

Bethlehem police invite public comment

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The Bethlehem Gadfly Police August 16, 2020 2 Minutes

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

Gadfly so surprised this wasn't announced at Tuesday's Public Safety Committee meeting. Or did he just miss it among the many proceedings?

from Christina Tatu, "Bethlehem police invite public to comment on its performance during reaccreditation process." Morning Call, August 16, 2020.

As they go through the national re-accreditation process with the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Bethlehem police invite the public and city officials to comment on whether they feel the department complies with national standards.

An assessment team will take calls from the public 2-4 p.m. Monday. Comments are limited to 10 minutes. The number to call is 610-865-1069.

CALEA is a national police accreditation agency which also provides guidance for departments in Canada and Mexico. It requires agencies to establish a framework for evaluating procedures and keeping arrest records, and requires officers to undergo bias and de-escalation training.

Bethlehem police Chief Mark DiLuzio said the commission mandates yearly reviews. And every three or four years, departments undergo a full reaccreditation process, which includes getting public comment.

Bethlehem Police Department has been accredited by CALEA since 2007. The department should have word on whether it satisfied the requirements by the end of the year, DiLuzio said. This review includes inspections of police headquarters and equipment, and an assessment of the department's manpower.

Note related story on peer intervention program:

from Dave Collins, “New push to train police officers how to stop abuse in own ranks.” Morning Call, August 16, 2020.

Despite policies on the books for years that require officers across the United States to stop colleagues from using excessive force, there has been little or no effort to teach officers how to intervene, law enforcement officials and experts say.

“I don’t think departments have prepared their officers sufficiently to deal with that sort of situation,” said Chuck Wexler, executive director of the Police Executive Research Forum, a Washington think tank. “Have we really thought through what that actually means, what’s actually expected of them? ‘Duty to intervene’ has to mean more than words. It has to mean actions.”

The Allentown Police Department has no such policy, but it’s among several reforms City Council is considering. The Bethlehem Police Department, the only one in the Lehigh Valley accredited by a national organization, already requires its officers to intervene when a fellow officer uses force inappropriately.