

1 SCRANTON CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
2 SPECIAL MEETING

3  
4  
5 HELD:

6  
7 Thursday, December 16, 2013

8  
9 LOCATION:

10 Council Chambers

11 Scranton City Hall

12 340 North Washington Avenue

13 Scranton, Pennsylvania  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22

23 CATHENE S. NARDOZZI, RPR - OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER  
24  
25

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

CITY OF SCRANTON COUNCIL:

JANET EVANS, PRESIDENT

FRANK JOYCE, VICE-PRESIDENT

ROBERT MCGOFF

PAT ROGAN

JOHN LOSCOMBE

NANCY KRAKE, CITY CLERK

KATHY CARRERA, ASSISTANT CITY CLERK

BOYD HUGHES, SOLICITOR  
(Not present)

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

3 MS. EVANS: Roll call, please.

4 MS. CARRERA: Mr. McGoff.

5 MR. MCGOFF: Here.

6 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

7 MR. ROGAN: Here.

8 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Loscombe.

9 MR. LOSCOMBE: Here.

10 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Joyce.

11 MR. JOYCE: Here.

12 MS. CARRERA: Mrs. Evans.

13 MS. EVANS: Here. Dispense with the  
14 reading of the minutes, please?

15 MS. KRAKE: THIRD ORDER. NO  
16 BUSINESS AT THIS TIME.

17 MS. EVANS: Do we have any Clerk's  
18 notes tonight, Mrs. Krake?

19 MS. KRAKE: No, Mrs. Evans.

20 MS. EVANS: Thank you. Do any  
21 council members have announcements at this  
22 time?

23 MR. JOYCE: Yes, I have one. Before  
24 we begin citizens' participation, I think  
25 it's important that the public knows the

1 reason why the mayor vetoed the budget  
2 amendments, so what I am going to do right  
3 now since I didn't see it in the newspaper  
4 or on-line anywhere is read the message, the  
5 veto letter, that was sent up from the  
6 mayor's office to city council's office  
7 before we begin so the public may comment on  
8 that, and it's, of course, addressed to our  
9 city clerk, Mrs. Krake.

10 "Dear Mrs. Krake, pursuant to  
11 Section 504 of the Home Rule Charter, you  
12 sent me File of Council 55-2013, an  
13 ordinance. Please be advised that I hereby  
14 veto File of Council No 55 of 2013 for the  
15 reasons set forth in this veto message.

16 (1). Violations of Section 905 of  
17 the Home Rule Charter.

18 (A). Council violated Section 905  
19 of the Home Rule Charter in that the record  
20 clearly reflects that I sent in my 2014  
21 operating budget to council on November 15,  
22 2013 in compliance with Section 902 of the  
23 Home Rule Charter, and Council did not  
24 conduct a public hearing on the same until  
25 December 5, 2013. As it clearly states in

1 Section 905 of the Home Rule Charter, "a  
2 public hearing shall take place no later  
3 than December 1 of the fiscal year"  
4 (emphasis added). This language is  
5 mandatory; hence, Council's non-compliance  
6 with Section 905 makes any amendments to my  
7 budget improper and illegal.

8 (B). Council also violated Section  
9 905 of the Home Rule Charter by making  
10 changes in budgetary items that exceeded 10  
11 percent of my recommended budget, to wit:

12 Increasing the Mayor's Confidential  
13 Secretary's salary from \$31,085 to \$36,085.

14 Decreasing the City Council  
15 Solicitor's salary from \$45,000 to \$40,000.

16 Increasing the Fire Chief's salary  
17 from \$50,000 to \$67,228.

18 Decreasing the amount of the  
19 overtime in the Department of Public Works,  
20 Bureau of Refuse, from \$100,000 to  
21 \$82,771,89.

22 Adding a new position in the  
23 Department of Public Works, Bureau of  
24 Refuse, at a salary of \$30,000.

25 Increasing the Business

1 Administrator's salary from \$53,550 to  
2 \$85,000.

3 Increasing the Finance Manager's  
4 salary from \$37,400 to \$50,000.

5 Adding a new position in the  
6 Business Administrator Office at a salary of  
7 \$35,000.

8 Increasing the standard salary in  
9 the Department of the Business  
10 Administration, Bureau of Administration,  
11 from \$238,904.21 to \$317,954.21.

12 Adding a line item and new account  
13 to Rents and Concessions for cell phone  
14 tower leases in the amount of \$18,000.

