

SCRANTON CITY COUNCIL MEETING

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HELD:

Thursday, July 20, 2017

LOCATION:

Council Chambers

Scranton City Hall

340 North Washington Avenue

Scranton, Pennsylvania

CATHENE S. NARDOZZI, RPR - OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER

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CITY OF SCRANTON COUNCIL:

JOSEPH WECHSLER, PRESIDENT

PATRICK ROGAN, VICE-PRESIDENT

WAYNE EVANS

WILLIAM GAUGHAN

TIM PERRY

LORI REED, CITY CLERK

KATHY CARRERA, ASSISTANT CITY CLERK

AMIL MINORA, ESQUIRE - SOLICITOR

1 (Pledge of Allegiance recited and  
2 moment of reflection observed.)

3 MR. WECHSLER: Roll call, please.

4 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Perry.

5 MR. PERRY: Here.

6 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

7 MR. ROGAN: Here.

8 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

9 MR. EVANS: Here.

10 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

11 MR. GAUGHAN: Here.

12 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

13 MR. WECHSLER: Here. There will be  
14 a motion to move item 5-B to Sixth and  
15 Seventh Order for final vote based on the  
16 attached emergency certificate. There will  
17 be a second opportunity to speak in Seventh  
18 Order prior to final passage of this piece  
19 of legislation. Dispense with the reading  
20 of the minutes.

21 MS. REED: THIRD ORDER. 3-A.

22 MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
23 MEMBERS OF THE SCRANTON HOUSING AUTHORITY  
24 HELD JUNE 5, 2017.

25 MR. WECHSLER: Are there any

1                   comments? If not, received and filed.

2                   MS. REED: 3-B. CHECK RECEIVED IN  
3 THE AMOUNT OF \$2,262.00 FROM GOODWILL AT  
4 NORTH GERALD T. LANGAN APARTMENTS (COMMUNITY  
5 REALTY MANAGEMENT), WHICH IS PAYMENT IN LIEU  
6 OF TAXES FOR THE CITY OF SCRANTON.

7                   MR. WECHSLER: Are there any  
8 comments? If not, received and filed.

9                   MS. REED: 3-C. CONTROLLER'S REPORT  
10 FOR MONTH ENDING JUNE 30, 2017.

11                  MR. WECHSLER: Are there any  
12 comments? If not, received and filed.

13                  MS. REED: 3-D. MINUTES OF THE  
14 NON-UNIFORM MUNICIPAL PENSION BOARD MEETING  
15 HELD JUNE 21, 2017.

16                  MR. WECHSLER: Are there any  
17 comments? If not, received and filed.

18                  MS. REED: 3-E. MINUTES OF THE  
19 SCRANTON POLICE PENSION COMMISSION MEETING  
20 HELD JUNE 21, 2017.

21                  MR. WECHSLER: Are there any  
22 comments? If not, received and filed.

23                  MS. REED: 3-F. MINUTES OF THE  
24 COMPOSITE PENSION BOARD MEETING HELD JUNE  
25 21, 2017.

1 MR. WECHSLER: Are there any  
2 comments? If not, received and filed.

3 MS. REED: 3-G. AGENDA FOR THE  
4 NON-UNIFORM MUNICIPAL PENSION BOARD MEETING  
5 HELD JULY 19, 2017.

6 MR. WECHSLER: Are there any  
7 comments? If not, received and filed.

8 Do any council members have  
9 announcements at this time?

10 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, I have one. An  
11 upcoming clean up is being planned for the  
12 two playgrounds located in Nay Aug Park.  
13 Volunteers are needed. For more information  
14 please call Brian Fallon at the park office  
15 at Weston Field at 570-348-4186. Thank you.

16 MR. WECHSLER: Yes, I would like to  
17 welcome the Ancient Order of Hibernians and  
18 Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians to  
19 Scranton. Their state convention will be  
20 held here this weekend. It will run from  
21 July 19, through July 22.

22 Also, Bethel AME Church presents  
23 Sounds of Fellowship and Gospel Jazz  
24 Experience July 22 from 12 to 9 and that  
25 will be on Washington Avenue.

1 MS. REED: FOURTH ORDER. CITIZENS'  
2 PARTICIPATION.

3 MR. WECHSLER: Fay Franus.

4 MS. FRANUS: Fay Franus, Scranton.  
5 I'd like to start out by asking if you could  
6 consider making a motion to suspend all of  
7 the legal work for the city from Ned  
8 Abrahamsen and his law firm, considering I  
9 believe it's a conflict of interest in  
10 consider the fact that he is suing  
11 Councilman Gaughan. I don't think it's  
12 appropriate that he has any more dealings as  
13 long as this is going on.

14 And even, otherwise, as far as the  
15 sewer deal goes, there are so many questions  
16 there. I just don't think he should be  
17 allowed to do any -- I would hope you take  
18 it into consideration and make a motion. It  
19 should be done.

20 Now, I have to wonder, a couple of  
21 weeks ago, many times you have asked the  
22 Attorney General to come in to investigate  
23 this sewer deal, you are talking out of both  
24 sides of your mouth, other than Mr. Gaughan.  
25 Last week you had the nerve to vote for an

1 ordinance for Mayor Courtright to spend more  
2 money from the sewer sale, which you know  
3 may be illegal. I even mentioned that last  
4 week. That may be illegal. The Sewer  
5 Authority is not dissolved and by law July  
6 27, 2012, Governor Corbett said, "No money  
7 should be spent from any authority into city  
8 government expenses."

9 None. So there is another legality,  
10 but you want ahead and voted to approve it.  
11 So you know what, you are as guilty as he is  
12 and someone should sue you, except for Mr.  
13 Gaughan for doing the same thing he did,  
14 breaking the state law and breaking the city  
15 code, but you don't care. You just want to  
16 do anything that Mayor Courtright wants and,  
17 Wayne, I'm surprised at you, you are the  
18 Finance Chair. I'm just shocked at that  
19 one.

20 MR. EVANS: Well, it's not about  
21 Mayor Courtright it's about what I feel is  
22 doing the right thing.

23 MS. FRANUS: You think it's the  
24 right thing to break the law?

25 MR. EVANS: Well, that's an

1                    interpretation. Our solicitor said that  
2                    it's not against the law and the Sewer  
3                    Authority spent \$3.1 million on attorneys  
4                    that said it's not against the law.

5                    MS. FRANUS: Who told you that?

6                    MR. EVANS: They did. They spent  
7                    \$3.1 million. That's what the Sewer  
8                    Authority spent.

9                    MS. FRANUS: I know that, but I'm  
10                   saying they spent it on loans and stuff for  
11                   the city. The money they got from the sewer  
12                   sale, which you not supposed to do. First  
13                   of all, I respect what you are saying, I'm  
14                   not going to repeat it, it possibly could be  
15                   illegal --

16                   MR. EVANS: Possibly.

17                   MS. FRANUS: Well, we are going to  
18                   see, aren't we? But in the mean time you're  
19                   enabling him. Now, another thing, Mayor  
20                   Courtright was kind enough to give me a  
21                   return call. I must admit though he hasn't  
22                   called Marie Schumacher back in over a year,  
23                   so I called because I wanted to know why he  
24                   waived the lawyer/client privilege for  
25                   Attorney Abrahamsen to get the bills for the



1 sewer sale but yet he didn't do it for the  
2 Parking Authority sale. Now, Todd Johns,  
3 who I believe might have been his campaign  
4 manager, the lawyer for the Parking  
5 Authority stated that they were going to  
6 have special meeting in August instead of  
7 September to waive the lawyer/client  
8 privilege. I told Mayor Courtright, the  
9 Parking Authority did not hire him, the city  
10 Cf Scranton did, Mayor Courtright did, so  
11 why would the Parking Authority have to give  
12 him a waiver? Bill Courtright said, "I  
13 don't know, that's what they told me. I  
14 have to listen to the lawyer."

15 Isn't that convenient? I just think  
16 it's another stall tactic just to keep this  
17 thing going and going instead of keep on  
18 spending more money, even though it might be  
19 illegal, and guess what? If they have to  
20 give this money back where are they going to  
21 get it from? You know the bank is not going  
22 to give it back. Where are they going to  
23 get the money from if they have to give it  
24 -- they'll go bankrupt.

25 Now, do you think that this is going

1 to go to court?

2 MR. EVANS: I can't say that, I  
3 don't know if it's going to go to court or  
4 not.

5 MS. FRANUS: But don't you feel any  
6 kind of worry that you could be involved in  
7 that because you have voted for things that  
8 possibly could be illegal.

9 MR. EVANS: Well, I have always been  
10 a proponent of paying down the debt so --

11 MS. FRANUS: Pardon me?

12 MR. EVANS: I've always been a  
13 proponent of paying down the debt.

14 MS. FRANUS: Even if it's illegal?

15 MR. EVANS: Again, Fay, that's your  
16 interpretation. Our solicitor told us that  
17 it's not illegal, the solicitors that were  
18 involved in the sewer deal told the Sewer  
19 Authority Board it wasn't illegal.

20 MS. FRANUS: Don't you wonder why  
21 Mayor Courtright wouldn't waive the legal  
22 fees for the Parking Authority considering  
23 he hired --

24 MR. EVANS: There is no excuse for  
25 that, I'm not go to defend that. Why would

1 I ever defend that?

2 MS. FRANUS: You understand that?

3 MR. EVANS: I would never defend  
4 that why he wouldn't do it. I don't know  
5 why he didn't do this.

6 MS. FRANUS: Why is the Parking  
7 Authority going to waive it?

8 MR. EVANS: I have no idea.

9 MS. FRANUS: I don't either that.  
10 That makes not sense, does it?

11 MR. EVANS: Well, if you parallel  
12 the parking and the sewer deal you are  
13 right, it doesn't make any sense.

14 MS. FRANUS: Okay, and another  
15 thing, what occurred to get the \$200,000 and  
16 just saying -- Mayor Courtright says to Ned  
17 Abrahamsen, "Oh, go ahead and do the work.  
18 I'll give you \$200,000. You don't need a  
19 contract and you don't have to get it  
20 approved by council and you don't have put  
21 it out to bid. Go ahead."

22 It's crazy. Now, I feel bad for  
23 Judge Moyle because she really got the  
24 goings over with Carl Greco. To me it's  
25 another stall tactic. I give her credit for

1           recusing herself because they really put her  
2           in a tight bind, but it was really  
3           deliberate, deliberate, deliberate to stall  
4           this investigation into whether it's legal  
5           or not. Thank you.

6                   MR. WECHSLER: Commissioner Laureen  
7           Cummings.

8                   MS. CUMMINGS: Good evening,  
9           gentlemen.

10                   MR. GAUGHAN: Good evening.

11                   MS. CUMMINGS: Laureen Cummings, Old  
12           Forge. I want to correct some misstatements  
13           which have been repeated on more than one  
14           occasion by one or more members of the  
15           Scranton City Council concerning remarks  
16           that I made which appear recently in the  
17           Scranton Times. Specifically, the statement  
18           regarding my experience when purchasing my  
19           home at the age of 25. June 14 it was  
20           quoted in the paper, our local paper, and  
21           Mr. Rogan stated that the Scranton Times  
22           reported that when I was 25 and house  
23           hunting real estate taxes didn't cross my  
24           mind when, in fact, my actual statement,  
25           which oddly enough was printed accurately in

1 the Scranton Times was, "When she was house  
2 hunting as a 25 year old what her neighbors  
3 paid for real estate taxes didn't cross her  
4 mind."

5 Now, let me repeat that, "What her  
6 neighbors paid for real estate taxes didn't  
7 cross her mind."

8 I have both articles here to back me  
9 up. Mr. Rogan continued to reiterate this  
10 misinformation regarding my statement  
11 throughout the meeting and he has done this  
12 with other statements that I supposedly made  
13 on many occasions. Too many, in fact,  
14 discussing my short -- too many to discuss  
15 in my short five-minute time frame this  
16 evening so I decided to address this at a  
17 commissioner's meeting. I stated in the  
18 meeting that I would bring the minutes from  
19 our meeting, which I did, and if need be the  
20 video, which I can, if you would like me to,  
21 to provide accuracy for him and others that  
22 continue the constant barrage of personal  
23 attacks against this commissioner on  
24 comments that I didn't make.

