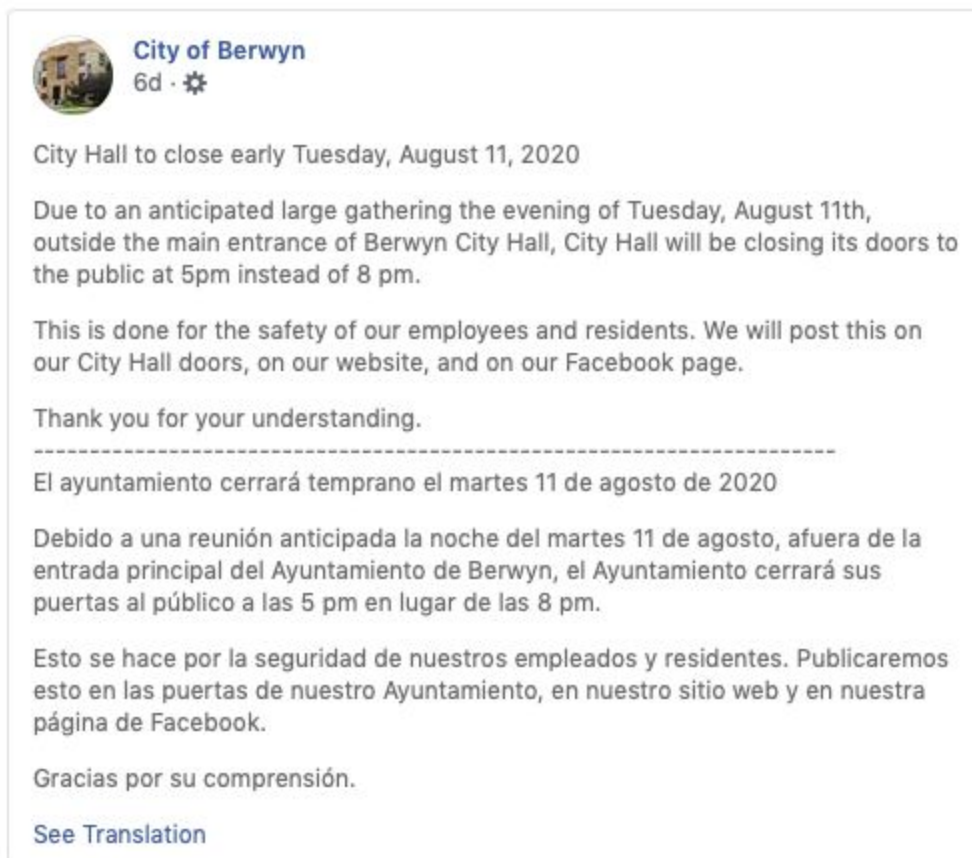


## STATEMENT FROM THE ORGANIZERS OF BLACK LIVES MATTER IN BERWYN RALLY

We, the organizers of August 11th's Black Lives Matter in Berwyn Rally would like to thank our fellow Berwyn residents for their support. We were thrilled at the turnout and the energy and the near-uniform warmth shown for our community's event.

Sadly, the City of Berwyn government and the Berwyn Police Force overwhelmingly greeted our peaceful, joyous, family-filled rally with a mix of apathy and intimidation, outlined below:

1. **Though claiming support for the event as a celebration, the city's only public notice for the event was a notice of City Hall's closure for "The safety of our employees and residents."**



The clear implications are:

- a. That a rally supporting Black lives is inherently unsafe because Black community members are at the center of the rally.
- b. That people attending the Rally are fundamentally dangerous because they support Black lives

This message continues the criminalization of Black people and those who support them and their right to protest anti-Blackness. We reject both implications, and the reality of

the Rally supports our claims. We celebrate the diverse, community-centered, and pro-Black event we enjoyed with our Berwyn neighbors.

2. **We are disappointed that so few elected officials, though entering City Hall for a council meeting, bothered to join, engage, or even hear our speakers.**

We applaud and thank Alderperson Reardon, Clerk Paul and School Board and Park District Board members who attended all or parts of our Rally. Your support is meaningful and significant at a time when Black residents feel unsafe and unwelcome in our town. The fact that Mayor Lovero and Alderpersons Lennon, Nowak, Fejt, Ruiz, and Santoy attended the meeting at City Hall with not so much as a hello to the crowd speaks loudly of their attitudes toward Black lives.

3. **The Berwyn Police Department's militarized, surveillance-state tactics toward the Rally illustrates the Department's hostility toward Black lives in Berwyn.**

While some speakers recounted trauma caused or abetted by the Berwyn Police Department—including the support of roving bands of vigilantes on June 1—members of the Berwyn Police Department armed with rifles, and taking photos, peered down from sniper positions from the roof of City Hall, and buildings across 26th Street. In the absence of communication with the organizers, rally attendees and neighbors about known threats or specific concerns, their stance was aggressive, hostile and further supports the notion that Black Berwyn residents are dangerous. These tactics of fear and intimidation unequivocally show that Black lives, and the lives of those who show up for Black lives, do not matter.

#### **Text for Call-to-Action on Posts:**

Please join us at Berwyn City Hall for the meeting of the City Council on Tuesday August 25th at 8pm, to speak at public forum and demand answers to these questions:

1. Who notified Berwyn PD or City of this alleged threat?
2. Was this threat specific to Berwyn and/or this rally?
3. If there was a specific, credible threat that justified this extreme police presence, why was there no official communication with rally attendees or residents regarding this threat?

4. What was or will be done with the photographs of rally attendees that were taken by multiple officers on the City Hall roof?

If you are not able to attend the City Council meeting in person, but would like to support us in our request for answers to these questions, please send an email to be read at open forum showing your support.

Email: City Clerk, Marge Paul, [MPaul@ci.berwyn.il.us](mailto:MPaul@ci.berwyn.il.us)

Subject: Please read at Open Forum, City Council Meeting 8-25-2020