

Council follows up on the Mayor's report

The Bethlehem Gadfly George Floyd killing, Police June 17, 2020

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

The Mayor's response to the R/CS memo at City Council last night generated this response from Council members. The Chief again feels confident in his department policies, reiterates belief that the criminal justice system needs reform, is all-in to cooperate with Council, and affirms getting back to community policing.

Councilman Reynolds elaborates a bit on the Community Engagement Initiative and distinguishes it from the just previously announced Citizen Advisory Committee with the NAACP.

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Chief Diluzio (min. 0:30):

- Most of the stuff we already do.
- Everything is documented.
- Do we have issues, and can reform help us? I think reform can help every police department in the country. Criminal justice reform can go around this country and we need it.
- We have an out-dated criminal justice system.
- Is there racism in it? Yeah, there is also racism in every type of occupation.
- If we're going to do this, let's do it correctly. Let's put everything on the table. And let's look at it and do it right.
- The 8 things in 8 Can't wait — honestly, I support all of them.

Councilman Reynolds (min 3:30):

- I'm happy to hear that the Mayor talked about his advisory council, but I do think that this is time for a much bigger conversation.
- The idea of the Community Engagement initiative is that we need to expand these conversations.

- What we're hearing . . . is that people want a public space for this conversation . . . a consistent public space for discussion and action items on systemic racism, discrimination, and social justice.
- We also need to have discussion about prioritization of the allocation of resources within the police department.
- [prior plan to take one police slot and use that money for community engagement]
- We need to listen, we need to provide space for the different groups in our community to have that opportunity for discussion.
- I also think there should be some public conversation within this initiative about organizing these non-enforcement events in neighborhood communities.
- I'm not sure . . . that everybody in the police department buys into the values of these non-enforcement, trust-building activities.
- Not only could you, but you should have employees in your police department that are not traditional police officers.
- We need to look at how we are organizing law enforcement.
- I think it's more powerful if we have monthly, regular get-togethers . . . not just the leadership, the rank-and-file.
- The power that we have in City Council is to help set the structure and space in which these groups have a voice, and that's what the Community Engagement Initiative is about.
- [Look for a resolution at the upcoming Public Safety meeting.]
- We're the ones who set the budget, we're the ones who allocate the resources . . . and there is a lot of room here . . . for discussion about how we are spending this money.

Chief DiLuzio (min. 9:36):

- I think community policing is very important. Community policing . . . is what we should be getting back to in this country.
- Police, social services — everyone needs to be involved.

Councilman Reynolds:

- It's not just the idea of community policing, though, it's also about teaching our police officers about the intersection of all of these different issues.
- Part of the challenge is getting buy-in from everybody in our police department.

Councilwoman Crampsie Smith (min. 11:00):

- I've seen how policing has evolved . . . My dad was a true community police officer . . . Those days are gone in many ways. And we really need to get back to some level of community policing.
- The people of Bethlehem have spoken . . . We need change.
- [converses with the Chief on the force directives: choke holds, duty to intervene, training]
- Systemic racism does exist.
- . . . giving the community a voice, because that is the right and necessary thing to do.

Councilwoman Van Wirt (min. 25:15):

- How is the Civil Service Board involved in complaints a gains officers?

Councilman Callahan (min. 26:35, transmission lost at end)

- Racism is everywhere.
- Small percentage of officers out of line.
- We can be very proud of our police department.
- [culture shift, teachers can't touch students, same being applied to police]
- Police departments have become more weaponized.
- [Police have a right to defend themselves, but what happened in Atlanta not right.]

Councilman Callahan repeated his remarks later in the meeting under new business, and they can be heard better here: [Audio Player not available in this archive](#)

