

# Councilman Callahan quotes from the record for the record

The Bethlehem Gadfly Budget, Lehigh Valley Good Neighbors Alliance, Police December 8, 2020

 *Latest in a series of posts about the Bethlehem Police* 

Councilman Callahan got himself in the middle, a not unusual position for him, by providing his explanation of the genesis of the Lehigh Valley Good Neighbors Alliance and the callers the night of the December 1 Council meeting.

That genesis, he said, was a combination of the tough defunding/abolition statements by commenters at the July 7 meeting plus sympathetic and supportive responses to them especially by Councilpersons Reynolds and Van Wirt.

Councilman Callahan went to the July 7 primary source and quoted passages from the Councilpersons to back up his point.

He explained that he wasn't trying to differentiate himself from others on Council, but he wanted the record to show that such statements were made, statements that would concern some citizens, and Gadfly believes that Councilman Callahan was implying that if it weren't for pushback at the August 11 meeting, there might have been amendments affecting the police department from the more liberal members of Council.

Certain members of Council "re-prioritized" after pushback, he said.

This, you will recognize, is the narrative of the LVGNA.

**5 mins.**

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- I agree with a lot of the comments that Grace Crampsie Smith made.
- All of us agree . . . very unfortunate deaths of those individuals..
- Some of those cases, I believe it was murder.

- I'm totally supportive of the police in our city, but I understand why the Black Lives Matter movement came up . . . supported that movement.
- I don't know the group that you are talking about [Lehigh Valley Good Neighbors Alliance].
- Obvious some of the residents of the city were concerned that some of the comments that were made at the July 7th meeting . . .
- No one on Council right now is making any amendments to defund the police department, but, let's be honest, that was not the case at the July 7 meeting.
- [reads comments from public at the July 7 meeting]
- Based on comments made at that meeting . . .
- [reads direct quotes from Councilpeople Reynolds and Van Wirt at the July 7 meeting]
- Those are the comments that were made and that's the genesis of some of the phone calls that were coming in tonight.
- I don't know about any threats, and I apologize to Ms. Crampsie Smith if anybody attacked her.
- [People who called in tonight] felt there were some pretty radical comments made at the July 7 meeting and there were some comments by Council members that backed up that.
- I'm just quoting from the record.
- That's where the genesis of that was.
- Nobody should be inciting any type of violence against anybody, or any type of fear . . .
- We're talking about the Bethlehem police department [not Wisconsin, Minnesota, etc.].
- Our police department hasn't really had any \_\_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_\_ since the Hirko settlement . . . national accreditation.
- [Concerns of people who called my house came from comments by Council people Reynolds and Van Wirt]
- Those were direct quotes from the Council meeting.

- I just want it on the record that those comments were made by those two individuals.

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**2 mins.**

- [Mr. Waldron], I think what happened was in that following Council meeting there was a lot of pushback
- I was the only one at that time — I'm not trying to differentiate myself from any Council members — I said very plainly we are not defunding the police department.
- There was a lot of pushback and [Councilers Reynolds and Van Wirt] had a re-prioritization of their thoughts.
- [repeats comments of Van Wirt from July 7]
- That's a direct quote; I'm not putting words in anybody's mouth.
- If anybody thinks the context is wrong, please go and check.
- [Gives time marks on video for each Council person] Judge for yourself on the context.

**2mins.**

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- I agree . . . empathy . . . seeing from both sides of the issue.
- All I was saying — I don't know any of the callers who called in, I don't know why anybody thinks I had anything to do with it, I didn't encourage anybody, if you want to blame me for that, you may, I had nothing to do with it, I don't know anybody who called in — I'm just trying to correct the record.
- I encourage all the residents, go look at the July 7 video and make up your own decision.
- I'm not putting words in anybody's mouth, go look at the meeting.

- It wasn't till after that meeting [August 11 public safety meeting] . . . when there was pushback and everybody kind of took a step back from their comments . . .
- For everybody to pretend that those comments weren't made is very disingenuous.
- Make up your own mind.
- Had there not been pushback from the community . . .
- I don't know anybody that called tonight . . .
- Had there not been the pushback, some of the more liberal people on our Council . . .
- When it comes to our police safety, I think some of the comments that those two Council members made that night were not welcome.

**2 mins.**

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- Mr. Reynolds, I agree with you about the emotional and reactionary response.
- I plainly said, right away, immediately, we are not going to defund the police department.
- My point is that some of you reacted . . . very reactionary and emotional responses to what was being said that night instead of thinking through the process.
- I stated right away, we're not defunding the police department.
- I'm not trying to embarrass anybody, but everybody's trying to back walk.
- Just like these comments weren't made. They clearly were made.
- I felt they were reactionary and emotional responses from you.
- If anybody is offended by me quoting . . . I apologize.
- But I encourage city residents to watch the video.