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SCRANTON CITY COUNCIL MEETING

PUBLIC HEARING

IN RE: FILE OF COUNCIL NO. 56 - 2011, AS AMENDED,
APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR THE EXPENSES OF CITY GOVERNMENT
FOR THE PERIOD COMMENCING ON THE FIRST DAY OF JANUARY
2012 AND INCLUDING DECEMBER 31, 2012, BY THE ADOPTION
OF THE GENERAL CITY OPERATING BUDGET FOR THE YEAR 2012.

HELD:

Tuesday, December 13, 2011

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:

JANET EVANS, PRESIDENT

(Not present)

PAT ROGAN, VICE-PRESIDENT

ROBERT MCGOFF

FRANK JOYCE

JOHN LOSCOMBE

NANCY KRAKE, CITY CLERK

JAMIE MARCIANO, ASSISTANT CITY CLERK

BOYD HUGHES, SOLICITOR

1 MR. ROGAN: I'd like to call this
2 public hearing to order. Roll call, please.

3 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. McGoff.

4 MR. MCGOFF: Here.

5 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Rogan.

6 MR. ROGAN: Here.

7 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Loscombe.

8 MR. LOSCOMBE: Here.

9 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Joyce.

10 MR. JOYCE: Here.

11 MS. MARCIANO: Mrs. Evans.

12 MR. ROGAN: Mrs. Evans can called
13 me yesterday, she said she maybe a little
14 late for tonight's meeting, she isn't
15 feeling well.

16 Notice is hereby given that Scranton
17 City Council will hold a public hearing on
18 Tuesday, December 13, 2011, at 6 p.m. in
19 council chambers, second floor, municipal
20 building. The purpose of said public
21 hearing is to hear testimony and discuss the
22 following: FILE OF COUNCIL NO. 56 - 2011,
23 AS AMENDED, APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR THE
24 EXPENSES OF CITY GOVERNMENT FOR THE PERIOD
25 COMMENCING ON THE FIRST DAY OF JANUARY 2012

1 AND INCLUDING DECEMBER 31, 2012, BY THE
2 ADOPTION OF THE GENERAL CITY OPERATING
3 BUDGET FOR THE YEAR 2012.

4 I would like to remind all speakers
5 that comment during this period will just be
6 on budgetary matters and the general meeting
7 you can address any city business you would
8 like. The first speaker is Reverend Kathryn
9 Simmons.

10 MS. SIMMONS: I'm sorry, I didn't
11 look at the sheet outside, that's for
12 council.

13 MR. ROGAN: Okay. We'll have you
14 first for the next meeting. Doug Miller.
15 Bob Bolus.

16 MR. BOLUS: Good evening, Council.
17 Bob Bolus, Scranton.

18 MR. JOYCE: Good evening.

19 MR. BOLUS: Yesterday we kind of
20 discussed about the different
21 implementations that the city can make to
22 implement different plans and programs here
23 before you pass the budget. You know, if
24 you are going to do something with a budget
25 right now, and we'll talk more I guess later

1 on in the second half of this, you need to
2 take your assets and do something with them.

3 As I've said in the past, if you
4 have a boat that's sinking and you have a
5 bucket you can try and bail it out. In this
6 case for the city to stay afloat, it has to
7 use it's assets. It has to increase the tax
8 base, you are going to decrease tax rate.
9 You know, in order to do that you have to
10 use the assets that we have available that
11 we have ignored. It's only the way we are
12 going to bail the city out. Other than
13 that, the city is going to continue to sink.
14 You can't borrow to get out of debt and you
15 can't sit here assuming that the taxpayers
16 of this city getting hit three ways are
17 going to be able to survive.

18 Most people are on a fixed income
19 here. They are set where they are,
20 different benefits are going up, medical,
21 etcetera, you can't just keep doing what we
22 are doing here and take it out on the
23 employees of the city and the taxpayers.
24 You have a vast number of vacant places that
25 can be sold and generate capital. You can

1 make cuts, but in your planning in your
2 budget, as I said last night, put some
3 planning in to leave it open ended in the
4 budget that you could utilize these assets
5 to decrease the debt, to bring our people
6 back to work. Have an escape route. You
7 are not looking at. It's like closed in.

