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SCRANTON CITY COUNCIL MEETING

HELD:

Thursday, May 11th, 2017

LOCATION:

Council Chambers
Scranton City Hall
340 North Washington Avenue
Scranton, Pennsylvania

MARIA McCOOL, RPR
OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER

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(Pledge of Allegiance.)

MR. WECHSLER: Please remain standing for a moment of silent reflection for our service men and women throughout the world and also for those who have passed away in our community.

(Moment of Silence.)

MR. WECHSLER: Thank you. Roll call, please.

MS. CARRERA: Mr. Perry.

MR. PERRY: Here.

MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

MR. ROGAN: Here.

MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

MR. EVANS: Here.

MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

MR. GAUGHAN: Here.

MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

MR. WECHSLER: Here. Dispense of the reading of the minutes.

MS. REED: THIRD ORDER. 3A.

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETINGS OF THE MEMBERS

1 OF THE SCRANTON HOUSING AUTHORITY HELD MARCH 6
2 AND APRIL 3, 2017.

3 MR. WECHSLER: Are there any
4 comments? If not, received and filed.

5 MS. REED: 3B. CHECK RECEIVED MAY 9,
6 2017 FROM COMCAST IN THE AMOUNT OF
7 \$269,436.72 FOR QUARTERLY FRANCHISE FEE
8 PAYMENT.

9 MR. WECHSLER: Are there any
10 comments? If not, received and filed.

11 MS. REED: 3C MINUTES OF THE REGULAR
12 MEETING OF THE LACKAWANNA COUNTY LAND BANK
13 HELD APRIL 13, 2017.

14 MR. WECHSLER: Are there any
15 comments? If not, received and filed. Do any
16 council members have announcements at this
17 time?

18 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, I have one. The
19 Armed Services Day Parade to support our
20 veterans will be held in downtown Scranton, May
21 20th, 11 a.m., to support the Army, Navy, Air
22 Force, Marines, and Coast Guard veterans.

23 It begins at Vine Street and Penn
24 Avenue, continues to the courthouse and all are
25 welcome. Colts bus will be running free all

1 day. And we just urge everyone to get out and
2 support or veterans on that day. Thank you.

3 MR. EVANS: I have another.
4 Riverfest 2017 is postponed one week because of
5 predicted dreary weather and high river levels.
6 The Annual Festival hosted by the Lackawanna
7 River Conservation Association was to be held
8 Saturday. But it is rescheduled to Saturday,
9 May 20th said Association Director.

10 Association postponed the festival
11 because of an all day raining forecast for
12 Lackawanna County as well as a danger of high
13 river -- the high river poses for paddlers.
14 That's all I have.

15 MR. WECHSLER: The ribbon cutting
16 ceremonies for the opening of the Rockwell
17 Avenue Bridge in North Scranton is scheduled
18 for tomorrow, Friday, May 12th, 9 a.m. All
19 are welcome to attend.

20 On Tuesday, May 16th, City Hall will
21 be closed for Election Day. The DPW will be
22 working. Garbage and recycle containers will
23 be on regular schedule next week.

24 The pave-cut inspector John Hazzouri
25 reports that the restoration work currently

1 being done on Cedar Avenue will be completed
2 tomorrow. And then they will move to East
3 Locust Street to restore the full block.
4 Within the next few weeks, PennDOT will pave
5 all of Cedar Avenue from Lackawanna Avenue to
6 Minooka.

7 And I also would like to thank
8 Mr. Hazzouri for assisting and getting the
9 repair done on Dale Avenue for UGI.

10 MS. REED: FOURTH ORDER. CITIZEN'S
11 PARTICIPATION.

12 MR. WECHSLER: Fay Franus.

13 MS. FRANUS: Fay Franus, Scranton.
14 I would like to start off by saying that I
15 understand you, Mr. Wechsler, and you,
16 Mr. Rogan, had nothing to do with the ads by
17 Pennsylvania Association of Realtors. But that
18 doesn't absolve your responsibility in my
19 opinion.

20 Now, to start with, the Pennsylvania
21 Association of Realtors is trying to influence
22 the election in our city government on May
23 16th. How are they doing this? They are doing
24 this by sending out multiple ads for Mr.
25 Wechsler and Mr. Rogan and other candidates

1 with falsehoods in them, statements that are
2 not true.

3 And the people have no way of
4 knowing this. I have to wonder what their
5 incentive is to help Mr. Wechsler and Mr. Rogan
6 and anybody else.

7 I know Mr. Rogan and Mr. Evans are
8 realtors. This realty transfer tax might have
9 helped them a little bit. And I don't think
10 that you, Mr. Rogan, or you, Mr. Evans, should
11 have voted for that because it's a conflict of
12 interest because it's helping your businesses.

13 Now, the first ad, Mr. Rogan, from
14 the Pennsylvania Association of Realtors
15 states: Mr. Rogan says Pat voted against the
16 hike in your trash fees. But that's an out and
17 out lie because Mr. Rogan in October -- I'm
18 sorry, December of 2013, he alone, no other
19 councilman ever in any -- not to the councils
20 before or the council since, he voted,
21 Mr. Rogan did to raise the garbage fee from
22 \$176 to \$300.

23 MR. ROGAN: That's not correct.

24 MS. FRANUS: Where is it wrong?

25 MR. ROGAN: I voted against the

1 increase.

2 MS. FRANUS: No, I beg to differ,
3 Mr. Rogan. You were the one that pushed it
4 through. Mrs. Evans and Mr. Joyce voted
5 against it.

6 MR. ROGAN: That's not accurate.
7 The garbage fee was increased I believe one or
8 two years prior to the year you're speaking
9 about. And I did vote against the increase.

10 MS. FRANUS: I don't believe it. I
11 just don't believe that. In the last three
12 years you voted for the garbage fee in the
13 budget. Now, mister -- oh, another thing, as
14 far as taxes, Mr. Rogan, you, and you alone,
15 nobody else on this council has raised taxes
16 86 percent. 86 percent.

17 You alone did this. Something not
18 to be too proud of considering you are the only
19 person on City Council that's raised taxes as
20 much as you have.

21 Now, Mr. Wechsler, in the ad that
22 they put out for you, your name and picture is
23 all over it on both sides saying that you were
24 working to help -- to look out for your
25 prescription drug claims in Scranton ensuring;

1 you're not overpaying for the medication you
2 need.

3 Now that implies you're helping in
4 the City of Scranton. And you know that's not
5 true. You could only do that for the employees
6 in Scranton. So this is very --

7 MR. WECHSLER: I did address that.
8 I don't agree with that statement either. I
9 did address it with them.

10 MS. FRANUS: Pardon me?

11 MR. WECHSLER: I did address it with
12 the realtors.

13 MS. FRANUS: You did address it?

14 MR. WECHSLER: When that flier came
15 out I called the realtors and I expressed my
16 displeasure. But I had nothing -- as you said,
17 we had nothing to do with what's in there.

18 MS. FRANUS: I know that. So now
19 another thing. This is how I feel. And I'm
20 going to read this because this is very true.
21 If, Mr. Wechsler and Mr. Rogan, if you had any
22 integrity, honesty, or conscience, you would
23 demand, demand that the Pennsylvania
24 Association of Realtors take out an ad in the
25 Scranton Times printing corrections before

1 Election Day May 16th on Tuesday.

2 You have that responsibility to us,
3 the people. And if you fail to do so or you
4 fail to correct those lies, it's -- you do not
5 deserve to be sitting on Council. You do not
6 deserve to be re-elected. And shame on you if
7 you don't do this.

8 Now, don't you agree that you should
9 demand a retraction from the Pennsylvania
10 Association of Realtors before next week?
11 Because, I mean, all of these people that are
12 getting these ads with deliberate lies in them
13 are not going to know the truth because these
14 realtors associations are spreading lies like
15 crazy. And it's not right.

16 So on May 16th, I hope the people
17 realize what the both of you are like and don't
18 vote for you ever. Now, I would like Mr.
19 Wechsler to ask Mr. Minora for me if there is
20 any law that he knows of that gives Jason
21 Shrive, the Sewer Authority Manager, the right
22 to retract those things on those invoices from
23 the lawyers. He's the lawyer for the City.
24 Would you please ask that question?

25 MR. WECHSLER: I'll ask him.

1 Mr. Shrive is the Director. I believe he has
2 the authority to do --

3 MS. FRANUS: He's a lawyer. He
4 should know the answer to that.

5 ATTY. MINORA: Well, you're asking
6 me what Shrive -- Attorney Shrive's position
7 is?

8 MR. WECHSLER: No, what authority
9 allows him to submit the letters with the
10 redactions in them.

11 ATTY. MINORA: Attorney/client
12 privilege, attorney/client privilege.

13 MS. FRANUS: We're the clients, the
14 people.

15 ATTY. MINORA: Sewer Authority is
16 the client.

17 MS. FRANUS: The Sewer Authority is
18 not the client. We, the people are.

19 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you. Joan
20 Hodowanitz. Mr. Kays, you're -- actually
21 you're not on the sign-in list. So you will
22 have to wait. There will be a period for you
23 to speak after Mr. Morgan.

24 MS. HODOWANITZ: Joan Hodowanitz,
25 city resident and taxpayer. Fifty more days to

1 June 30th, the deadline for the City's audit.
2 And speaking of audits, the Sewer Authority
3 published in the paper in the legal section
4 request for proposals for its audit.

5 And the audits -- the bids will be
6 opened here in City Hall on May 19th, Friday at
7 10 a.m. That same day at 4 p.m., in the
8 Governor's room will be the next Sewer
9 Authority meeting. And I hope a lot of people
10 attend because I would like to hear what the
11 Authority will say about whether or not they're
12 going to ask the AG to perform an audit.

13 And if they don't want to do that, I
14 would like to know why. And hopefully we'll
15 get an answer and they won't dodge the
16 question. Five days to the Primary Election.
17 I hope everybody turns out to vote. Anyone who
18 is not pleased with the candidates running can
19 always write in a name.

20 But the best thing that could ever
21 happen to us is if we get as close to 100
22 electoral turnout. And that will certainly
23 send a message to everybody who is running or
24 would like to run. And that includes people
25 running for the school board.

1 Even though the school board is a
2 separate entity, it's one city. And that
3 election is going to affect us greatly because
4 remember, they are slowly swirling down the
5 drain. On one hand, the City trying to get out
6 of distressed status. And on the other hand,
7 the school district is about to pull us
8 underneath the waves. So everybody go out and
9 vote.

10 One hundred eighty days to the
11 general election. And hopefully by then we
12 will have the Arcadis study telling us where we
13 stand on storm water management. And it's been
14 six weeks since you approved the Knowles
15 Insurance list. Has that been scrubbed and
16 ready for release to the public?

17 MR. EVANS: We're about a week away.
18 He told me last week it would be ready in two
19 weeks so --

20 MS. HODOWANITZ: Okay, I will make a
21 note of it. Next Wednesday, May 17th is the
22 next Pension Board meeting. And speaking of
23 the pensions, on May 19th here in Council
24 Chambers at 10 a.m., same time that they're
25 opening the bids for the RFP for the Sewer

1 Authority's audit, they will be opening up the
2 bids for the RFP for the third party
3 administrator.

4 And if anybody can explain to me
5 during fifth motion how they advertise for
6 nationally recognized third party
7 administrator, I would be grateful. Again, the
8 City's website, the RFP page is incomplete.
9 There is only one page on the rental
10 registration and the RFP for the third party
11 administrator was never post to the website.

