

# Council “pivots” away from defunding; the Chief’s “wise” statement rises above attacks to a holistic view

The Bethlehem Gadfly Police August 14, 2020

 Latest in a series of posts about the Bethlehem Police 

*With the last post in this series Gadfly wrapped up his slow-walk review of Council comments on the police force statistics in the first part of the August 11 Public Safety meeting. It’s time to look back. What are you thinking? What part or parts of Council interaction with the police struck you most? Gadfly invites you in to the conversation.*

Gadfly:

Without telling people what to do — everyone should listen to the comments the Chief of Police made in response to Councilperson Reynolds’ question.

**Audio Player not available in this archive**

The comments are some of those wise statements we really didn’t expect at this hearing. This guy seems to truly understand what goes on in our City. I imagine, from his perspective, it’s usually not nice.

Despite that, he seemed to rise above the attacks on police and went to the “we must look at this holistically” approach. He talked about crime as a function of economic conditions, housing, health care, substance abuse, gangs, mental health, and other factors. Of course, these are not problems for the Police to fix. Police have to deal with the consequences of those problems, and I suspect most of the people they have to deal with in crisis situations are not being nice.

At the hearing, the police were there to present their reports (100+ pages), and Council dispiritedly wanted to catch them on some reason to “defund the police” and be responsive to the issues raging nationally.

Despite many Council members saying they support the police — after hundreds of calls and emails coming to them over the past month ( on both sides), we are grateful that some Council members did pivot on the

“defund” issue toward a “we need to change the world” agenda. This was very different from what we heard on July 9 at the Council meeting from both the 19 callers and the “recorded” comments of Council members. OK, we all get to change – right?

It would be great if Council was truly interested in “changing the world” and not just pandering to voters (sorry for my cynicism). If so, let’s begin to discuss ways to improve people’s lives at every level of the income spectrum with much improved efforts to improve quality of life concerns and create and support jobs.

Ask me about my recent read that asserts happiness comes from two things: love (good relationships) and pride or esteem in one’s job — whatever that job is. Not sure there are votes for that agenda.

Bud Hackett