

# “We might need to get back to the basics of what the City’s core mission is”

The Bethlehem Gadfly Budget December 3, 2020

 *Latest in a series of posts on the City Budget* 

Here’s another caller to Council Tuesday night not on the police topic that Gadfly doesn’t want to get lost in the shuffle, or the kerfuffle.

For the topic — the budget — is timely.

The last budget hearing is tonight at 6PM, and the final vote on the budget will take place December 15.

Gadfly always asks that you go to the primary source and listen for yourself.

The text is not a transcription, but what there is, is directly quoted.

If the audio is unsatisfactory, go to the video for better quality.

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**Bud Hackett (7 mins.) (min. 12:05):**

- There’s a **story this morning in the Morning Call** . . . a story about the Allentown budget process . . . and there’s a comment from the City Controller, a fellow named Jeff Glazier . . . “It would be my recommendation that Council proceed

with very light feet in how they take money from various funds within the city.”

- The Mayor’s budget seems to be a reasonable continuation of last year’s budget, but it includes a significant increase in taxes.
- I’ve watched a lot of these meeting since June or July, and City Council has spent much of the past 6 months listening to and being pressured by a number of different people . . . .
- The essence of what I heard is that those people want city programs and operations changed . . . reallocate funds within the city to more social programs.
- There’s no shortage of important issues . . . homelessness, affordable housing, drug abuse, gangs, mental issues . . . pedestrian bridges.
- There’s just more and more and more demands for Council’s activity.
- We might need to get back to the basics of what the City’s core mission is.
- In business you see a lot of mission creep, taking on more and more activities.
- In my mind, the mission is all about public works, public safety, maybe addressing some but not all of the quality of life issues.
- It’s not the City’s role, in my opinion, to solve all the problems of the world or our community.
- I know there will be votes for elected officials who are [?] pandering is probably too strong a word to all the vocal groups [?] change, and I do respect people’s right to speak out.
- But here’s the cold, hard facts, we don’t have all the money to do all the things the special interest groups are demanding.
- [info on Allentown which became an attractive place for low income people to move to. Even worse in Reading. Higher taxes drove people out of the city and that created more demand for social programs.]

- The city found itself with staggering social problems and the cost of correcting those needs
- 2020 has been a devastating year for so many of us.
- It's time for Bethlehem to stop thinking about how it can spend more money.
- At least for this year.
- There will be a lot of support for elected officials who begin to think about how Bethlehem can become more balanced in its approach to government and spending.

**The Bethlehem Gadfly**