15 All of the changes listed above  
16 required that a public hearing take place  
17 within 72 hours to justify said changes  
18 pursuant to Section 905 of the Home Rule  
19 Charter. This requirement was not met;  
20 hence, the changes are illegal and improper.

21 Reason number II. Administration  
22 meetings with the Pennsylvania Economy  
23 League. The Business Administrator and I  
24 met with Jerry Cross and Joe O'Boyle from  
25 the Pennsylvania Economy League for the

1 purpose of reviewing my proposed 2014  
2 operating budget prior to forwarding it to  
3 council. PEL indicated that my proposed  
4 2014 operating budget was reasonable and  
5 realistic. Such a budget is necessary for  
6 the City to continue operations as well as  
7 obtain a Tax Anticipation Note for 2014.  
8 Since that meeting, not one PEL  
9 representative nor anyone from the  
10 Mayor-Elect's transition team, nor the  
11 Mayor-Elect himself has contacted me to  
12 discuss any amendments to my budget, despite  
13 the fact that on November 6, 2013, I  
14 personally contacted the Mayor-Elect and  
15 invited him to take part in the 2014  
16 operating budget process. On December 12,  
17 2013, myself, the Business Administrator and  
18 the City Solicitor confirmed via telephone  
19 conversation with Gerald Cross, Executive  
20 Director of the Pennsylvania Economy League  
21 that my proposed 2014 operating budget was  
22 reasonable and adequately meets the  
23 requirements the city must meet to continue  
24 operations in 2014.

25 Reason number III. Mayor's proposed

1                   2014 operating budget procured 2014 TAN-A.

2                   As evidenced by Council's passage of  
3                   File of Council 56 of 2013, my budget  
4                   procured a 2014 Tax Anticipation Note, which  
5                   will permit the City to have the proper cash  
6                   flow throughout the fiscal year of 2014.

7                   The procurement of this note was based on my  
8                   proposed 2014 operating butt.

9                   Number IV. Amendments are fiscally  
10                  irresponsible.

11                  The amendments as specified in  
12                  Paragraph 1-B, above, created new positions  
13                  and increase in salaries that Council itself  
14                  had previously reduced, cannot be justified  
15                  and are fiscally irresponsible. At no time  
16                  did Council members McGoff, Rogan and  
17                  Loscombe meet with me since I forwarded my  
18                  proposed 2014 operating budget on November  
19                  15, 2013, to discuss or justify these  
20                  amendments.

21                  Further, as I prepared this veto  
22                  message, the Department of Public Works is  
23                  readying its fleet and employees for a major  
24                  winter storm that will bring six inches of  
25                  snow to the city. Myself and the City



1           Controller have prepared an Emergency  
2           Certificate regarding this weather event.  
3           It is fiscally irresponsible for Council to  
4           amendment any overtime salary in the  
5           Department of Public Works any further, due  
6           to the unpredictability of weather in  
7           Northeast Pennsylvania.

8                         Also, it has come to my attention  
9           that Council's amendments to the Business  
10          Administration Office are to be funded by an  
11          alleged grant from the Commonwealth of  
12          Pennsylvania. In pursuit of this alleged  
13          funding, Councilman Rogan at last night's  
14          meeting stated he had a letter from the  
15          Department of Community and Economic  
16          Development regarding this grant. The  
17          administration has reached out to the  
18          Pennsylvania Economy League and PEL  
19          indicated it was not aware of said  
20          correspondence with DCED.

21                         Finally, Council's amendments  
22          seeking to eliminate the Support Service  
23          Specialist position in the Office of  
24          Economic and Community Development and  
25          increase the funding for neighborhood police

1 by the same amount is procedurally  
2 impossible. I have personally contacted the  
3 OECD director and have been advised that the  
4 maximum allotment towards public safety  
5 through OECD is 15 percent and that level  
6 has already been met in my budget.

7 And the mayor's conclusion: For all  
8 of the reasons cited above, I hereby veto  
9 File of Council No. 55 of 2013.

10 Sincerely, Christopher A. Doherty."

11 So I just wanted the public to know  
12 the message that the mayor had sent to us  
13 prior to voicing your comments.

14 MR. LOSCOMBE: May I just make a  
15 correction?

16 MR. JOYCE: Sure.

17 MR. LOSCOMBE: In Article IV of the  
18 mayor's veto it states, "The amendments as  
19 specifically listed in Paragraph 1-B above,  
20 creating new positions and increasing  
21 salaries that Council itself has previously  
22 reduced cannot be justified and are fiscally  
23 irresponsible. At no time did Council  
24 members McGoff, Rogan and Loscombe meet with  
25 me since I forwarded my proposed 2014

1 operating budget on November 15, 2013, to  
2 discuss and/or justify these amendments."