25 I would hope fewer commentary you

1 can give me a call. I'm free to --

2 MR. ROGAN: Commissioner Cummings --

3 MS. CUMMINGS: If I can continue  
4 with my five minutes I would appreciate it.  
5 To the Scranton Times, contemplating what  
6 motives council members might have in their  
7 weekly personal attacks against this  
8 commissioner are not, in my opinion, an  
9 accusation. In fact, I contemplated many  
10 reasons, including fear of my male  
11 counterparts and council members in possible  
12 attention to run for commissioner. I will,  
13 however, say that council members reactions  
14 and remarks following that article were a  
15 bit much. How does that saying go, me  
16 thinks thee doth protest too much.

17 In conclusion, I want to make it  
18 clear that despite some disparaging remarks  
19 which were made about me, this entire matter  
20 regarding reassessment is way too important,  
21 way, way too important to involve  
22 personalities and attacks on character. I  
23 am more than happy, gentlemen, to sit down  
24 with any member of your governing body to  
25 discuss my positions on the issue of

1 reassessment.

2 In addition, I welcome all of you to  
3 attend our meetings on Wednesdays during the  
4 evening, attend the public hearings, express  
5 your opinions when these are scheduled, and  
6 I look forward to debate. I thank you for  
7 your time and I'd be happy to take any  
8 questions.

9 MR. ROGAN: Just a reply regarding  
10 your quote.

11 MS. CUMMINGS: Do you want me to  
12 stay her?

13 MR. ROGAN: You can stay. It's up  
14 to the council president, but I would be  
15 fine with it. Regarding your statements, I  
16 was paraphrasing what was mentioned in the  
17 Scranton Times and when house hunting in the  
18 same neighborhood looking at the difference  
19 in taxes between houses is comparing your  
20 neighbor's taxes.

21 MS. CUMMINGS: I'm sorry?

22 MR. ROGAN: Looking at property  
23 taxes in competing properties in the same  
24 neighborhood is comparing it with the  
25 neighbors. For instance --

1 MS. CUMMINGS: But that's not the  
2 way you framed it.

3 MR. ROGAN: It's exactly how I  
4 framed it.

5 MS. CUMMINGS: No, it's not. I have  
6 it right here.

7 MR. ROGAN: In the homes in Old  
8 Forge you were looking at, the tax was  
9 different on each one. It comes across  
10 people's mind. I see it every day.

11 That being said, myself or anyone up  
12 here has not leveled a single personally  
13 attack against you. We have differed on  
14 issues. There's a big difference on the  
15 issue. The only personal attack that was  
16 levied was the one you levied against myself  
17 and Councilman Evans saying that our  
18 comments --

19 MS. CUMMINGS: It was not an attack.

20 MR. ROGAN: -- attacked you with  
21 sex, which it did not. It had to do --

22 MS. CUMMINGS: That wasn't an  
23 attack.

24 MR. ROGAN: It had to do with the  
25 issue. Well, it certainly was is an attack.



1 MR. CUMMINGS: Well, that's what the  
2 paper wrote because that's sensationalizing  
3 what was said, so --

4 MR. ROGAN: Well, we can agree on  
5 our differences from the Scranton Times but  
6 the only difference that I have with you is  
7 on your position. It's not with you.

8 MS. CUMMINGS: That's --

9 MR. ROGAN: It's not with anything  
10 else.

11 MS. CUMMINGS: I'm glad to hear  
12 that.

13 MR. ROGAN: We have a difference of  
14 opinion, actually Councilman Evans and I  
15 have a difference of opinion regarding the  
16 vote. I support the vote. I think you did  
17 the right thing regarding --

18 MS. CUMMINGS: I saw that.

19 MR. ROGAN: -- giving it to the  
20 taxpayers for a vote.

21 MS. CUMMINGS: I appreciate that  
22 comment.

23 MR. ROGAN: But that being said, we  
24 do have a big difference of opinion and how  
25 it affects the residents. I'm looking

1 forward to debating the issue from now until  
2 November and the people will have the last  
3 say at the ballot box.

4 MS. CUMMINGS: I would ask --

5 MR. WECHSLER: You are okay.

6 MR. EVANS: You have one minute.

7 MS. CUMMINGS: I would ask in the  
8 article from the Scranton Times, maybe they  
9 misquoted it, but they didn't misquote it  
10 because I have your statement here, "Anyone  
11 who has purchased a property or is looking  
12 no purchase a home real estate taxes  
13 certainly have to cross your mind."

14 And, again, that wasn't what I had  
15 stated. I was talking about the facts, and  
16 if you go back into my commentary, which if  
17 you would like me to I can, I mean, it's  
18 very brief if you want me to go on I can  
19 tell you exactly what my wording was, I was  
20 saying I didn't look across the street at my  
21 neighbor's taxes prior to purchasing my home  
22 because that's just pitting -- I feel that  
23 that's pitting neighbor against neighbor and  
24 I don't like that. I think there is a  
25 better solution and I think you are in

1 agreement with that as well for House Bill  
2 76, from my reading on your background, so  
3 there is another issue that we do agree on,  
4 but I would hope that in the future that  
5 this can end the Scranton Times debacle  
6 between the council and myself because I  
7 really think it's very important for us to  
8 be able to have a conversation and get along  
9 without having any kind of disparaging  
10 remarks, and I make this promise to you that  
11 as long as I'm not phone call at 9:00 after  
12 your meeting telling me about all of these  
13 commentary that you are making, I won't be  
14 back again to address it either, so I hope  
15 that we can have that comradery between us  
16 and nix this so that we can -- thank you.

17 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you for coming,  
18 Commissioner. Actually, we do look forward  
19 to being part of the debate to get the  
20 information out there so the citizenry can  
21 make the right decision at the ballot box on  
22 November.

23 MS. CUMMINGS: I look forward to it.  
24 Thank you. Have a good evening.

25 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you. Bob

1 Bolus.

2 MR. BOLUS: Good evening, Council.  
3 Bob Bolus. I will say one thing I thing, I  
4 think it was very disrespectful to the  
5 commissioner to have that bell ringing while  
6 she was giving the courtesy of speaking  
7 here. We know as speakers we have to play  
8 that game, but to a public official,  
9 especially one of our commissioners, I think  
10 it was very disrespectful and I think, Mr.  
11 President, you should have stopped the bell  
12 ringing and let her speak. She was here  
13 informative for each and every one of us in  
14 here, just not council, and I think that was  
15 out of order to do and I think she actually  
16 deserved an apology. I don't think that  
17 would happen if you guys were speaking at  
18 the Commissioner's meeting and I have been  
19 there many times, and you're respected,  
20 everybody that comes to this lectern is  
21 respected. Respected over their and not  
22 play with that bell.

23 You know, she is talking about  
24 taxes, nobody knows more about what's going  
25 on in this city, the unfairness that goes

1 on, I bought the Holy Cross church to save  
2 it so the kids and everybody could stay  
3 playing, yet nobody in here fought or raised  
4 an issue why I got assessed at a half a  
5 million dollars on a church that was only  
6 worth a dollar to the city and \$2 to a judge  
7 who was buying the hall and had to be  
8 executed, I paid 35,000 to preserve our  
9 culture. Yet, nobody stood up and said  
10 anything about it, yet nobody said thanks  
11 for letting the kids play for free at my  
12 expense and that's what this is it all  
13 about. So is there a fairness in what we do  
14 in this county? Hell no.

15 One of the things, and I'm going to  
16 change a little the format tonight, I'm  
17 going to make this is question and answer  
18 deal.

19 MR. WECHSLER: Mr. Bolus, this is  
20 your time to comment.

21 MR. BOLUS: Let me finish,  
22 Mr. Wechsler. I'm asking a question --

23 MR. WECHSLER: You can all the  
24 questions --

25 MR. BOLUS: It's your

1 responsibility --

2 MR. WECHSLER: It's your comment  
3 period.

4 MR. BOLUS: Your responsibility is  
5 to keep quiet while I'm speaking --

6 MR. WECHSLER: No, it's not.

7 MR. BOLUS: And your responsibility  
8 and that of the commissioners are --

9 MR. WECHSLER: Go ahead, Mr. Bolus.

10 MR. BOLUS: Wait, are to answer our  
11 questions.

12 MR. WECHSLER: It's not a question  
13 and answer period, it's comment period.

14 MR. BOLUS: Well, I'm going to stand  
15 and I'm going to put a question to you  
16 because it's like talking to the deer in the  
17 headlights with you guys.

18 MR. WECHSLER: You can ask all of  
19 questions you like.

20 MR. BOLUS: When it came to the  
21 Sewer Authority money that I raised you  
22 people took the money and you squandered it  
23 and spent it while the Sewer Authority is  
24 still active. It's illegal to do what you  
25 authorized to be done. Allowing the Sewer

1 Authority money to be spent on anything  
2 other than what the Sewer Authority's own  
3 projects are. Now, that Sewer Authority was  
4 disbanded. You people signed off and the  
5 recovery plan, you allowed disbursement of  
6 the money and you are all accountable.

7 Now, I raised this question before,  
8 I'm going to wait for two weeks and I talked  
9 to intelligent people that respond. They're  
10 commissioners in Florida because they want  
11 to know what's going on, they want to have a  
12 dialogue with people who come here, not a  
13 bunch of mutes to sit here and take insults.  
14 Now, my question to you, have any of you  
15 gone to have the money refunded or made our  
16 solicitor file in court to have every penny  
17 returned back to the Sewer Authority until  
18 you guys and the mayor and everybody else  
19 involved, including Dunmore, do one thing  
20 and do it legally which you have not done?

21 And if that answer is not  
22 forthcoming, I will assure you I will take  
23 your butts to Court and you will be held  
24 accountable and yeah, Mr. Wechsler, you will  
25 answer the questions then whether you like

1           it or not. That's where I'm coming from so  
2           we understand each other once and for all.

3                     Mr. Gaughan, are we paying your  
4           legal fees?

5                     MR. GAUGHAN: That I don't know.

6                     MR. BOLUS: Well, I'd like to know  
7           because you made statements --

8                     MR. GAUGHAN: You can ask Solicitor  
9           Minora. I'm not sure.

10                    MR. BOLUS: Well, I'm asking you --

11                    MR. GAUGHAN: Well, the complaint  
12           hasn't been filed yet so I don't know  
13           exactly.

14                    MR. BOLUS: Well, listen, ou wanted  
15           transparency, you wanted all of this  
16           nonsense, you signed off on the recovery  
17           plan, you committed to a sale without  
18           knowing what you are selling or what you are  
19           reading and you signed off. Now you make  
20           issue about legal fees and made statements,  
21           did you do it on behalf the council? Did  
22           you do it on behalf of us? You sure as hell  
23           didn't do it on behalf of me. Are you  
24           paying your own legal fees? Because I don't  
25           believe we should be held accountable to pay





1 Mr. Wechsler, tonight whether or not you  
2 intend to pursue to recapture the money I  
3 need simple yes or more.

4 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you, Mr. Bolus.

5 MR. BOLUS: That's not what I asked.

6 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you, Mr. Bolus,  
7 your time is up.

8 MR. BOLUS: Well, Mr. Wechsler, one  
9 thing I am going to tell you here and now --

10 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you.

11 MR. BOLUS: -- as a public record and  
12 as a taxpayer in this city you will be held  
13 accountable since you don't have what it  
14 takes to answer citizen's question.

15 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you, Mr. Bolus.

