

Council Candidates – 2-year seat – Question 1 (17)

The Bethlehem Gadfly Candidates for election, Gadfly's posts, Serious Issues March 29, 2019
(17th in a series of posts on candidates for election)

There are 3 candidates for the 1 opening for a 2-year position on City Council: Will Carpenter, Ashley Daubert, Grace Crampsie Smith.

Gadfly's purpose is not to endorse candidates but to provide information. Gadfly will pose a few questions (prompts) for the candidates to answer in succession in the period before the election on May 21.

Gadfly followers are welcome to suggest future questions.

A tip o' the hat and a wave of the wings to the candidates for their commitment and courage in running for office and for participating in this Gadfly attempt to help us all be more informed voters.

The first question Gadfly posed was: "What uniquely qualifies you to serve on Bethlehem City Council?"

Gadfly told the candidates that he was looking for c. 250-300 words and that more would probably be ok but that much less might feel skimpy. Here – in alphabetical order this time (we'll vary that in subsequent posts) – are their answers to the first question/prompt.

"What uniquely qualifies you to serve on Bethlehem City Council?"



Will Carpenter

What I share with my fellow Council candidates is a love for our city and a belief that this is an important time for setting the course for our continued growth. We are facing important challenges and opportunities as exciting new projects that will help create jobs and define our future are proposed. My experience working for an international corporation as a Director of Real Estate gives me a unique perspective and insight needed by the Council at this time. I have sat at the table and made decisions during the entire development process. I have negotiated with municipalities, developers, and contractors and

have seen how projects get shaped and how cities can work effectively to uphold standards and attract development.

I have attended dozens of council, zoning, and planning meetings in cities large and small. I decided to run for City Council because I believe this experience is valuable at this important time. We can strategically pursue development to create jobs and growth while conserving public funds and defining our vision. Bethlehem is in a great position; people want to live and work here. We need City Hall to be the voice of our community, leading with a vision that is shaped by our values. We must learn from both our successes and our shortcomings to find the balance between economic vitality and responsible growth.



Ashley Daubert

I am the only candidate for the two-year term that is a lifelong Bethlehem resident. I was born in Bethlehem, I grew up in Bethlehem, I am a proud product of our BASD schools, I work in Bethlehem, and I am now raising my own family in Bethlehem. To truly represent a place and its people, I think you need to be invested in it. That place needs to be a part of who you are. Bethlehem means so much to me, as it has grown with me. To see (and be part of) all of the things Bethlehem not only always was, but has become, has truly been an honor. Bethlehem residents take great pride in our city – and I am blessed to be able to call Bethlehem my hometown. Professionally, I hold degrees in both Crime, Law, and Justice, and Nursing. I am a registered nurse by trade, with an ANCC board certification in psychiatric-mental health nursing. I have dedicated my life to helping other people. Having such a diverse background has given me an understanding of and a compassion for human suffering that is the driving force behind all I do and will do for our city. I believe people need to come before politics – and we need to see beyond party lines and truly take the time to discuss issues in terms of how they will affect the quality of life of (all of) our citizens. My priority is community wellness – this means mental health, physical health, financial health, environmental health, safety, and inclusion. Bethlehem is the greatest city in the Lehigh Valley – and as a Councilwoman, I will both further and initiate efforts to (continue to) make Bethlehem a great place to live, work, and play.



Grace Crampsie Smith

Service to others has been woven into the tapestry of my life. My dominant family gene is “Publicum Officium,” as my parents and 6 siblings have also continually given of themselves to public service.

I believe the hallmark of the role of councilperson is to be a representative and advocate for all the citizens of Bethlehem. I have been advocating for the rights of those in need for almost 40 years as an Addictions Counselor, administrator of government-funded services for people with developmental disabilities and mental illness and their families, Instructor at college level on the ADA and IDEA, and currently as a high school counselor in a Title I school. Additionally, I have been a lifelong democrat, and continually fight for democratic ideals via my membership in Northampton County Democratic Committee (Precinct Committee Person), Bethlehem Area Democratic Committee, Lehigh Valley ROAR, Lehigh Valley 4 All, Lehigh Valley Democratic Progressive Coalition, Human Rights Campaign, American Legion Auxiliary, and ACLU.

I have a Bachelor’s Degree in Sociology/Social Welfare, which has enlightened me to the impact socio-economic policy at the local level has upon citizens, the environment, and the community as an entity. I have a Master’s Degree in School Counseling, and as a counselor, I have become quite skilled at mediation, negotiation, conflict resolution, and crisis management, necessary skills for a city council person.

As a Coordinator of Early Intervention and Community Services for Lehigh County, I managed multi-million-dollar taxpayer-funded budgets and had to make heart-wrenching decisions in disbursement of limited government funds to our most vulnerable populations — those with developmental disabilities, mental illness, and homelessness. I successfully oversaw the transformation of our service delivery system resulting in the elimination of waiting lists and provision of vital services to all in need. As Part C of the IDEA federal legislation mandated Early Intervention Services for infants and toddlers as an entitlement, I took the lead in assuring adherence to legislative tenets of the entitlement program within Lehigh County. I was elected Chair of Lehigh-Northampton County Inter-Agency Coordinating Council and was

responsible for coordination of service delivery and legislative compliance amongst county offices, contracted service providers, local hospitals, school districts, and intermediate units.

I have been innovative and collaborative throughout my career in undertaking new initiatives. I was recruited to be on the committee to establish the first Family Center within the Allentown School District. In my first year as a school counselor, I initiated an after-school tutoring program in collaboration with Lafayette College. I also developed the Skills for Success Program within our school. This program was in collaboration with Lafayette College and the local NAACP and provided daily mentoring and tutoring to at risk 9th graders. This program significantly reduced the dropout rate for this cohort.

To better understand the operations and challenges of the Bethlehem Police Department, I completed the Citizens Police Academy. As an Addictions Counselor, I provided counseling within the prison setting and provided testimony for court-ordered evaluations. As a College Instructor on the ADA and IDEA, my knowledge of these vital federal legislations will certainly be relevant in city council, for the ADA mandates must be considered in all new development as well as renovations within the city. As a current school counselor, I am faced on a daily basis with issues of mental health, suicide risk, opioid addiction, homelessness, sexual and physical abuse, gang violence, and immigration. To address the growing opioid crisis, I facilitated a community forum on opioid addiction. As I deal with the increasing number of children and families who are homeless, I see the need for development and access to affordable housing within every community, including Bethlehem. In the event of a death or tragedy within our school district, I am called upon to lead the crisis management team in grief counseling due to my expertise in this area. I mediate conflict on a daily basis between teens as well as adults, and my proficiency in mediation will certainly be an asset to city council.

I have always been a tireless advocate for all, and I hope to expand my advocacy and skill sets to serve the citizens of this great city.