

Election of new Council president at City Council meeting tomorrow night, Monday [note change of day], January 6, 7PM, Town Hall

The Bethlehem Gadfly Uncategorized January 5, 2020

Our next City Council meeting — the “face” of Bethlehem City government — occurs tomorrow night Monday, January 6, Town Hall, **at 7PM.**

Note: Monday meeting not Tuesday this one time in the year.

These meetings are video-recorded and can be viewed LIVE or later at your convenience on the City’s website after the meeting at <https://www.bethlehem-pa.gov/Calendar>.

The YouTube channel for live or archive viewing is “City of Bethlehem Council.”

Find the Council agenda and documents here: <https://www.bethlehem-pa.gov/Calendar/Meetings/2020/City-Council-Meeting/50>

Note also that there are two meetings in succession here Monday night. In one, Council reorganizes, swears in the “new” members, and elects a president for the coming year. Council rules state, “The President and the Vice President shall serve no more than two consecutive terms” ([rule 2](#)). President Waldron has served in 2018 and 2019, so he is due to be released from that bondage.

Gadfly followers know that a stated part of his mission has been to familiarize you with your elected officials so that you are an informed voter.

Now, you can't vote for Council president and vice president, but you can (and should!) formally express your preference in at least 2 ways:

- Either write to individual Council members or write the City Clerk Robert Vidoni and ask that your email be distributed to each Council member. Email contact info for both options are on the Gadfly sidebar.
- Come to the meeting and express your preference during public comment.

This is an important decision. Gadfly thinks of the City Council meeting as the “face” of Bethlehem City government.

The Council president is the face of that face. Being Council president is a big deal. It's a big honor. It's a big responsibility. The president must be a high quality person, one we can be proud of. He or she is a premier representative of the City.

The City operates under a “strong Mayor” form of government in which Council approves legislation, budget, and appointments. Council is top of the food chain but the Administration does the work, so cooperation is key.

The Council president must be able to work with the Mayor and the Administration for the good of the City, but the separation of power in this form of government is meaningful and essential, and, perhaps most importantly, the Council president must be an independent voice and force as well when necessary.

The president must also foster the kind of working relationships that enable Council to move forward on positive measures for the City.

Who are you thinking?

Gadfly will do some winnowing.

Waldron is out per the rules as Gadfly reads them. As a rookie, Grace Crampsie Smith is out unless there is some massive stalemate. Her time will come.

Gadfly is going to venture that Bryan Callahan is out. He has been perceived a divisive figure by four members of Council.

For Gadfly, that leaves Councilpersons Colon, Negron, Reynolds, and Van Wirt.

Pertinent additional factual information in terms of Council experience might be that Negron is current Vice President of Council and Reynolds is a prior president.







Gadfly invites your commentary, your choices, your weighing of skills and qualities, your thought processes relevant to this important decision. Think it out. Talk it out.

And, as always, as long as he has flutter in his wings, Gadfly urges attending City Council live or virtually — one way or the other.

Participate. Be informed.