12 And on the Controller's web page, we
13 have only the report from March. All of the
14 reports were deleted. I don't know why.
15 During fifth motion, I hope you will discuss
16 the Nay Aug tree house disaster. I suspect
17 that no one has an idea yet how much repairs
18 will cost if the situation is repairable.

19 But if it comes forward to the
20 Council as a resolution for funding, I hope you
21 demand a full accounting of what the cost
22 entails.

23 MR. PERRY: I talked to Mr. Fallon
24 from Parks and Rec today to see if he had any
25 new information about any expectations of

1 quotes or when work will be started and
2 completed. And at that time he didn't have
3 anything. I'll do a followup.

4 MS. HODOWANITZ: I think it's
5 premature to get a cost estimate. But should
6 it come as a funding issue, let's just not
7 rubber stamp it through. Let's get some
8 questions answered before you approve it. And
9 during motions if you could explain whether or
10 not we've got any reassessment data from the
11 county and if it's of any use to us.

12 And Item 5B, the National Resource
13 Network we're in phase two of the downtown
14 revitalization implementation and school
15 budgeting. The MOU that was on the website
16 does not fully explain the role that the school
17 district is playing in downtown revitalization.

18 I don't understand how the school
19 district got sucked into this to begin with.
20 Although I appreciate that they're going to
21 have to kick up \$10,000. But if somebody could
22 explain, I understand, you know, the City's
23 interest in downtown revitalization.

24 But what's going on with the school
25 district for this particular project? The only

1 thing that they got downtown right now is the
2 School Administration Building. Thank you.

3 MR. WECHSLER: Ann Robinson.

4 MS. ROBINSON: Ann Robinson,
5 Scranton homeowner and taxpayer.

6 Mr. President, City Council members, good
7 evening. Just as a refresher, I did address
8 you on March 2nd, 2017, concerning the vacant
9 lot next to my property and the residents of
10 this property, mainly the snakes.

11 May I present some pictures to City
12 Council? I had the lot cleared. So please
13 refer to the before and after pictures. The
14 pictures do speak for themselves. It's almost
15 like a breath of fresh air. The low grass and
16 the cool wet temperatures that we have been
17 having have been a deterrent for the snakes.

18 But the grass is already getting
19 high and the snakes will appear. And my budget
20 cannot afford for me to do this in a timely
21 manner. If this lot is a situation of taxpayer
22 ownership, then the owner is responsible. If
23 this lot is on the City's list of abandoned
24 properties, then it is the City's
25 responsibility.

1 Unfortunately no one wants to look
2 at this concern. The block where I live has a
3 few more lots in this similar situation. So I
4 could only imagine how many snakes we have.
5 And just a reminder, there are parents walking
6 their children to Willard School. And there
7 are students going to West Middle and West
8 High.

9 When the house on this property was
10 demolished, we did have an exterminator. He
11 did identify the snakes. They were rattlers.
12 We also had raccoons and possums and
13 woodchucks. And just as a side note, we still
14 have the raccoons. I had one on my deck last
15 night and Sunday after mass.

16 My next project is going to be to
17 identify this type of snake that we do have
18 here. I do have a kennel in my yard for my
19 animals. And one of my animals is vision
20 impaired. So I need to know which type of
21 snake I'm looking at in case of a snake bite.
22 I will certainly keep you up-to-date on it.
23 And thank you for your time.

24 MR. WECHSLER: Ma'am, would you like
25 your pictures back or do you want us to keep

1 them?

2 MS. ROBINSON: You certainly can
3 keep them. I do have others of the snakes. I
4 will save them for next time.

5 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you. David
6 Wilson.

7 MR. WILSON: Hello, gentlemen.
8 David Wilson, Scranton. I would like to tell
9 you about a problem I've been helping with the
10 City for the past five years and nobody knows
11 about because nobody could see it. I adopted
12 the Leggetts Creek area kind out of a way to
13 get out of the house.

14 I moved back five and a half years
15 ago from Alaska and to help my parents. I was
16 only taking a year off and that was five and a
17 half years ago. And the reason I came back to
18 help because we learned that my mom had
19 Alzheimers.

20 So I'm a caregiver in the home. And
21 I had to get creative on how to get out of the
22 house and do things. And I started scrapping,
23 you know, metals and I kind of walk around and
24 look at different places. And there's lot of
25 accidents in the Notch.

1 So I was seeing lots of metal parts
2 down over the bank. As I looked into the creek
3 bed that used to be a sewer complex down there
4 probably 50, 80 years ago. And what they did
5 was, when they made the new sewers, they just
6 cut off the old pipes. They let them lay in
7 the creek bed. And the creek was bleeding
8 orange.

9 So I started cracking them up and
10 moving them out of there. I have been working
11 on that project for over five years. Two
12 months ago when I found out we had the great
13 Pennsylvania cleanup started, I got all excited
14 and I called to register and the lady said that
15 she would not allow me to register for that
16 area because it was too dangerous.

17 And I said I've already been there
18 for five years. I know that area better than
19 anybody. But no body else could see it until
20 this year. So what happened is, somewhere
21 along the way last year, all the trees and
22 brush were cut on the side of the hill. And
23 it's caving in.

24 You're losing the dirt and the bank
25 right off the side of the highway coming down

1 into Scranton from Clarks Summit. It's just
2 caving in. Some of the pipes actually fell
3 down, some of the old pipes. And one day I
4 went down and saw they used to connect those
5 pipes with lead rings.

6 One of those lead rings was just
7 laying on a rock in the creek bed. So you had
8 all the iron in the creek. You had the lead
9 there. I also found toxic stuff that the
10 railroad has thrown over the bank. And I have
11 pictures.

12 I have pictures of everything that
13 I've done down there. I got a picture of a
14 container that has the railroad marked on it.
15 And I picked it up and it had a tarp in it.
16 And I pulled the tarp out. And inside the tarp
17 was a rag with some chemicals in it that made
18 me sick for about three days.

19 I had no idea what it was. But the
20 railroad company's name was right on the
21 bucket. And then there's a bunch of other
22 pails that are all similar. And I had them all
23 lined up and took pictures of them.

24 So I wanted you folks to know that,
25 you know, they need to be better stewards of --

1 it's an area that nobody can see. And the
2 reason why there is so much garbage -- I took
3 over 60 bags of garbage out of there in the
4 past month and a half. I took an old sewer
5 pipe out of there that was right off the
6 pull-off by the Market Street -- before the
7 Market Street exit where you could tell years
8 ago some sewer company used to back up in
9 there, hook it up and just release their tanks
10 down into the creek bed.

11 I pulled that out and cut it off and
12 then some other samaritans and people that
13 helped me picked up all of that garbage. But
14 I'm going to continue doing that. I'm just
15 trying to help solve a problem and let you know
16 it's just an area that nobody can see.

17 Nobody can see and that's why people
18 throw garbage out. And the things they throw
19 over those banks are incredible. When there's
20 accidents, all the parts get pushed over the
21 bank down into the creek. Nobody comes and
22 cleans it up. They just get pushed over the
23 bank into the creek.

24 There's still lots of pipes and
25 things I'm kind of working on. But it is not

1 an area for the faint of heart. But somebody
2 should be patrolling it. I recommend somebody
3 take a look at that down in there because it's
4 just getting -- in just five years basically
5 since last year, what's happened to that side
6 of that bank and that road is incredible.

7 And what the railroad, what they're
8 throwing over the bank from the top side is
9 really not good, not good stewardship. So I'm
10 going to keep doing what I do. I just wanted
11 you folks to know what's going on.

12 MR. GAUGHAN: Can you leave your
13 name and number with Cathy and I'll be in touch
14 with you? Okay. Thank you.

15 MR. WILSON: Thank you.

16 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you for all of
17 your hard work.

18 MR. WILSON: Thank you, folks.

19 MR. WECHSLER: John Foley.

20 MR. FOLEY: Gentlemen, first let me
21 thank you for your service for what you've done
22 and what you will do. I will tell you the job
23 that you have I would never want. It would
24 bore me to tears.

25 MR. WECHSLER: Oh, it's not boring,

1 Mr. Foley.

2 MR. FOLEY: But with that said, I've
3 had an opportunity look at some records but not
4 all. I looked at the SA purchasing agreement.
5 I looked at the information -- financial
6 information provided by the Authority to City
7 Council. And my observations are based on
8 that.

9 I have not had an opportunity as of
10 yet to interview people at the Sewer Authority.
11 But I'm looking to. But let's talk about some
12 of the interesting things. The financial
13 information was given to us was incomplete.
14 Incomplete in that -- and I can't tell you
15 whether it was out of design -- but I know it
16 would have been helpful to have the financial
17 information for the months of April, May, and
18 June, 2015.

19 I was able to work around it. But
20 it would helpful to have that and I requested
21 from the Authority. I look at the information
22 in total through the December 31st and I say to
23 myself, the information has to be incomplete.
24 And I say that because I looked at the payroll
25 for the month of December, December of 2016 of

1 the Sewer Authority.

2 And there is \$356,000. There's an
3 accrual on the books for 149,000, which I take
4 it part of that 356. But the thing that caught
5 my attention that in December, 2016, the
6 Authority opened a postclosing payroll account.

7 And at year end there's 1.1 million
8 dollars on it. It wasn't there in November of
9 '16 or any time prior. This is opened in
10 December. So it seemed that accruals -- maybe
11 it's bonuses paid to individuals after year
12 end. But frankly they should have accrued it.

13 That leads me to believe that you
14 did not get complete information. I will be
15 sending a right to know request into the
16 Authority. And I'll deal with right to know
17 requests later. It leads me to believe you
18 guys didn't get the whole story. You need to
19 get it.

20 Now, some of the other pieces of
21 information I did have an opportunity to take a
22 look at, they provided some fixed asset
23 information. And the thing that caught my
24 attention was not the balances at year end.
25 That's typically what the bean counter

1 accountants look for but the forensic guys
2 look to what happened on a month to month
3 basis.

4 And then when I looked at it, I saw
5 that between the closing date or the date that
6 it was determined on the purchase price to the
7 closing date the Authority spent 15 million
8 dollars. It appears that the documents -- not
9 appears, the documents did not address what
10 would happen for significant increases.

11 They're saying that the purchases of
12 property planted equipment for the two years
13 ending '15 and '16 are nowhere near what you
14 pay -- and '16 being through March 31st, '16,
15 that there was an acceleration. And the things
16 that really bother me, I looked at the
17 vehicles.

18 The vehicles went with the deal. I
19 looked at I think it's Section 202 small one.
20 It indicated that there was going to be a
21 retention of vehicles. That was in the asset
22 or SA purchase agreement dated March 28, 29,
23 2016. But in September, '16, they bought
24 vehicles for \$63,000. So that means a couple
25 months before.

1 The sewer plant and everything that
2 goes with it was turned over to American Water.
3 Somebody spent \$63,000 on vehicles. Maybe it's
4 right. I can't tell you. But I can tell you
5 one thing, that in December, 2016, they spent
6 230-some thousand dollars on vehicles the same
7 month that the sewer plant was being sold.

8 I will come back because some of
9 these things I believe have significance. I'll
10 deal with the last thing. Thank you very much
11 for considering that you will use or you ask
12 the Auditor General to jump in. I know those
13 guys. I respect their work.