8 I don't agree with the real estate
9 transfer tax, it's bad enough to try and buy
10 a house in the city let alone keep paying
11 more and more to transfer the tax on it.
12 There are other avenues that you have
13 ignored, the administration definitely has
14 ignored, and you got to just take an open
15 mind. But I didn't hear anybody here say;
16 look, let's open end the budget that we
17 could get rid of assets, we could sell the
18 vacant land, build in 90 days or forfeit
19 what you spend for it. That's increasing
20 the tax base. That's only one little thing
21 to do. You had the leachate line, you got
22 the gas line, you got so many different
23 things that some creative thinking would do
24 other than just hammer the people.

25 Keep in mind you gave away, and this

1 council didn't do it, but it was given way
2 over 3 1/2 dollars plus the interest on the
3 golf course that was to be left for
4 recreation and it was squandered. It wasn't
5 utilized in it's best interest, it was
6 squandered.

7 Now you got parks closed, kids have
8 to stay out in the heat and couldn't swim
9 this year. These are the things that you
10 see being ignored on a daily basis and you
11 have to the power right now to make this
12 change happen. It's up to you guys to sit
13 here and take the bull by the horn. Put
14 politics to the side. This isn't about a
15 political race, this is about the people and
16 the businesses in this city that are being
17 destroyed. Not everybody can live like
18 those on a pension or their benefits are
19 paid for, people work to get somewhere in
20 life. Now they've gotten there and they
21 find out that their assets are being
22 diminished by utility companies and other
23 expenses out there that were unforeseen 15,
24 20, 30. Twenty-five, 30 years ago you were
25 told, gee, if you put this away you will

1 have \$25,000 when you retire. You can't
2 even buy a car today.

3 So those are the things you have to
4 look at, the attrition that's happening to
5 the people in this city, the morale that's
6 gone downhill. You think one of your police
7 officers should go out there and chase a guy
8 and take a chance of getting a bullet when
9 they are being discredited. Your police
10 chief should go out or your fire chief
11 should run into a building when he is only
12 getting paid 40 hours? You cannot take your
13 top management and pay them less than the
14 subordinates. This is the morale that you
15 are destroying in this City of Scranton.
16 Just put yourself in their shoes, put
17 yourself in the taxpayers' shoes and see
18 where they are, those that are in their 60's
19 70's and 80's, that can't even heat their
20 homes.

21 You have to open the budget, open it
22 open ended so you could utilize the decrease
23 in the assets that you have out here,
24 decrease the debt and you are going to move
25 forward. Other than that, you can talk all

1 night long in here you are not going
2 anywhere because next you're going to be
3 here, only a lot worse. Thank you.

4 MR. ROGAN: Thank you, Mr. Bolus.
5 Doug Miller.

6 MR. MILLER: Still the hearing on
7 the budget?

8 MR. ROGAN: Still the hearing.

9 MR. MILLER: That was for the
10 regular meeting.

11 MR. ROGAN: Okay. Sam Vitris.

12 MR. VITRIS: Okay, Sam Vitris,
13 International Aerospace Machinists,
14 president of Local Lodge 2305, deletion of
15 positions in the 2012 budget. Jack, I know
16 you understand this. Bob, I know you
17 understand this. Mr. Joyce and Mr. Rogan,
18 you eliminated snow drivers. The positions
19 that you took out of the budget are snow
20 drivers, so you are asking the people of the
21 Department of Public Works, right, to do
22 more with less, but you took our skilled
23 people off the streets. You took them right
24 out of the budget, what do you want us to do
25 now? And I want some answers, you are not

1 just going to -- you can't just sit there
2 and just say it's our turn to get laid off.
3 That is ridiculous.

4 MR. ROGAN: Mr. Vitris, our
5 amendments actually laid off fewer DPW
6 workers than the mayor's proposal.

7 MR. VITRIS: Pat, you are not
8 listening. You are closed minded. You laid
9 off snow drivers, guys who are skilled to
10 plow snow. Can you -- you have to have a
11 commercial driver's license. You have to be
12 skilled to do the job. It's not just
13 getting in your car and driving around in
14 the snowstorm looking at the flakes falling.
15 You got to know what you are doing or you
16 could kill somebody. You took our snow
17 people and our skilled people off the road.

18 There is nothing else I can say, but
19 somebody has to rectify this before this
20 vote goes through. It's terrible. All the
21 jobs I'm hearing, "It's your turn. It's
22 your turn to get laid off. Everybody else
23 got laid off and lost positions."

