

Do we have a beef with the police department?

The Bethlehem Gadfly Police July 29, 2020

 *Latest in a series of posts about the Bethlehem Police* 

Nextdoor blog comments on Reynolds-Crampsie Smith resolution

Yesterday Gadfly transcribed 14 pages of comments of discussion on the Nextdoor blog triggered by the Reynolds/Crampsie Smith resolution.

And suggested that it might be seen as a microcosm of community views.

And thus that we ought to engage with the commentary as we approach the August 11 Public Safety meeting.

And that it would be a good exercise for each of us to pull 10 comments from the discussion (not necessarily comments that we like or don't) for even further discussion.

What does Nextdoor reveal about our next steps?

What does Nextdoor reveal about the pulse of the community?

Did you make a list? Would you share?

Here is Gadfly's first of what might be several such lists:

1) In my opinion [the Reynolds/Crampsie Smith resolution] was very much an anti Police statement. . . . To me the language seemed very one sided.

2) Reform is unnecessary. I'm going on 65 years in the town of Bethlehem that has unquestionably the best Police Department.

3) Defund the police...are you delusional???

4) Not broken ...no need to fix. Hats off to the men n women in blue.

- 5) I've lived here for over 20 years and never had a problem-
- 6) he wants to totally get rid of the police lol
- 7) God Bless the Police who protect us, Black, Brown, white and all other Colors.
- 8) God bless our police department. Without them we would be another Portland and Seattle. Thank God we have a common sense Mayor (Bob Donches)
- 9) Thank you to the men and women in Blue helping to keep Bethlehem safe and prosperous
- 10) Back the blue. Blue lives matter

Way long ago, Gadfly asked, "How would you characterize the relationship between our police and our community?"

Relatively long ago (**well, June 23**), Gadfly asked what the prompt for a first community meeting on the police should be.

And then, characteristically, stirred by commentary by Gov. Cuomo, he answered his own question **the next day**: "Is the trust between community and police broken in Bethlehem?"

On a roll, Gadfly **asked for data**, that is, testimony, with your answer to that question.

And he got **some testimony**. And maybe more coming. But by no means enough.

For you see, here's what Gadfly is struggling with:

Do "we" as a City have a beef with the police department? Is there sentiment, more importantly, is there evidence that the police department needs radical (or even moderate) change?

Or is the national conversation occasioned by the murder of George Floyd to which no police department is immune and to which we are joining in the Public Safety Committee meeting August 11 simply a time



to do a healthy review of the department and to consider beneficent changes that will only enhance the superior quality of department performance and to enable the city to address genuine problems that need attention?

In regard to a beef, followers need to listen to Councilwoman Negron at the end of the July 21 City Council meeting talking about the reluctance in the Latino

community to speak up because of fear of reprisal and thus the need for a “safe space” for those voices to be heard.

We need to hear those voices more, for Gadfly thinks that the Nextdoor blog shows that there is a “silent majority” in the community who have no idea why there should even be any conversation at all about our police department policies and practices.

They may see problems elsewhere, but their default position is that we’re ok.

If there is a problem with, if there is a beef with the police department, Gadfly thinks there is a strong wall of resistance that will need to be softened, need to be persuaded that even commencing a review is necessary.