16 MR. BOLUS: Don't thank you today,  
17 you will thank me later on --

18 MR. WECHSLER: John Foley.

19 MR. BOLUS: -- when you have to pay  
20 with money out of your pocket -- -

21 MR. WECHSLER: Mr. Bolus --

22 MR. BOLUS: -- and pay for your  
23 stupidity. Thank you.

24 MR. WECHSLER: John Foley.

25 MR. FOLEY: Good evening, gentlemen.

1 MR. WECHSLER: Little hot in there,  
2 John.

3 MR. FOLEY: I had not anticipated  
4 being here tonight for a couple of reasons,  
5 but the article in the paper that  
6 Mr. Gaughan was going to be sued by a  
7 Scranton attorney for making demands for  
8 information in connection with his  
9 responsibility as a city councilmen did  
10 catch my attention. It would seem that if  
11 it was in the course of his work in  
12 representing the city as councilmen that the  
13 city should cover all of his legal fees. I  
14 would expect that if you haven't gotten it  
15 already that you seek a written opinion from  
16 your solicitor. I believe that it was in  
17 conjunction with city business, demanding of  
18 the information, that the lawyer may not  
19 have -- the case may not have any merit.

20 But if the city is covering it, I  
21 find it problematic if the lawyer is still  
22 doing work for the city. There may be an  
23 ethical issue here and it would seem that if  
24 the lawyer that is suing the city through  
25 council that the lawyer should recuse

1           himself from all work until it's completed.

2                       Now, with that said, I have another

3           issue, I'm not finished with it but

4           hopefully within the next week I'll find

5           time to get to it. I'm still a member of

6           the Pennsylvania Institute of Certified

7           Public Accountants, retired, non-practicing,

8           but I did have an opportunity to take a look

9           at the 2016 city financial statements, and

10          after reviewing the financial statements I

11          find some things disturbing in there. Let's

12          see, in no particular order, that the

13          disclosure on the trash refuse fee

14          litigation is virtually silent, it may be in

15          one item, but it that's it I find the

16          disclosure wanton. I laid the issue out to

17          the city administrator, business

18          administrator, several months ago. I have

19          drafted a letter through the city's outside

20          auditors going through my analysis of the

21          issue and hopefully they'll see where I'm

22          coming from and that it has not been

23          disclosed in the financial statements, or if

24          it was never disclosed to the outside

25          auditors with that means that they would

1           have to do something retroactively.

2                       Now, there are other issues. As  
3           long as I decided to send a letter to the  
4           outside auditors, there are material  
5           weaknesses in internal county controls that  
6           I have identified through the other work I  
7           have done. I have not seen, although, I am  
8           trying to get a copy of the auditor's  
9           management letter to see if what I have  
10          found they found, but I'm also going to put  
11          that in the letter because I believe that  
12          some of these things are problematic. For  
13          example, there is one individual that is  
14          responsible for accepting information,  
15          recording the information, recording it,  
16          billing it, and collecting it. A single  
17          individual. That is a material weakness in  
18          internal accounting control. I will, of  
19          course, copy all of you in that letter.

20                     All of operating expenses of the  
21          city may not be in the 2016 financial  
22          statements, very specifically, I followed  
23          with some interest the dialogue back and  
24          forth in the paper between the mayor,  
25          Shrive, and others as to who was responsible

1 for the legal feels, very specifically, the  
2 Abrahamsen fee. What I have found that  
3 those legal fees are recorded on the books  
4 of the Sewer Authority which would lead me  
5 to believe they are not recorded on the  
6 city's books, although, Shrive has suggested  
7 they are the city's responsibility and if  
8 that's the case then I know that there is  
9 potentiality that the operating expenses in  
10 the financial statements are short by at  
11 least \$200,000. For all I know, there may  
12 be other professional fees that were paid by  
13 the Sewer Authority and that are on the  
14 Sewer Authority's books but rightfully  
15 belong on the city's books. Now, I did not  
16 want to go through that today because this  
17 just a head's up I will be corresponding  
18 with the city's outside auditors. They may  
19 well have to come back.

20 One last thing, I truly believe that  
21 the outside auditors should meet with city  
22 council to review the financial statements  
23 in draft form before they are released. Not  
24 just the mayor, but also city council. That  
25 way if there was any questions that you have

1 of the outside auditors that will give you  
2 the opportunity in that setting to ask for  
3 it. I don't believe you have gotten them in  
4 the past, but I would suggest to you, you  
5 ought to demand to get it in the future.  
6 You are entitled to the information. With  
7 that, I'm going back to Moosic Lake.

8 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you.

9 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you.

10 MR. WECHSLER: Gerard Hetman.

11 MR. HETMAN: Good evening, Council.

12 Gerard Hetman from the Lackawanna County  
13 Commissioner's Office. To begin this  
14 evening, we have two posters that you may  
15 have seen around town or will be shortly for  
16 two upcoming events and these are really  
17 great events in their own right. They could  
18 also lead hopefully to some bigger and  
19 better things in the years ahead.

20 The first is for the revived  
21 Northeast Pennsylvania Air Show at the  
22 Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport.  
23 That's Saturday and Sunday, August 12th on  
24 13th, and if you are fan of military  
25 aviation, as I am, you will see there is

1           some really neat acts out there. The  
2           Devil's teams for the F-410 and the F-22  
3           Raptor and the Army Golden Knights parachute  
4           team.

5                        So please come out. It's a great  
6           event. It looks like two days and there is  
7           lots of neat static displays. I know there  
8           are performing acts that aren't listed on  
9           the poster. And we'll keep -- the last  
10          thing about the air show and how can we  
11          build it and grow it, my understanding of  
12          the air show business the better we make  
13          this event, which will be the first one in  
14          17 years, you can tell my age now because I  
15          remember the last air show and the last  
16          several, but the bigger and better we make  
17          this the better chances we get to get not  
18          just these acts back, but other quality  
19          acts, including maybe some of the big jet  
20          devil teams from the Air Force and some more  
21          -- or militaries that we may see line for  
22          future air shows, so let's make it a great  
23          time.

24                        On that not, September 19, which I  
25          think is a Tuesday, the Gildan AAA National



1           Championship game at PNC field. A lot of  
2           you will remember this from last year from  
3           when the Railroads played in this game, and  
4           I believe it was held in Memphis, I think it  
5           was the Cardinal's affiliate that hosted  
6           that game and the Railriders beat the El  
7           Paso Chihuahuas to win the national title.  
8           Hopefully the Railriders will be playing in  
9           it again this year representing nationally  
10          league, but even if they are not the game  
11          will be still be held at PNC Field. This is  
12          important. As some you may have seen these  
13          comments from some folks associated with the  
14          Railriders that the better we do with this  
15          game in terms of attendance, local  
16          participation, the better that bodes for  
17          hopefully PNC Field getting the AAA All Star  
18          game back in the future, and I remember  
19          watching the All Star game on TV, but I lot  
20          of you may have been there and seeing the  
21          young Derrick Jeter play in the Columbus  
22          Clippers in that game, so you never know who  
23          is going to be here and hopefully we can get  
24          an All Star came in the future, this would  
25          go a long way having to put an event in the

1           AAA national championship, of course,  
2           hopefully make this successful for the All  
3           Star game in the future years, so two great  
4           events coming up to wrap up the summer.  
5           Let's have a good time at both of them,  
6           we've seen them here before, hopefully we'll  
7           have a good turn out and do some good things  
8           not just now, but for the future.

9                     A couple of other county events  
10           coming up over the summer, most of these  
11           should seem familiar. Our three-on-three  
12           basketball tournament set for Friday and  
13           Saturday, July 28th and 29th. If either of  
14           those days has inclement weather we'll just  
15           push the tournament back and we'll use  
16           Sunday, July 30, as an extra day. It's \$90  
17           to register per team. Teams have a minimum  
18           of three players, maximum of five, and we  
19           have teams from third grade up to the adults  
20           open division, so all ages and all  
21           basketball skills are welcome in the  
22           tournament. It's held again this year and  
23           this is our sixth year in a row on the 100  
24           and 200 blocks of Wyoming Avenue. We  
25           appreciate everyone that makes that happen

1 from Scranton Police to the downtown  
2 residences and business community. We  
3 really get a great -- a out of feedback from  
4 people that played in and watched it that  
5 like it downtown, so we appreciate everyone  
6 that puts up with us and cooperates with us  
7 to make the event a success. To register,  
8 just call 570-963-6743, extension 1874,  
9 that's my co-worker Rick Notari, he'll be  
10 happy to take care of you.

11 We also have two Art in the Park  
12 days still remaining tease. These are free  
13 art activities for children and accompanying  
14 adults. They're from 10 a.m. to noon on  
15 Tuesday, July 25 at Aylesworth Park, and  
16 Tuesday, August 1, at McDade Park. Good  
17 time, music, refreshments, a great way to  
18 spend some time with children that you may  
19 be babysitting, grandchildren, etcetera,  
20 etcetera, so come out and take out our parks  
21 for that.

22 And, also, two family fun days  
23 remaining that we have. Those kind of are  
24 open house at the park. We have  
25 refreshments, face painting, a little bit of

1 music, it's for all ages though so Saturday,  
2 July 22, Covington Park and Saturday, August  
3 4, at Ayelsworth Park. 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
4 each day for both the family fun days.

5 So lots of good stuff to close out  
6 the summer. Are there any questions or  
7 feedback from council? Great. Thank you,  
8 Folks.

9 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you. Kara  
10 Seitzinger.

11 MS. SEITZINGER: Good evening,  
12 Council. Kara Seitzinger, City of Scranton  
13 resident. Scranton was not at it's finest  
14 this past week as has been well reported.  
15 We saw back and forth exchanges between the  
16 newspaper, city officials and others. We  
17 saw a neighborhood group once again continue  
18 their fight to have a settlement agreement  
19 which became law back in 1990 enforced by a  
20 judge because that very power rests only in  
21 the hands of the judiciary, not the SSA,  
22 Pennsylvania American Water Company or any  
23 one individual, city official, or their  
24 various attorneys.

25 We saw a Common Pleas Court judge

1 display enormous restraint by recusing  
2 herself following an ex parte communication  
3 that a local attorney, who by his own  
4 admission initiated that communication in an  
5 11th hour plea to postpone the inevitable.

6 And, finally, the most concerning we  
7 watched one of your colleagues, a lawmaker,  
8 be threatened with a lawsuit by one of the  
9 very lawyers that this body and  
10 administration have hired and authorized  
11 payments to for countless legal matters.

12 There is a common tread in all of  
13 these matters, each person involved has had  
14 direct dealings in the sale of the Scranton  
15 Sewer Authority and that should concern each  
16 of you. Attorney Grecco and Abrahamsen's  
17 involvement in the above matters is  
18 well-known and most cases documented in some  
19 form. Attorney Abrahamsen was also the  
20 attorney who represented Keystone Landfill  
21 when they first sued the City of Scranton  
22 back in the mid-1980's and the then mayor  
23 refused to allow leachate to run through our  
24 neighborhood and the city.

25 We speak of transparency and each of

1           you has publically vowed at various times to  
2           be transparent. Their action of attempting  
3           to stifle you as law makers usurps your duty  
4           as councilmen. Elected officials are  
5           entrusted to question, scrutinize, represent  
6           and protect the public's interest. That is  
7           simply good government and it is why you  
8           sacrifice so much of your lives to be on  
9           that dais.

10                           2015 Greenridge Neighborhood

11           Association asked Councilman Gaughan to  
12           research the facts and to vote his  
13           conscience on matters relative to leachate,  
14           and more importantly, the sale of the  
15           Scranton Sewer Authority, the city's very  
16           last asset. He has not failed us. Not  
17           once.

18                           It is our plea today that you stand  
19           in solidarity with him and you support him  
20           as we do. If you do not do that, you just  
21           may be another victim of a baseless  
22           allegation or worse yet you may lose your  
23           ability to effectively represent your  
24           constituents. It is simply not right for  
25           you or for one attorney to cripple your

1 ability to legislate as you see fit, and you  
2 are entitled to do so by virtue of your  
3 election to this office. Again, we ask that  
4 you protect your rights as an elected  
5 officials and you stand in support of  
6 Councilman Gaughan. Thank you.

7 MR. WECHSLER: Joan Hodowanitz.

8 MS. HODOWANITZ: Joan Hodowanitz,  
9 city resident and taxpayer. Smile,  
10 gentlemen, one more week until recess.  
11 Going back to the 2016 independent audit, it  
12 was not listed in Third Order last week's  
13 agenda nor is it listed Third Order in this  
14 week's agenda. I do know that the city  
15 clerk received it on July 12, so could we  
16 get that picked up on Third Order, the  
17 listing of reports received?

