MULTIYEAR BUDGET PLANNING

WHEREAS, the New York State Office of the State Comptroller recommends multiyear financial planning to help local officials set long-term priorities, work toward goals, and make the tough decisions that will keep their governments solvent and healthy; and

WHEREAS, multiyear financial planning frames the development of each year's budget within a longer term framework, avoiding decisions based on only a single year's needs; and

WHEREAS, Bethlehem's citizens value town services and should be assured that their town government is planning in a realistic manner that ensures continued services within realistic revenue and tax constraints or discloses where major changes may be required; and

WHEREAS, the multiyear plan is a supplement to the legally required town budget and neither legally authorizes expenditures nor commits the Town to future actions; and

WHEREAS, Bethlehem is committed to using the best available budgeting and planning tools, long term planning is valued by rating agencies and others who review town finances, and there is an advantage to recognizing and requiring the use of such tools as a matter of formally established Town policy;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town of Bethlehem shall annually consider its budget within the context of a Multiyear Budget Planning process, and that a Multiyear Budget Plan shall be presented each year with the Supervisor's Tentative Budget proposal; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Supervisor and Town Comptroller will oversee this planning process, with updates and additional reports as appropriate, including an update to the Multiyear Budget Plan presented with the Preliminary and Final Budgets as necessary and practicable, and a report on the budget outlook for the coming fiscal year prior to May 31 each year; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Multiyear Budgeting Plan shall include:

1. Summary level information for two years of projected revenues and expenditures beyond the budget year, as well as identification of projected annual operating deficits/surpluses and anticipated changes in fund balances/reserves,
2. Current and prior year budget estimates, historical data from the previous 5 years, and
3. A description of the Plan's assumptions and criteria; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Multiyear Budget Plan will be assembled within the context of the Town of Bethlehem's Fund Balance Policy, will note anticipated deviations from the Policy, and will serve as the planning mechanism required under that Policy to replenish budgetary reserves over a three-year period should actual fund balances ever decline below the levels specified within that Policy.