

“the Bethlehem PD is better than most, but . . .”

The Bethlehem Gadfly George Floyd killing, Police June 9, 2020

 *Latest in a series of posts on the George Floyd killing* 

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Gadfly:

A couple of thoughts on **council members’ responses**:

1. Some Council members had inspiring responses, but what remains to be seen is whether their actions and votes are equally inspiring and effective.
2. Legislators often think that enacting a policy actually creates the change they envision, and we have seen examples of this with Bethlehem City Council — but, as the history of attempts to control the Minneapolis PD show, some “law enforcement” officers act as if they are above the law. In a current story in *In These Times*, one Minneapolis council member states that “We Actually Cannot Reform This Department” [inthesetimes.com/article/22583/george-floyd-minneapolis-black-lives-matter-police-disband-dismantle].
3. I appreciate the fact that our police departments here in the Lehigh Valley have not descended to the depths we see in some big city police departments, but just because they don’t display violent, sadistic, criminal behavior does not mean everything is OK. I think the Bethlehem PD is better than most, but . . .
 - We know that in some neighborhoods, police patrol more heavily and are often more vigorous in their enforcement (yes, even in Bethlehem).
 - At the “Forum on Race” almost two years ago, citizens related a number of incidents where Bethlehem PD officers showed racial bias and/or have not lived up to the high standards we’d like to see.
 - Even when things are slow, police here in Bethlehem often ignore minor offenses that could help people learn to be safe — bicyclists riding on the sidewalks or against traffic, motorists running a red light, and so

on. One BPD officer even explained to me that his job was to put the bad guys away, not deal with petty problems.

- Police in some Lehigh Valley municipalities have, over the years, taken action against protesters — arresting lawful, non-violent, peaceful protesters. How does this comport with their oath to obey & uphold the Constitution?

- Bethlehem PD has a lot of equipment that seems to be designed for violence against the people. Who is paying to train officers in its use and to store and maintain all this equipment?

Peter