24 I understand that, but you are not
25 telling everybody the whole story. In

1 January we lost five bodies; am I right,
2 Mr. Joyce?

3 MR. JOYCE: Yes.

4 MR. VITRIS: We lost five bodies.
5 We lost another seven in casuals, so that's
6 12, the nine positions with the union that's
7 21; correct?

8 MR. JOYCE: Yes.

9 MR. VITRIS: Right?

10 MR. JOYCE: Actually --

11 MR. VITRIS: Wait now. Wait. Now
12 we lost -- we have 11 on workers' comp, now
13 we are at 32 less bodies. You want us to
14 provide the same service, and we didn't even
15 count for one guy taking off a sick day, one
16 guy taking off a vacation day or additional
17 injuries because the guys are going to be
18 out there longer and working harder.

19 So something needs to be done here
20 before the people of this city explode, and
21 it's coming, and if you are willing, because
22 you are the policy makers, if you willing to
23 do it and willing to go down that road and
24 have the courage, because I lived this
25 already back in 1991, I lived this when the

1 people were punished. We all still get our
2 paychecks. We are going to get our
3 paychecks every two weeks. You are going to
4 get yours, but the people of this city are
5 going to be punished because it's our turn
6 to get laid off. This has got to --
7 something has to be straightened out here
8 and I say this with all due respect to each
9 and every one of yous.

10 And supervisors, is there only a
11 Director of Public Works at DPW? Is that
12 all there is? So you are telling me that
13 the Director of Public Works is going to be
14 available 365 days a year, seven days a
15 week, 24 hours a day with no time off. What
16 if he has a death in his family? What if he
17 gets sick? What if he just totally
18 exhausted because he worked all night with
19 the snow? We are not the police and we are
20 not the fire department where we have
21 lieutenants, we have captains, we have shift
22 supervisors. We are bunch of workers.
23 That's what we do. So a huge problem.

24 That's why I said the department
25 will be destroyed, and the decisions you

1 make today are going to be the decisions
2 that affect 70,000 people in this city and
3 it's going to be -- it will be bad. I seen
4 it. I don't want to sound like I'm trying
5 to scare anybody because I'm not. Can I
6 finish?

7 MR. JOYCE: Yes.

8 MR. ROGAN: Sure.

9 MR. VITRIS: I'm just trying to tell
10 you how I have seen this department run from
11 '91, when it was the last time they did all
12 of this, right, and the guys all came back
13 to work because it was so much pressure put
14 on them they had to come back to work.
15 There was no savings, overtime was way over.
16 You think overtime is bad now, wait. I
17 mean, I don't want to sound like I am just
18 up here to scare you and I want you to do --
19 I want you to believe me and what I'm saying
20 is true truthful.

21 And I said about the compensation.
22 You have to add, add all of those people who
23 can't work, you have to add that into our
24 daily work basis because our work is daily.
25 No matter how you cut it, it's daily, and

1 eliminating snow drivers, eliminating
2 skilled drivers, the one in the parks,
3 right, nobody knows that that's a facility
4 maintenance, that's a skilled guy. That's a
5 guy who if they have to pour concrete or if
6 they have to get some carpentry done, right,
7 we only have one now, so if he goes down or
8 if he is off we got nobody. So, I mean,
9 like --

10 MR. ROGAN: Thank you, Mr. Vitris.

11 MR. VITRIS: Thank you.

12 MR. JOYCE: I just have one question
13 though, and if you don't mind me asking, and
14 I understand and I have a great deal of
15 respect for the work that the DPW does. I
16 know that every DPW worker in the budget is
17 a skilled worker, they are very hardworking
18 individuals, I saw the work that you and
19 your crew did when we had the huge windstorm
20 up on Oram Street and I have the upmost
21 respect for the job that the DPW does, but
22 I'm saying -- what I wanted to say is you
23 mentioned the people being out on workers'
24 comp, and I understand that those people
25 aren't working, and, you know, the mayor

1 proposed a buyout, and there was ten people
2 that he wanted to buyout, and I actually
3 have an e-mail here from Ryan McGowan that
4 there were another ten individuals with 20
5 to 25 years.

6 MR. VITRIS: Frank, I'm glad you
7 brought it up, I really am because I
8 actually forget about it.

9 MR. JOYCE: So, yeah --

10 MR. VITRIS: Right. I know exactly
11 what you are going to say.

12 MR. JOYCE: I'm saying if the mayor
13 were to buyout those individuals would there
14 in your opinion, would there still be a
15 large impact on services of the DPW with
16 those people gone?

