

Council voices matter

The Bethlehem Gadfly City government, George Floyd killing June 9, 2020

 *Latest in a series of posts on the George Floyd killing* 

One of Gadfly's missions is to help make us better voters.

We don't elect our City Council members, for instance, to make 7-0 decisions on a contract for the Water department, though that is the kind of thing seemingly they mostly do.

We elect them — or should elect them — for their potential to provide leadership when things get tough.

Like now.

George Floyd's murder has become a national inflection point. Look at the news to see what City Councils across the country are being asked to consider — are, in fact, considering.

Such moves as defunding, dismantling, disbanding the police.

Such issues as racial discrimination and systemic injustice.

That's a lot for our part-time Bethlehem public servants.

But this is precisely the kind of time we should envision when we vote.

Over the past few days, Gadfly has asked you to concentrate individually on each Council member's first public response to the Floyd murder.

Whose voices move us, whose don't?

Who seems up to the task at hand, who not?

Whose voices reveal leadership timber, whose not?

Gadfly asks you to consider such questions now and as we go forward especially in the next few weeks for we will no doubt meet these people on the Council ballot again, for no doubt one or more of these Council

members will be running for mayor — a decision now less than a year away.

Let's test their mettle now.

Let's see what they've got.

So before we move on, Gadfly asks you to take a few more moments to browse again the first voices of our Council members at this dynamic cultural moment.

For, to shamelessly appropriate a phrase, "Council voices matter."

President Waldron: "the Police department . . . did a great job . . . supporting the First Amendment rights that everyone is granted"

Councilwoman Van Wirt: "I ask you to do something, to look at our own city and address economic and social racism where it exists"

Councilwoman Crampsie Smith: "We must work together as a city to insure that all our community members and visitors of color feel safe, secure, equal, and loved"

Councilman Reynolds: "It is not enough just to say that we can have peaceful demonstrations here"

Councilman Callahan: "I was so proud of the way people were behaving themselves and just peacefully protesting"

Councilman Colon: "Now is the time for listening and to keep the dialog going"

Councilwoman Negron: "There's a lot of wrong-doing, a lot of wrong going on right here"