14 I'm glad to see cooperation with
15 Dunmore. They jumped in. I think you probably
16 should have asked for the Attorney General's
17 Office to jump into this thing or my all time
18 favorite the Department of Justice. But we can
19 deal with some of those matters at future
20 meetings.

21 Oh, one last thing. I finally found
22 a lawyer -- a City lawyer that I think is doing
23 an outstanding job, Joe Price. Congratulations
24 for the hire.

25 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you. Bill

1 Jackowitz.

2 MR. JACKOWITZ: Good evening,
3 Scranton City Council, Cathy, Council
4 Stenographer, Lori, and Amil, good evening.
5 Well, I see another group jumped into the
6 Scranton Sewer Authority. I seen the Office of
7 Open Records is now involved in this.

8 But then again right off the bat
9 they screwed up by allowing the Sewer Authority
10 an extended extension. I mean, they should
11 have demanded answers immediately and get them
12 while they are still hot on the press because
13 this is still brand new to all of us. So I
14 hope them better luck than City Council and
15 everybody else has had with the administration
16 and with the Sewer Authority.

17 I hope they get some answers and
18 some proper answers. Sounds like Mr. Foley
19 here is doing a lot of work that should have
20 been done by City Council prior to their four
21 to one vote in approving the sale of the
22 Scranton Sewer Authority.

23 It seems to me like a lot of this
24 stuff was being put in place well in advance of
25 the actual sale. And if a good investigation

1 had been done prior to this, maybe the vote
2 would have been different from four to one.
3 Maybe it would have been one to four. And the
4 Sewer Authority sale would have been delayed
5 for a period of time.

6 But again, it's Scranton. What more
7 can I say? The City is in dire needs and dire
8 straits. It's been in dire needs and dire
9 straits for quite some time now. I'm really
10 surprised that it's hung on for as long as it
11 has. I hope it to hang on for at least five or
12 ten more years. But I don't know.

13 I kind of have my doubts with the
14 school board having their problems and the City
15 having their problem and the Authority having
16 their problems and everybody else having their
17 problems. And I'm not sure how much longer the
18 City can survive this. Question, the Sewer
19 Authority Board, who appointed them?

20 MR. GAUGHAN: The Mayor.

21 MR. EVANS: The Mayor.

22 MR. JACKOWITZ: I know the Mayor,
23 but which one?

24 MR. WECHSLER: Mayor Courtright for
25 the most part.

1 MR. JACKOWITZ: Mayor Courtright
2 appointed to the Sewer Authority Board.

3 MR. WECHSLER: For the most part.

4 MR. JACKOWITZ: For the most part.
5 Okay. I was just wondering who, you know, who
6 did. It makes sense now that his appointees
7 naturally vote the way he wants them to vote.
8 And --

9 MR. WECHSLER: Actually the sale was
10 started under the prior board. The Sewer
11 Authority started the sale under the board that
12 had been appointed for the most part by Mayor
13 Dougherty.

14 MR. JACKOWITZ: So the actual sale
15 for the Sewer Authority actually started three
16 years ago, two years ago.

17 MR. WECHSLER: It started two years
18 ago, yeah.

19 MR. JACKOWITZ: It started two years
20 ago.

21 MR. WECHSLER: Yes.

22 MR. JACKOWITZ: So you mean we've
23 had two years of advanced notice of this sale
24 and everything is screwed up like it is.

25 MR. WECHSLER: First they planned to

1 lease it. Then they planned to sell it. So
2 this has been going on for a while, yes, by the
3 Authority.

4 MR. JACKOWITZ: By the Authority. I
5 understand that. I understand that City
6 Council had no deal with the sale of the Sewer
7 Authority except for the vote that they took to
8 authorize the sale.

9 MR. WECHSLER: That vote was to
10 allow money to come in --

11 MR. JACKOWITZ: That's the only part
12 that City Council had in that. I understand
13 that.

14 MR. WECHSLER: And that was to allow
15 the money to come into the City. If that vote
16 wasn't taken, the money would be out with the
17 Sewer Authority. So that's why that vote had
18 to be taken.

19 MR. JACKOWITZ: But we have been
20 planning the sale for two years. How come
21 there was so many mistakes made? I mean, 14
22 million dollars I believe it is a shortfall.

23 MR. WECHSLER: The Sewer Authority
24 negotiated the deal.

25 MR. JACKOWITZ: I understand that.

1 But I'm just saying, you know, if we had -- if
2 they were negotiating this two years, how do
3 they have so many mistakes? How can so many
4 mistakes happen unless you have incompetent
5 people running the show, which might be the
6 problem, you know.

7 MR. WECHSLER: Their meeting is on
8 the 19th if you would like to ask them.

9 MR. JACKOWITZ: It's a waste of time
10 going there, you know, it really is. But
11 again, it just amazes me how everything that
12 Scranton seems to do, you got the problem with
13 parking garages. That's going to end up biting
14 us in the rear end by the time everything is
15 over with it.

16 We got problems with the mall. That
17 is going to bite us also. And we got the Sewer
18 Authority. You know the Sewer Authority deal
19 is not going to go away.

20 People are not going to forget this
21 because every month when they get their water
22 bill, they're going to remember -- they're
23 going to remember who voted for it and who put
24 it into place, who negotiated. Actually, who
25 did negotiate the Sewer Authority sale.

1 MR. WECHSLER: The Sewer Authority.

2 MR. JACKOWITZ: The Sewer Authority.

3 But who negotiated for them? The board didn't
4 do the negotiation.

5 MR. WECHSLER: That's all part of
6 the legal fees. The legal team for the Sewer
7 Authority negotiated the --

8 MR. JACKOWITZ: So the 50 lawyers
9 negotiated the sale.

10 MR. WECHSLER: Parts of it, yes.

11 MR. JACKOWITZ: Okay. That answers
12 a lot of my questions. Thank you.

13 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you.

14 MR. WECHSLER: Lee Morgan.

15 MR. MORGAN: Good evening, Council,
16 Lee Morgan. I'd just like to take the people
17 back here a little while. And I want everybody
18 to remember how entertaining these Council
19 meetings were at one time with Ray Lymun and
20 YouTube and everything.

21 And everybody was just under the
22 opinion that these Council meetings were all
23 just fun and games and nothing mattered. And
24 there were people who came here, you know, some
25 of them are deceased now. They brought very,

1 very important questions forward.

2 They didn't receive any answers
3 then. And people aren't receiving any now. As
4 a matter of fact, I remember I believe when
5 Janet Evans to say, Kay, take a letter and the
6 meatheads in the bars used to have a shot and
7 laugh and joke and drink about it really
8 enjoyed the hell out of themselves.

9 And I guess they are probably
10 thinking a little different now. And there is
11 really nothing left of our City. It's just a
12 complete wasteland and a slum for the most
13 part.

14 As a matter of fact, today I had the
15 day off from work. And I had a gentleman who
16 lives on East Mountain. He told me that if
17 somebody came up to him and offered him \$40,000
18 for his property, he would leave. He said he
19 might even take 37 or 35,000 just to get out of
20 here.

21 That is a very troubling thing. And
22 then like Fay said, you know, people are coming
23 here trying to influence the election. And I
24 just -- the message I have for the people in
25 this City to be very honest is write -- the

1 Republicans have this opportunity more than
2 anybody else.

3 Write somebody's name in the ballot
4 that you -- a neighbor, somebody that lives in
5 your community you have some kind of faith in
6 that can't be bought and sold like a commodity
7 that won't sell you out. And write their name
8 in no matter who they are and hope they get the
9 100 votes and they could survive and run in the
10 general election.

11 Or somebody's going to have to do a
12 write-in because the things that have happened
13 in our government for a quarter century, I have
14 to ask what our State Senator and what our
15 State Representatives have done to make this
16 City government function in a way that would
17 serve the people because we've had Council
18 members, nothing personal against the Council
19 members.

20 But they were never intelligent
21 enough to do the jobs they had. And the
22 council that voted the sale of the Sewer
23 Authority's assets is beyond ridiculous because
24 they couldn't even understand what they were
25 reading. And it's not a personal shot at you.

1 And, you know, the people who are on
2 the Sewer Authority Board that were political
3 and voted the way they were told, I don't think
4 the Scranton residents understand exactly
5 what's going to happen in the next couple years
6 because none of the pension problems have been
7 addressed, neither are any of the problems as
8 far as revenue in the City is concerned have
9 been addressed.

10 The Waste Water Management Plan
11 hasn't been addressed. I asked this Council
12 last week if they were willing to petition the
13 PUC to come in and readjust Pennsylvania
14 American Water's rates because they gave away
15 the storm water collection system money with
16 the sale of the Authority.

17 Not one person was willing really to
18 jump in there and write a letter. So my point
19 is, who do you really represent because you're
20 not doing anything for the residents of this
21 City. And, you know, when you look at the
22 Novembrino Pool Project that's going to take
23 place, I don't know, does the City really need
24 a splash park?

25 Or do we really need somebody to

1 come onto this Council and somebody in the
2 Mayor's office to slash the City's budget by at
3 least 30 percent to begin funding the pensions.
4 And, I mean, my vehicles have been just totally
5 beaten into submission by the potholes and the
6 lack of basic repair work to the City's
7 infrastructure.

8 And how can this Council or this
9 administration justify that? And all the other
10 things like people are talking about the tree
11 house now and tons of other things. Well, you
12 were all celebrating when Mayor Dougherty was
13 Mayor and he was spending money like it didn't
14 matter.

15 And everything we did that was wrong
16 and to be honest with you, nothing personal
17 against Mr. Courtright or this Council, but
18 everything you've gentlemen have done is wrong,
19 selling garages off, doing the deal with the
20 Sewer Authority.

21 It's all wrong. And all the
22 neighborhoods are in complete decline. And
23 people are trying to get out of here. And you
24 know that as well as anybody else. And really
25 what was necessary is to step forward and be a

1 leader and cut the budget. Why? Because the
2 people are out of money. And you should be
3 serving them.

4 But that's not what's happening
5 here. And that's not what's happening across
6 this country. And we can only fool ourselves
7 for so long. But you know what? Whether I
8 support or don't support Mr. Barletta, he said
9 it right last week when he said reform in the
10 healthcare system is necessary because the
11 federal government's having a hard time meeting
12 its obligation of payments.

13 Although you shouldn't do it on the
14 backs of healthcare and on the people in this
15 county but then the people if this country have
16 been sleepwalking for 50 years and they are
17 putting themselves to sleep. Thank you. Write
18 somebody in for City Council and do yourself a
19 favor, somebody who represents you.

20 MR. WECHSLER: Anyone else?

21 MS. SCHUMACHER: Good evening, Marie
22 Schumacher. I'd like to note that I believe
23 Monday was the first anniversary of the letter
24 I wrote to Mayor Courtright asking questions on
25 the Sewer Authority. That's been followed up

1 both by phone and in person many times. And I
2 still do not have a response.

3 That is the same Mayor who promised
4 when he was debating Jim Mulligan that he would
5 be very transparent and everybody could just no
6 problem coming to see him just all you had to
7 do was walk on in the door. Not true.

8 So that leads into the fact that
9 next Tuesday is the election. This is the last
10 Council meeting. I hope that people have been
11 watching. I hope they've been reading the
12 paper. I hope they've been listening. And
13 most of all, I hope they leave their homes and
14 vote.