3 I did state at last week's meeting  
4 that I did meet with the mayor. At that  
5 time I didn't have any amendments in my  
6 hand, but we did discuss the budget, and his  
7 main concern was that his tax increase  
8 remain without change. That was the crux of  
9 the whole conversation and I did meet with  
10 him, so that's not a correct statement under  
11 Article IV, and I just wanted to correct  
12 that for the record.

13 Unless he knew beforehand, before  
14 the meeting, that there was going to be a --  
15 that he was going to be veto it, then that's  
16 an incorrect statement. That's all I have  
17 to say. Thank you.

18 MS. EVANS: Thank you.

19 MR. ROGAN: I would also add there  
20 are a number of other things that are  
21 incorrect, which I will address under  
22 motions.

23 MS. EVANS: The purpose of the  
24 tonight's special meeting of Scranton City  
25 Council is to address solely one agenda

1 item, Mayor Doherty's veto of the amendments  
2 to the 2014 operating budget of the City of  
3 Scranton. Council members will vote either  
4 to override the mayor's veto, thereby  
5 including 17 amendments to the mayor's  
6 budget, or to sustain the mayor's veto,  
7 thereby eliminating these amendments.

8 During citizens' participation,  
9 speakers may address only this agenda item.  
10 No other issues can be discussed. And  
11 that's it.

12 MS. KRAKE: FOURTH ORDER. CITIZENS'  
13 PARTICIPATION.

14 MS. EVANS: Our first speaker this  
15 evening is Dave Dobrzyn.

16 MR. DOBRZYN: Good evening, Dave  
17 Dobrzyn.

18 MR. JOYCE: Good evening.

19 MR. LOSCOMBE: Good evening.

20 MR. DOBRZYN: Well, we have some  
21 tough calls here, but my personal opinion is  
22 it's time to take that final bow and leave  
23 the city go on. We have 9 percent  
24 unemployed, and I don't have any animosity  
25 towards the union settlements or whatever,

1 but it's time to stop watching Fox news and  
2 listen to Rush Limbaugh and that's how we  
3 got here. You know, people vote for the  
4 state and stuck it to us, and people are  
5 voting away as they're told to on television  
6 and it's ashamed, but I would say I don't  
7 have any problem with overriding the veto.

8 And one question, could  
9 Mr. Courtright, Mayor-Elect Courtright,  
10 reopen the budget after --

11 MS. EVANS: Yes.

12 MR. DOBRZYN: -- the first of the  
13 year?

14 MR. JOYCE: Yes, he can.

15 MR. DOBRZYN: So this isn't the  
16 final say on this then?

17 MS. EVANS: No.

18 MR. DOBRZYN: In other words. Okay,  
19 but however anybody votes it's, you know,  
20 basically I don't care for the fact that he  
21 overrode the veto at all. He decided not to  
22 run again for mayor and it's time to take  
23 the final bow and go out smiling. Have a  
24 good day.

25 MR. JOYCE: Thank you. You have a

1 good day, too.

2 MS. EVANS: Our next speaker is Doug  
3 Miller.

4 MR. MILLER: Good evening, Council.  
5 Doug Miller, Scranton.

6 MR. LOSCOMBE: Good evening.

7 MR. JOYCE: Good evening.

8 MR. MILLER: You know, I'm basically  
9 going to reiterate a lot of the statements I  
10 made last week prior to council voting in  
11 Seventh Order on the budget. And once again  
12 express my grave concern I have for these  
13 amendments.

14 It's my personal opinion that I  
15 believe council this evening should sustain  
16 this veto. We have two budgets in front of  
17 us, we have the mayor's proposed budget, and  
18 we have the lazy man's version, as Mrs.  
19 Evans summed that up quite well last week  
20 with that terminology because that is, in  
21 fact, what this is.

22 MS. EVANS: Mr. Miller, I'm sorry to  
23 interrupt you, but that actually -- that  
24 statement actually applies to the mayor's  
25 proposed budget as well.

1 MR. MILLER: Okay. Well,  
2 absolutely, I agree. They are both, you  
3 know, budgets that are certainly  
4 unacceptable. But, unfortunately, this  
5 evening, you know, we have to pass a budget  
6 and a budget is obviously going to have to  
7 become reality and, believe me, neither one  
8 of them is any good any my book, but  
9 certainly when it comes down to it I don't  
10 feel that it is the common sense thing to do  
11 in terms of raising salaries, creating jobs.

