

Coronavirus report at City Council

The Bethlehem Gadfly City government, coronavirus April 22, 2020

 *Latest in a series of posts on the coronavirus* 

Gadfly supposes the most important part of last night's City Council meeting was the report on the coronavirus situation by the Mayor, Kristen Wenrich, and Bob Novatnack.

Gadfly followers know that the City has had two press conferences that have been covered here. Much of what was reported last night will be familiar to those who checked out our prior posts on those press conferences (see [coronavirus](#) on the sidebar).

The section that followers might find most interesting is the interchange between President Waldron and Kristen Wenrich following her presentation ([video min. 40:30](#)):

Audio Player not available in this archive

Now, here below are the full presentations by the main players in our coronavirus response.

Mayor Donchez ([video min. 25:00](#)):

Gave thanks to residents for making 1000 masks; thanks to city workers, the counties, the hospitals; good news on payments from Wind Creek; storm water work postponed to January; unlikely Memorial Pool will be opened but will open others; hiring freeze; Public Works and Water Department now working shifts; all city workers have masks; street cleaning continues, no tickets except violation of public safety; tax deadlines extended; compost center opening for drop-off only, need masks; putting off bond till next year, deferring capital spending; no decision yet on Musik-Fest; furloughs will be last resort; financial status is good.

Kristen Wenrich, Health Bureau Director ([video min. 33:30](#)):

Doing contract tracing; as of Monday 376 cases, 3 deaths; working on a map/data dashboard that will be updated daily; 39 hospitalized, 20%

positivity rate; 45% white, 39% Hispanic; 66% white, 12.5% African American, 1.6% Asian; doing education outreach to Hispanics and African American communities; higher % in 25-49 age group; average age 46.9; rise in household infections; not recommending mild cases be tested; rates not increasing but testing has decreased; working with non-profits for care of elderly and homeless, 1 homeless in isolation; working with New Bethany and Comfort Suites for housing; outbreaks in 3 long-term care facilities, 1 transferred patients so actually working with 2; acting as liaison, putting these facilities in contact with state consultant on infection control — Acri? — and 1 has had a call from them; most frequent calls are about workplace concerns; concern about getting enough people tested; up and down numbers so hard to say if peak has been reached; testing site opening up at Mohegan Sun; LVHN having trouble getting tests; Allentown cases through the roof, with whom we will be lumped in a region by region re-opening; re-opening criteria = incidence rates and Lehigh County has highest in the state; Bethlehem is faring fairly well in context of state averages; working on a “heat map” but hasn’t seen any geographical trends in the city; ok now on staffing to do the contact tracing

Bob Novatnack, Emergency Management Director (video min. 51:20):

Supply chain for city employees is strong; only 1 city employee tested positive; police and fire calls down, different procedure in dealing with the public; everything fully staffed; good working relationship with the counties; getting complaints about businesses not following masking guidelines; government working smoothly; dealing with changes in guidelines on a daily basis; credit to cleaning crew in City Hall; big kudos to the Health Department, recognizes that there are now 4 components to public safety: police, fire, EMS, and Health Dept.