18 MR. WECHSLER: Yeah, I'm not sure  
19 that that --

20 MS. HODOWANITZ: It's been on prior  
21 years.

22 MR. WECHSLER: The audit goes in on  
23 reports received. I don't think it has  
24 though.

25 MS. HODOWANITZ: Okay. It's also

1 not on the city's website I would like to  
2 see that posted, and I remind you that you  
3 have to put out your summary in the  
4 newspaper.

5 But I agree with Mr. Foley, it's  
6 very disturbing that such an important  
7 annual document, which is an indicator both  
8 to governing officials and to the citizens  
9 of the financial health or lack thereof of  
10 the city is downplayed, okay? This is  
11 something that should be discussed, that  
12 people should look forward to seeing getting  
13 released, should be able to ask questions.  
14 I am still waiting for the business  
15 administrator to answer my questions on the  
16 2015 report, which I hand carried a letter  
17 to his office on March 18, 2016. Now, is  
18 that anyway to treat a taxpayer? Okay. Are  
19 they really afraid of a little old lady like  
20 me? The mayor won't give me an appointment,  
21 the only time he has ever answered a  
22 question is at a town hall meeting, I have  
23 been trying for a whole year to see him, the  
24 business administrator won't answer my  
25 questions on the 2015 audit, is it worth my



1 while to send him a list of questions on the  
2 2016 audit? I don't think so.

3 But moving on, have we heard  
4 anything from the Attorney General's Office  
5 about your request to have him look into the  
6 sewer sale transaction?

7 MR. WECHSLER: No, I'm going to  
8 follow-up with him next week. He asked me  
9 to give him a few weeks, a few weeks are up.  
10 It's about three weeks since I last spoke to  
11 him. That's what the Attorney General  
12 represented.

13 MS. HODOWANITZ: How about rebidding  
14 the RFP for the third party administrator  
15 for the pension funds?

16 MR. WECHSLER: We were informed  
17 tonight that is going to start again.

18 MS. HODOWANITZ: Okay. How about  
19 the Knowel's insurance list?

20 MR. WECHSLER: Nothing from them.

21 MS. HODOWANITZ: Okay. Again, you  
22 know, I mean, what is our money, Monopoly  
23 money?

24 MR. ROGAN: I believe there was a  
25 memo, and I didn't read it at length, I

1 believe there was a memo that came from Mr.  
2 Bulzoni regarding the insurance list.

3 MS. HODOWANITZ: Okay.

4 MR. ROGAN: I'll report on it under  
5 motions.

6 MS. HODOWANITZ: Going back to the  
7 audit, I saw in the June controller's report  
8 that Rainey & Rainey was paid \$7,817.50 in  
9 the month of June, my question is this is  
10 the third year that we have used them to  
11 help prepare for the annual audit, when is  
12 the Business Administrator's Office going to  
13 take off the training wheels? If they  
14 haven't learned how to prepare for an audit  
15 in three years you think they are going to  
16 learn the fourth year? How long are we  
17 going to extend that contract? I think, you  
18 know, we need to take a hard look at that.

19 And Mr. Foley's comments about the  
20 shortfalls in the audit are very valid, and  
21 he did not have time in five minutes to give  
22 you a laundry list. There was no part in  
23 that document that addressed internal  
24 controls, and he is right. Look at the  
25 litigation, the summary of litigation

1 expense that they published in there. There  
2 is nothing addressing the rental  
3 registration lawsuit, like it's nothing, or  
4 how about the garbage fee or any of the  
5 others that date back to 2016?

6 I mean, there are a lot of serious  
7 questions. The public when you address your  
8 questions to Mr. Bulzoni, as it says to do  
9 so in the document which they cut and past  
10 every year, it's ignored. They wouldn't  
11 even grace you with a phone call or an  
12 appointment. If this isn't a red flag to  
13 you I don't know what is.

14 Okay, rental registration. I live  
15 in the Forum which has 80 apartments, and at  
16 least 39 of those apartments the tax bill is  
17 sent not to the apartment to a different  
18 address. Only six of those are empty or the  
19 owner is deceased so the 33 that are in  
20 question as rental income properties, how do  
21 I get ahold of Mr. Moran to give them this  
22 information?

23 MR. EVANS: I would think you can  
24 call Mrs. Reed and we'll get a number for  
25 you.

1 MS. HODOWANITZ: How?

2 MR. EVANS: Mrs. Reed and we'll get  
3 a number for you. I have his number if you  
4 want it.

5 MS. HODOWANITZ: Every person that  
6 fails to pay their taxes or fees leaves a  
7 burden on me.

8 MR. EVANS: He'll be very happy to  
9 hear from you.

10 MS. HODOWANITZ: I've had it. Thank  
11 you.

12 MR. ROGAN: Before you sit down to  
13 answer your question, I know I did see it  
14 and so this actually just came through today  
15 at 2:30 regarding the insurance review and  
16 this is from a representative at Knowel's  
17 Associates, it says, "Dave, we are working  
18 it now. We will send you a revised property  
19 schedule by the end of the week. We are  
20 also working on the umbrella and cyber  
21 quotes and get back to you when we have the  
22 numbers from the company."

23 And there is actually some other  
24 issues with excess workers' comp that they  
25 get into as well so they are reviewing a

1 number of items.

2 MS. HODOWANITZ: I hope that it's  
3 going to be released to the public.

4 MR. ROGAN: Everything we get we  
5 will certainly pass along.

6 MS. HODOWANITZ: Okay.

7 MR. WECHSLER: Ron Ellman.

8 MR. ELLMAN: Hello, Council. Relax,  
9 there is no anti-council rhetoric tonight,  
10 but I would like to talk about this  
11 outrageous obscenity. This is nothing but  
12 preelection propaganda at the taxpayers'  
13 expense and anyone can see through it. This  
14 is disgusting. All you got -- year after  
15 year we don't get one until election time.  
16 It's -- it's -- I'd like to tear it up in  
17 pieces and throw them on the floor. That's  
18 what I think of it.

19 As I've said a couple of times in  
20 here I'm a deplorable dyslexic I guess and I  
21 get up here sometimes and I get so  
22 infuriated at what's going on in this city  
23 with no leadership that my notes they are  
24 backwards and sideways and upside down and  
25 inside out and it takes me couple of seconds

1 to look there and get my little pea brain  
2 going for what I want to say, so when I  
3 hesitate I hope you all will give me a  
4 little latitude. In fact, right now I think  
5 I have a dyslexic attack coming on just  
6 thinking of Amoroso and Bulzoni give me one.  
7 Thinking of you guys giving Lackawanna  
8 College that gives me one, but that's in the  
9 past and I don't dwell that much on it.

10 But yesterday reading in the paper  
11 about some double dealing hypocritical  
12 ambulance chaser wanting to sue our  
13 councilman that's just going too far. I'd  
14 like to know where he thinks he could find a  
15 jury that would listen to him. He is trying  
16 to turn facts and truths around to suit  
17 himself. He's using that as an excuse for  
18 verbal contracts for a multi-million dollars  
19 deal. This is terrible what's going on in  
20 this city. I hear from my son that has a  
21 computer and listens, well, he reads what's  
22 going on, but I'd like to say if this suit  
23 is pursued as a taxpayer I demand that this  
24 council's -- I don't know how they -- but I  
25 demand our attorney bill be paid by this

1 city. These statements that were made were  
2 in defense of the city and I think we all  
3 are responsible for the consequences of  
4 them. Mr. Doherty used to have the city pay  
5 for one lawsuit after another, the city  
6 should have to pay for this if it proceeds  
7 and it's something that mayor downstairs  
8 could put an end to it because it's just  
9 like suing ourselves over all of this  
10 nonsense.

11 I guess the people lost and all of  
12 these attorneys that was just a God send.  
13 It's just something that come true for them,  
14 millions of dollars one after another just  
15 it just senseless where this money went and  
16 nothing except talk, talk, talk being done  
17 about it. I think -- I think Councilman  
18 Bill has more integrity in the tip of his  
19 little finger than all of these attorneys  
20 that participated in this shame against the  
21 city have in their whole bodies put  
22 together. To me, there is some people  
23 writing about retirement funds they ought to  
24 be in jail instead of what went on.

25 I have talked -- like I said,

1 professional people saying you don't have  
2 verbal contracts except maybe when you go to  
3 Judge Judy or something about an apartment.  
4 Million dollar deal and excuses for all of  
5 the problems that involved in it is because  
6 of verbal contracts. Thank you for allowing  
7 me my few minutes up here.

8 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you, Mr.  
9 Ellman.

10 MR. ELLMAN: I certainly hope, I  
11 know some of you that support the mayor, but  
12 I certainly hope we have a new mayor whoever  
13 runs and a new administration instead of  
14 these two hacks that have collusion with the  
15 Lackawanna College.

16 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you,  
17 Mr. Ellman.

18 MR. ELLMAN: Thank you.

19 MR. WECHSLER: Lenny Srebro.

20 MR. SREBRO: Lenny Srebro, Scranton  
21 resident. I'd like to give Mr. Perry a  
22 picture and if you would pass it down,  
23 that's the storm that hit the neighborhood  
24 at 5:00 tonight.

25 MR. PERRY: Yeah, it's still -- Mr.



1 Srebro -- I'll explain what I'm looking at,  
2 it's just where his property line runs back  
3 and it has that big low lying area. There  
4 is a drainage -- 36-inch drainage pipe that  
5 obviously we are all well aware of and it's  
6 almost at the top of it, and that was  
7 installed by, you know, a former resident of  
8 the area just as a last ditch effort to  
9 drain the water. As you can see in the  
10 picture, it's not. It's not moving any  
11 water and this issue that you have --

12 MR. SREBRO: As a matter of fact,  
13 it's pushing it back out. It's actually  
14 pushing the opposite way.

15 MR. PERRY: I remember when we were  
16 on the scene --

17 MR. SREBRO: -- when the creek fill  
18 sup --

19 MR. PERRY: -- and the pitch has that  
20 kind of --

21 MR. SREBRO: Okay, I appreciate your  
22 help, Mr. Perry. You know, you and  
23 Mr. Gaughan just seem to me that you are the  
24 only people that are interested in the  
25 problem in the Keyser Valley. I never hear

1           any comments from anybody else. They never  
2           ask me any questions, so kudos to you two  
3           guys.

4                       MR. PERRY: Thank you, but to be  
5           fair we do bounce ideas off each other and  
6           we do talk about this issue, even though the  
7           might not be asking you.

8                       MR. SREBRO: Okay. You know, just  
9           like the last gentleman that was here, I  
10          call him -- I wrote down in my notes the  
11          hippie, that's the best I can -- but I'm the  
12          same as him. I'm the exact same. You know,  
13          I have so many things to say and so many  
14          thoughts and I get confused and I don't know  
15          where the heck I'm at, and also I'll tell  
16          you what, after tonight's storm at 5:00, you  
17          know, the whole neighborhood is flooded. On  
18          this camera is really about ten pictures of  
19          the manholes coming up, I'm telling you, the  
20          whole neighborhood they just did paving  
21          today, you know, blacktopping where they put  
22          in all new gas mains and it's all washed  
23          away. The people from the construction  
24          company, you know, I was speaking to a  
25          supervisor and one of the managers,

1                   whatever, he was riding around. He couldn't  
2                   believe the flooding problems just washed  
3                   all of their pavement, their blacktopping  
4                   away from -- they are going to do it all  
5                   again tomorrow.

6                   The point is, is this was a  
7                   20-minute storm. Can you imagine what I go  
8                   through when it's a one or two-day rain?  
9                   It's unbelievable. Mr. Mayor, if you are  
10                  watching, if you want to be reelected I'm  
11                  telling I can't you got a huge neighborhood  
12                  of people, by the grace of God please help  
13                  us. It's unbelievable what's there.