17 MR. VITRIS: I guess Josh is the
18 only one can verify it because when he asked
19 me that very question, well, you know, you
20 are recommending -- I'm the kind of a guy
21 who doesn't want to see people thrown out in
22 the streets. I know Jack Loscombe is the
23 same way. He is a union guy and I know it.
24 That's the way we think, but Josh asked me
25 the same question and I said to him that

1 same question, I says, "Well, yes, it could
2 affect services."

3 I wasn't going to -- whether he put
4 it in or not is another story.

5 MR. JOYCE: Right.

6 MR. VITRIS: But he asked me that
7 very question, what's the difference -- in
8 other words, you are losing ten positions
9 with layoffs, you are losing ten positions
10 with buyouts, and I said, "Well, yeah, it
11 could affect services."

12 But the bottom line is it's not ten
13 anymore, is it?

14 MR. JOYCE: No, it's --

15 MR. VITRIS: Oh, it's not ten. It's
16 far from ten. It's 31 or 32 less bodies.

17 MR. JOYCE: But I'm saying the
18 people on workers' comp, they wouldn't be
19 bought out, they would still be on workers'
20 comp so with the mayor's plan those people
21 would still be there.

22 MR. VITRIS: It's just like in the
23 school district, maybe the other departments
24 should model us. Maybe they should. It's
25 just like in the other departments, we'll

1 use the school teacher profession. A school
2 teacher takes off, what do they do?

3 MR. JOYCE: They have a substitute
4 that fills their class.

5 MR. VITRIS: You took our subs. You
6 took our subs and now we don't have -- now
7 we to add the additional people who are --
8 no matter how you do it you got to look at
9 the numbers. You got to look at all of the
10 numbers, whether they are on comp, whether
11 they are sick, whatever reason they off,
12 sick leave, vacation, you got to look at
13 those numbers because that's what happened
14 in '91. Nobody listened until there was
15 massive chaos.

16 And having, you know, one supervisor
17 to do 365 days a year, now, what does that
18 sound like to you? Does that sound --
19 honestly, does that sound reasonable to have
20 one guy 365 days a year that has to be
21 available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
22 Does it sound reasonable to you?

23 MR. JOYCE: And I know that --

24 MR. VITRIS: And honestly. I just
25 want an honest answer, does it sound

1 reasonable.

2 MR. JOYCE: I know that Councilman
3 McGoff brought this up at the previous
4 meeting, the director, the current director,
5 Mr. Brazil, is available 365 days out of the
6 year, 24 hours a day.

7 MR. VITRIS: He has help. He
8 doesn't -- look, I'm there. He doesn't work
9 365 days a year, seven days a week, 24 hours
10 a day.

11 MR. JOYCE: Correct. I know
12 that's --

13 MR. VITRIS: Nobody could. It's
14 impossible. Nobody could do -- unless you
15 are, I don't know, Superman. I don't know,
16 but you have to look at the whole picture,
17 and if you are willing to take the blame
18 with the people for the dismantling of this
19 department then so be it. Then so be it.
20 Because I lived this and I just want to
21 prevent it. There has got to be a way that
22 we could sit down and figure this out before
23 it's too late. Thank you.

24 MR. ROGAN: Thank you. Is there
25 anyone else who would like to address

1 council regarding the budget?

2 MR. SBARAGLIA: Andy Sbaraglia,
3 citizen of Scranton. Fellow Scrantonians.

4 MR. JOYCE: Good evening.

5 MR. SBARAGLIA: I'm concerned about
6 the TANS. Have we got the \$5 million TAN in
7 place at this time before you approve the
8 budget?

9 MR. JOYCE: Could you repeat the
10 question?

11 MR. SBARAGLIA: Without the TAN
12 that budget is useless.

13 MR. JOYCE: Well, from what I
14 understand we do the \$5 million TAN, it's
15 the larger TAN that we are still in the
16 process of obtaining. I was -- I did attend
17 a meeting. And Mr. McGoff was there and he
18 could attest to this, there is some things
19 that the banking community want to see
20 before they give us the \$9.5 million TAN.
21 One, is the audit completed. Two, they want
22 the budget. And essentially what the
23 banking community wants is assurance that we
24 are going to be able to pay them, and
25 instead of a lump sum payment at the end of

1 the year, the banks will probably require
2 that we make a monthly TAN payment instead
3 of the current procedures with the TAN.