15 Leaving the results of the election
16 to a few is not really a very good idea. And I
17 do hope everyone will get out and vote who is
18 eligible. Now, the first item on my -- I did
19 not get to look at the agenda this week prior
20 to but there is only one.

21 But it ties in with my first
22 question, which is, did the City use Scranton
23 Sewer Authority proceeds to fund the City's
24 share of funding for the National Resource
25 Network?

1 MR. EVANS: Not that I'm aware of.

2 MS. SCHUMACHER: Where did \$500,000
3 come from then?

4 MR. EVANS: Well, that was -- no,
5 this is just for the study. We're talking
6 about phase two here is going to cost us
7 \$12,500. That 500,000 I think is a promissory
8 that is built into the Sewer Authority
9 proceeds.

10 MS. SCHUMACHER: But if we do this,
11 are we not obligated to continue with the next
12 phase? I mean, why spend 12,000 if you're not
13 going to go for the 500,000?

14 MR. EVANS: Well, that is built into
15 the Sewer Authority proceeds. You're correct.
16 But that has not been spent yet.

17 MS. SCHUMACHER: I hope you don't
18 spend any. What about the firehouse next door
19 that was -- I believe was -- Mr. Bulzoni said
20 he thought the Sewer Authority proceeds were a
21 good place to fund that. Has that -- is that
22 what paid for the --

23 MR. WECHSLER: I think we're still
24 waiting for the third party administrator.
25 That all ties together before the money starts

1 entering the system.

2 MS. SCHUMACHER: No. The work has
3 been done.

4 MR. EVANS: The work is being done
5 now.

6 MR. WECHSLER: That is the
7 emergency work plan.

8 MS. SCHUMACHER: Where's it going
9 to --

10 MR. WECHSLER: The Capital
11 Improvement Program, I believe the sewer
12 proceed sales. They're waiting for everything
13 to get all settled with the pensions.

14 MS. SCHUMACHER: That's where it's
15 coming from. And you're all in agreement. So
16 you're allowing money to be spent before the
17 trust agreement is before you.

18 MR. WECHSLER: No money has been
19 that I'm aware of.

20 MS. SCHUMACHER: Well, you've done
21 the work. Would you rather be sued?

22 MR. WECHSLER: Well, the work has to
23 be done.

24 MS. SCHUMACHER: It's been done.

25 MR. WECHSLER: It's emergency repair

1 over there.

2 MS. SCHUMACHER: But it's still
3 where it's going to get paid from. So I don't
4 think you should -- I think this should be
5 tabled until you get that trust agreement and
6 this gets back to what Mr. Bolus said something
7 I do agree with him on is that's where you have
8 your power.

9 If you don't vote on all of these
10 things and bring them forward until you get the
11 information you want and we want, then this
12 place will come to a standstill or maybe people
13 would get rational and that actually give us
14 some information. I mean, I'm expecting
15 hundreds of dollars probably worth of redacted
16 information from the Sewer Authority way, way,
17 way overdue.

18 And I'm sure probably most of the
19 money from whatever I have to pay will be used
20 in black felt-tip markers redacted just as it
21 was for the Times. And you people sit there
22 like you're not supporting us. I just don't
23 understand why.

24 MR. WECHSLER: We request the -- the
25 same answers we got you got. So don't say I'm

1 not supporting. We're requesting the same
2 information you are.

3 MS. SCHUMACHER: Moving on, I guess
4 this would be with Mr. Rogan. Back in the last
5 administration, UNC, United Neighborhood were
6 given -- and they've always been given a lot of
7 our federal money. And they were a complex of
8 nice brick structures which I thought were to
9 be sold in the 600 block of the odd side of
10 Cedar Avenue.

11 And strange that one of those
12 apartments, just recently this article in the
13 paper, A Scranton man sold heroin to an
14 informant while holding his baby, the police
15 said. And guess what his address was? 611
16 Cedar Avenue, one of UNC's places that they're
17 leasing that they're renting out or leasing out
18 because I guess they couldn't sell them.

19 I don't know. I would like some
20 information. This is certainly not a
21 low-moderate income person when they could have
22 with the amount of drugs they found in that
23 building.

24 And how is UNC -- I mean, I'm really
25 offended. We have a lot of people that could

1 be helped and could use that money. And if
2 that's what UNC is doing with our federal
3 dollars, then I'll be back next week Lord
4 willing with the rest. Thank you.

5 MR. ROGAN: And on that with UNC, I
6 do think that is something we should look into
7 because they do receive a very large portion of
8 our block grant money. There are a number of
9 programs there that I think have done a good
10 job. But this is one -- I believe some of
11 those properties are actually still listed for
12 sale. So thank you.

13 MR. KAYS: Good afternoon,
14 gentlemen, Christopher Kays, President of the
15 South Scranton Neighborhood Association. What
16 I'm here for tonight is Pennswood Manor, 929
17 Cedar Avenue.

18 I know this has been an ongoing
19 issue for four to five years now. Two previous
20 presidents have brought this to your attention.
21 The problem is, we get keeping getting told
22 that, okay, the final date say this last one
23 was the end of April.

24 Well, Mr. Wechsler was kind enough
25 to inform me this week that they got yet

1 another extension until June. How do they keep
2 getting these extensions? I can't get answers
3 from anybody.

4 MR. WECHSLER: We haven't -- we
5 investigated it. And it seems odd that a lower
6 court could reverse the State Supreme Court.

7 MR. KAYS: That was one of my other
8 questions.

9 MR. WECHSLER: We talked about it in
10 caucus this evening. Our attorney, we don't
11 understand it either.

12 MR. KAYS: Okay. I mean, I'm
13 getting personal complaints directly to me from
14 parents of the students of South Intermediate
15 which is only half a block away from a drug
16 rehab, which there is a resident there who is
17 on the Megan's list. I don't know if you
18 gentlemen are aware of that.

19 But it's a public -- you could see
20 it. He's residing a half a block away from the
21 school. I did talk to Chief Graziano and there
22 are no laws or anything in place, which seems
23 ridiculous to me.

24 And another thing, I don't think
25 it's ever in the past four or five years been

1 zoned properly or licensed properly.

2 MR. EVANS: No, you're correct. I
3 think they lost their zoning appeal for the
4 rehab center and they have been operating
5 illegally ever since.

6 MR. KAYS: Then why does the City
7 not close it down?

8 MR. EVANS: That's what the State
9 Supreme Court said and then they were overruled
10 by a lower court, which again we don't
11 understand. But there is a -- basically the D
12 day right now is June 1st. That's the date
13 we're all looking for at this point.

14 MR. WECHSLER: Yeah, and we've asked
15 Mr. Hinton to begin planning for June the 1st.
16 We're not sure exactly what his authority is.
17 To be honest with you, I'm not sure if he has
18 the authority to remove them or if that is the
19 sheriff or --

20 MR. KAYS: Well, that's what I was
21 told last time that if they weren't out at the
22 end of April that they are physically going to
23 go in there and remove them.

24 MR. WECHSLER: Who? Who should --

25 MR. KAYS: I was told the inspector

1 would do that. But the end of April is past
2 and now they got another extension. This has
3 to be the fifth or sixth extension.

4 MR. WECHSLER: Yeah, I'm not sure.
5 The inspectors are not law enforcement
6 officers. So I don't know. That is what we're
7 trying to determine.

8 MR. PERRY: Yeah, I spoke to
9 Director Hinton as well. And I got the same
10 story. You know, we're all getting on the same
11 page. And my suggestion was, that if they --
12 first, we're all in agreement that I don't
13 understand how a lower court could grant an
14 extension to a Supreme Court's ruling.

15 But with that said, it was done.
16 And it's my opinion that if it was granted
17 once, what's not to say they're already not
18 putting together something for a second
19 extension which would further bring this out.

20 MR. KAYS: It would be more than a
21 second.

22 MR. PERRY: So it's almost like an
23 ongoing, you know, issue that's just, you know,
24 where's the end? The Pennsylvania Supreme
25 Court said you're not supposed to be there.

1 Get out. But yet they're there. And they are
2 getting -- they're getting allowed to stay, you
3 know, 60 days at a time.

4 So I made a suggestion that maybe we
5 should start getting our team together and
6 fight and get ready for this next battle if it
7 does happen because we cannot allow another
8 extension.

9 MR. KAYS: Let's be proactive.

10 MR. PERRY: Right. June 1st is it.
11 June 2nd is over but then to Mr. Wechsler's
12 point is now what's the avenue, what's the
13 vehicle? How do we enforce the Supreme Court's
14 ruling once we make sure that they don't get
15 another extension? And that's kind of where we
16 are now.

17 MR. ROGAN: We discussed this at
18 length in the back room. And I'm very familiar
19 with it, not only from talking to you but from
20 being at this facility five years ago when this
21 battle first started.

22 The frustrating part for us and for
23 you and the neighbors as well is the highest
24 court in the state has said that this drug
25 rehab facility cannot operate at Pennswood

1 Manor. And it's continuing to operate.

2 So under motions tonight, I'm going
3 to -- and I won't elaborate now but I mentioned
4 this in the back as well. I'm going to ask
5 that we send a letter to Director Hinton asking
6 that he gets all of his ducks in a row kind of
7 what Mr. Perry just mentioned that when this
8 expires, whether it's putting physical locks on
9 the property or whatever has to be done, this
10 game cannot continue of them going to the
11 courts every few months for a continuation.

12 MR. KAYS: For four or five years
13 now.

14 MR. ROGAN: Right.

15 MR. KAYS: Four or five years.

16 MR. ROGAN: And I understand when it
17 was in legal appeals going through the appeals
18 process. I wasn't happy about it. But I
19 understood that a final determination hasn't
20 been made. It was in the appeals process. But
21 at this point once the State Supreme Court
22 rules, that's the ruling. And they have to
23 abide by it. And this drug rehab has to be
24 shut down.

25 MR. KAYS: We have to be concerned

1 about the children. There's children that pass
2 by there to and from school. These are middle
3 school 11, 12-year-old children. And these
4 gentlemen are approaching these children asking
5 them for cigarettes, asking for lights for
6 their cigarettes.

7 No grown adult that doesn't know
8 that child should be approaching a child,
9 especially if it's one of the Megan's Law guys.
10 And do we know what the director's
11 qualifications are? Is he even qualified to
12 run it? What's his education? Is he even
13 qualified to run a facility?

14 MR. WECHSLER: I think you're
15 accusing Mr. Hinton when it's the courts
16 that --

17 MR. KAYS: No, I'm not accusing
18 Mr. Hinton. I'm curious as the gentleman
19 running this Pennswood.

20 MR. WECHSLER: That, I don't know.

21 MR. KAYS: Does anybody know his
22 qualifications, his level of education, his
23 experience?

24 MR. WECHSLER: I mean, that's --
25 they're certified by the state, I would

1 imagine. But we don't have any control over
2 that.

3 MR. KAYS: Before the bell goes off
4 I see her reaching for it. I know bars have
5 nuisance laws. If -- I've heard about bars
6 being shut down because they have the nuisance.
7 Is it the same for residence rental properties?

8 MR. WECHSLER: There is a law when
9 somebody calls the police it becomes a nuisance
10 property.

11 MR. KAYS: Do you know what that
12 time frame is?

13 MR. ROGAN: It's not calls. It's
14 filed reports. And that's part of the issue
15 that sometimes a call will be made. The police
16 will say calm it down or they'll take care of
17 the situation. But if that report isn't
18 actually filed, then that doesn't count towards
19 that. I believe it's three in six months. But
20 I'm not 100 percent sure on that.

