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1 SCRANTON CITY COUNCIL MEETING

2 PUBLIC HEARING - FILE OF COUNCIL NO. 108, 2007 -

3 APPROVING AND ACCEPTING THE CITY OF SCRANTON

4 CAPITAL BUDGET FOR THE YEAR 2008 PURSUANT TO

5 SECTION 904 OF THE CITY'S HOME RULE CHARTER.

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7

8 HELD:

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10 Tuesday, September 25, 2007

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12 LOCATION:

13 Council Chambers

14 Scranton City Hall

15 340 North Washington Avenue

16 Scranton, Pennsylvania

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25 CATHENE S. NARDOZZI- COURT REPORTER

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2 CITY OF SCRANTON COUNCIL:

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4 MS. JUDY GATELLI, PRESIDENT

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MS. JANET E. EVANS

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7 MS. SHERRY FANUCCI

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MR. ROBERT MCGOFF

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10 MR. WILLIAM COURTRIGHT

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MS. KAY GARVEY, CITY CLERK

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13 MS. SUE MAGNOTTA, ASSISTANT CITY CLERK

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MR. AMIL MINORA, SOLICITOR

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1 MS. GATELLI: I'd like to call the

2 public hearing to order. Roll call.

3 MS. GATELLI: I'd like to call the

4 public hearing to order. Roll call.

5 MS. MAGNOTTA: Mrs. Evans.

6 MRS. EVANS: Here.

7 MS. MAGNOTTA: Mrs. Fanucci.

8 MS. FANUCCI: Here.

9 MS. MAGNOTTA: Mr. McGoff.

10 MR. MCGOFF: Here.

11 MS. MAGNOTTA: Mr. Courtright.

12 MR. COURTRIGHT: Here.

13 MS. MAGNOTTA: Mrs. Gatelli.

14 MS. GATELLI: Here. The purpose of

15 the public hearing is to hear testimony on

16 the following: FILE OF COUNCIL NO.

17 108,2007 -- APPROVING AND ACCEPTING THE CITY  
18 OF SCRANTON CAPITAL BUDGET FOR THE YEAR 2008  
19 FOR PURSUANT TO 904 OF THE CITY'S HOME RULE  
20 CHARTER.

21 I don't have a sign-in sheet. Thank  
22 you. First speaker is Marie Schumacker.  
23 Please try to limit your comments to five  
24 minutes.

25 MS. SCHUMACKER: I'll do my best.

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1 Marie Schumacker. My comments again deal  
2 with the fact that it's not totally in  
3 compliance with Section 904 of the Home Rule  
4 Charter and we have gone over those issues  
5 and they are pretty much the same as former  
6 years, but my main concern is the capital  
7 budget is investing in the infrastructure of  
8 our city. It's the things that are going to  
9 last over time, over certain I believe I  
10 heard one of the assistant solicitors say  
11 three years or longer, so it's important to  
12 the city that we invest in our  
13 infrastructure. Look at the Harrison Avenue

14 bridge and the problems that's causing.  
15 There is plenty of infrastructure, our  
16 streets, but my primary concern is that the  
17 mayor has not been -- is that there are many  
18 missing projects from the capital budget.  
19 As I said last time, the police headquarters  
20 paving, only binder was in the contract for  
21 that headquarters so the finishing layer  
22 behind the police headquarters is totally  
23 binder, it's now been there for two years,  
24 this budget is for five years. I seriously  
25 doubt that that binder is going to last for  
. . .  
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1 seven years. It would be far more cost  
2 effective to put the finishing layer down  
3 now before the binder starts to break up and  
4 that should certainly be in the budget. It  
5 should have been in the initial project.  
6 The south side complex. People were  
7 promised a lighted replacement field. There  
8 is nothing in the budget for that  
9 replacement field. Robinson Park and East  
10 Scranton Little League, again, going back to

11 2002 and the \$72 million bond issue. The  
12 mayor clearly stated and listed the  
13 improvements that were going to be made up  
14 at Robinson Park, they have not been made.  
15 The structure that's there now has shingles  
16 missing again, you know, that could be  
17 simple maintenance, but the fact is he  
18 promised a quarter of a million dollars  
19 worth of investment there, a penny has not  
20 been invested and he has nothing in the  
21 budget for Robinson Park or East Scranton  
22 Little League which I believe also got short  
23 changed out of what was promised.  
24 OECD told HUD the Nay Aug greenhouse  
25 had been restored for use at the BEST  
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1 Program. That was an outright lie. I don't  
2 think a dime has been invested in that  
3 greenhouse, it looks like a good sneeze  
4 would take it down. I think the mayor needs  
5 to live up to his promise and restore that  
6 greenhouse and have it used. There was an  
7 issue of a handicap playground area at Nay