14                 Mr. Bolus, I'm telling you, I'm as  
15                 angry as him, but I don't show it. I don't  
16                 understand who is in charge of right now  
17                 with them paving and ripping up the roads,  
18                 about roughly saying 15 square blocks. Why  
19                 aren't they doing something with the storm  
20                 drains right now while they are the roads  
21                 ripped up and doing all of this construction  
22                 and then they got a pave it after they are  
23                 done, but then again it seems like the right  
24                 process for the city is to pave and then rip  
25                 up the roads a couple of months later and do

1           some other kind of project.

2                       So right now it just seems so smart  
3           to try and do something with these storm  
4           drains. I'm telling you, they were all like  
5           gushers, you know, just tonight I should  
6           have been home pumping out my garage and my  
7           cellar again like all of the neighbors are  
8           doing right now. I'm telling you, I rode  
9           around the neighborhoods and everybody can't  
10          believe that all of this construction is  
11          washed away. Roads are all ripped apart and  
12          this is just the 20 minute storm. Why can't  
13          something be done? All it is, you know,  
14          somebody looks into it and then it's all  
15          gone. What did we come up with, Mr. Perry  
16          for a flushing the rest of that drain,  
17          anything?

18                      MR. PERRY: Our letter was sent out  
19          this Friday and I haven't got a response  
20          back.

21                      MR. SREBRO: Please give me one  
22          minute. See, I'm just like the hippie. So  
23          when they are all done what roads, I would  
24          like to know what roads will be paved and  
25          when? So the construction company I see

1           they are almost done putting in all of the  
2           gas mains and they are just about done and  
3           leaving there and now I wonder when they are  
4           going to be back or if another contractor is  
5           going to pave the roads. I can't seem to  
6           get any solid answers from all of these  
7           supervisors and workers that are there. You  
8           know, it's all up in the air. I'm sure  
9           somebody's got to be able to know when the  
10          roads are going to be paved and if they are  
11          going to be paved or if they are going to be  
12          left like all of this patching that they  
13          have done. Thanks for your time.

14                   MR. WECHSLER: Andrea Skill.

15                   MS. SKILL: Good evening. Andrea  
16                   Skill, homeowner, taxpayer, resident all my  
17                   life in the City of Scranton. There have  
18                   been so many times I thought about coming  
19                   here to speak and never did. The reason why  
20                   I'm here tonight is because of the article  
21                   in the yesterday's paper of the Scranton  
22                   Times. I was totally appalled when I saw  
23                   the front page stating, "Lawyer targets  
24                   official." The law firm Abrahamsen, Conaboy  
25                   and Abrahamsen is suing Councilman Gaughan

1 for slander. Really?

2 Let me see if I understand this  
3 right. Mr. Gaughan requested the bill for  
4 the sale of the Sewer Authority.

5 Mr. Abrahamsen obviously got angry he had to  
6 produce the invoices of services rendered so  
7 now he wants to sue him. If Mr. Abrahamsen  
8 had produced the invoice in the beginning  
9 none of this would be happening. Obviously,  
10 Mr. Abrahamsen must be feeling guilty stow  
11 he wants to divert from the attention of all  
12 of the money he made on this deal.

13 It also said the other four members  
14 of council had no comment. I thought the  
15 city council was a team and not one against  
16 four. Mr. Gaughan, I want to applaud you  
17 for standing your ground for the taxpayers  
18 of this city, not just now but always.

19 And one more thing other than that  
20 concerning our property taxes and city and  
21 school taxes, I would like to know why  
22 homeowners are the only people that are  
23 burdened by the city and school taxes. I  
24 personally never had children and have  
25 always paid the city and school taxes. Why

1           doesn't everyone pay? The renters are  
2           usually the ones with all of the kids and  
3           they never pay any school taxes. Is this  
4           fair? Everyone should be trusted -- I'm  
5           sorry. Everyone should be treated equal and  
6           pay their fair share but then you will say  
7           how can we track down the renters to send  
8           them a bill? Maybe you can hire an outside  
9           firm to handle this. I can go on and on,  
10          but I'll stop here. I don't want to take  
11          any more of your time. Maybe, just maybe,  
12          I'll be back. Thank you.

13                       MR. WECHSLER: Kyle Donahue.

14                       MR. DONAHUE: Good evening, Council  
15          members. Kyle Donahue, candidate for city  
16          council. Ned Abrahamsen's attempt to silent  
17          Bill Gaughan on this council with a threat  
18          of a frivolous lawsuit is mind boggling.  
19          This attack is by the Courtright  
20          administration and Mr. Abrahamsen against  
21          this body's legislative function of checks  
22          and balances. The concept of checks and  
23          balances is the cornerstone of our  
24          democracy. It is council's job to question  
25          the actions of the legislative branch.

1                   Tonight I am here to call on Mayor  
2                   Courtright to urge Mr. Abrahamsen to drop  
3                   this outrageous lawsuit and to encourage the  
4                   administration to turn over all of the  
5                   information that has been requested by  
6                   council members immediately, specifically  
7                   the 12 million that the Authority spent on  
8                   federally mandated projects. After seven  
9                   months, the citizens of Scranton deserve to  
10                  see how these funds were allocated. Provide  
11                  the invoices. Thank you.

12                  MR. WECHSLER: Marie Schumacher.

13                  MS. SCHUMACHER: Good evening.  
14                  Marie Schumacher. First tonight, since  
15                  there is only one week left before your  
16                  five-week vacation, I'd like to question the  
17                  double pension. It was almost a month ago  
18                  that Councilman Rogan said, "I look forward  
19                  to reviewing the documents and to looking  
20                  into if council should hold hearings based  
21                  on the findings. It's possible we could use  
22                  it to issue subpoenas to key people involved  
23                  in the scandal."

24                  When is that -- are we going to get  
25                  a report on that.



1 MR. ROGAN: We still haven't  
2 received the documents yet. I know Attorney  
3 Minora has been --

4 MS. SCHUMACHER: Who is following up  
5 on it?

6 MR. ROGAN: Attorney Minora has been  
7 going back and forth with the state police  
8 regarding the agreement to release the  
9 documents to us, but none of us have seen  
10 them yet.

11 MS. SCHUMACHER: Do you have an ECD  
12 for when they are going to arrive?

13 MR. ROGAN: Attorney Minora?

14 MR. MINORA: Myself and the council  
15 for the Pennsylvania State Police agreed to  
16 -- he agreed to allow us to review the  
17 investigative reports subject to, you know,  
18 the --

19 MS. SCHUMACHER: But when, yeah.

20 MR. MINORA: He then told me he  
21 would be unavailable to prepare an order for  
22 the Court to sign for several weeks and that  
23 on his return to the office he would begin  
24 that work and he and I would review it  
25 before submitting to the Court for signature

1 so we don't have a Court order yet. That's  
2 what's holding it up.

3 MS. SCHUMACHER: Thank you. Eating  
4 up most of my time. Okay, 400 block of  
5 Clay, will the perpetrators be sued for the  
6 cost if they are found guilty? Yes or no?  
7 Whoever has got that committee? Who has got  
8 police and fire?

9 MR. PERRY: I'm not sure, but I'll  
10 get an answer for you by next week.

11 MS. SCHUMACHER: Thank you. Now,  
12 the exit plan, I would like to ask, because  
13 it's very important, last week I asked  
14 Mr. Evans a question that is the first  
15 non-compliance with one of the --  
16 approximately 65 recommendations of PEL in  
17 the exit plan, I would seriously like next  
18 week for you people to start early or take  
19 an extra hour to read through every one of  
20 those recommendations and then tell we, the  
21 people, which ones you are going to ignore  
22 and which ones you are going to pursue  
23 because that's what we ought to judge that  
24 on, and I don't think it looks very helpful  
25 for most of them or does it look helpful for



1           digging up make a patch and it was PAWC and  
2           they took out a beautiful piece of concrete  
3           and slapped, and I mean slapped, some madam  
4           and I said, "Wait a minute, you guys are  
5           replacing --" "Oh, we'll be back to fix  
6           it."

7                         Not only have they not been back, I  
8           mean, it's not my property, but if the owner  
9           is happy with it, but to take out somebody's  
10          cement that somebody has paid for and then  
11          replace it with bumpy old just not even  
12          rolled sidewalk, it's terrible. And I  
13          noticed that I believe it was this week or  
14          very soon that the contract or the bids are  
15          due in on this years and I really think we  
16          need a new process. We need to get  
17          affidavits from each of the utilities before  
18          that list is put out to bid that they are  
19          not planning any utility work. I would  
20          really like somebody to take mand I'll only  
21          take a minute on this, last years list of  
22          the street that were paved, ask DPW to go  
23          out and see which of them have been dug up  
24          or are marked for being dug up because I  
25          think it's a pretty high percentage and I

1 don't want to see that happen again, and I  
2 appreciate your consideration on my request  
3 tonight. Thank you.

4 MR. WECHSLER: Anyone else?

5 MR. DOBRZYN: Good evening, Council.  
6 Dave Dobrzyn, resident and taxpayer. On our  
7 lawsuit announced yesterday, we need  
8 Mr. Abrahamsen to drop it without prejudice.  
9 He is the one that failed to come up with  
10 the records for how long and things get a  
11 little shrill sometimes for -- mostly from  
12 the audience, but also from council, but  
13 sometimes that's the only way people hear  
14 you, so please stop harassing our local  
15 watch dogs.

16 I just thought I'd bring this up  
17 tonight, there hasn't been any Saturday or  
18 Sunday excursions outside of the rail yard  
19 at Steamtown and I wouldn't bother with the  
20 Park Service so much as I would talk to the  
21 administration, they have an administrator.  
22 The employees aren't at liberty to discuss  
23 park business with the public. So last year  
24 we seen -- received an announcement on how  
25 much it generated economic activity and so

1           forth and this year there hasn't been one  
2           excursion out of the Steamtown yard and, of  
3           course, once again they're a tax exempt  
4           entity so I do love Steamtown myself, but  
5           tax exempts are increasing which brings me  
6           back to my -- one my weekly comments.

7                     They are increasing. It's time we  
8           get to Court. There is too many and the  
9           state and the county and I had hoped that  
10          somebody was here to hear this, want to  
11          compensate us for them that would be great.  
12          I don't care if 80 percent of the town  
13          becomes tax exempt, but I can't pay for 80  
14          percent of the town to be tax exempt, so I  
15          don't know what to do about it, but we  
16          should be exploring Federal Court because we  
17          have to bypass the parties that are  
18          responsible.

19                    And I also agree with recent speaker  
20          about other money that was never -- we were  
21          never compensated for with the expansion of  
22          the upgrades and stuff on the sewer. They  
23          got both quite a deal and as far as I  
24          remember three councilmen voted against it  
25          and one, unfortunately, didn't even make it

1           against them dissolving or selling the  
2           authority at the December meeting. And,  
3           unfortunately, didn't get voted for  
4           reelection -- or a reelection run.

5                       And this rental registration  
6           business, I didn't see -- I get a little  
7           fascinated with some thousand horsepower  
8           plus cars last Sunday and I didn't get to  
9           see the Sunday night and then I forgot the  
10          council at 2:30 Monday and I hear there were  
11          some comments after I left on rental  
12          registration and then so forth and we really  
13          have to hunt these people down and we have  
14          to make sure they are paying their trash  
15          fees. We can't afford to carry out-of-town  
16          landlords and whatever, and pay to throw is  
17          not going to work. People just won't pay  
18          it, they will throw it and we'll have a  
19          messy town.

20                       I rode bike a lot along the old Erie  
21          line along East Mountain and above the  
22          bridge going over 307 huge piles of  
23          shingles, construction debris. I seen a guy  
24          in a pickup truck driving with king size  
25          mattress on the back, now, what was he doing

1 back, that was back going south and it's an  
2 excellent bike trail so riding the bicycle,  
3 and you don't have to worry about too many  
4 cars, but the point being that after that I  
5 started carrying a pencil and paper so I  
6 could record their license, but  
7 unfortunately, I have a problem here I can't  
8 do anything this summer. I haven't  
9 exercised at all.

10 And, don't forget, if you not happy  
11 with your candidates, Dubchef for dictator,  
12 and by the way, I'm not a hippie, I'm a  
13 Anthracite Hillbilly, dang it.

14 MS. JEFFERIES: Good evening,  
15 Council. My name is Norma Jefferies, and  
16 I'd like to say recently that I'm a longtime  
17 resident, native Scrantonian and I'm a  
18 taxpayer as well.

19 And I want begin tonight by thanking  
20 council for the opportunity to renew and to  
21 refresh my mind on the city government  
22 process. It has been a long time since I  
23 had my civic classes in high school, so over  
24 the past few months that I have been  
25 attending council meetings I have heard some



1 good things and I have heard some not so  
2 good things, not only from council members,  
3 but also from those citizens who take their  
4 time to investigate what concerns them and  
5 to bring it here and to voice their  
6 concerns, so I thank them as well for their  
7 time that they put into the issues that they  
8 are concerned with. If we were all on the  
9 same page with the various issues, how  
10 boring would life be? But as we listen to  
11 each other we have to again remember that we  
12 should respect each other's point of view.

13 So now for my concern, as I was here  
14 a few months ago and I gave my spreadsheet  
15 on these street signs, I have not seen any  
16 activity at all on the street signs. I know  
17 that it was turned down by the mayor, and if  
18 the mayor is listening tonight or if one of  
19 his staff members hears my plea, maybe I  
20 need to make a call to the Mayor of  
21 Scranton, but I recently accompanied, and I  
22 think, Mr. Evans, you gave the presentation  
23 on the small city media and the kiosks they  
24 want to put downtown and it seems great. I  
25 did look it up on the internet, and I did

1 look into it. It looks like it's going to  
2 be a great idea, how many smart phones do we  
3 have? I think we all have a smart phone in  
4 our purse or in our pocket, but what good is  
5 these kiosks if the people can't get there?  
6 If when they get ready to look at the street  
7 signs.

8 So the other day I pulled over with  
9 my smart phone on one of the streets that  
10 don't have a sign up and I thought what does  
11 it say when I go in to look on my smart  
12 phone? Fortunately, it does say what street  
13 it is even though it's not posted.

14 So, like I said, I just think that  
15 the kiosks are a great idea, but I just have  
16 confidence that you and the panel are going  
17 to do what needs to be done just to refresh  
18 the city. When you pass Blakely and  
19 Greenridge Street and they did all of that  
20 activity up there and they put up new street  
21 signs, and I thought they don't have be that  
22 big, but they could put a sign up for us.

23 And like I was saying, it wasn't  
24 just me, it's new people coming to town.  
25 It's, you know, the University I'm sure

1           there is lot of students that live up that  
2           way and I'm sure that they, too, would like  
3           to see street signs and, Mr. Gaughan, you as  
4           well know that the neighborhood association  
5           has been begging for that.

6                         So I come tonight because this time  
7           next week I'm going to be on vacation so I  
8           thought, oh, if I'm going to do anything I  
9           better get up here and say it tonight, and  
10          I'm hoping that by the time we return in the  
11          fall that there will be some kind of  
12          activity going on with the street signs and  
13          I know that you are going on vacation as  
14          well, so I wish you a great vacation as I'm  
15          planning mine to have so thank you.

16                       MR. WECHSLER:  Anyone else?

17                       MS. REED:  FIFTH ORDER.  5-A.

18                       MOTIONS.

19                       MR. WECHSLER:  Mr. Perry?

20                       MR. PERRY:  Yes, thank you.  I have  
21          a couple of things here to catch up on.  We  
22          are still going back and forth with  
23          correspondence between the city, Director  
24          Gallagher and PennDOT regarding the  
25          crosswalk that we would like installed on

1 Birney Avenue in the Minooka section. Right  
2 now we are at the stages of getting with  
3 PennDOT to coordinate a detour and a traffic  
4 pattern. This city is not equipped to  
5 handle such detour for such a busy street  
6 and we want to coordinate the efforts with  
7 PennDOT while the paving is being done so we  
8 can get this done in one shot. It's  
9 obviously not the first crosswalk that was  
10 ever going to be installed so there has to  
11 be something in place on how we divert  
12 traffic and make it safe for the residents  
13 while this is getting done. So, again,  
14 that's still something that's going forward  
15 and Director Gallagher is confident that  
16 something will be worked out and we'll get  
17 this taken care of.

18 Lori, also, if we could, we made a  
19 request to Chief Graziano probably about two  
20 months ago for a speed indicator that is  
21 located on Pittston Avenue to be moved to  
22 Birney Avenue and if we do that in lieu of  
23 the crosswalk until then, that might help  
24 lower some of the speeding that's being  
25 taken care of. I know the issue with the

1 speed indicator on Pittston Avenue was there  
2 to collect data and he said it was a 30-day  
3 data collecting process. I don't know if  
4 they got enough data, I don't know if they  
5 wanted to extend it for a reason, if we  
6 could follow-up with that and see if we can  
7 get that back on schedule and have it moved  
8 to the other part of city that would be  
9 greatly appreciated.

10 I'll also given the mayor's office a  
11 call on the follow-up on the request for the  
12 proposal for those street signs. I remember  
13 when we talked about this maybe two months  
14 ago, maybe even a little bit longer ago,  
15 that the response I got from Mayor  
16 Courtright was it was something too big for  
17 DPW to take on themselves and he wanted to  
18 put an RFP out on street signs. I wasn't  
19 given a timeframe. I'll see if I can hold  
20 him down to a timeframe of when he plans on  
21 putting that RFP together and when he plans  
22 on putting that out, and maybe if we can do  
23 that they will help us push this along a  
24 little bit.

25 I was born and raised in Minooka,

1           which is really close to South Side and  
2           actually part of South Side and I still --  
3           I'll take Prospect all the way down to River  
4           Street and, you know, every street sign is  
5           worse than the other, you know, and I have  
6           been there for 42 years so it's definitely  
7           understandable and I think all of us share  
8           some of that frustration, and as you brought  
9           up, that phone app, which is good for  
10          pedestrians but the last thing we want to do  
11          is someone drive through the street looking  
12          at their phone, you know, what street am I  
13          on so that's obviously not a viable option  
14          as far as safety goes, but we'll see if we  
15          can get this moving along for us all.

16                   Was there anything else I had? Ms.  
17          Schumacher, I'll follow up and see if we can  
18          get an answer for you next week. It  
19          shouldn't be take. I don't want to give the  
20          opinion that the police will give, but I'll  
21          get the answer from the person who has it  
22          and pass that onto you.

23                   And then I just want to touch on  
24          something that came up about Councilman  
25          Gaughan in the paper about that slander

1 issue. That, my friends, is a slippery  
2 slope. If we allow something like this to  
3 take place what does that do to the core of  
4 our democracy? Now, I'm not a lawyer. I  
5 don't know if there was slander which, you  
6 know, correct me if I'm wrong means that  
7 there was damages incurred, I don't know,  
8 but if he wants to go through with this, you  
9 know, that would be something for a judge to  
10 decide and be hashed out in the courts.  
11 But, you know, if it's Mr. Gaughan today,  
12 it's Mr. Rogan tomorrow. It's not the  
13 correct way to handle things. You can not,  
14 and again, it's my opinion, I'm not speaking  
15 for the body, I'm speaking for myself, Tim  
16 Perry, that this is not how we want to  
17 handle things. If there is an issue then we  
18 need to bring it into a more personal level,  
19 but, you know, to put this on a city  
20 councilman is the not the right way to go.

21 I mean, Councilman Gaughan and I  
22 don't see eye-to-eye on every issue. I  
23 believe you said it, if we did it would be  
24 borrowing. There is that saying that goes  
25 most of us agree with half of the things

1 each other do, and if you agree with 70  
2 percent then you should vote for me. If you  
3 agree with ten out of ten then you should  
4 have your head examined. We are never going  
5 to agree on everything, but he does sit up  
6 here and he does put his heart and soul into  
7 the work and that needs to be respected. I  
8 just don't think that was the right tactic  
9 take by Mr. Abrahamsen. But, again, that's  
10 his choice to make and, you know, we'll see  
11 where this goes. That's all I have today.

12 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you, Mr. Perry.  
13 Mr. Rogan?

14 MR. ROGAN: Yes, a couple of brief  
15 items. First regarding the 2016 audit,  
16 although we haven't had a chance to review  
17 the audit in detail at this point, I do want  
18 to note that the audit for the first time in  
19 a long time was on time, and regarding  
20 setting budgets, the city needs to have an  
21 audit to do a budget and that's where the  
22 city went off track for a number of years  
23 having audits that came out after budgets  
24 were even written, so having a chance to  
25 review the previous year's audit before



1 writing next year's budget is certainly  
2 something that will be helpful in the  
3 budgetary process.

4 I do agree, and I forget which  
5 speaker brought it up, but I do agree that  
6 council should have a session with the  
7 auditors to go over the summary of the audit  
8 and in particular any findings that are in  
9 the audit to let us know exactly where  
10 things need to be tightened up. I know the  
11 administration, the Finance Chair and  
12 council generally have it, but I think all  
13 five members of council should have that  
14 chance to meet with the auditors and go  
15 through all of those documents and answer  
16 any questions that we have as well.

17 The double pension scandal was  
18 brought up again tonight, and I thank  
19 Attorney Minora for his work on this. I  
20 assure you I will be continuing to work on  
21 this issue for the month of August. I think  
22 Attorney Minora is getting sick of my phone  
23 calls every other day asking when are we  
24 going to receive the documents, but I know  
25 he is working diligently to get those

1 documents to us. The concern that I do have  
2 is what we can do with those documents when  
3 we receive them. I know there are going to  
4 be restrictions placed on how much we can or  
5 can't say regarding what's found in those  
6 reports, but I am very anxious to read them  
7 and hopefully will be something through  
8 August we will and be able to about through  
9 and provide some sort of report if we  
10 legally can when we come back into session.

11 One of the speakers brought up on  
12 taxes, particularly school property taxes,  
13 and this is issue that I hear all of the  
14 time from a lot of senior citizens who  
15 haven't a child in the school system in  
16 decades or people who never married or never  
17 had children, that they are paying very high  
18 school taxes and they are not receiving  
19 anything from it. And they often say, well,  
20 my neighbor rents, they don't pay property  
21 taxes, they have six children and they are  
22 not paying and I'm paying for them. That's  
23 something I hear every day throughout the  
24 city, and as everyone knows your school  
25 taxes are the highest portion of your tax

1 bill, they always have been and,  
2 unfortunately, the financial situation with  
3 the school district saying it looks like as  
4 the city finances are improving the school  
5 districts finances are, unfortunately,  
6 deteriorating, but there is something that  
7 can be done and this is on the state level.  
8 And I'm glad this was brought up, I haven't  
9 brought it up in a number of months, there a  
10 Senate Bill 76 which would eliminate school  
11 property taxes in the entire State of  
12 Pennsylvania and replace them with an  
13 increased income tax and increased sales tax  
14 on non-essential items. So, for instance,  
15 your food, your clothing, all of those items  
16 would still remain completely tax free in  
17 the State of Pennsylvania, but luxury items,  
18 items that aren't necessities people will be  
19 paying taxes.

20 The beauty of this law, which what I  
21 really love about it, it takes the burden  
22 off of senior citizens and takes the burden  
23 off of homeowners, but anyone who is going  
24 out and making purchases of non-essential  
25 items will then be paying school taxes,

1 where under the current system that's not  
2 the case.

3 So I would encourage everyone to  
4 contact your state representative and state  
5 senators and ask them to support Senate Bill  
6 76 and some sort of tax relief from the  
7 state budget.

8 Finally, reassessment was brought up  
9 again, and I have spoken at length about  
10 this issue for numerous weeks. I do want to  
11 reiterate one point though, and this is what  
12 really bothers me most about our current  
13 system, even in a perfect world if school  
14 property taxes were done away with, as I  
15 suggested, you still have a city tax and for  
16 purposes of reassessment we still have the  
17 county tax, and the county tax is really  
18 where I think the reassessment is unfair to  
19 the City of Scranton not having a  
20 reassessment is unfair to the City of  
21 Scranton. There has been tremendous  
22 building outside of the city in the last 40  
23 years since the last assessment and that's  
24 not being taken and accounted for. It needs  
25 to be balanced out.

1                   And the other issue that really  
2                   bothers me about the current system is  
3                   individuals who have the means, who have the  
4                   money, who have the connections, the  
5                   attorneys they are lining up down at the  
6                   county courthouse to appeal their taxes  
7                   where the average person who has lived in  
8                   their home for 10, 20, 30, 40 years in the  
9                   city they don't have an attorney, they can't  
10                  afford an attorney and they don't know how  
11                  to file the appeal to have their taxes  
12                  possibly reduce their assessment. That is  
13                  one of the things that really does bother me  
14                  about the current system, and I do know I  
15                  think the commissioners proposed, and I  
16                  think it was rescinded, increasing the fees  
17                  to appeal your taxes and that's something I  
18                  certainly oppose.

19                  I am pleased that the voters of  
20                  Lackawanna County in Scranton will have the  
21                  final say regarding reassessment. I think  
22                  there might be some court challenges whether  
23                  that does go on the ballot or not, but at  
24                  this point it does look like the voters will  
25                  have the last say and whether we agree or

1 disagree the majority is going to rule and  
2 that's how it should be. So that is all I  
3 have for tonight. Thank you.

4 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you, Mr. Rogan.  
5 Mr. Evans?

6 MR. EVANS: Thank you. First of  
7 all, I'm sorry that the clock ran out on  
8 Commissioner Cummings, I had several  
9 comments and questions for her so I hope to  
10 continue that conversation and if my  
11 schedule permits I may even show up at the  
12 next commissioner's meeting.

13 With that said, back to the sewer  
14 transaction. Since the mayor is in a giving  
15 mode this week as far as getting out  
16 information on the sewer-related  
17 transaction, so I look forward to reading  
18 that documentation. Again, I have been  
19 repeating, but quite frankly, I'm starting  
20 to feel like every single day is like  
21 groundhog day as it relates to the  
22 post-closing issues of the Sewer Authority  
23 transaction.

24 On June 22 the mayor held his town  
25 hall meeting. On June 29, I asked that a

1 letter be sent to clarify the mayor's  
2 statement and his statement printed on the  
3 Power Point presentation. That statement  
4 was simply that the money spent during the  
5 contract period was for mandated work that  
6 the Sewer Authority and that all of the work  
7 was fully documented. At that time, I  
8 thought finally after asking that question  
9 for nearly six months we are going to have  
10 the answer we are looking for. After all,  
11 that was up on the big screen for everybody  
12 to see and the mayor repeating his  
13 statement. All of the mandated work was  
14 fully documented. Well, here we are four  
15 weeks after the town hall meeting, nearly  
16 seven months after the close of the  
17 transaction, and still no documentation and  
18 I feel like we are no where. Again every  
19 day is groundhog day.

20 So, Mrs. Reed, if you can, send a  
21 follow-up letter to the mayor to get a  
22 status report of the fully documented  
23 mandated work that was performed during the  
24 contract period and when we might expect to  
25 see those documents.

1                   Also, on the audit, I would be  
2                   remiss if I did not recognize the hard work  
3                   of the Office of the Business Administrator  
4                   in getting the audit completed by July 11,  
5                   particularly, Rebecca Macgonal has been the  
6                   primary point person on this annual project  
7                   the last several years. Because of her  
8                   efforts and the efforts of others we have  
9                   seen significant improvements each year in  
10                  the completion date of the audit. This is  
11                  another example in my mind of successful  
12                  public partner -- public/private partnership  
13                  of city government.

14                  And, finally, I want to talk briefly  
15                  about the notification of a lawsuit against  
16                  Councilman Gaughan for slander by the  
17                  mayor's special council. This lawsuit is  
18                  wrong and if successful it could have a  
19                  dramatic and chilling effect on the very  
20                  principle of free speech, especially as it  
21                  relates to public officials and the  
22                  fundamental right of every elected official  
23                  to ask hard questions and demand  
24                  accountability of others while we are  
25                  representing the taxpayers and the citizens



1 of Scranton. So, for the record, I stand  
2 with Councilman Gaughan. That's all I have.

3 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you, Mr. Evans.  
4 Mr. Gaughan.

5 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, thank you. Just  
6 a few citizen's requests. There are several  
7 quality of life issues in the 700 block of  
8 Brook Street in South Scranton so we sent  
9 that to the Licensing and Inspections  
10 Department. I did receive several  
11 complaints from residents in the area of the  
12 100 block of South Bromley Avenue. They are  
13 having issues with a condemned home there so  
14 we are going to also send that to the  
15 Licensing and Inspections Department.

16 We sent a second request for  
17 flooding issues on East Mountain in the 1300  
18 block of Birch Street. We are still  
19 researching the signage for parks detailing  
20 rules and regulations. This request came  
21 from the East Mountain Neighborhood  
22 Association meeting that Councilman Wechsler  
23 and I attended.

24 Mrs. Reed and I have been trying to  
25 correct a problem on along Third Avenue with

1 a fence that is very dangerous. A gentleman  
2 who reached out to us over a year ago is  
3 continually hearing concerns. The land  
4 apparently is owned by the Scranton  
5 Redevelopment Authority and we are working  
6 with the SRA to try and resolve this issue.

7 Mrs. Jefferies, who spoke this  
8 evening about street signage, I don't  
9 understand why the signs that you have  
10 identified, which I don't think were -- I  
11 think it was maybe over 20, somewhere in the  
12 area of 20, yeah, I don't understand why in  
13 the interim they just can't simply be  
14 replaced or be put up, so I would ask that  
15 we send a letter to the DPW asking them to  
16 do that, to put those signs up and to repair  
17 the ones that Ms. Jefferies has identified,  
18 because I do agree with her traveling  
19 throughout the city, especially the Hill  
20 Section, is very difficult if you are not  
21 from the area or you are not familiar with  
22 the neighborhood to find out where you are  
23 going, so hopefully they can take care of  
24 that.

25 As for Mr. Evans request on the \$12

1 million, you know, I just have to say that  
2 the fact that we have to continue to ask for  
3 this information repeatedly time and time  
4 again is appalling and disgraceful. The  
5 letters that we're sending out, I've found  
6 this over the last 3 1/2 years, they are  
7 about as worthless as the paper that are  
8 written on, and I think I have a better  
9 chance of talking to one of the mayors or  
10 getting information out one the mayors in  
11 one of the picture frames here on these  
12 walls in city council chambers, and I don't  
13 take that lightly at all.

14 In regard to the notice of the  
15 potential lawsuit that may be filed against  
16 me for slander by Ned Abrahamsen I just want  
17 to reiterate my belief that this lawsuit is  
18 not only frivolous, but it's clearly an  
19 attempt to bully me and to put a muzzle on  
20 me so that I stop asking questions. This is  
21 not going to work. And I want to thank  
22 Councilman Perry and Councilman Evans for  
23 standing with me tonight.

24 This lawsuit will not detour me from  
25 demanding transparency for the taxpayers of

1           this city and, quite frankly, I believe it  
2           would be a dereliction of duty if I did not  
3           question everything that comes before me as  
4           a city councilman. I am simply doing the  
5           job that I was elected by the people of this  
6           city to do. This potential lawsuit is not  
7           only an attack on my ability to speak freely  
8           at council meetings, question and scrutinize  
9           things, but it is an attack on every elected  
10          official throughout Lackawanna County who  
11          may dare question those in government or in  
12          a position of power and influence.

13                    You know, the ironic thing about  
14                    this potential lawsuit is that it cost  
15                    Mr. Abrahamsen who, by the way, has been  
16                    detailed that he made \$400,000 as special  
17                    counsel to the city cost him nothing to file  
18                    this lawsuit, but it may cost the taxpayers  
19                    of Scranton a lot of money.

20                    I'm glad Mr. Abrahamsen's invoices  
21                    have finally been released for work  
22                    performed on the sewer sale, but I find it  
23                    extremely unfortunate and concerning that  
24                    Mayor Courtright and the Sewer Authority  
25                    disregarded my request and my colleagues'

1 request for this information for months.  
2 I'm still reviewing the invoices, but I  
3 anticipate I'll have further questions.

4 One of the questions I have based on  
5 my initial review is when was the document  
6 detail work perform performed on the sewer  
7 sale by Mr. Abrahamsen, who submitted it to  
8 the Scranton Times, generated. So I would  
9 like to know when that document was exactly  
10 generated. The data on the document says  
11 July 17. Was this work being documented as  
12 it was performed or after the fact?

13 Also, what date, time and place did  
14 the mayor and Mr. Shrive tell Mr. Abrahamsen  
15 to go to work, as he was quoted in the  
16 newspaper, and when was the officially hired  
17 by the mayor and Mr. Shrive as special  
18 counsel?

19 I continue to believe that this is  
20 bad government to have someone make \$400,000  
21 without an actual contract detailing what  
22 work would be performed. And, finally,  
23 lawsuit or no lawsuit I will continue to  
24 stand my ground and I will not back down.  
25 Thank you.

1 MR. WECHSLER: Yeah, I also would  
2 request that Attorney Abrahamsen drop this  
3 suit. Scranton City Council as a body has  
4 been pursuing this issue since January. We  
5 have had been writing letters, going to  
6 meetings, requesting the Auditor General,  
7 requesting the State Attorney General to  
8 look into it, and Mr. Gaughan is asking  
9 questions that we have all asked. It's all  
10 the same questions. There is really no  
11 different questions than we asked in  
12 January. The best thing for me would be to  
13 suggest that we need to release everything.  
14 This dribs and drabs that's coming out  
15 weekly and bit by bit, the best way all of  
16 the information has to be released, and as  
17 was echoed here tonight I don't believe that  
18 the suit against Mr. Gaughan is a good idea.  
19 All of us here ask the same questions, so I  
20 don't know why we weren't involved in the  
21 same suit, we asked the same questions.

22 As we saw tonight, we do our work up  
23 here to make sure that we are doing things  
24 properly. We had some comments tonight  
25 about how -- what we are doing up here is

1 illegal. You know, the thing is we checked  
2 with city solicitor, we checked with our own  
3 solicitor, we have done some research, there  
4 is four or five of these different deals  
5 going on in the State of Pennsylvania right  
6 now. Everything that we are doing right now  
7 we have been told is legal. Our job as  
8 legislators is to take the legislation as  
9 presented to us by the mayor and we either  
10 approve it or we disapprove it. In my  
11 particular case, we have looked at it last  
12 week, we asked questions of this transaction  
13 is using the proceeds was legal and we were  
14 told that we were. I would rather save \$1.5  
15 million as we did last week by refinancing  
16 the bonds and go on what we have known as we  
17 were told is true. I can't make my decision  
18 saying, "I think it's illegal or I think  
19 it's wrong," we don't have an opportunity  
20 here. We only have the opportunity to do  
21 what we are told is legal and right and  
22 that's what we do here.

23 And we'll see how it proceeds and  
24 there are lawsuits that perhaps, I don't  
25 think so, but perhaps it wasn't legal, but

1 right now the money has been spent. We have  
2 authorized to spend the money. The  
3 financial institutions that we are dealing  
4 with are satisfied that we are making  
5 financial process, the Pennsylvania Economy  
6 League is satisfied that we are making  
7 financial progress, so for us not to use the  
8 proceeds and wait to be sued to me is  
9 irresponsible.

10 And people can come and yell and  
11 scream at me all night long if they want to  
12 and we made the right decision with this.  
13 We are spending the money wisely, as we said  
14 we would, and I think that's our  
15 responsibility as councilmen.

16 But just to sum up, it's also our  
17 responsibility to ask questions and we can't  
18 be limited by the questions that we ask. As  
19 Mr. Gaughan knows better than most, he asks  
20 a lot of questions and lot of them go  
21 unanswered, but the fact is we still have to  
22 be able to ask questions. Threatening of a  
23 lawsuit I don't think is proper. We talked  
24 about the relationship that council and the  
25 administration has tried to develop, a



1 lawsuit suing one of our members, and as was  
2 said, we are body. If you sue one member as  
3 far as I'm concerned you are suing all of  
4 us. So I would ask Attorney Abrahamsen to  
5 drop this suit so we can get back to doing  
6 the business as we see fit by asking  
7 questions, waiting for answers most of the  
8 time, but I think we do have a  
9 responsibility to continue and ask these  
10 questions. That is all I have.

11 MR. PERRY: Mr. Wechsler, before we  
12 proceed I have piece that I forgot, if you  
13 don't mind?

14 MR. WECHSLER: Sure, go ahead.

15 MR. PERRY: We received a letter  
16 yesterday with 35 signatures petitioning to  
17 have a "No Through Traffic" sign on Muncy  
18 Avenue. The crux of the issue is that there  
19 is many vehicles traveling north on  
20 Greenridge Street using Muncy Avenue to  
21 avoid the traffic light at Sanderson Avenue.  
22 Many vehicles traveling on East Greenridge  
23 use Muncy to avoid the traffic light at  
24 Capouse Avenue. Many of the drivers of  
25 these vehicles drive at unsafe speeds and

1 this is in the 1500 block of Muncy Avenue.

2 If we could have this submitted to  
3 the police department and engineering  
4 department for a feasibility study just to  
5 see if this something that can actually be  
6 done. The street is narrow and we have  
7 traffic trying to bypass Greenridge there is  
8 legally cars allowed to park on both sides  
9 of the street and even with legal parking  
10 trucks of the large size aren't able to make  
11 the swing, and that's just becoming a  
12 problem over there, so if we could submit  
13 this on behalf of the 35 signatures to just  
14 take a look at this and see if we get a  
15 resolution with a no through traffic.  
16 That's all I have. Thank you for letting me  
17 make that addition.

18 MS. REED: 5-B. FOR INTRODUCTION -  
19 AN ORDINANCE - GRANTING DEED OF EASEMENTS  
20 AND RIGHTS-OF-WAY OVER PARCELS OF PROPERTY  
21 OWNED BY THE CITY OF SCRANTON AS NOTED BELOW  
22 IN CONNECTION WITH THE SCRANTON SEWER  
23 AUTHORITY'S SEWER/STORMWATER COLLECTION  
24 SYSTEM ACCESS AND MAINTENANCE EASEMENT.  
25 (EMERGENCY CERTIFICATE ATTACHED).

1 MR. WECHSLER: At this time, I'll  
2 entertain a motion that Item 5-B be  
3 introduced into its proper committee.

4 MR. ROGAN: So moved.

5 MR. EVANS: Second.

6 MR. WECHSLER: On the question? All  
7 those in favor of introduction signify by  
8 saying aye.

9 MR. PERRY: Aye.

10 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

11 MR. EVANS: Aye.

12 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

13 MR. WECHSLER: Aye. Opposed? The  
14 ayes have it and so moved.

15 MS. REED: 5-C. FOR INTRODUCTION – A  
16 RESOLUTION – AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND OTHER  
17 APPROPRIATE CITY OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE AND  
18 ENTER INTO THE SIXTH AMENDMENT TO THE  
19 FEDERAL AID BRIDGE PROJECT AGREEMENT NO.  
20 041222 BETWEEN THE COMMONWEALTH OF  
21 PENNSYLVANIA (“DEPARTMENT”) AND THE CITY OF  
22 SCRANTON (“MUNICIPALITY”) FOR THE PURPOSE OF  
23 INCREASING CONSTRUCTION FUNDING AND UPDATING  
24 STANDARD FEDERAL PROVISIONS OF THE ROCKWELL  
25 AVENUE BRIDGE PROJECT.

1 MR. WECHSLER: At this time, I'll  
2 entertain a motion that Item 5-C be  
3 introduced into its proper committee.

4 MR. ROGAN: So moved.

5 MR. EVANS: Second.

6 MR. WECHSLER: On the question? All  
7 those in favor of introduction signify by  
8 saying aye.

9 MR. PERRY: Aye.

10 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

11 MR. EVANS: Aye.

12 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

13 MR. WECHSLER: Aye. Opposed? The  
14 ayes have it and so moved.

15 MS. REED: 5-D. FOR INTRODUCTION -  
16 A RESOLUTION - AMENDING RESOLUTION NO. 133,  
17 2017 ENTITLED "AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND  
18 OTHER APPROPRIATE CITY OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE  
19 AND ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH PMA  
20 MANAGEMENT CORP. FOR CITY OF SCRANTON  
21 SELF-INSURED WORKERS' COMPENSATION AND HEART  
22 AND LUNG CLAIMS THIRD PARTY ADMINISTRATION  
23 FOR A PERIOD OF THREE (3) YEARS FROM APRIL  
24 1, 2017 THROUGH MARCH 31, 2020" TO INCLUDE  
25 EXHIBIT "C" TO THE CONTRACT.

1 MR. WECHSLER: At this time, I'll  
2 entertain a motion that Item 5-D be  
3 introduced into its proper committee.

4 MR. ROGAN: So moved.

5 MR. EVANS: Second.

6 MR. WECHSLER: On the question? All  
7 those in favor of introduction signify by  
8 saying aye.

9 MR. PERRY: Aye.

10 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

11 MR. EVANS: Aye.

12 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

13 MR. WECHSLER: Aye. Opposed? The  
14 ayes have it and so moved.

15 MR. EVANS: I make a motion to  
16 suspend the Rules and move Item 5-B to Sixth  
17 and Seventh Orders to be considered for  
18 final passage based on the attached  
19 emergency certificate.

20 MR. ROGAN: Second.

21 MR. WECHSLER: On the question? All  
22 those in favor of introduction signify by  
23 saying aye.

24 MR. PERRY: Aye.

25 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

1 MR. EVANS: Aye.

2 MR. WECHSLER: Aye. Opposed?

3 MR. GAUGHAN: No.

4 MR. WECHSLER: The ayes have it and  
5 so moved.

6 MS. REED: SIXTH ORDER. 6-A.

7 READING BY TITLE - FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO.  
8 111, 2017 - AN ORDINANCE - ADOPTING AND  
9 IMPLEMENTING THE ACT 47 EXIT PLAN FOR  
10 THE CITY OF SCRANTON PURSUANT TO THE  
11 FINANCIALLY DISTRESSED MUNICIPALITIES ACT;  
12 AND AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR OF THE CITY OF  
13 SCRANTON TO ISSUE AN ORDER DIRECTING THE  
14 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACT 47 EXIT PLAN WHICH  
15 WILL BECOME EFFECTIVE UPON ADOPTION ATTACHED  
16 HERETO AS EXHIBIT "A" IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE  
17 PROVISIONS OF 53 Pa. C.S.A. §11701.245, THE  
18 MUNICIPALITIES FINANCIAL RECOVERY ACT.

19 MR. WECHSLER: You've heard reading  
20 by title of Item 6-A, what is your pleasure?

21 MR. ROGAN: I move that Item 6-A  
22 pass reading by title.

23 MR. EVANS: Second.

24 MR. WECHSLER: On the question? All  
25 those in favor signify by saying aye.

1 MR. PERRY: Aye.

2 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

3 MR. EVANS: Aye.

4 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

5 MR. WECHSLER: Aye. Opposed? The  
6 ayes have it and so moved.

7 MS. REED: 6-B - FORMERLY 5-B -  
8 READING BY TITLE - FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO.  
9 112 2017 - AN ORDINANCE - GRANTING DEED OF  
10 EASEMENTS AND RIGHTS-OF-WAY OVER PARCELS OF  
11 PROPERTY OWNED BY THE CITY OF SCRANTON AS  
12 NOTED BELOW IN CONNECTION WITH THE SCRANTON  
13 SEWER AUTHORITY'S SEWER/STORMWATER  
14 COLLECTION SYSTEM ACCESS AND MAINTENANCE  
15 EASEMENT. (EMERGENCY CERTIFICATE ATTACHED).

16 . MR. WECHSLER: You've heard  
17 reading by title of Item 6-B, what is your  
18 pleasure?

19 MR. ROGAN: I move that Item 6-B  
20 pass reading by title.

21 MR. EVANS: Second.

22 MR. WECHSLER: On the question? All  
23 those in favor signify by saying aye.

24 MR. PERRY: Aye.

25 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

1 MR. EVANS: Aye.

2 MR. WECHSLER: Aye. Opposed?

3 MR. GAUGHAN: No.

4 MR. WECHSLER: The ayes have it and  
5 so moved.

6 MS. REED: SEVENTH ORDER. 7-A. FOR  
7 CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC  
8 WORKS - FOR ADOPTION - FILE OF THE COUNCIL  
9 NO. 110, 2017 - AN ORDINANCE - CLOSING AND  
10 VACATING A PORTION OF WRIGHT COURT BETWEEN  
11 LINDEN STREET AND THE FORMERLY VACATED  
12 PORTION OF WRIGHT COURT.

13 MR. WECHSLER: What is the  
14 recommendation of the Chairperson for the  
15 Committee on Public Works?

16 MR. GAUGHAN: As Chairperson for the  
17 Committee on Public Works, I recommend final  
18 passage of Item 7-A.

19 MR. ROGAN: Second.

20 MR. WECHSLER: On the question?  
21 Roll call, please?

22 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Perry.

23 MR. PERRY: Yes.

24 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

25 MR. ROGAN: Yes.



1 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

2 MR. EVANS: Yes.

3 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

4 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

5 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

6 MR. WECHSLER: Yes. I hereby

7 declare Item 7-A legally and lawfully

8 adopted.

9 If anyone who would like to address  
10 council on the emergency legislation you may  
11 do so at this time.

12 MS. REED: 7-B - FORMERLY 6-B - FOR  
13 CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC  
14 WORKS - FOR ADOPTION - FILE OF THE COUNCIL  
15 NO. 112 2017 - GRANTING DEED OF EASEMENTS  
16 AND RIGHTS-OF-WAY OVER PARCELS OF PROPERTY  
17 OWNED BY THE CITY OF SCRANTON AS NOTED BELOW  
18 IN CONNECTION WITH THE SCRANTON SEWER  
19 AUTHORITY'S SEWER/STORMWATER COLLECTION  
20 SYSTEM ACCESS AND MAINTENANCE EASEMENT.  
21 (EMERGENCY CERTIFICATE ATTACHED).

22 MR. WECHSLER: What is the  
23 recommendation of the Chairperson for the  
24 Committee on Public Works?

25 MR. GAUGHAN: As Chairperson for the

1                   Committee on Public Works, I recommend final  
2                   vote on Item 7-B.

3                   MR. ROGAN:    Second.

4                   MR. WECHSLER:  On the question?

5                   MR. GAUGHAN:  Yes, on the question,  
6                   I'll be voting "no" on this.  I know this is  
7                   probably routine, but I don't think feel  
8                   comfortable with this coming down with an  
9                   emergency certificate.  I feel that, you  
10                  know, I don't see the emergency and I would  
11                  have preferred if it had come down earlier  
12                  for adoption.  Thank you.

13                  MR. WECHSLER:  Roll call, please?

14                  MS. CARRERA:  Mr. Perry.

15                  MR. PERRY:    Yes.

16                  MS. CARRERA:  Mr. Rogan.

17                  MR. ROGAN:    Yes.

18                  MS. CARRERA:  Mr. Evans.

19                  MR. EVANS:    Yes.

20                  MS. CARRERA:  Mr. Gaughan.

21                  MR. GAUGHAN:  No.

22                  MS. CARRERA:  Mr. Wechsler.

23                  MR. WECHSLER:  Yes.  I hereby  
24                  declare Item 7-B legally and lawfully  
25                  adopted.

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If there is no further business,  
I'll entertain a motion to adjourn.

MR. ROGAN: Motion to adjourn.

MR. WECHSLER: Meeting adjourned.

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I hereby certify that the proceedings and evidence are contained fully and accurately in the notes of testimony taken by me at the hearing of the above-captioned matter and that the foregoing is a true and correct transcript of the same to the best of my ability.

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CATHENE S. NARDOZZI, RPR  
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