

Allentown Council discusses the resolution regarding the police department (2): divestment and defunding

The Bethlehem Gadfly George Floyd killing, Police July 31, 2020

 *Latest in a series of posts responding to the George Floyd killing* 

Allentown City Council meeting July 29, 2020, video

Mins. 2:24:40 – 2:40:20

Now we get to the heart of the matter.

Councilpeople Gerlach and Siegel are the ones behind the resolution.

No one else on Council supported the divestment and defunding proposed in the last clause of the resolution.

No one.

The Mayor said the City “needs help” from the county in regard to some of the services to which the “defunders” would like to see money reallocated. The county must “step up to the plate.”

Social workers aren’t going to respond to the call of a man barricaded with a gun.

No way hospital personnel were going to respond to the man, given the state he was in, in the recent Sacred Heart Hospital episode.

There was a recent major fire in Allentown — the police responded first.

Fire fighters say they depend on the police for their very lives and plead that the police not be cut.

The Police are out there disregarding their own safety during this pandemic.

“Our lives depend on the police department.”

Defunding “is going to turn into a disaster.”

Domestic violence calls are among the most dangerous calls there are — and not for social workers.

The police department had 242 officers in 2003, 216 now. It is not now adequately staffed.

“Our city is not shrinking,” we need more police not less.

Social service agencies already exist, with lots of money.

What we should do if we are going to do it right, is do research, partner with someone and study what’s right for our community. Such models as Eugene, Oregon, and St. Petersburg not transferable.

Need data-driven approach.

To cut the department now would be to cut (seniority basis) the most diverse part of the department — would make no sense.

What can’t the police department do without? Training. You wouldn’t want to cut that.

The department budget has been cut but even so it is now running under even the diminished budget. We’re running a good ship. Good stewards of our resources.

I support Black Lives Matter, and I support the Police Department.

Nobody supported divestment or defunding.

Say again, nobody supported divestment or defunding.

How did the proposers of the resolution respond? See next.