

Taking a look at the Council section of the new City web site

The Bethlehem Gadfly City government, City web site, Communication survey November 6, 2019

 *The latest in a series of posts on the City web site* 

Posting about tonight's Council meetings took Gadfly last night to the Council section of the new City web site.

<https://www.bethlehem-pa.gov/>

Remember that he has encouraged you to visit the new site and make constructive comments.

And he has also hoped for volunteers to take an individual section of the new site and “go deep,” pointing out its value and perhaps shortcomings.

Well, last night Gadfly went deep on the City Council section.

<https://www.bethlehem-pa.gov/Meet-Your-Government/City-Council>

You wouldn't expect much if any difference to the content on this portion of the web site from the old site.

And, indeed, the same basic information as before is there and easy to find.

One thing Gadfly likes to point out is that you can find Council members' financial statements here — you ought to look at them every once in a while just for the helluva it. And, after all, with the current election now heading in to the past, “war chests” for the next round will be of interest. Gadfly was always curious about what it takes financially to run for office

in our small town. Here you can find out. And there was a question about the “ethics” of a candidate financial transaction at the very tail end of the May primary, you might remember.

<https://www.bethlehem-pa.gov/Meet-Your-Government/City-Council/Candidate-Disclosure>

A happy surprise, though, is a literal **calendar** of Council meetings, with direct links to the agenda and background documents. And it is on this page that you will find the link to the live streaming and archiving of the Council meetings.

<https://www.bethlehem-pa.gov/Calendar/>

Now Gadfly thinks it was just in his last post on the new web site that he whined about not having a calendar for all City events. He still would like that. (Maybe one has quietly appeared, for this Council calendar wasn’t there last time he looked.)

But here’s a calendar for the specific Council section. Good.

Gadfly is old style, he guesses, for he likes the visual ease and familiarity of taking in the whole month at a glance this way.

Of course, there aren’t really a whole lot of Council meetings, so some times this calendar will look pretty empty.

But November will soon fill up with budget meetings, so the calendar view will come in handy as far as Gadfly is concerned, planning how to fill all that “free” retirement time he has.

There is one further technological step that Gadfly would like to see in proper course.

The agenda and background documents for agenda items are separated, and eventually direct links from agenda items to background documents would save time and distraction and improve usability.

A time-consuming step, Gadfly knows, but a helpful one.

And, by the way again, Gadfly is still wondering if there was any kind of report on the Communication Survey that was done by the City some months back now. He will try to remember to ask about this at Council tonight.

Please do send your constructive comments about your experience with the new web site.