



CITY OF BETHLEHEM
OFFICE OF THE CITY SOLICITOR

INTER-OFFICE MEMORANDUM

To: Rachel Leon, Council President

From: Matthew J. Deschler, Assistant Solicitor

Re: Amendment to Police-Related Civil Service Rules – Repeal of College Education Requirement for Police Applicants

Date: October 7, 2026

Enclosed for Council's review and action is a proposed resolution to amend the Civil Service Rules by repealing Appendix B, Section 1(c), which requires police applicants to hold an associate's degree or sixty (60) college credits. Section 1(c) would be replaced with "(c) Deleted." The repeal is a pilot program intended to broaden the applicant pool for police officer vacancies.

Under Section 157.01(c) of the Codified Ordinances and Section 6 of the Civil Service Rules, an amendment to the Rules must be approved by the Civil Service Board and then by Council. The City's Department of Human Resources intends to present the enclosed Council resolution to the Civil Service Board at its meeting at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 20, 2026, prior to the Council meeting, to seek the Board's approval of the amendment as proposed. A draft Board resolution, No. 2026-002, is also enclosed. If the Board does not approve the amendment as proposed, the Council resolution will be revised or withdrawn.

Applicants must still hold a high school diploma or GED under 37 Pa. Code § 203.11. After the next entry-level testing cycle, Human Resources will report the results to the Board, which may then revisit the requirement, subject to Council approval.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew J. Deschler".

Matthew J. Deschler
Assistant Solicitor

Cc: J. William Reynolds
Chief Kott
Deputy Chief Meixell
Michelle Cichocki
John F. Spirk, Jr.

**CITY OF BETHLEHEM
CIVIL SERVICE BOARD
RESOLUTION NO. 2026-002**

**A RESOLUTION TO REPEAL THE COLLEGE EDUCATION
REQUIREMENT FOR POLICE APPLICANTS AS A PILOT PROGRAM**

WHEREAS, Appendix B, Section 1(c) of the Civil Service Rules and Regulations requires police applicants to possess an associate's degree or sixty (60) college credits, subject to specified police experience and military service exceptions;

WHEREAS, the City has police officer vacancies and an insufficient applicant pool and wishes to broaden eligibility through a pilot program to be reviewed after the next entry-level police officer testing cycle; and

WHEREAS, to ensure a broader pool of eligible applicants, Section 1(c) of Appendix B must be repealed, and the Board finds that it is in the best interests of the City to do so.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Civil Service Board approves the draft City Council Resolution attached hereto as Exhibit "A", which repeals Section 1(c) of Appendix B of the Civil Service Rules.

ADOPTED this _____ day of _____, 2026.

CITY OF BETHLEHEM CIVIL SERVICE BOARD

Board Member

Print Name: _____

Board Member

Print Name: _____

EXHIBIT “A”

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-_____

**A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM,
COUNTIES OF LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON, COMMONWEALTH
OF PENNSYLVANIA, APPROVING AN AMENDMENT TO APPENDIX B
OF THE CIVIL SERVICE BOARD RULES AND REGULATIONS
REPEALING SECTION 1(c), THE COLLEGE EDUCATION
REQUIREMENT FOR POLICE APPLICANTS**

WHEREAS, Article 157 of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Bethlehem, enacted pursuant to the civil service provisions of the Third Class City Code, 11 Pa.C.S. §§ 14401–14410, establishes the Civil Service Board of the City of Bethlehem (the “Board”) to provide for and oversee the examination of applicants for appointment and promotion to positions in the Police and Fire Departments, except the positions of police chief and fire chief; and

WHEREAS, Section 157.01(c) of the Codified Ordinances empowers and directs the Board to prepare and adopt rules and regulations for the selection, appointment and promotion of qualified persons, subject to approval by City Council; and

WHEREAS, Section 6 of the Board’s General Rules and Regulations (the “Civil Service Rules”) provides that amendments or repeals of the Civil Service Rules shall be approved by the Board at a meeting noticed in accordance with the Sunshine Act, shall be submitted to City Council by resolution prepared by the City Solicitor, and shall become effective upon approval by City Council; and

WHEREAS, Appendix B, Section 1(c) of the Civil Service Rules currently requires applicants for appointment to the Police Department to possess an associate’s degree or a minimum of sixty (60) credits from not more than two (2) accredited institutions, subject to waiver for applicants who have fulfilled the requirements of the Pennsylvania Municipal Police Officers’ Training Act and have two thousand (2,000) active hours of experience as a police officer, or who have two (2) years of active military service and an honorable discharge; and

WHEREAS, to ensure a broader pool of eligible applicants, Council finds it necessary to amend the Civil Service Rules by repealing Section 1(c) of Appendix B.

WHEREAS, the City has police officer vacancies and an insufficient applicant pool, and the Board has determined to broaden eligibility through a pilot program to be reviewed after the next entry-level police officer testing cycle; and

WHEREAS, at a public meeting held on October 20, 2026, and noticed in accordance with the Sunshine Act, 65 Pa.C.S. § 701 et seq., the Board approved of this Resolution repealing Appendix B, Section 1(c) of the Civil Service Rules, subject to the approval of City Council; and

WHEREAS, City Council finds that repeal of Section 1(c) of Appendix B of the Civil Service Rules is, at present, in the best interest of the City and its residents.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Bethlehem as follows:

1. Section 1(c) of Appendix B of the Civil Service Rules shall be repealed in its entirety and replaced with the following text: “(c) Deleted.”
2. Pursuant to Section 157.01(c) of the Codified Ordinances and Section 6 of the Civil Service Rules, the amendment set forth in the preceding paragraph shall become effective upon the adoption of this Resolution.
3. All other provisions of the Civil Service Rules remain in full force and effect. Nothing in this Resolution waives or alters any education, training or certification requirement imposed by applicable law, including the qualifications of the Municipal Police Officers’ Education and Training Commission at 37 Pa. Code § 203.11, or by police academy admission standards.
4. After the next entry-level police officer testing cycle, Human Resources shall report recruitment and hiring results to the Board, which shall review said report and consider, subject to Council’s approval, reinstating or revising the college education requirement.

5. The Secretary of the Board, or the Secretary's designee, is authorized and directed to incorporate the amendment into the published Civil Service Rules and to update police applicant application materials consistent with this Resolution. The proper officers and officials of the City are authorized to take all other actions necessary to carry out the intent of this Resolution.

Sponsored by: /s/ _____

/s/ _____

ADOPTED by Council this _____ day of _____, 2026.

/s/ _____
President of Council

ATTEST:

/s/ _____
City Clerk