21 MR. KAYS: Okay. 1022 Cedar Avenue,
22 there's been three visits this month alone.
23 And it's been like that in previous months.
24 I'm sorry.

25 MR. WECHSLER: Attorney Minora, did

1 you have a comment? Did you have a comment?

2 ATTY. MINORA: Not so much a
3 comment, but the court ordered an extension.
4 That's where it came from. But it came at --
5 as a result of the City seeking sanctions
6 against Pennswood Manor.

7 And Pennswood Manor filed a motion
8 for an extension and to stay the sanctions. So
9 the Court granted that until June 1st. So it's
10 not as though the City was doing nothing. The
11 City actually precipitated this order by asking
12 the Court to sanction them for not following
13 previous court order.

14 So I can't explain to you why the
15 Court acted the way they did. I don't have the
16 pleadings in front of me. I could make some
17 guesses, but you don't want that.

18 MR. KAYS: Okay. Well, I'll be
19 interested in seeing Mr. Hinton's reply to the
20 letter.

21 MR. WECHSLER: We have it on
22 Mr. Hinton's radar now. And it's on our radar
23 now.

24 MR. KAYS: I made him aware of it
25 too.

1 MR. ROGAN: We can ask that any
2 correspondence back to us that you're copied on
3 it as well -- the Neighborhood Watch.

4 MR. KAYS: I appreciate that. Thank
5 you.

6 MR. WECHSLER: Anyone else?

7 MS. RADER: Good evening. Mary Ann
8 Rader. I'm a Scranton resident. I'm here to
9 discuss -- it's going to seem tedious in light
10 of everything we've been talking about tonight,
11 but the flooding and storm drain issue out
12 where I live.

13 I live on North Washington Avenue
14 near the corner of Green Ridge Street. In 2001
15 my husband and I remodeled our basement, put a
16 French drain in. I think that's what it's
17 called a sump pump, never had a problem until
18 late last year and then this March.

19 The basement is no longer in use.
20 It's useless, had to tear everything out. Our
21 yard becomes a pool of water. I've never seen
22 anything like it. My concern is, I do have
23 some pictures here. I took pictures of all the
24 storm drains along North Washington in that
25 corner. Can I bring them up to you?

1 MR. WECHSLER: Sure.

2 MS. RADER: These drains as you
3 could see are completely obstructed, every one
4 of them. They -- there's so much debris and
5 they're useless. There used to be a truck -- I
6 think it was referred to as The Claw that the
7 City owned that is no longer functioning, of
8 course, along with the leaf extractor truck
9 that no longer functions.

10 Why? I don't know. They used to
11 come out periodically, open up the storm drains
12 and dig out all the debris. So these trucks
13 don't function. People sweep their leaves to
14 the curb. There's no more truck to extract
15 those leaves.

16 Those leaves get swept down the
17 street and, you know, block -- obstruct these
18 storm drains. So my question is, I think North
19 Washington Avenue is an emergency route because
20 of Marywood University, Holy Family Residence,
21 St. Joseph's Center. I'm not sure who's
22 responsible for these storm drains.

23 I think Green Ridge Street is a
24 state route if I'm not mistaken. My question
25 is, do I have to go out with my yellow gloves

1 and clean out these storm drains? It's just --
2 they're useless. They are of no use. There's
3 branches in those drains.

4 My yard is just out of control.
5 There is also -- I have no curbs left. There
6 are no curbs. Now, am I responsible to put my
7 own curbs in I think? I don't know if that is
8 my responsibility. I pay an extraordinary
9 amount of money in taxes, \$10,000 a year in
10 taxes.

11 MR. PERRY: I don't mean to
12 interrupt. But if you could step a little bit
13 back from the microphone, it's just kind of
14 muffled. I want to make sure everybody can
15 hear.

16 MS. RADER: We pay approximately
17 \$1,700 a year in county taxes and \$8,300 in
18 City and school taxes a year. And this is what
19 we get. And what do we get for it? Not much,
20 no services at all. So I don't know if there
21 is grant money available for situations like
22 this for curbs for -- I'm sure not to clean out
23 drains. But I don't know.

24 I don't know what the answer is.
25 But something has to be done because it's

1 destroying our properties. I mean --

2 MR. GAUGHAN: Well, Mrs. Rader, I'll
3 make Director Gallagher aware of it. And we'll
4 make sure that it gets done.

5 MS. RADER: Okay. All right. Okay.

6 MR. WECHSLER: If it's strictly a
7 storm water sewer -- storm water, the City is
8 responsible for that. The City now is 100
9 percent responsible. It's always been
10 responsible but now it's specifically
11 responsible.

12 MS. RADER: Yeah. Yeah.

13 MR. WECHSLER: They did get
14 equipment from the Sewer Authority to clean up
15 problems just like --

16 MS. RADER: I saw one last week.
17 But apparently it's a Pennsylvania Water truck
18 or something that was cleaning out drains, but
19 I don't know.

20 MR. WECHSLER: The City did receive
21 equipment to start doing this.

22 MS. RADER: Okay. All right. That
23 would be great. Thank you.

24 MR. DOBZYN: Good evening, Council,
25 Dave Dobzyn, resident, taxes paid, fees paid.

1 Once again, if you drove up Cedar Avenue on the
2 way to town here, you would see that it was
3 being destroyed even gooder than ever. They
4 are right, UGI digging away. It looked like a
5 real crummy repair, patched up.

6 There were tire tracks in it. And
7 the guys were getting ready to go to the bar or
8 home, whatever. I'd also like to mention our
9 parking authority once again. I hope that
10 they're planning on fixing the elevators
11 doesn't continge on a grandiose plan of tearing
12 the two top floors of the parking garage across
13 the street down.

14 And maybe by the time they -- I
15 might still be young enough to drive by the
16 time they get it finished. So that elevator
17 situation should be fixed ASAP. If they're so
18 great to begin with and they're helping us out
19 so much, well, time to kick in and start.

20 This is a regional problem. And it
21 also pertains to Scranton. Channel 16 and
22 related networks are being bought out by FOX
23 Network. Now, personally -- and this is only a
24 personal opinion, but I think that Rupert
25 Murdoch should be deported as an unlawful

1 alien.

2 But that's besides the point. But
3 there's too many stations falling under their
4 control. All of your Discovery Channels fell
5 under their control. And they currently stink,
6 flying saucers, all kinds of crazy stuff,
7 mountain monsters, the Sasquatch, give me a
8 break. That's not information. I want
9 information.

10 And they are not the people that
11 provide it because they are nothing but a bunch
12 of lying, self aggrandizing whatever, along
13 with their anchors that just resigned for their
14 corporate rape attempts.

15 Once again, Wayne, don't forget.
16 DINKS -- I want to see that sign up DINKS
17 welcome, dual income, no kids. Our school
18 system is in enough trouble. We don't need --

19 MR. EVANS: We love DINKS --

20 MR. DOBZYN: -- moving in with seven
21 kids.

22 MR. EVANS: Absolutely.

23 MR. DOBZYN: You know, so don't
24 forget us DINKS. My wife and I are memberships
25 of the honorable DINK Club. A week or two ago

1 somebody was in here ranting about how certain
2 landfill could refuse to take our trash. And I
3 would appreciate if you people would disregard
4 it.

5 Pretend it goes in one ear and out
6 there -- sorry, Mark, because that not economic
7 justice. Economic justice isn't pay New York
8 City prices for a ton of coal when it's being
9 taken out from 10 feet from under your
10 basement.

11 I mean, you know, if he wants to
12 refuse to accept Scranton trash, then he could
13 take his trash pile and move out of town. Go
14 somewhere else. Move to China for all I care.
15 And a lot has been said about the Sewer
16 Authority. And I don't want to keep kicking
17 it.

18 But future limits on salaries, we
19 can't have somebody piling one hour after
20 another after they are already making a
21 considerable six figure salary and then all of
22 a sudden, oh, I put beaucoup hours into this.
23 I deserve another six figure salary.

24 I have a little question on
25 politics. What does marriage and politics

1 have in common? Are the promises you're
2 getting worth the promises you got? And I said
3 that nicely. Are the promises you're getting
4 worth the promises you got.

5 So I often wonder a lot of people
6 think that maybe somebody else could do a
7 better job. But then again I have to look at
8 the situation and see what we get, you know.
9 Thank you and have a good night.

10 And one quick thing, if you're tired
11 of voting for the typical candidates, keep in
12 mind I'm always available for (inaudible)
13 comrades. Have a good night.

14 MR. WECHSLER: Anyone else? Tommy,
15 you have to follow Dave now. Tough act to
16 follow I'll tell you.

17 MR. WELBY: It is a tough act to
18 follow. My name is Tom Welby. And just to be
19 clear, before you upset Mr. Murdoch and have
20 him send any zombies in after us, I spent a
21 little over 25 years working at -- between WOLF
22 TV and WNEP TV. And FOX Network doesn't have
23 anything to do with this.

24 These are -- WNEP is owned as are a
25 number of small local stations around the

1 country owned by Tribune Broadcasting. They're
2 local stations, nothing to do with the
3 networks. They just happen to air different
4 network programming the same thing WOLF
5 Sinclair Broadcasting.

6 Sinclair is buying Tribune. And
7 hopefully we won't upset Mr. Murdoch and have a
8 discovery feature here. I'm here actually more
9 on behalf of State Representative Marty Flynn
10 for whom I work. And just a couple of things
11 that I wanted to bring up with you.

12 One is, we had originally scheduled
13 a shredding event for this coming Saturday over
14 at the Scranton High School Memorial Stadium
15 parking lot. And because of the threat of
16 heavy rain, we had to cancel it. But I do want
17 to if we can for anybody that is interested,
18 Geisinger Mount Pleasant is having a free
19 shredding event. And they okayed my promoting
20 this.

21 Free shredding event tomorrow
22 morning at their property over on Mount
23 Pleasant Avenue. That's just off Linden Street
24 up above Redners. And it's from 7 a.m. to 11
25 a.m., a free paper shredding event that is

1 available for this weekend. Representative
2 Flynn will be rescheduling his own. But if
3 somebody has paper ready, that shredding is
4 available to them.

5 Another thing regarding recycling,
6 the last couple weeks we've been out as I know
7 some of you have been out as well on cleanups
8 of our neighborhoods and trails and river
9 walks. And we have been seeing a lot more of
10 electronics, televisions and computer monitors
11 in particular.

12 We're finding them in the alleys.
13 We're finding them on the trails. And we're
14 finding them right along the road sides.
15 Representative Flynn has introduced legislation
16 that will provide for funding to once again
17 supplement for the recycling of the electronics
18 materials.

19 In the meantime it's difficult for
20 someone to recycle them. The Recycle Center
21 which is no longer owned by the county charges
22 \$2 a pound. A lot of the old TVs weigh 100
23 pounds and more. And to expect someone to pay
24 \$200 to recycle an old TV, I don't think this is
25 going to be met with a lot of success.

1 And we did some investigation in
2 other communities in Pennsylvania. And in all
3 of the instances that we have found, recycling
4 centers are owned by municipality by the
5 county. But in those situation they are
6 recycling for 30 cents a pound for non
7 residents and 20 cents a pound for residents
8 making it a little bit more reasonable.

9 But I know that some of you were
10 working on trying to find a way to allow for a
11 dumpster to be opened at the DPW yard and made
12 available during regular business hours for
13 people to drop their televisions or electronics
14 recycling off there.