12 We are looking at a 57 percent tax  
13 increase, a 69 percent increase in the  
14 garbage fee, astronomical increases in the  
15 rental registration program, meter rate  
16 increases, just to name a few, and then are  
17 you going to come forward and ask for raises  
18 and create jobs. It certainly doesn't look  
19 good in the public eye.

20 In the last week I have talked to  
21 many citizens throughout the city and it  
22 certainly came as a surprise listening to  
23 the amendments last week because they  
24 expected to hear a council who tried to  
25 reduce the tax increase. Now, we all knew

1 the tax increase was inevitable, I'm not  
2 going to say that, you know, I'm not going  
3 to make it sound as if a tax increases is  
4 uncalled for, we knew it had to happen, but  
5 the reality of the situation is there was no  
6 attempt to reduce the burden that was placed  
7 on the taxpayers.

8 There is no excuse for raising the  
9 garbage fee 69 percent. That does not have  
10 to happen. There is no excuse that we have  
11 to raise the rental registration. That also  
12 does not have to happen. There were many  
13 opportunities that council had, more  
14 importantly that the administration had, in  
15 following through on council recommended  
16 revenue enhancements that we certainly  
17 missed out on several opportunities, and  
18 that's inexcusable and had we followed  
19 through on those things we would obviously  
20 be in a much different situation this  
21 evening. We wouldn't be looking at, you  
22 know, increases in this amount.

23 But, you know, it upsets me that we  
24 have come to this position where it seems to  
25 me that we are doing all of the work for the



1 next administration and throughout this  
2 whole process we haven't heard anything from  
3 the transition team other than raising  
4 salaries and creating jobs, and if those are  
5 the answers, if that's what the next four  
6 years looks like, how are we going to ever  
7 turn this city around?

8 And we've heard that it's unfair to  
9 criticize the next administration because  
10 they haven't been sworn in yet, there is no  
11 justification for it, that doesn't mean  
12 anything. When the next administration  
13 that's coming in has an obligation to review  
14 the budget and make appropriate adjustments  
15 to help this city survive, that hasn't  
16 happened.

17 And, you know, we heard that the  
18 raises and the creation of the jobs are  
19 coming from grants and DCED, but what we  
20 failed to mention is, you know, yeah, it's  
21 nice to say it's a grant, but that's just a  
22 fancy -- that's just another fancy way of  
23 saying tax dollars because we are still  
24 paying for it.

25 So there is the right thing to do

1           tonight and there is the political thing to  
2           do tonight and, unfortunately, we seem to  
3           go, continue to go down the path of doing  
4           the political thing, and we haven't heard  
5           from the next administration and I'm very  
6           troubled by that. They haven't reached out  
7           to our Finance Chair, which I think to not  
8           even have the courtesy to respond back to a  
9           message or to, you know, an inquiry I think  
10          is totally inexcusable, but ultimately this  
11          Council should not be doing the dirty work  
12          for the next regime.

13                        I feel that this veto should be  
14                        sustained. I think the next administration  
15                        should come in, let them reopen the budget  
16                        and let them explain to the taxpayers the  
17                        justification of the raising salaries and  
18                        creating jobs when their taxes are going up  
19                        57 percent and the hardworking people of  
20                        this community are paying \$300 a year for  
21                        garbage and the rental registration fee is  
22                        going up and it's going to drive people out  
23                        of this city. Let Mr. Courtright and his  
24                        group of the transition come in and explain  
25                        that to the residents of this city because

1 it's not fair.

2 And is this the Christmas present we  
3 want to leave the residents of this city  
4 with? I don't think so because it  
5 discredits all the work that the majority of  
6 this council has accomplished in the last  
7 four years and I'd hate to see it end this  
8 way. Do the right thing, sustain the veto,  
9 and give the taxpayers what they deserve and  
10 put politics to bed once and for all. Thank  
11 you.

12 MS. EVANS: Thank you. That  
13 concludes our sign-in sheet, is there anyone  
14 else who cares it address council?

15 MR. MORGAN: Good evening, Council.

16 MR. JOYCE: Good evening.

17 MS. EVANS: Good evening.

18 MR. MORGAN: I'm probably going to  
19 not use five minutes because what I have to  
20 say isn't going to take a lot of time. I'm  
21 hoping that council sustains the veto and  
22 the reason for that is that I just think  
23 that there is a lot of politics at play here  
24 in every direction. We had the council  
25 members elects and we have the mayor-elect

1           during the campaign that had a vision for  
2           the city that just is totally opposite of  
3           what's occurring here.