4 MR. SBARAGALIA: I knew about the
5 9.5, I'm more concerned with the \$5 million,
6 has that been approved and we are going to
7 get the \$5 million, because the \$5 million
8 is what we are going to use in the very
9 beginning.

10 MR. JOYCE: Correct.

11 MR. SBARAGLIA: The other 9.5
12 million we have maybe a couple of months
13 before we had to get into that.

14 MR. JOYCE: Right.

15 MR. SBARAGLIA: I don't know exactly
16 how far we are in arrears on our debt, I
17 know 6.5 million, I don't even know if that
18 covers all of the debt from this year
19 actually. I don't know. I don't know if
20 any of you know if that's the total amount.
21 That's the amount they told you, but not
22 necessarily the true amount. You went
23 through all of this before. You can't
24 believe what they are telling you without
25 getting them -- before you would have them

1 swear to it, so they can be held
2 accountable.

3 I mean, you found out what happened
4 with the last budget. They socked it right
5 to you, and they are no different. These
6 people are no different this time than they
7 were the last time. I mean, if you can get
8 somebody to come before you and actually
9 swear that these figures are true and you
10 can be held accountable for it, then you got
11 something that you can really go by. As it
12 is now, you are shooting in the dark again.

13 They are holding up your budget and
14 there must be a darn good reason why. For
15 somebody not to give you an audit got to be
16 a darn good reason why they are holding it
17 up, and if you usually think about it how
18 the city works you know the reason most
19 likely is the debt is a lot greater than
20 what they are saying.

21 I'm sorry for you, I really am. I
22 told you that in the very beginning because
23 I knew that all of this was coming to -- you
24 working on a budget without the two facts,
25 two audits, to this, to that, swore

1 testimony, you are in the dark. I know you
2 are doing the very best you can, and I
3 certainly hope they are not holding up a
4 heck of a lot from you, like that \$11
5 million from HUD or something like that
6 might pop up or this or that, I'm not even
7 talking about the 20 plus million because
8 like he said before it's not going to effect
9 this budget. It's going to effect it when
10 he leaves office. You are going to be stuck
11 with that and, like I said before, the debt
12 keeps growing in that budget, this budget
13 and the further budget, and when you start
14 paying off the TANS in payments I hope they
15 really give you a break on the interest that
16 as the TANS get lower the interest gets
17 lower. I sincerely hope, so but knowing the
18 way this city work God only knows. Thank
19 you.

20 MR. JOYCE: Thank you.

21 MR. ROGAN: Is there anything else?

22 MR. UNGVARSKY: Good evening,
23 Council members. I'm Tom Ungvarsky. I see
24 where over \$100,000 has been cut out of the
25 budget for the buyouts for the Public Works

1 Department. I understand that whatever
2 happens now will go through attrition; is
3 that correct?

4 MR. JOYCE: We eliminated certain
5 positions in the budget from the DPW. It
6 was Mayor Doherty's plan to buy out these
7 individuals instead of simply cutting the
8 jobs.

9 MR. UNGVARSKY: Do you know if there
10 are buyouts for any other departments in the
11 city?

12 MR. JOYCE: Currently, no.

13 MR. UNGVARSKY: Those were the only
14 buyouts?

15 MR. JOYCE: Correct. At that time,
16 yes. Those are the only buyout.

17 MR. UNGVARSKY: Okay, thank you. As
18 far as the audit goes, I know you people
19 tried to explain it last week, but it really
20 doesn't make any sense. There has to be a
21 reason why this mayor won't produce a budget
22 and the longer he holds out the more
23 suspicious it seems. No one seems to know
24 the reason why he won't do it, and he has
25 been faced -- in fact, I guess it was about

1 six weeks ago he told GO Lackawanna
2 newspaper that he would have the audit by
3 the end of that week. That was over six
4 weeks ago. I don't know what -- the longer
5 this goes on the worst it looks. Even if
6 there is nothing there, it sure gives the
7 appearance. Thank you.

8 MR. ROGAN: Thank you.

9 MR. JACKOWITZ: Bill Jackowitz,
10 South Scranton resident. Like I have said
11 several times from this podium, I really
12 feel sorry for you guys. You are in over
13 your head. Either way you go you are going
14 to be blamed for just about everything and
15 anything and that's ashame because it's
16 really not your fault.

