town of bethlehem
LITTLE TOWN UNDER THE STAR

Town council meeting
June 1, 2026

Present: Mayor Chris Lelle; Councilmen, Sally Brown, Eric Dailey, Sharon Johnson, Mike Camp and Doug Koestel; Kathy Bridges, clerk, Jack Samuels, attorney; Sarah McQuade of CPL

The meeting opened at 7:06 with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Sally Brown made the motion to approve the May 4 minutes and with a second by Sharon Johnson, the motion passed unanimously.

The council looked over the financials and went on to the first new business-the budget amendment for the ARPA (federal rescue) funds. The amendment was at the recommendation of the auditor who explained a budget is required each year. Sally Brown made the motion to approve the amendment, Sharon Johnson seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

The road RFPs were next on the agenda. Doug Koestel made the motion to approve the low bid ($754,568.48) of DCBC LLC with the exception of Harrison Mill Road ($45,720) which will be rebid and presented at the next meeting. His motion was also to lower the amount of speed tables on Angel Street from 5 to 3. Sally Brown and Eric Dailey voted yes, and Mike Camp and Sharon Johnson voted no. The motion passed 3-2.

The rezone of 84 Smith Mill Road was next discussed by Sarah McQuade of CPL. Wayne Sanderson Farms planned to expand the hatchery and the property needed to be rezoned from M1 to Ag. A public hearing is set for June 29, she said. Attorney Jack Samuels recommended a text amendment to add a new zoning classification to the UDC entitled Planned Industrial Campus. After discussion McQuade said a new public hearing date would be announced in a public notice for July 6.

Next on the agenda was the request from Charles Braden of Magnolia Farms to use the lot in front of 742 Manger to sell produce. He also sells pumpkins and Christmas trees. Eric Dailey made a motion to allow the use with a liability waiver and a $50 fee per use for 3 months. Sharon Johnson seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Next the council discussed the CPL invoices which were not very detailed. McQuade said she would make sure dates and more details were added to upcoming bills.

The Mayor asked for a motion to amend the agenda to add the duties of the mayor and the mayor pro-tem. Sally Brown made the motion, Doug Koestel seconded the motion, and it passed by unanimous vote.

Next the council discussed the work at 742 Manger Ave. A plan and budget for the renovation work were presented as well as a report from the Fire Marshall. The Mayor said architectural plans for the electrical, mechanical and plumbing needed to be submitted for review. Doug Koestel made the motion to approve a $45,000 budget for the renovations and if architectural fees are added they are in excess of the remodeling budget of $45,000. Eric Dailey seconded the motion, Johnson and Camp voted yes and Sally Brown voted no. The motion passed 4-1.

Koestel also made a motion to reimburse the Johnson's for the $1200 they spent on the cabinets and also for gas and a helper they paid for a total of $1900. Eric Dailey seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously. (Sharon Johnson recused herself from the vote)

Playground estimates were next up on the agenda. A Smart Play cube for ages 5 and under was priced at $38,039.40 and a zip line was priced at $77,284.60. Sally Brown made a motion to approve the prices and installation using rubber instead of wood for surfacing. Sharon Johnson seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously. Councilman Koestel was to check on lead and installation time was well as maintenance issues.

The council discussed spending approval for the Mayor. Sally Brown made a motion to add discussion of the role of the mayor and council per the charter. Koestel seconded and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

The Mayor said the carnival trailers should be gone by the end of the week. Sally Brown commented on how much fun the carnival was.

Next up was an update on the municipal judge. The position has been posted with no response. Attorney Samuels said he would assist in finding a judge.

Adding code exemptions was discussed next. The council wanted to be able to give an exemption from the UDC for any case. Attorney Samuels said a provision could be added to give an exception to any case. Doug Koestel made a motion to move forward with the exception verbiage draft, Sally Brown seconded the motion, and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

The Mayor discussed the roles of the Mayor and the mayor pro-tem and the council.

At 9:20 Sharon Johnson made the motion to go into executive session for personnel, Mike Camp seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

At 9:45 Sharon Johnson made the motion to come out of executive session and to end the regular meeting. Koestel seconded the motion which passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned.