

Councilman Callahan decides not to run for Mayor, focuses on Council

[The Bethlehem Gadfly](#) [Candidates for election](#), [Election](#) February 16, 2021

🌿 *Latest in a series of posts on candidates for election* 🌿

Cribbed this from Bernie O'Hare's Lehigh Valley Ramblings blog.

Clears the air a bit. But do you think anyone else will join Messrs. Reynolds and Grubb in the mayoral race? Deadline for filing still pretty far off: March 9.



There has been much speculation about my running for Mayor of Bethlehem. Over the last year I've met with many residents, homeowners, business owners and union leaders who have encouraged me to run for Mayor. However, the time for me to run for Mayor is not right.

As many of you know, I lost my beautiful wife Lucia to cancer 14 years ago. Our kids were 12 and 9 at the time, so my first and foremost obligation is to my two kids. I am a fulltime veteran educator in the Bethlehem Area School

District at Northeast Middle School. I love teaching the students of our City and I believe I've made a real difference in the lives of many of them. I have also owned and operated a very successful small business for the past 12 years and just opened a new brick and mortar business, Callahan's Driving School and Testing Center with my brother John. This new business requires a significant amount of my time to ensure its success. While being Mayor of our great City would have been the honor of a lifetime, it is a fulltime commitment and thus I will not be placing my name on the ballot for the Mayor of Bethlehem.

I will be running for re-election for my third term on City Council. As many of you know, I have a great love and am very passionate about our City. I am a Nitschmann Lion and Liberty Hurricane until the day I die.

There is this perception and idea by a few people in our city that everything that has happened, all the good that has happened in our city over the last 20 years, was just inevitable. They think the rebirth and renaissance our City has been through over the last 20 years would have just happened by itself...that is simply NOT true! There are small towns and cities littered and scattered throughout the Northeast and Midwest of the United States that are examples of what happens when you don't have progressive forward thinking leadership willing to keep pushing for better.

I am proud of my service on Council. As a member and a Chair of the Finance Committee I have fought to keep taxes in check and by refinancing some high interest debt the Standard and Poor's bond rating for the City of Bethlehem rose 4 times from a BBB Stable rating to a A+ Stable rating in just 5 years.

In my first two terms I introduced, proposed and passed the Wage Equality Ordinance that prevents the perpetuation of gender-based wage inequality, the No Gifts Ban that prohibits City Council Members from accepting gifts from those trying to influence public policy, along with improvements to the Rose Garden and Municipal Golf Course and more funding for ADA Ramps.

I also supported and voted for the Ethics Training Ordinance for City Council Members, the Community Engagement Initiative, the North Side 2027 initiative to help revitalize neighborhoods, the Open Data Group that improves openness and transparency in government, supported ordinances to ensure City contracts pay a fair wage to its employees, two new fire engines to support our fire fighters, body cameras and new Motorola radios for our police, a new EMS vehicle and funding for the Climate Action Plan.

In the next month I will be bringing forward a new ordinance that gives local businesses, especially minority, female and veteran owned businesses an advantage when bidding on local jobs.

My record of supporting critical smart economic development and fighting hard to hold the line on taxes (I voted 6 out of 7 times against tax increases) will continue. I will also fight to make certain we fund our public safety resources at the level needed to keep our neighborhoods

safe and our property values up. Growing our tax base, keeping our neighborhoods safe and holding the line on taxes are critical so that Bethlehem remains affordable and the best City in Pennsylvania to live, work and play!

I look forward to the campaign and sharing my vision for Bethlehem.