17 Now, I said this a couple of weeks
18 ago, that it's not the people who are here
19 that we should be concerned about, it's the
20 people who are not here. Jeff Brazil, I
21 think he is still DPW director, I'm not
22 sure, he may be with the school district
23 now, Jeff Brazil should be sitting in that
24 seat right there defending his DPW workers
25 if he was really concerned about the city,

1 the residents and the DPW workers.

2 Chief Tom Davis should be sitting in
3 the second chair right next to Jeff Brazil
4 as the fire chief if he is really concerned
5 about the firefighters and the safety of the
6 citizens of Scranton.

7 Chief Dan Duffy should be sitting in
8 this chair right there if he is really
9 concerned about his police officers and the
10 safety of the residents in this city of
11 Scranton.

12 And Mayor Doherty should be sitting
13 over here, also, because he is the chief
14 executive of this city and he should be
15 concerned about the DPW workers, the
16 firefighters, the police officers and the
17 citizens and residents of the City of
18 Scranton. The primary concern of any
19 elected official is to provide for the
20 safety and the welfare of the citizens of
21 his community or his state or his nation,
22 okay? But them not being here tells me
23 point-blank without a doubt that they are
24 not concerned. They are more concerned
25 about other things okay?

1 Now, I don't want to see anybody get
2 laid off. I don't want to see DPW workers
3 get laid off, I don't want to see
4 firefighters get laid off, I don't want to
5 see police officers get laid off, but I'm
6 intelligent enough to realize that the City
7 of Scranton has a financial debt that is
8 unbelievable and it was not caused by the
9 taxpayers of Scranton, it was caused by the
10 administration, by the mayor and his cabinet
11 members who, by the way, are not here to
12 defend themselves, okay?

13 So, you know, I believe in fairness,
14 I understand that fairness is not always
15 fair, but I do believe in fairness. The
16 firefighters have been whacked and the
17 police officers have been whacked, DPW has
18 been whacked in the past, okay? When I say
19 fairness I mean fairness to the citizens and
20 to the taxpayers, the ones who are paying
21 the bills.

22 We are getting whacked by a tax
23 increase. It's either going to be 4 percent
24 or it's going to be 29 percent, we don't
25 really know. We'll find out when this all

1 comes out in the end. We don't really know
2 what's going to happen, okay, because we
3 know if your amendments are passed the mayor
4 is going to veto them and you guys are going
5 to probably override his veto and then we
6 are going to see what happens. Last year
7 you overrode his veto and he went ahead and
8 did what he wanted to do anyway, so we are
9 going to see if that happens again. But
10 again, the people who are getting hurt all
11 are the taxpayers and the residents and the
12 supermajority or city council because you
13 guys are caught in the middle of this and
14 that's ashame.

15 You know, the firefighters are
16 getting blamed for using too much overtime.
17 For years, headlines every day in the
18 newspaper, editorials in the newspaper about
19 them using too much overtime. Now they are
20 getting whacked because they don't want to
21 work overtime. So where is the fairness
22 there? There is none. Okay. Editorial in
23 today's paper about the firefighters not
24 wanting to work overtime, you know. Last
25 year it was the firefighters working too

1 much overtime.

2 So, again, we have to come -- as
3 adults we have to come to a conclusion here
4 and it's not going to happen until council
5 and the mayor work together. I know you
6 have tried, I don't think the administration
7 and the mayor has tried, but it's got to
8 come to an end because the City of Scranton
9 is the laughing stock of Northeastern
10 Pennsylvania and probably the entire state,
11 okay? With the news coverage and
12 everything, they are like those clowns down
13 in Scranton can't get nothing right. They
14 can't even work together, they can't decide
15 whether they want firefighters, police
16 officers, DPW workers, all things that are
17 guaranteed and that's why we pay taxes,
18 that's why we pay a garbage fee.

19 So good luck to you, I hope you all
20 make the right decision and I really wish
21 the mayor and his cabinet members would come
22 here and express their opinion and not leave
23 it up to the workers to do it for them.

24 MR. ROGAN: Thank you,
25 Mr. Jackowitz.

1 MS. SCHUMACHER: Good evening,
2 Council. Marie Schumacher. I'll defer for
3 a minute because I have a disagreement with
4 some of what Bill just said. He said the
5 taxpayers weren't at fault, I think every
6 voter is probably a taxpayer and I would say
7 we are at fault. Look at how many vacant
8 seats are here tonight? Do people really
9 care? I don't know. Most people who have
10 been reelected if they have run for
11 reelection and they have been successful and
12 that tells me the voters/taxpayers are happy
13 with the policies that have been set and the
14 spending that's been set, so I say we do
15 have a responsibility.

