

What next in the ethics case?

The Bethlehem Gadfly City government, Ethics December 9, 2019

 *Latest in a series of posts on Ethics and City Government* 

At the December 3 City Council meeting, the Mayor told Councilman Callahan that he would be sending him a letter. Gadfly doesn't know if that's been done or not.

(Gadfly's had his nose in City business for two years now. He wishes people would just automatically "cc:" him on all correspondence and invite him to all confidential meetings.)

But knowing Councilman Callahan's passion, he's not going to give up.

So what's the next step?

Gadfly #1 Stephen Antalics suggests asking the [Penna. State Ethics Commission](#) to investigate. Follower Barbara Diamond pointed to that same path during the Q'nA at the Callahan press conference. Whether that can be done now that the subject of the investigation has been publicly identified, Gadfly is not sure.

<https://youtu.be/OxKath53xpc>

- The City is not the forum to handle the problem that's existing.
- It can't be handled fairly because we have two organizations in the City arguing with each other.
- Who's the judge?
- It puts the Mayor in an awkward position to have to deal with one of his employees.

- Members of Council and the Mayor should cease and desist and stop the discussion immediately . . . and turn it over to the Ethics committee at the State level.
- Because the procedure has turned into a demeaning and insulting procedure beneath the dignity of the citizens of Bethlehem.
- We don't need it, we're above it.
- You have an ethics commission at the State.
- Take it there where it belongs.
- And stop this in-house quibbling, it's simple quibbling of the lowest form.
- Don't take us back to grade school. We're all adults. Let's act that way.

Now in the video clip from the December 3 City Council meeting in the previous post in this series, [President Waldron argued firmly against](#) calling on the State Ethics Commission.

Answering a question many of us had, President Waldron determined that there are two local paths that the City employee whistleblowers and Councilman Callahan might have used to trigger an investigation of the possible unethical behavior: the H.R. path and the Controller tip-line path.

But they didn't — sigh . . .

“There is a whistleblower protection in place . . . We have an H.R. department that investigates those issues . . . There's policies in place for that . . . There is a system, and as far as I can tell, it is working. So to bring in the state ethics board to research something, I don't think is necessary because there are policies, there are practices in place. And, additionally, we have a Controller anonymous tip-line . . . to talk about waste or inefficiency or whatever the issue may be . . . So I don't think

we really need to talk about why the system is broken . . . I think the process and policies in place are fair.”

So there were paths for the employee and the Councilman to take with their complaints that would have brought us to a different place.

Would that they had — sigh . . .

So the question is, are those paths viable now that news of the possible dirty laundry seasoned with a fair bit of acrimony has reached the four corners of our town and into the region?

Gadfly invites your thoughts on that, but his instinct is no, aligning with Stephen’s, no, those paths are not viable now.

Gadfly can understand President Waldron’s desire to keep all action in this instance local, “in the family.”

It’s natural and “politic” to be able to say and believe that you can handle things.

And no good comes when outsiders peek under your roof and empty your waste baskets.

But who files the complaint to the Ethics Commission? Could it be an entity like Council? A boss like the Mayor? The aggrieved Councilman Callahan? Or would it have to be the whistlers themselves?

to be continued . . .