

The Bethlehem conversations on defunding the police (7): Greg

The Bethlehem Gadfly Lehigh Valley Good Neighbors Alliance, Police August 22, 2020

 Latest in a series of posts about the Bethlehem Police 

*Good conversation builds community.
The Gadfly*

For the past six “conversation” posts, Gadfly has been pairing opposed views on defunding or altering Bethlehem’s system of policing expressed at the August 11 Public Safety meeting. However, the supporters of the status quo were more numerous than the “revisers,” so from here on we’ll just be hearing from the supporters. Mr. Ragni gives us a lot to think about here, so I won’t pair him with someone else. Remember that the text is not a transcription, so that Gadfly always suggests that you go to the primary source. For best results, please listen to the audio.

Greg Ragni

Audio Player not available in this archive

Thank you to the representatives from the Bethlehem Police Department . . . for their incredibly professional and thorough presentation. It’s obvious that they track their officers’ behaviors and actions in a myriad of different ways which makes them capable of self analysis and correction. . . . It doesn’t surprise me that they have these advance accreditations that they’ve earned. . . . With regard to the commentary by Holona Ochs. . . . One of the things we’ve heard a lot about tonight is the concept of implicit bias. It may be a bias that we have only one criminologist that we have. . . . We might want some counterbalancing ideas. . . . Now I’ve been in contact with thousands of the citizens of Bethlehem. . . . I don’t think we need to tear each other down to achieve these goals. The police department doesn’t have to be dismantled, or defunded or destroyed in order to achieve these goals of equality and fairness. . . . And by the same token for the police department to survive and thrive there shouldn’t have to be members of the community who shouldn’t have to . . . experience any type of traumas from policing. I think we can figure this out. But maybe we need to examine our own

implicit and explicit biases. It seems that everyone wants to talk about everybody else's biases but nobody wants to talk about their own biases. . . . Everybody talks about people they think are great. . . . Holona Ochs . . . "the" expert? . . . There's a lot of research on criminology. . . . So maybe we need to expand our views beyond our local criminologist. . . . Look at all of the possible options. . . . it sounds to me that Bethlehem is one of the cities that has done policing well. Maybe other cities should look to us. . . . It seems to me that some members of Council are struggling to understand the difference between statistics on a page and real life policing. . . . Perhaps members of City Council should do a defensive tactics scenario day, where Council would go and they would be the police. . . . It seems that some on Council, to be honest, are coming from a very strong political or ideological mind set — I'm going to call it their ideological blind spot. . . . An instance of racism I experienced when I listened to the July 7 meeting. One of the comments by one of the activists was "we don't need to hear from any more white people." It doesn't get any more racist than that. . . . "Silence is violence." . . . "Tolerating racism in any form is racist." . . . You guys sat there and listened to that. . . . Every one of you should have called that out. . . . Practice what you preach. . . . perhaps we need more common sense. . . . Look at Seattle, Minneapolis. . . . If your idea of getting experts is to turn our city into that, don't get too comfortable in those City Council seats.

The Bethlehem Gadfly