

Mayoral candidates Grubb and Reynolds on the \$34m coronavirus relief money

The Bethlehem Gadfly Candidates for election, Election May 5, 2021

 *Latest in a series of posts on candidates for election* 

selections from [Christina Tatu, “Q&A with Bethlehem’s Democratic candidates for mayor.” Morning Call, April 22, 2021.](#)

Q. Bethlehem stands to receive nearly \$34 million in federal coronavirus relief money. How do you think the city should spend that money?

Grubb: First and foremost, funding should be allocated to get all eligible Bethlehem residents vaccinated. Second, funding should be used to provide assistance to both businesses and their employees, both of who have been negatively impacted by the pandemic. Third, nonprofit organizations that struggled to support the neediest in our community during COVID should receive assistance that allows them to continue their mission and service. Fourth, funding should be allocated to the provision of safe affordable housing. Finally, environmental and public infrastructure such as air quality improvement measures, streets, parks and existing public facilities that need maintenance should be funded, particularly since use of outside spaces has increased exponentially during the pandemic.

Reynolds: The past year has been extraordinarily difficult for everyone in our community. We need to work with Northampton and Lehigh counties to make sure that everyone in our city benefits from the federal money in both the short and long term. The relief bill was designed to help our families, small businesses and nonprofits that suffered during the pandemic. One initiative that I have proposed is a community recovery fund that will provide financial assistance to the organizations in our city that define who we are. Neighborhood farmers markets, arts and cultural groups, youth recreation associations. They need to be financially supported to guarantee they continue their vital work in our city. Many of these organizations were not able to operate over the past year and our city suffered financially and emotionally. The community

recovery fund will be designed to help them bounce back and make them more vibrant and successful post-pandemic.