16 But now what I really want to talk
17 about because I'm still concerned, very
18 concerned about the fire department. I was
19 here briefly last night because I did want
20 to make -- I was one of, again, three people
21 that testified last night at the public
22 hearing at the school board. First of all,
23 has the \$600,000 been placed into the salary
24 line item for the fire department?

25 MR. JOYCE: Um --

1 MS. SCHUMACHER: Yes or no? I mean,
2 yeah.

3 MR. JOYCE: Yes, actually, more than
4 that has been. It all comes out -- and if
5 you could hold her time that's fine.
6 Actually, I have a chart and I can send that
7 to you. I could send it to you via e-mail.
8 It actually -- the cost is actually more
9 than \$600,000 to add back the firefighters,
10 however, when you subtract out their
11 unemployment that was originally in the
12 budget, the total comes out to \$600,000, so
13 it may be say \$900,000 or 800 and some
14 thousand dollars, but \$250,000 or so was
15 already budgeted for unemployment, so those
16 have been added to the correct line item.

17 MS. SCHUMACHER: Thank you, the
18 sufficiency was the next item, I divided the
19 \$600,000 by 13 and I know 46,000 is not
20 enough to sustain salary and benefits, so
21 I'll be very interested in seeing that.

22 Can you tell me how many stations
23 113 firefighters which, of course, we know
24 we don't have 113 on at all times, how many
25 fire stations will that sustain?

1 MR. LOSCOMBE: How many will it
2 save?

3 MS. SCHUMACHER: Will it sustain,
4 well, save, sustain, how you want to say it.

5 MR. LOSCOMBE: That's a loaded
6 question.

7 MS. SCHUMACHER: No, it's not
8 loaded, it's very sincere.

9 MR. LOSCOMBE: No, I don't think
10 anyone can tell you on a day-to-day basis
11 how many stations are going to be open.

12 MS. SCHUMACHER: How many -- without
13 rounding the number --

14 MR. LOSCOMBE: There is going to be
15 more out with 100 right now.

16 MS. SCHUMACHER: Without rolling
17 brownouts how many fire stations will be
18 opened with 113 people?

19 MR. LOSCOMBE: I think you should
20 direct that question to Chief Davis.

21 MS. SCHUMACHER: Well, I would
22 assume that you folks already did that when
23 you decided on the figure of 113.

24 MR. LOSCOMBE: No, we did no study,
25 we have increased it to where we can in the

1 budget right now, we didn't reduce the 29.
2 Get it straight, the mayor reduced the 29.
3 We actually were able to find some money at
4 this point to guarantee another 13 bodies
5 and go for the SAFER grant, something that
6 the mayor did not address. He cut 29. 13
7 more at this point is still better than 100,
8 and is it safe? I don't believe so. Not at
9 all. And we have to work hard to get it up
10 to a safe position, but we have no study
11 that was done by the administration and we
12 have no money in our budget to do a study
13 right now.

14 That's why I recommended the mayor
15 and the chief be here at these meters to let
16 the public know how they plan on covering
17 the city with the reductions they have made.
18 All we are doing is trying to do our best to
19 put money in the budget to bring that to a
20 little safer level, but we don't have the
21 money at this time to fund everybody. Trust
22 me, I think 150 is short.

23 MS. SCHUMACHER: Is there a
24 guarantee of 100 percent that once that
25 SAFER grant is applied for it's

1 automatically given or is this a
2 competition? Is this \$600,000, is there a
3 chance of it not happening.

4 MR. JOYCE: Well, with the SAFER
5 grant, and this is true with any grant,
6 there is no guarantees. What I do know is
7 that the City of Harrisburg, for instance,
8 they are having -- I believe they have five
9 firefighters funded through that grant and
10 it's for a number of years, I'm not sure of
11 the exact term, but there is no guarantees
12 on the grants, but it's our wish -- it's
13 council's wish and our suggestion through
14 the motion that I passed -- or that was
15 passed last night, that the mayor apply for
16 the grant and at least -- well, we can see
17 what we are going to get.