15 I was hoping that perhaps you might
16 have an update on that for us. And in our
17 office is also continuing to look for grant
18 money to provide for that. And also regarding
19 cleanups, next week we'll be out doing --
20 Representative Flynn will and myself and some
21 other volunteers will be out on South Scranton
22 Neighborhood Association and North Scranton
23 people covering over graffiti.

24 We're going to get the Market Street
25 underpass and Green Ridge Street underpass, the

1 Theodore Street underpass and few others as
2 well as some buildings that need to be covered
3 over. We will go onto some private property
4 within reason. And if anybody wants to help,
5 anybody wants to volunteer, contact our office
6 and we'd be happy to do that.

7 And also if there is graffiti that
8 you think should be covered up, let us know
9 about that as well. The property that Chris
10 Kays from the Neighborhood Association referred
11 to earlier today on Cedar Avenue, 929 Cedar,
12 that was sold at the judicial sale in late
13 March.

14 And the person who purchased the
15 property hasn't received the deed yet and
16 probably won't for another month. It's Just
17 Management Properties, LLC. And I believe the
18 gentleman's name is John Zang. And we spoke
19 today or had someone speak to him today. He
20 said he has no association with the current
21 people that are in there.

22 And we believe that to be true. He
23 doesn't know what his intentions are for the
24 property until he gets the deed and is able to
25 get in there and look at it. There's also the

1 possibility he might just charge them rent
2 unless something is done to be sure that they
3 are to be put out if in deed that is the wish
4 of the people.

5 Now, the other property that he
6 mentioned on Cedar Avenue, 1022 I believe it
7 is, 1020 or 1022 Cedar Avenue that he believes
8 is a nuisance property, there were two police
9 vehicles at that property today and officers
10 speaking to the residents at that property
11 today. So hopefully report will be made on
12 that as well.

13 And just real quick, I noticed Mark
14 Migliore from ECTV stuck his head out regarding
15 a little technical issue. And I just wanted to
16 acknowledge ECTV for all that they do, not just
17 for you all, I generally watch the meetings
18 live or later rebroadcast on ECTV and so many
19 of the other things that they do.

20 And thank you for your support of
21 ECTV. And actually I'm looking forward to
22 seeing some of you on the rebroadcast of the
23 program. You live here. You should know this,
24 which is another great little feature that we
25 see on ECTV. And thank you for your support on

1 them.

2 MR. WECHSLER: Mr. Welby, actually
3 just before you go, the county is trying to put
4 something together for all the municipalities
5 for electronic recycling. We had a meeting I
6 believe three weeks ago to discuss this problem
7 because it's everywhere like you said. So
8 they're actually trying to come up with a plan
9 where we can coordinate between all the
10 municipalities in the county.

11 MR. ROGAN: And I'll follow up with
12 Mayor Courtright as well. And I believe it
13 was Mr. Perry that wrote a letter a few months
14 back. I forget what the date was. But we were
15 told that there will be dumpsters down at DPW
16 for residents to bring electronics to recycle
17 because the rate that's being charged like you
18 mentioned, especially for older electronics is
19 astronomical, \$200 to recycle a TV.

20 MR. WELBY: Who's going to do that?

21 MR. WECHSLER: My old TV would cost
22 more to get rid of than a new TV that I
23 purchased.

24 MR. WELBY: Thank you.

25 MR. WECHSLER: Anyone else?

1 MS. REED: FIFTH ORDER, 5A.

2 Motions.

3 MR. WECHSLER: Mr. Perry.

4 MR. PERRY: Yes, thank you, Mr.
5 Wechsler. I have a couple things. And most of
6 them we touched on tonight one way or the
7 other. But first for our stenographer, how
8 many times have you had to type the word zombie
9 as officially because it has to be a record,
10 probably four times now.

11 A couple things we talked on,
12 something that I want to say that I'm pleased
13 with is that Dunmore is getting on board with
14 us with our request for the SSA to seek an
15 audit for the sale. That just goes to show you
16 there is a thirst for getting this out in the
17 open and the information that we have gotten up
18 to now has been at best so far.

19 You know, the redacted or the
20 information that we got or blackened out
21 information just doesn't cut it. And it just
22 as Mr. Foley said, it doesn't tell us enough,
23 doesn't give us enough pieces to the puzzle.
24 So I applaud them. And I know this board is
25 continuing forward on that.

1 Mr. Wechsler also mentioned the
2 Rockwell Bridge, which is going to have its
3 formal opening tomorrow at 9 a.m., after its
4 half decade of being closed, which is going to
5 be a big relief for everybody in that part of
6 the city I'm sure.

7 As I spoke about I spoke with
8 Mr. Fallon about the tree house and the -- just
9 the state that it was in and if he had any
10 expectations on when it was going to get fixed,
11 how much it was going to cost and what the root
12 problem was and who was going to take a look at
13 it and fix it.

14 And he didn't have anything other
15 than what was reported in the paper for right
16 now. So I'll follow up with him next week. He
17 said he should have more answers, see if we
18 have this up and running at some point this
19 year. Pennswood Manor, again we talked about
20 this a lot. We talked about this in caucus and
21 I know Mr. Rogan is going to make a formal
22 motion soon here.

23 And I just want to say that, you
24 know, when a Supreme Court makes a decision
25 that should hold -- now, do I have a law

1 background, absolutely not. But sometimes
2 common sense can trump a law degree. And the
3 extensions they need to stop. That does not
4 belong there. That facility never belonged
5 there.

6 It's -- I don't think it's ever been
7 legally there. And that's why the Pennsylvania
8 Supreme Court said they need to leave. So I
9 know speaking with Mr. Hinton, he is absolutely
10 on board with doing whatever it takes to
11 prevent any more extensions and making June 1st
12 the absolute end date.

13 You know, it's going to be -- you
14 know, we're going to follow up with this. And,
15 you know, it's just very disturbing to hear how
16 long this has been going on. I went to school
17 there for three years 6th, 7th, and 8th grade.
18 And, you know, everything that that gentleman
19 said was right.

20 You know, kids walked past there
21 constantly. I got the bus. But I got the bus
22 on Pittston Avenue. And I walked down Maple
23 Street right to the school. There is just no
24 way of avoiding it. So, you know, us as a
25 City, I know we've done numerous things to help

1 get this finished.

2 But we need to do more. We need to
3 make sure this isn't here anymore, whatever it
4 takes. If that means blocking another
5 extension and then forcing the Supreme Court's
6 decision then that's what we need to do. We
7 have to make sure we take care of this.

8 Let's see, we talked about this.
9 Really the only thing I have left was that it's
10 going to be -- oh, Mr. Evans, I don't know if
11 you were going to address the correspondence
12 you got about the assessment so I'll let you do
13 that. I know, you know, we're both on board
14 with the county doing a reassessment.

15 It's far overdue. So Mr. Evans will
16 discuss that. And lastly I'll leave you guys
17 with Election Day. Please get out there and
18 vote. It's one of the most important jobs that
19 we have as citizens. And it's just, you know,
20 so many people go to war. Some of them don't
21 come back. And it's for that right to vote.
22 So please get out there on the 16th and do your
23 duty. Thank you.

24 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you, Mr. Perry.
25 Mr. Rogan.

1 MR. ROGAN: Yes, thank you very
2 much. First, I want to give a huge thank you
3 to our police department. And I don't know if
4 they want me to mention them by name or not,
5 but specifically there were two officers that
6 did an amazing job.

7 Then again, it was a minor issue but
8 was well reported. There was a vandalism spree
9 in West Side about three weeks ago. It was
10 widely reported in the paper and on WNEP.
11 Initially one individual was caught. And I
12 think it was Sunday night around 8:00 I
13 received a phone call from the police
14 department. I was one of the victims.

15 So I filed a report online. I
16 received a followup call on Sunday at 8:00 from
17 our police department to let me know that they
18 were going to apprehend a number of individuals
19 in this case. So I have to give a huge thank
20 you to the officers that worked this -- the
21 West Scranton vandalism spree case.

22 And I have to say I was a little
23 startled when I got a call at 8:00. And they
24 said this is Scranton Police Department. But
25 when they said it was, you know, in regards to

1 the vandalism spree and they were making
2 arrests, I was -- I was ecstatic, especially to
3 have that service on a Sunday night at a late
4 hour. So I have to give a huge thank you to
5 those officers and our entire police department
6 for doing such a great job.

7 Secondly, I want to correct
8 something I mentioned earlier. I was
9 incorrect. I voted for the 2014 budget but
10 against the 2013 budget. So I did want to
11 correct that. Onto the Pennswood Manor issue,
12 we did receive a very large packet of
13 information about Pennswood Manor.

14 This issue unfortunately has been
15 going on for over five years. Many years ago,
16 Pennswood Manor was a nursing home that housed
17 senior citizens. My wife actually worked there
18 in high school. She was the recreation
19 coordinator as a part-time-job.

20 A number of years following that
21 they -- the ownership decided for some reason
22 that there wasn't enough money in having a
23 nursing home for people who need help and
24 decided to turn it into a drug rehab facility.
25 This never went to Scranton. This was never

1 approved by Scranton Zoning Board. An
2 occupancy permit was never issued for a drug
3 rehab to operate on that property.

4 So this is probably going back four
5 years ago at this point. I corresponded
6 with -- actually it was a previous director
7 from Licensing and Inspections. And I was told
8 at the time that this was currently under
9 appeals. And although I was not happy with the
10 answer, I understood the answer that if it was
11 tied up in the courts, the City had to wait
12 until the court's weighed in.

13 As Mr. Perry mentioned and as the
14 speakers mentioned tonight, the Pennsylvania
15 State Supreme Court ruled that Pennswood Manor
16 has no legal right to operate a drug rehab
17 facility on Cedar Avenue in South Scranton. We
18 have a large amount of documentation here.

19 Following that order, the Pennswood
20 Manor Associates have multiple times petitioned
21 the court asking for extensions saying that
22 they need more time to move people out, saying
23 that, you know, their affairs aren't in order.
24 And they need an extension.

25 And this is all documented. A

1 number of it is in the packet we have here.
2 And this letter I want to read and excerpt of
3 it. This is from May 4th, 2016. It was sent
4 to Jack Sweeney, the Zoning Officer from the
5 attorney for Pennswood Manor.

6 And it says, Dear Mr. Sweeney,
7 please accept this correspondence as followup
8 to my client's letter dated April 29th, 2016.
9 My client, Pennswood Manor Estate Associates
10 contacted me to notify you that it expects
11 September 30th, 2016, to be their last day of
12 operation for Cedar Residence Inc., at 929
13 Cedar Avenue address.

14 The sentence that appears in my
15 client's April 29th letter namely, no
16 additional residents will be accepted for
17 treatment at 929 Avenue location and my clients
18 agree to voluntarily remove the operations of
19 Cedar Residence, Inc., from the 929 Avenue --
20 Cedar Avenue location within 135 days of this
21 correspondence were the result of a
22 misunderstanding on my part and not that of my
23 client.

24 As stated above, the operative day
25 for the cessation of Cedar Residence operations

1 at 929 Cedar above location is September 30th,
2 2016. So we're looking -- that was well --
3 that was almost over a year ago that September
4 30th date. This letter was dated well over a
5 year ago.