8 Aug. There is nothing in here for that.  
9 That would be equipment that should have  
10 been listed in the budget if it was done  
11 properly. The Nay Aug pool house I  
12 understand is out of spec with what it's  
13 supposed to be, that's not in the budget.  
14 And, since I have been a fond user of  
15 the Albright library for many, many years  
16 and I think the structure is beautiful, the  
17 staff is wonderful, the former Christian  
18 Science building is beautiful for the  
19 children's library, considering all of the  
20 things that are not in the budget I don't  
21 think we need to really go out and do  
22 anything new to build and to buy property to  
23 build a new library and combine the two.  
24 That is frivolous, needless and I don't  
25 think if the mayor tried to do something at

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1 Albright I don't think he is really fully  
2 informed on what kind of resistance he is  
3 going to meet for that, so I think there is  
4 lot, I could go on, there are still other

5 things that are not in this budget that have  
6 been promised or lied about and I think that  
7 needs to be corrected. I am somewhat  
8 troubled by the fact that most of it is,  
9 again, by the bond issue. I do understand  
10 the issue of long-term debt for something  
11 that's going to be involved, but the other  
12 thing that's not in, Mrs. Gatelli, that one  
13 budget meeting that the public was allowed  
14 to come to somebody spoke of the fact that  
15 under a grant the south side fire station is  
16 eligible for a new fire truck. That's not  
17 in here, and it should be. This is for  
18 equipment, that's a major piece of  
19 equipment. It could be provided at no cost  
20 with a grant and then that piece of  
21 equipment isn't there that could be flow  
22 down to someplace where it's less old or  
23 sold to someplace else that really has need.  
24 I mean, this is just something that was  
25 thrown together. It's an embarrassment and  
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1 it actually makes me very angry that such



2 little thought has going into it and it is  
3 out of compliance and I'll end my comments  
4 on that now. Thank you.

5 MS. GATELLI: Thank you. Mr. Quinn?

6 MR. QUINN: Ozzie Quinn, I'll speak  
7 on the capital improvements program, the  
8 \$21 million program, 16 million of it is  
9 through debt service, bonds. We cannot  
10 afford, okay, not with \$10 million is going  
11 to go for frills and parks, all right, and  
12 move into the municipal Albright Library.  
13 If you want to fix up the parks use what the  
14 sale of the muni funds were for. Put that  
15 into the parks, but we cannot afford one  
16 penny other than what we should have to do  
17 to fix up the roads and bridges and that is  
18 only \$1 million compared to what the parks.  
19 Now, something is askew here, it's crazy,  
20 okay, and it's a capital improvements  
21 budget, it's more or less like a frills  
22 budget. Capital improvements should be  
23 addressing the road, streets, the  
24 infrastructure. It shouldn't be -- then  
25 look at the other frills, but we are

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1 spending money again, we are going to be  
2 raising the taxes again and what he wants to  
3 do is float another bond issue for 16  
4 million of his \$21 million bond capital  
5 improvements program and we can't afford it.  
6 The taxpayers had it. Please, please revise  
7 that again, okay? Thank you.

8 MS. GATELLI: Thank you.

9 Mr. Sbaraglia.

10 MR. SBARAGLIA: Andy Sbaraglia,  
11 citizen of Scranton. I'm looking at  
12 bridges, roads, curbs and sidewalks.  
13 Improvements are needed within the City of  
14 Scranton's infrastructure, projects may  
15 include but not limited to street  
16 resurfacing, bridges, and reconstruction of  
17 sidewalks. Project costs, three million.  
18 Lackawanna Avenue bridge is going to cost  
19 7.5 million according to your own estimates,  
20 I hope that money is in place and this is  
21 just something different because if not you  
22 got seven and a half million dollars, this

23 three million will be nothing.

24 Okay. Now, it says improvement,

25 building improvement, improvements we needed

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1 for the buildings owned by the City of

2 Scranton. This includes city hall, DPW

3 complex and police headquarters. I thought

4 they were new buildings. Pray tell, why are

5 we having to poor money to improve something

6 we just built. In fact, we didn't even pay

7 for it, in fact, probably my grandchildren

8 will still be paying for it if I had any,

9 but I know yours will.

10 Okay, then we go onto City of

11 Scranton, 208 capital improvement plan, CIP

12 funded, 11-2-08 capital budget. It says

13 here, "Revenue from long-term debt,

14 \$16,500,000."

15 Does that mean he plans to borrow

16 \$16,500,000 more or where else is he is

17 going to get this from? So, actually, when

18 you approve this you are approving him

19 borrowing \$16,500,000.

20 MS. FANUCCI: No.

21 MR. SBARAGLIA: Well, it's in here,

22 right here.

