

Maybe movement on the wage equity ordinance

[The Bethlehem Gadfly](#) [Wage equality](#) October 27, 2020

🦋 *Latest in a series of posts on wage equality* 🦋

Wage Equality Memo (1)

Gadfly gets asked on a fairly regular basis if he knows what's happening with Councilman Callahan's wage equality ordinance.

The basic idea is that this ordinance (which is gaining nationwide acceptance) hopes to free women from the spiraling financial trap of beginning their work careers at a low salary while they progress in their careers. Employers will not be able to ask a female applicant her past salary and low-ball her salary-wise on the new job.



The proposal has been stalled since pre-pandemic days in Councilman Callahan's Human Resources Committee (Olga Negron and Paige Van Wirt are the other committee members) over the enforcement piece of the ordinance.

And the collegiality on the committee is fractured, as Gadfly has chronicled (click [wage equity](#) on the right-hand sidebar under Topics).

However, at City Council October 20, Councilman Callahan advised of several matters that relate to the enforcement piece:

- Both Lehigh and Northampton Counties are forming Human Relations Commissions, so Bethlehem cases can go there for enforcement.
- Councilman Callahan has volunteered to serve on one of the Commissions.
- Councilman Callahan has consulted with lawyers who have told him that really all he need worry about is passing the ordinance not the enforcement piece.

- Councilman Callahan has determined that the standard lawyer fee for representation before a magistrate is \$500.
- Councilman Callahan is consulting with the State Ethics Commission and researching whether it's legal for his PAC to contribute \$2000 to cover the first 4 women who bring a case.
- If that is not legal, Councilman Callahan will see if he can contribute that amount from his business.
- Gadfly is not sure why these avenues are being pursued if the cases are going to be heard by the new county commissions.

So Councilman Callahan is seeking a meeting time with his committee to do the necessary to now move the ordinance on to the full City Council.

Audio Player not available in this archive