6 The letter I just read was dated May
7 4th. And there are a number of other
8 correspondence in here that it seems every time
9 the date comes for this operation to be shut
10 down, their attorney files again with a lower
11 court asking them to stay even longer.

12 And all the while residents are
13 being harassed. And as Mr. Perry mentioned,
14 students walking to school are having -- having
15 issues. So that being said, we did discuss
16 this in caucus, so I would like to make a
17 motion that we send a letter to Pat Hinton and
18 also the South Side Neighborhood Watch copied
19 on all correspondence asking that he takes any
20 and all appropriate measures to enforce on June
21 2nd, the Cedar LLC, vacating the premises.

22 We'll ask that he coordinates with
23 other law enforcement agencies. And if needed,
24 the City physically locks down this facility.
25 This can no longer continue to go on. Five

1 years has been long enough. So I would like to
2 make that motion.

3 MR. EVANS: Second.

4 MR. WECHSLER: There's a motion on
5 the floor and a second. On the question.

6 MR. PERRY: On the question, I agree
7 wholeheartedly with that. I would just like to
8 also say if we can copy the law department on
9 that just so we can be ready for the possible,
10 any legality that their attorney already
11 started to get ready for another extension.

12 MR. ROGAN: Absolutely.

13 MR. WECHSLER: Yeah, I'd also like
14 to include the school district on that and also
15 the Scranton Police Department just because of
16 the traffic that goes by the school. We
17 understand there's been some -- it's disturbing
18 what's -- of what may be going on there.

19 MR. GAUGHAN: Yeah, on the question,
20 and this is kind of on the side. But I used to
21 work at South Intermediate. And actually, you
22 know, the whole area there is depressed,
23 meaning the building across from the school on
24 both sides. One of them needs to be torn down.
25 It's been condemned forever. So we also might

1 want to look into that. I know we sent letters
2 before.

3 And the sidewalks are in awful
4 condition going up to the school. So Pennswood
5 Manor I agree needs to be taken care of. But
6 there also needs to be more of a focus of that
7 neighborhood being that there is a school
8 there. And as many people already mentioned,
9 there's hundreds of children that walk up and
10 down that street every day. Thank you.

11 MR. EVANS: On the question, this is
12 really is a cautionary tail of how a company
13 can play the legal system for five years to the
14 detriment of the neighborhood and detriment of
15 the neighbors that are down there. So I agree
16 with the motion. And let's hope that
17 Mr. Hinton and the City, all City officials
18 that are necessary to be involved are ready and
19 waiting on June 2nd for action.

20 MR. WECHSLER: All those in favor
21 signify by saying aye.

22 ALL MEMBERS: Aye.

23 MR. WECHSLER: Opposed?

24 (No response.)

25 MR. WECHSLER: The ayes have it and

1 so moved.

2 MR. ROGAN: Thank you very much and
3 hopefully this nightmare for the residents in
4 that neighborhood of south side and the
5 students will be coming to an end next month.
6 And I also ask that Director Hinton keeps us
7 abreast of the developments as they continue
8 with this situation here.

9 Followup on a couple other items
10 that were mentioned, the Rockwell Avenue
11 Bridge, unfortunately I can't attend the ribbon
12 cutting tomorrow because of work obligations.
13 But that's a long overdue project. The
14 residents of North Scranton have waited long
15 enough.

16 I'm thrilled that it's going to be
17 back open. Not being from North Scranton,
18 that's one of the few ways I know to get to
19 that section. So I could go back to my old
20 route and not have to take the long detour now.
21 I will follow up with the Mayor to see what the
22 status of the dumpster being placed at DPW is
23 for electronic recycling.

24 I know it was something that was
25 mentioned -- I'm trying to think about three or

1 four months ago at Council meetings. And it
2 was supposed to be a spring slash summertime
3 project. But I see it everywhere in the City
4 and most of it is that people don't know that
5 the garbage men can't take TVs because there
6 was a time when they could.

7 Now, when it's smaller TVs, it's not
8 as big of an issue. But when you get those big
9 consoles, it's certainly a big problem. And
10 then finally I would just like to ask everyone
11 to go out to the polls and vote on next
12 Tuesday. Thank you very much.

13 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you, Mr. Rogan.
14 Mr. Evans.

15 MR. EVANS: Thank you. First of
16 all, please vote next Tuesday. It's very, very
17 important that you use your vote as your voice.
18 I did receive a letter from County Commissioner
19 Patrick O'Malley responding to my request for
20 information that was collected during the last
21 abandoned assessment in 2009.

22 It's very similar to what was
23 reported in the paper there are 20 boxes with
24 102,000 files. There is no electronic format,
25 which I'm having a little bit of a problem

1 with. I did contact John Foley who was Deputy
2 Director for assessment office who was the
3 keeper of the files.

4 I advised him that I will be
5 stopping by over the next few weeks to take a
6 look at what's in the boxes to see if there is
7 any information that we can gather that might
8 be worthwhile for the City and to move forward
9 not only with the rental registration but other
10 initiatives because it is good information so
11 I'll let you know how that goes.

12 The -- Marie had asked me about the
13 RFP. I got an answer late today. I didn't get
14 a chance to review it so I'll send that over
15 via e-mail tomorrow to you. And finally, there
16 was a recent Scranton Times editorial, in fact,
17 it was yesterday. And it was entitled The
18 Board Conflict Illuminated.

19 The editorial reads in part Dunmore
20 Council created a conflict of interest when it
21 appointed one of its own members to the SSA
22 Board, especially at a time when the Authority
23 was in the process of selling the sewer system.

24 It went on to say -- this part is
25 very interesting. Authorities exist to conduct

1 specialized aspects of public business outside
2 the direct political control of the municipal
3 government. They are by law independent
4 entities that are supposed to act in the
5 interest of the constituency that the authority
6 serves -- in this case the sewer system rate
7 payers.

8 Authority members are appointed to
9 separate them from campaign donations and
10 other forms of influence seeking. I happen to
11 agree with that opinion piece. This City
12 Council has been saying this in several ways
13 for the past months, probably since December
14 29th when the deal closed that we had no input
15 in the sale that we were not privy to the
16 particulars of the sale.

17 We were not at the table for
18 negotiations of the sale. And we certainly had
19 no influence on the sale. Why? Possibly
20 because it could have been illegal or at the
21 very least improper for us to be involved in
22 the sale.

23 And for some reason there are those
24 that want to rewrite history and question why
25 we didn't do this and why we didn't do that

1 prior to the closing of the transaction.

2 I repeat, the editorial says
3 authorities exist to conduct specialized
4 aspects of public business outside the direct
5 political control of the municipal government.
6 They are by law independent entities. We
7 passed legislation on December 15th, 2016, to
8 begin to dissolve and terminate the SSA.

9 This in the simplest terms allow for
10 the funds that would be received from the sale
11 between the SSA and PAWC to be transferred to
12 the City of Scranton. A no vote by this body
13 would have created a situation where the funds
14 would have remained with the SSA after the
15 sale.

16 This is a scenario that even critics
17 should have found unacceptable. With that said
18 and I will be honest, I supported the concept
19 of this deal. It was part of the recovery plan
20 that I voted for. And it was the right thing
21 to do for financial well-being of the City.

22 There was no other realistic
23 alternatives to be offered. What I didn't
24 support and continue not to support was the
25 lack of transparency leading up to the closing

1 and postclosing, the lack of information, the
2 redacted invoices, and the lack of supporting
3 documentation as to how nearly 12 million
4 dollars was spent during the contract period.

5 Most, if not all of the 12 million
6 dollars are funds that we expected money to pay
7 down more debt, money for additional capital
8 improvements, money to help shore up pensions
9 now seemingly lost with no solid backup or
10 explanation as to why.

11 This postclosing period has been an
12 insult to this council and to the taxpayers.
13 Quite frankly, the Mayor should have been as
14 outraged as all of us over how this was handled
15 as the public, City Council, and the media
16 continue to search out answers.

17 He should have been as equally
18 outraged over the extraordinary cost for legal
19 and professional fees. Yet there is silence.
20 After months of stalling and receipts of
21 worthless redacted invoices, we had no
22 alternative to contact the Auditor General for
23 help.

24 The Auditor General instructed us
25 that it was indeed the SSA that would have to

1 make that request. With A much appreciated
2 support of the Dunmore Council we are now
3 awaiting on our joint request to the SSA Board
4 on if they will act and invite the Auditor
5 General to step in and audit the sale.

6 Then and only then can we begin to
7 finally put this behind us so we can continue
8 at the real important task which is finding a
9 way to exit after a 25 year travesty of being a
10 distressed city. So that's all I have for
11 tonight. Thank you.

12 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you, Mr. Evans.
13 Mr. Gaughan?

14 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, thank you. Just
15 a few items. First of all, I would like a
16 letter to be sent on behalf of Council
17 regarding Mrs. Rader's issue over on North
18 Washington Avenue and Green Ridge Street.

19 Also Ms. Robinson who was here
20 earlier tonight about the issue with snakes in
21 her yard, I have been trying to help her out
22 now for months. So I would like an additional
23 letter to be sent to the Licensing and
24 Inspections Department.

25 I would like to thank the DPW. I

1 have been complaining as have residents for
2 quite some time about a dangerous tree on St.
3 Ann's Street. And that tree is in the process
4 of being taken down. So I'm very glad to hear
5 that news.

6 I'm also receiving several
7 complaints about the spray paint on the
8 walkways up in Nay Aug Park. So I am going to
9 have -- or plan on having a conversation with
10 the DPW about that and either prohibiting it or
11 regulating it because it does look very bad.

12 We got several requests in, one for
13 Morgan Court and Cherry Street needs patching,
14 the corner of Crisp and Jackson Street there's
15 a large pothole that needs to be filled,
16 speeding at Park Gardens on Morell Street. So
17 we'll send that to the police department.

18 I have been trying to get a meeting
19 with Mayor Courtright regarding the museum
20 downstairs and a few other things. But I
21 haven't been successful, so send another
22 letter, make another phone call. I'm not sure
23 what else to do. Maybe I have to pitch a tent
24 downstairs and wait for him to go in or out in
25 the morning. I'm not really sure.

1 But I continue to be concerned
2 about those issues. So I would like a meeting
3 with him. So if we could send another letter
4 and ask for a response by next week I would
5 appreciate that. The Rockwell Avenue Bridge
6 opening tomorrow, very glad to finally see
7 that.

8 The neighbors back there are
9 thrilled. It's been a long time coming. When
10 the bridge does open, I would like to send a
11 letter to the DPW Director to replace the stop
12 sign at Gilbert Street and Rockwell Avenue.
13 It's falling over.

14 And now that the bridge is going to
15 be opening up, unfortunately one of the issues
16 is that's going to be a very dangerous
17 intersection again. I've seen quite a few near
18 misses there. So if we can try to get that
19 done. Also, I'm very concerned that news that
20 the tree house is closed.

21 I do have several questions and
22 concerns. One thing I would like to find out
23 is if there had been routine postwinter checks
24 in the past on that tree house. And if so,
25 were there reports issued and were there any

1 findings.

2 It seems hard to believe that
3 within -- if there was a postwinter check last
4 year that within a year those trees could have
5 deteriorated to the point where the tree house
6 would have to be closed. So I would like
7 further information on that.

8 On the Sewer Authority, just a
9 couple things. I'll disagree with Mr. Evans in
10 one respect. If you remember back to December
11 of 2016, I actually think that Council had
12 leverage to get those answers. I made a motion
13 when the legislation was on our agenda to
14 dissolve the Sewer Authority. And I voted
15 against it because we didn't have those answers
16 yet.

