

“It is only a matter of time before we have our own George Floyd”

The Bethlehem Gadfly George Floyd killing July 8, 2020

 *Latest in a series of posts responding to the George Floyd killing* 

Allison Mickel is a Lehigh University professor and a community activist.

Dear city councilmembers,

My name is Allison Mickel, and I am a resident of Bethlehem and a faculty member at Lehigh University. I am deeply concerned about police misconduct and the militarization of the police, which is happening here in Bethlehem as it is elsewhere. It is only a matter of time before we have our own George Floyd, or Joey Santos.

I do not call the police when I have a safety concern, because I am worried about the ramifications of inviting police into my racially diverse neighborhood and my interracial home.

If City Council is going to pass a resolution on policing that will make Bethlehem more equitable and safe, it needs to include the following:

1. Pledge to move money in the city budget away from policing and into public health, social services, and infrastructure. Bethlehem police currently receive 20% of the city budget. This is outrageous.
2. Implement a hiring freeze for BPD. No new positions will be created.
3. End any MoUs or contracts with the school board that allows for SROs to be in Bethlehem schools.
4. Create a public registry of officers fired for police misconduct.
5. Mandatory de-escalation training for Bethlehem police.
6. Make police misconduct records publicly available.
7. Withhold pensions from police officers accused of misconduct.
8. Amend the use of force policy to include clear consequences for violations of the policy, to define threat ex post facto rather than by the officer in the moment, and to require officers to intervene if they observe excessive force being used.

Thank you for your attention,

Allison Mickel

We've posted here testimony from people who attended the City Council meeting, and Gadfly is preparing some testimony from people who called in. Here's an example of the kind of mail Council got.