

Officer Audelo provides perspective

The Bethlehem Gadfly Police December 18, 2020

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

Turns out that police and policing were in good view during the December 15 City Council meeting (look for another post involving the police after this one!).

Officer Audelo, president of the local FOP, called in with these comments (7 mins.):

- bad air quality in the police station, a test would be sure to show “positive toxic mold”
- a movie needing a 70s look was just done in their cell block — outdated infrastructure
- think better starting salaries to attract the best new hires, ours are lower than Allentown and other surrounding communities
- when thinking about the cost of pensions at budget time, realize that officers do not take social security and pensions for new officers were cut not too long ago
- “experts” like Lehigh profs Ochs and Mikell are “embarrassing,” for instance in statements like force should never be used on juveniles (gives personal experience as example)
- force beyond taking a person to the ground was used only 38 times out of 62,000 calls last year
- the department always could be better
- minorities don’t want whites speaking for them
- people not encouraging love and who are just shouting not speaking, they are on the wrong side

- police stand with the small business community

Officer Audelo's call was immediately followed by one by Greg Ragni, whom we now recognize as co-head of the Lehigh Valley Good Neighbors Alliance.

Mr. Ragni complimented the officer (It's nice to hear "what a true expert on policing sounds like" "it's nice to hear someone speak facts") and, in the conversations about policing we have been having, he called for "true experts versus political hacks with an ideological ax to grind." We should be talking about what policing is like "in Bethlehem," not Seattle or elsewhere, he said (2 mins.).

Officer Audello remarked that he had encouraged Council to watch a particular body cam video but that no one had. Gadfly would like to do that. His understanding is that body cams are not obtainable via Right-to-Know, but he will try.

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