

Council candidate Grace Crampsie Smith at LV4ALL

The Bethlehem Gadfly Candidates for election, Election February 27, 2021

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

Candidate for City Council incumbent Grace Crampsie Smith at the Lehigh Valley for All “Meet the Candidates” event February 17.



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I'm in my second year of a two-year term on Bethlehem City Council. I'm running for the 4-year term. I've been a resident of Bethlehem for over 30 years. And I'm the grateful mother of three children, who pretty much have contributed to inspiring me to run for City Council to give back to the great community in which they were raised. My daughters Shannon and Bridget are going to graduate from Law School and Medical School in May, so I'll have two people off my payroll. And my son Brendan is in his third year of college. And I am extremely grateful and proud of them. Professionally, I have a Master's Degree in Counseling from Lehigh, and I have been a high school counselor at Easton Area High School for over 15 years. I have over 30 years experience in various area. I was an addictions counselor. I was an administrator of government-funded services for people with developmental disabilities and mental health diagnoses and their families. And I was an adjunct instructor at the community college level on the America for Disabilities Act and the Individual with Disabilities Education Act. Currently on Council I am chair of the Public Works Committee, and I am a member of the Public

Safety and Community Development Committees. In my first year on Council I initiated and co-chair the current Affordable Housing Task Force. Homelessness and housing that is affordable is a passion of mine. I really got interested in this years ago, but more specifically in the past five years when I saw a significant increase in the number of my students and families who were homeless and transient. So the Affordable Housing Task Force consists of public and private entities, including developers, and our goal is to try to come up with recommendations to address the lack of affordable housing with in the City. Recently, I was thrilled to get the folks from State College and Pittsburgh to join our meeting and give an extensive presentation on their success with inclusionary housing. I also sponsored a resolution to insure insurance coverage to first responders to include post-traumatic stress disorder because that's important. Councilman Reynolds and I have, through the pandemic, met on an ongoing basis with the local business associations and the Mayor to try to assist them to survive during this pandemic. Councilman Reynolds and I last year also met with the Police and the Administration and pushed for them to review our use of force policy to make sure that restraints were not included if they were going to be adverse like the things we saw last summer. We also formed a Community Engagement Initiative which included people from the community which involved people from the Police, the Administration, and the community to try to join together to look at ways that we can enhance the services of the police within the city. Again, Councilman Reynolds and I have been meeting with the ongoing with the Police Chief and the City regarding adequate and appropriate training for the police and to work toward coordinating with community and governmental services in the area of mental health, drug and alcohol, domestic violence, and other areas. I think that I have a unique perspective when it comes to the police issue because I come from a family of police. My father was a police chief, I have three nephews who are policeman, one of them is currently on the SWAT team at the U.S. Capitol, so he was actively involved in the insurrection unfortunately on January 6 but fortunately he is safe. And as I have said repeatedly, I come from a family of cops, but I also see that you can support the police but also address and fight systemic racism because they are not two mutually exclusive items. Basically, I feel that my personal attributes and my professional experience have been relevant on my role on City Council, and it's been an honor. Even though this year has been a long, strange trip, I have

enjoyed it. It's been an honor and privilege to serve the great, diverse community of Bethlehem, and I hope I continue to get this opportunity to serve and to represent and to fulfill the initiatives I've started.

There are 6 candidates running for 4 seats on City Council. The other candidates are Bryan Callahan, Hillary Kwiatek, Rachel Leon, Adam Waldron, Kiera Wilhelm.