inc. to evaluate the existing steam boilers and hot water circulation system at the wastewater treatment plant. AYE: Amann, Callahan, Colón, Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Leon, 7. Resolution 2026-010 passed.

E. *Approve Resolution – 2026 09 Emerson License Software Support – Emerson Power & Water*

Solutions

Sponsors: Leon, Kwiatek; Agreement with Emerson Power & Water Solutions to provide licensed software support. AYE: Amann, Callahan, Colón, Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Leon, 7. Resolution 2026-011 passed.

F. Approve Resolution – 2026 12 Wastewater Rate Study – Gannett Fleming Valuation and Rate Consultants

Ms. Kwiatek asked Mr. Boscola for more information. Mr. Boscola said the last sewer rate increase was in 2024. Council at that time recommended that before another sewer rate increase is sought, a thorough study should be done justifying the rates. This study will review the revenue stream and how rates are apportioned among the rate classes, and how tributary municipalities are charged. This is preparation for the likelihood that a rate increase will be sought within the next few years.

Sponsors: Leon, Kwiatek; Agreement with Gannett Fleming Valuation and Rate Consultants to provide a wastewater rate study. AYE: Amann, Callahan, Colón, Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Leon, 7. Resolution 2026-012 passed.

G. Approve Resolution – Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement – Hanover Township – Yard Waste Facility Usage

Sponsors: Leon, Kwiatek; Agreement with Hanover Township, Northampton County, to continue to allow Township residents to use the City's Yard Waste Facility. AYE: Amann, Callahan, Colón, Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Leon, 7. Resolution 2026-013 passed.

H. Approve Resolution – Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement – Fountain Hill – Yard Waste Facility Usage

Sponsors: Leon, Kwiatek; Agreement with Fountain Hill to continue to allow Borough residents to use the City's Yard Waste Facility. AYE: Amann, Callahan, Colón, Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Leon, 7. Resolution 2026-014 passed.

I. Approve Resolution – Lease Agreements – Bethlehem Tempo, LLC

Ms. Laird wanted to guarantee the ability for the public to use this area for occasional quick drop-off despite this lease agreement. Ms. Collins said the lessee agreed that those dropping off bicycles for use of the nearby Greenway, for example, would be permitted to do so. Solicitor Spirk believed the language of the lease would not exclude quick drop-offs but a subsequent letter agreement could further clarify this intention. Ms. Laird said she would feel most comfortable adding this letter. Ms. Collins said related language could be included in the Developer's Agreement.

Sponsors: Leon, Kwiatek; Agreement with Bethlehem Tempo, LLC to lease property. AYE: Amann, Callahan, Colón, Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Leon, 7. Resolution 2026-015 passed.

J. Approve Resolution – 2026 13 Community Development Professional Services – Michael Baker

International

Sponsors: Leon, Kwiatek; Agreement with Michael Baker International to provide technical assistance and professional services required to receive HUD-administered federal funding. AYE: Amann, Callahan, Colón, Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Leon, 7. Resolution 2026-016 passed.

Motion to combine Items 10 K through 10 M: Amann, Laird. AYE: Amann, Callahan, Colón, Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Leon, 7. Motion passed.

K. *Certificate of Appropriateness – HARB – 55 East Church Street to construct renovations and additions and to install an elevator and associated shaft within the existing rear stairwell, expand the rear porch, and install new copper gutters and downspouts;*

L. *Certificate of Appropriateness – HARB – 441 Linden Street to install GAF Slateline Shingles in the Antique Slate color, install three sets of wood shutters on the Linden Street-facing façade, and paint the front door; and*

M. *Certificate of Appropriateness – HARB – 443 Center Street to construct a 250-square-foot raised bluestone and clay brick patio off of the west side of the residence, install a 2-foot-high retaining wall around the patio that is faced with clay brick and capped with bluestone, install a 67-square-foot bluestone and clay brick pad off of the west side of the property, and install new plantings in the rear yard.*

Sponsors: Leon, Kwiatek; AYE for 10 K through 10 M: Amann, Callahan, Colón, Daniels, Kwiatek, Laird, Leon, 7. Resolutions 2026-017 through 2026-019 passed.

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned 8:32 PM.

ATTEST:

Tad J. Miller
City Clerk