

# Councilmembers Reynolds and Crampsie Smith propose creating a citywide Community Engagement Initiative within our police department

The Bethlehem Gadfly Community Engagement Initiative, George Floyd killing, Police June 9, 2020

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

## CITY OF BETHLEHEM City Council Memorandum

**SUBJECT:** Use of Force Directives and Community Engagement Initiative

**TO:** Mark DiLuzio, Chief of Police

**FROM:**

J. William Reynolds, Member of Council  
Grace Crampsie Smith, Member of Council

**DATE:** June 9, 2020

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Chief Diluzio,

Let us start by thanking you and the Bethlehem Police Department for your efforts in helping the residents of Bethlehem protest racial injustice peacefully over the past few weeks. During a time of justified anger and frustration, our community has been able to come together to grieve, talk, and mobilize without fear of violence or confrontation.

Recently, citizens and social and criminal justice reform organizations have been creating and advocating for proposed changes and initiatives to improve police departments throughout the country. We are writing to you concerning two areas that we feel need to be priorities for our City moving forward.

### **Use of Force Directives**

There has been national discussion recently about a set of policy directives related to use of force directives within police departments (generally referred to as “8 can’t wait”). We have received significant support from the members of our community about the implementation of these principles here in Bethlehem. The directives are attached to this memo. In connection with the directive, we have the following questions:

- (1) How many of these eight directives are currently included in our use of force guidelines?
- (2) For the directives currently not in place, what is your stance on adding them to our current guidelines?
- (3) What are our annual training requirements for our police department?
- (4) What percentage of the training time is spent on de-escalation?

### **Community Engagement Initiative**

Over the last several years during budget hearings and various community events, we have heard consistently about the positive programs that our police officers engage in with the community. These “community policing” programs involve everything from working with elementary school students to attending block watch meetings where citizens share the issues in their individual neighborhoods. The importance of these programs is unquestioned. They provide positive, trust-building opportunities for members of our community and the police officers who serve them. Yet, many residents feel that the level of trust is still lacking. We, as a community, clearly need to invest more time and money into the aforementioned initiatives to continue to build trust and collaboration between our citizens and our police department.

**We are proposing creating a citywide Community Engagement Initiative within our police department. It would include a broad coalition consisting of residents, police officers, representatives from our schools, social justice organizations, and more.**

The initiative would bring awareness and a louder voice to issues of injustice in our City. It could also help to design and promote events and actions designed to build trust between our citizens and the Police Department. It could also be a place for people to talk, organize, and,

most importantly, listen. The reality is we don't know exactly what the coalition would want to focus on. It is designed to be a group with an organic and flexible focus determined by our community. We understand that we are currently successfully carrying out individual events that fulfill the philosophy of engaging citizens with our Police Department in non-enforcement activities. It is clear, however, that we need to do more. Bethlehem needs to include more officers, more organizations, more citizens, and have more discussion on issues relating to race, justice, and trust.

If you would be able to provide a response to the use of force related questions and your opinion on our proposed Community Engagement Initiative by next Monday (June 15, 2020), it would be greatly appreciated. Please feel to contact us with any questions you may have about the information in this memo.

Thank you again for all of your hard work over the past several weeks and we look forward to continuing the conversation about the future of our Bethlehem community.

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J. William Reynolds, Member Council

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Grace Crampsie Smith, Member of Council

CC: R. Donchez, Mayor; Members of Council

## ATTACHMENT

Memorandum to Chief DiLuzio, dated June 9, 2020, from  
Councilmember J. William Reynolds and  
Councilmember Grace Crampsie Smith

# **POLICE USE OF FORCE DIRECTIVES**

1. **Ban chokeholds and strongholds:** allowing officers to choke or strangle civilians, in many cases where less lethal force could be used instead, results in the unnecessary death or serious injury of civilians.
2. **Require de-escalation:** require officers to de-escalate situations, where possible, by communicating with subjects, maintaining distance, and otherwise eliminating the need to use force.
3. **Require warning before shooting:** require officers to give a verbal warning, when possible, before shooting a civilian.
4. **Exhaust all other means before shooting:** require officers to exhaust all other reasonable means before resorting to deadly force.
5. **Duty to intervene:** require officers to intervene and stop excessive force used by other officers and report these incidents immediately to a supervisor.
6. **Ban shooting at moving vehicles:** restrict officers from shooting at moving vehicles, which is regarded as a particularly dangerous and ineffective tactic.
7. **Require use of force continuum:** Develop a Force Continuum that limits the types of force and/or weapons that can be used to respond to specific types of resistance.
8. **Require comprehensive reporting:** Require officers to report each time they use force or threaten to use force against civilians.

*Source: Campaign Zero, Police Use of Force Analysis, September 20, 2016. Campaign Zero Planning Team: DeRay McKesson, Samuel Sinyangwe, Johnetta Elzie, and Brittany Packnett.*