18 You know, I'm saying, well,
19 Harrisburg has five positions funded through
20 it, maybe we'll have four, maybe we'll have
21 five, maybe we'll have more but there is no
22 guarantee of how many positions the grant
23 will actually cover.

24 MS. SCHUMACHER: When is the open --
25 when is the open period for that grant and

1 when the grant is awarded?

2 MR. JOYCE: My understanding is that
3 the period of the grant starts in December
4 for the SAFER grant and the money would be
5 awarded -- I believe it's a timely process,
6 it's a number of months. Now, I'm not sure
7 if you are thinking of two things. One
8 thing that I mentioned last night was the
9 health care savings grant of \$600,000, that
10 was to put back 13 firefighters. That
11 will --

12 MS. SCHUMACHER: Well, then these
13 are two separate grants?

14 MR. JOYCE: Yes, these are two
15 separate grants.

16 MS. SCHUMACHER: Then the same
17 questions I have with that grant, are they
18 -- when is the time period, what is the
19 chances of we'll get an award?

20 MR. JOYCE: Actually, the health
21 care -- it's actually a health care
22 prescription savings grant that applies to
23 retirees. That's the \$600,000.

24 MS. SCHUMACHER: All retirees or
25 firefighter retirees?

1 MR. JOYCE: All retirees. However,
2 I'll give you the list of currently the city
3 is covering 40 DPW retirees, 268 in fire,
4 237 in police, 31 in the administration and
5 62 in the clerical. It was our idea to use
6 that \$600,000 in savings to reinstate 13
7 firefighters. The SAFER grant, which we are
8 encouraging the mayor to apply for, would be
9 in addition to the 13 to add more positions
10 if the city received that grant.

11 MS. SCHUMACHER: So the health care
12 and all of those other departments has been
13 reduced and the money transferred into the
14 firefighters --

15 MR. JOYCE: Yes, that's why --

16 MS. SCHUMACHER: -- and now I have
17 the same questions on that --

18 MR. JOYCE: Right. That's why --

19 MS. SCHUMACHER: When is the grant
20 applied for and when is it awarded?

21 MR. JOYCE: I will get that answer
22 for you when the award would come in, I
23 don't have the exact time that it would come
24 in. However, the grant -- I will also
25 confirm with our business administrator when

1 he intends to apply for it, but this is
2 something actually that PEL said that they
3 were bringing up for the past two years, so
4 this is a savings that we should be seeing
5 and should be --

6 MS. SCHUMACHER: So then what we are
7 going to see is the layoffs occurring and
8 when the grant is obtained they will be
9 called back; right?

10 MR. JOYCE: That's my hope. It's my
11 hope that the Mayor --

12 MS. SCHUMACHER: So we are not going
13 to have -- -

14 MR. JOYCE: -- follows the motion.

15 MS. SCHUMACHER: That sounds fairly
16 risky to me, but my bottom line, the rest
17 I'll talk about in the next meeting, but the
18 most disappointing thing is this budget does
19 absolutely nothing, not one penny, for
20 achieving parity with our neighbors and
21 getting down any proposal of how we are
22 going to work down the wage tax to the 1
23 percent so we can be competitive. I have
24 some ideas on that, but I probably will
25 bring them to the podium next year, but

1 that's my biggest disappointment, and the
2 rest of my questions I will ask since I have
3 over gone my time.

4 MR. JOYCE: Right, and if I may just
5 comment for a brief moment, we would
6 definitely like to hear your suggestions
7 because the process for 2013 begins
8 immediately once this process is over
9 because -- and this is something I don't
10 think, you know, everybody realizes, I know
11 that you realize it because you have brought
12 it up a few times, about state
13 representatives and our state senator. We
14 need the state's approval to enact many of
15 the ideas that residents bring up to us, for
16 instance, such as commuter taxes, payroll
17 expense taxes and measures of that sort.

18 So this is something that is going
19 to have to be a collaborative effort between
20 counsel, the administration and our state
21 legislature because some of these measures
22 that we discuss here are going to be
23 measures that would have to -- would have to
24 obtain state approval before the city could
25 actually enact them.

1 MS. SCHUMACHER: I hope you will
2 have them sitting here at the first meeting.
3 I don't think they do much business in
4 January. I don't think they do much
5 business period, but that's only one
6 person's opinion. Thank you.

7 MR. ROGAN: Is there anyone else who
8 would like to address council? Hearing
9 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.

CATHENE S. NARDOZZI, RPR
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