

# Complimenting President Waldron's strengths but recognizing his shortcomings

The Bethlehem Gadfly City government January 19, 2020

 Latest in a series of posts on City Government 

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Gadfly,

Personally, I like Adam. I particularly admire him because he's a successful small business owner in Bethlehem.

As Council President, there are two qualities I have enjoyed and am happy he's brought to the position. First, he isn't rigid with the 5 minute limit given to public speakers. Second his sense of humor is welcome in some cases. I'll get back to that in a minute.

But, there is a really big difference between allowing someone, whether a resident or Councilmember, to speak versus issuing a personal attack. And, I think that's where he loses sight of his role as Council President and allowed it to become disruptive to the ebb and flow of Council meetings, especially in 2019. Personal attacks on residents or other Members of Council are completely inappropriate and as President of Council you have to be able to recognize the difference. Anyone who has

attended many Council meetings can. Whether it is initiated by another Councilmember or public speaker, that's when a City Council President needs to step in and turn that "soft gavel" into a hard gavel. As far as humor goes, poking fun at the topic or a situation is fine, but poking fun at a person takes it too far. Commenting on a person's dress, in the example you've mentioned in this column, is an example of the latter and shouldn't be done. Fortunately, Steve Antalics had a great comeback to Adam's sweater remark, one that shouldn't have been made in the first place. And, these kinds of comments, attempts at humor, have been made at someone's expense before.

I believe those who appeared at the Council meeting in support of Olga Negrón recognized these shortcomings while also complimenting Adam's strengths and felt that a more experienced more mature City Council President was needed. I don't believe it was really anything more than that, although the secondary benefit of an opportunity for Council to elect a woman, and in the case of President, a Latina, into leadership positions was not lost on the public.

Dana

*Dana's post moves us toward the next topic Gadfly will write about on this thread, free speech among the Council members.*