17 But if we had voted to table it,
18 nobody would have got any money. And I think
19 then we could have held their feet to the fire
20 and brought them in here and asked them those
21 important questions. And I am very glad that
22 the Auditor General is interested in reviewing
23 and auditing the sale of the Scranton Sewer
24 Authority.

25 The lack of transparency has been

1 quite frankly astonishing to me and deeply
2 concerning over the past few months. And where
3 there's smoke there's usually always fire. I
4 believe that it's in the best interest of the
5 residents, the ratepayers and the City as a
6 whole that this transaction be reviewed by an
7 independent agency that being the Pennsylvania
8 State Auditor General.

9 As I mentioned last week, this is
10 about transparency, accountability, and
11 integrity. I would also urge every ratepayer,
12 every taxpayer in this City to attend the next
13 Scranton Sewer Authority meeting on Friday, May
14 19th at 4 p.m., right here in Council Chambers
15 and demand that they invite the Auditor General
16 in to review this transaction.

17 I would also ask my colleagues if
18 they would agree to send a letter to Mayor
19 Courtright asking him to call on the Scranton
20 Sewer Authority to express his desire for a
21 complete review and audit by the Auditor
22 General. Let's not forget as was pointed out
23 that the Mayor appointed the majority of the
24 members of the Sewer Authority Board. And I'd
25 like to know what his position is on this very

1 important issue.

2 To close, I would like to wish every
3 mother in the City of Scranton a happy Mother's
4 Day this Sunday, especially my mother Marie, my
5 wife Kelly who is quite frankly a saint in my
6 opinion, and my sister who is going to be
7 having a baby God willing any day now. So
8 she's a mother-to-be. And that's all I have.
9 Thank you.

10 MR. WECHSLER: Thanks, Mr. Gaughan.
11 In regards to the vote on terminating of the
12 Sewer Authority, if we did not take that vote,
13 we would not have the opportunity to bring the
14 money into the City and take advantage of what
15 we have taken advantage of with already paying
16 down some long-term debt. And we made good use
17 of that money already.

18 And holding this up we would have
19 gotten the same answers that we got now. I
20 don't think would have been wise at that point.
21 We are going to have the Auditor General
22 hopefully come in. I don't believe there is
23 any reason why he won't come in.

24 He responded quite quickly to our
25 request last week. By Friday morning he

1 already expressed an interest in taking up the
2 case. And I do believe the reason why he
3 mentioned it is there are going to be many of
4 these transactions throughout the state. And I
5 believe that unfortunately Scranton is going to
6 be used as a case study on how sometimes it
7 should not have been done.

8 We're going to have to get in front
9 of this. There are -- there is legislation in
10 the state to require some more transparency by
11 state law. So some of the other sales as they
12 take place in the future may avoid some of
13 these same problems that we're experiencing.

14 I did reach out to Dunmore Council
15 on Sunday last week to get this process going.
16 Scranton City Council really has been
17 struggling with this issue on our own for quite
18 a few months. And I'm very happy that Dunmore
19 Council came in. I'm very happy that the vote
20 was six to nothing.

21 It does show that there is a need
22 and recognized by all people involved. It's
23 very rare that all votes like that are
24 unanimous. I do thank them for that. And I
25 look to work with them in the future on

1 different issues, including possible storm
2 water management and also cooperating with
3 battling the expansion of the Keystone
4 Landfill. And I do look forward to working
5 with Dunmore on that.

6 Last week we talked a little bit
7 about the problem with Mr. Young's property.
8 This week I did speak to Solicitor Boyles and
9 also to Business Administrator Bulzoni to
10 concur with that DEP really is giving us a
11 favorable stance now on us doing some repair
12 work out at the Young and Kennedy properties.

13 Ms. Boyles is going to contact --
14 have a meeting with DEP with Larry West from
15 Senator Blake's office just to get the
16 particulars down. And we're anticipating that
17 we should have some type of emergency
18 legislation before us within the next two weeks
19 to get a preliminary plan done to fix
20 Mr. Young's problem up there.

21 It will take some time still to
22 complete that. We're hopeful we can get this
23 all through and be done within the next few
24 weeks. The City still is concerned. We want
25 to make sure that any repairs that we do there

1 are acceptable and fit into the future repairs
2 that are going to be done by the State out
3 there.

4 So we're just trying to get
5 everything in there. We don't want to put good
6 money after bad. But I'm very confident right
7 now that this problem is finally going to be
8 coming to an end. We did have a call this week
9 with some concerns about excess water at
10 Novembrino Swim Complex.

11 Right now the City is working on
12 getting the good pools open. Director
13 Gallagher is monitoring the situation up there.
14 And the water will be removed at an opportune
15 time. We talk about Scranton being the hub of
16 the county. And we saw that the other day.

17 The Scranton Bomb Squad was involved
18 with the problem out by the armory. Our force
19 is the bomb squad for the entire Northeast.
20 That could have been a very serious situation
21 that was handled with professionalism.
22 Fortunately, there was only a minor injury to
23 someone out there. But it could have been
24 catastrophic event. And I would like to thank
25 our bomb squad for being involved with that.

1 Rockwell Avenue Bridge, we kind of
2 beat a dead horse. We're all happy that it's
3 fixed. But I would also like to offer my
4 congratulations to Representative Flynn's
5 Office and also to Senator Blake and also to
6 PennDOT. That actually was supposed to be a
7 City project.

8 PennDOT picked up the ball on that.
9 And they ran into the problem with the
10 contaminated soil and they fixed that also. So
11 I would like to thank them for sticking with
12 that project and getting it done. And I heard
13 Mrs. Reed is going to be on the fire truck on
14 Friday? That's very nice. And that's all I
15 have right now.

16 MS. REED: 5B. FOR INTRODUCTION - A
17 RESOLUTION - AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND
18 OTHER APPROPRIATE CITY OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE AND
19 ENTER INTO PHASE II MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
20 (MOU) BETWEEN THE CITY OF SCRANTON AND THE
21 NATIONAL RESOURCE NETWORK TO PROVIDE SUPPORT
22 FOR THE CREATION AND ORGANIZATION OF A TASK
23 FORCE TO ASSIST SCRANTON TOMORROW AND PROVIDE
24 ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE.

25 MR. WECHSLER: At this time, I'll

1 entertain a motion that item 5B be introduced
2 into its proper committee.

3 MR. ROGAN: So moved.

4 MR. EVANS: Second.

5 MR. WECHSLER: On the question?

6 (No response.)

7 MR. WECHSLER: All those in favor of
8 introduction signify by saying aye.

9 ALL MEMBERS: Aye.

10 MR. WECHSLER: Opposed?

11 (No response.)

12 MR. WECHSLER: The ayes have it so
13 moved.

14 MS. REED: SIXTH ORDER, 6A. No
15 business at this time.

16 SEVENTH ORDER. 7A. FOR
17 CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY
18 DEVELOPMENT - FOR ADOPTION - FILE OF THE
19 COUNCIL NO. 99, 2017 - AN ORDINANCE -
20 AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND OTHER APPROPRIATE
21 CITY OFFICIALS TO DISBURSE EIGHTY-NINE THOUSAND
22 DOLLARS (\$89,000.00) FROM THE ACCOUNT INTO
23 WHICH REPAYMENT OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT ACTION
24 GRANTS (UDAG) ARE DEPOSITED (UDAG REPAYMENT
25 ACCOUNT) TO BE USED FOR THE PURCHASE OF PAVING

1 MATERIALS FOR THE CITY OF SCRANTON'S
2 PAVING PROGRAM.

3 MR. WECHSLER: What is the
4 recommendation of the Chairperson for the
5 Committee on Community Development?

6 MR. ROGAN: As Chair for the
7 Committee on Community Development, I recommend
8 final passage of item 7A.

9 MR. EVANS: Second.

10 MR. WECHSLER: On the question.

11 (No response.)

12 MR. WECHSLER: Roll call, please.

13 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Perry.

14 MR. PERRY: Yes.

15 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

16 MR. ROGAN: Yes.

17 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

18 MR. EVANS: Yes.

19 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

20 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

21 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

22 MR. WECHSLER: Yes. I hereby
23 declare Item 7A legally and lawfully adopted.

24 MS. REED: 7B. FOR CONSIDERATION BY
25 THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE - FOR ADOPTION -

1 RESOLUTION NO. 148, 2017 – APPROVING IN
2 ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 147(F) OF THE INTERNAL
3 REVENUE CODE OF 1986, AS AMENDED, A PLAN OF
4 FINANCING OF THE SCRANTON-LACKAWANNA HEALTH AND
5 WELFARE AUTHORITY AND DECLARING THAT IT IS
6 DESIRABLE FOR THE HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELFARE
7 OF THE PEOPLE OF THE CITY OF SCRANTON FOR THE
8 SCRANTON-LACKAWANNA HEALTH AND WELFARE
9 AUTHORITY TO UNDERTAKE A PROJECT FOR ALLIED
10 HEALTH CARE SERVICES.

11 MR. WECHSLER: What is the
12 recommendation of the Chairperson for the
13 Committee on Finance?

14 MR. EVANS: As Chairperson for the
15 Committee on Finance, I recommend final passage
16 of item 7B.

17 MR. ROGAN: Second.

18 MR. WECHSLER: On the question.

19 (No response.)

20 MR. WECHSLER: Roll call, please.

21 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Perry.

22 MR. PERRY: Yes.

23 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

24 MR. ROGAN: Yes.

25 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

1 MR. EVANS: Yes.

2 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

3 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

4 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

5 MR. WECHSLER: Yes. I hereby
6 declare Item 7B legally and lawfully adopted.

7 MS. REED: 7C. FOR CONSIDERATION BY
8 THE COMMITTEE ON RULES - FOR ADOPTION -
9 RESOLUTION NO. 149, 2017 - AUTHORIZING THE
10 MAYOR AND OTHER APPROPRIATE CITY OFFICIALS TO
11 EXECUTE AND ENTER INTO A MEMORANDUM OF
12 UNDERSTANDING WITH THE COMMONWEALTH OF
13 PENNSYLVANIA, DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
14 ("PDA"), DIVISION OF WEIGHTS AND MEASURES TO
15 DELEGATE SPECIFIC WEIGHTS AND MEASURES
16 INSPECTION, AND ENFORCEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES TO
17 THE CITY OF SCRANTON.

18 MR. WECHSLER: As Chairperson for
19 the Committee on Rules, I recommend final
20 passage of Item 7C.

21 MR. ROGAN: Second.

22 MR. WECHSLER: On the question.

23 (No response.)

24 MR. WECHSLER: Roll call, please.

25 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Perry.

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MR. PERRY: Yes.

MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

MR. ROGAN: Yes.

MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

MR. EVANS: Yes.

MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

MR. WECHSLER: Yes. I hereby
declare Item 7C legally and lawfully adopted.
If there's no further business, I'll entertain
a motion to adjourn.

MR. ROGAN: Motion to adjourn.

MR. WECHSLER: Meeting is adjourned.

C E R T I F I C A T E

1
2
3 I hereby certify that the proceedings and
4 evidence are contained fully and accurately in the
5 notes taken by me of the above-cause and that this copy
6 is a correct transcript of the same to the best of my
7 ability.

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9
10 _____
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12 Official Court Reporter
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