23 MS. FANUCCI: No.

24 MR. SBARAGLIA: It says, "Revenue

25 from long-term debt." I mean, that money

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1 ain't going to come from debt, it has to

2 come from new debt, not from old debt, so,

3 hence, we've got \$16,500,000 that I heard

4 you all, I mean, somewhere along the line

5 you should get that clarified if he plans to

6 borrow \$16,500,000 or he has that somewhere

7 up in his pockets stored somewhere. I mean,

8 that's a nice sum. It would be nice to know

9 where that money is going to come from. And

10 really that's the only thing I inquire

11 because I know this is a dream plan. I

12 stood by and heard many of these things come

13 and go, and very little are really

14 accomplished. The only thing that ever got

15 accomplished when we borrowed all that money

16 and built the police headquarters and the

17 DPW site, just too bad we don't own it no  
18 more. I wish the landlord would fix  
19 whatever has to be fixed with the DPW site,  
20 but probably not, probably in the contract  
21 somewhere along we are responsible for all  
22 damages or improvements and so forth and so  
23 on, but we all know we don't own the DPW  
24 site. That's now owned by the Scranton  
25 Redevelopment Authority. Why that would be  
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1 owned by them is beyond me but that's the  
2 only thing I want to clarify, just if he  
3 plans to borrow \$16,500,000 I'd like to know  
4 it now, not later on. I thank you.

5 MS. GATELLI: Mr. Jackowitz.

6 MR. JACKOWITZ: Bill Jackowitz, South  
7 Scranton resident, member of the Scranton  
8 Lackawanna Taxpayers' Association and  
9 Citizen's Group. 2008 capital budget,  
10 projected cost for fire station equipment  
11 \$3 million. Bridges, roads, curbs and  
12 sidewalks \$3 million. Building improvements  
13 for city hall, DPW complex, police

14 headquarters 1.5 million. Park systems,  
15 Weston Field, Weston Park, Connell Park,  
16 Capouse Avenue pool and Novembrino Pool, Nay  
17 Aug Park, projected cost is \$10 million.  
18 I'm glad that this is just a wish list  
19 and really not the budget because where in  
20 the heck are we going to come up with  
21 \$21 million? Now, I'm no accountant and I'm  
22 no expert on budgets and I don't claim to  
23 be, but the way I look at this is we have 4  
24 1/2 million dollars up of the 21 million, so  
25 like Andy said we are \$16 million short.

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1 Where is the rest of the money going to come  
2 from, is this go to be Monopoly money, funny  
3 money? Where is it going to come from?  
4 This is something that you five need to  
5 answer before you vote on this, before you  
6 consider this, because we cannot afford to  
7 borrow any more money, and I hope we do not  
8 borrow any more money. We cannot afford to  
9 raise taxes and I hope you do not raise  
10 taxes again because right now the population

11 in Scranton is about 60,000 and I believe  
12 it's 60,500 people, and that includes --  
13 they include the Lackawanna County Prison  
14 into our population so I wonder how many of  
15 those 60,000 are prisoners, and we know they  
16 are not paying taxes, we are paying them to  
17 be there. We are paying for them. But,  
18 anyway, seriously, we need to really look at  
19 this because we are \$16 million short and if  
20 you are not going to borrow anymore money  
21 and you are not going to raise taxes someone  
22 needs to tell the citizens where this 16  
23 million is going to come from because we  
24 can't afford it anymore. Population is in  
25 decline, irregardless of what you say, what  
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1 you believe, the figures don't lie. I know  
2 you can manipulate figures, but these  
3 figures are not lying. The population is  
4 dying, is leaving, and they are doing both.  
5 They are dying and leaving. And that needs  
6 to be taking into consideration before you  
7 vote on this, that's why you were elected.

8 We put our support behind you when people  
9 voted for you. Now it's time for you to  
10 vote for the people, not for the mayor, he  
11 is only one person. His cabinet, they are  
12 only one, we got 60,000 people depending  
13 upon you five to vote not your conscience,  
14 but to vote for what's right because the  
15 city just cannot -- we just can't deal with  
16 it any longer and people are leaving and I'm  
17 glad that this is just a wish list, I'm glad  
18 this is just a Christmas list, call it  
19 whatever you want, I'm just glad it's not  
20 real. This is not reality, no where close  
21 is this reality. This is someone's vision,  
22 someone's fantasy, and that's what needs to  
23 be talked about because when the budget  
24 comes up and the borrowing comes up people  
25 will be paying attention and watching very

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1 closely as to what's going to happen and if  
2 you do it wrong, guess what, more people are  
3 going to leave the city and the population  
4 is going to decline even more.



5 MS. GATELLI: Thank you. Anyone

6 else? I now declare this public hearing

7 closed.

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1 CERTIFICATE

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

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CATHENE S. NARDOZZI  
15 OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER

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