4                       And the other question I have is the  
5           way the council is kind of split lately with  
6           the 3-2 split. And it's only, you know,  
7           look it, I don't have any disrespect for  
8           anybody on this council, but is the  
9           mayor-elect trying to have this council  
10          implement things that he wouldn't implement  
11          on his own? And I think it's time for the  
12          mayor-elect to come forward, explain to the  
13          city what he wants, it's time for the  
14          council members to get the council member  
15          elects to come forward and tell us their  
16          vision and how they are going to change this  
17          city, and I don't know of all of the  
18          politics that might be playing behind the  
19          scenes, but it's time for the city to leave  
20          politics behind because we are in a very  
21          troubled position here. Just the TANS we  
22          are going to borrow next year is scary to  
23          me.

24                      And, you know, I know a lot of  
25          people out there they are looking for jobs

1 and everybody in the country is basically  
2 looking for jobs because unemployment is  
3 fairly high right now, but I think the next  
4 mayor needs to come in here and determine  
5 where he is going to make major cuts to this  
6 budget and stop borrowing because he is  
7 talking about going in a new direction and  
8 having the ability to work with this city  
9 labor unions. He said that during the  
10 campaign that they would only negotiate with  
11 him.

12 And if we are going to turn the city  
13 around then we need an elected body that can  
14 stand up and explain why they are doing it  
15 and what they are doing and, of course, why  
16 they are doing what they are doing, and I  
17 just think that it's time to really to  
18 sustain the mayor's veto, let all of the  
19 parties come forward, present their  
20 arguments, and present them substantive to  
21 the voters and the vast majority of the  
22 people who have given up on the system  
23 because Scrantonians deserve a lot better  
24 than what we have been offered.

25 And look it, the last thing I would

1           like to say, I don't know if I'll be at the  
2           next meetings, but I really appreciate every  
3           single council member and everybody who has  
4           run for elected office and I really  
5           appreciate your thoughts and your concerns  
6           for this city even if I disagree. Thank  
7           you. Have a Merry Christmas.

8                       MS. EVANS: Merry Christmas.

9                       MR. JOYCE: Merry Christmas to you,  
10           too.

11                      MS. FRANUS: Fay Franus.

12                      MR. LOSCOMBE: Good evening.

13                      MS. FRANUS: It seems that everybody  
14           knows what the act is here but this council,  
15           Mr. McGoff, Mr. Rogan, Mr. Loscombe, all  
16           voted for those amendments last week and  
17           it's very apparent that Bill Courtright had  
18           you do his work for him. He wanted you to  
19           pass them, praying that they would get  
20           passed and he wouldn't look bad. Now he is  
21           going to have to open the budget and  
22           probably put all of those amendments, which  
23           are his to start with, not Pat Rogan's or  
24           Jack Loscombe's or Bob McGoff's, they  
25           weren't theirs, they did the work for Billy

1 Courtright, Billy Boy.

2 So he doesn't like it, but he is  
3 going to have take the flap. He will put  
4 all those amendments in and he probably will  
5 raise the taxes because Attorney Hickey came  
6 here saying we needed more taxes and he  
7 spoke for Bill Courtright, make no mistake  
8 about that.

9 And here we have Councilman Rogan  
10 who sat there for years and years and voted  
11 no to any tax increase, no, and I vow I will  
12 never raise taxes on the people. Boy, you  
13 really changed your tune, and maybe you  
14 think you just got elected for four years  
15 and that's going to be make a difference,  
16 four years goes by very quickly and if  
17 anybody -- if you run for another job,  
18 whether it be the council or whether it be  
19 the county, there is going to be plenty,  
20 plenty of tapes out there that show you  
21 voting for all of these tax increases, and  
22 if anybody wants any pages contact me or go  
23 to the library because, boy, you can sure  
24 use that for a campaign commercial against  
25 Pat Rogan, the one who wants to raise the

1 taxes for the people, the one who vowed he  
2 never would.

3 And you also said just now that you  
4 wanted to make corrections to what the mayor  
5 amended, what is the reasons for saying the  
6 veto, why he wanted to veto because of your  
7 amendments, so you are going to say what  
8 they were in motions. Well, I have a clue  
9 for some of the people out there, just  
10 because Pat Rogan says it doesn't mean it's  
11 true, so takes what he says in motions with  
12 a grain of salt because he has been known to  
13 lie up there many, many times and just  
14 because Pat Rogan says it doesn't mean it's  
15 true.

16 And just know that Mr. McGoff and  
17 Pat Rogan have been working with Bill  
18 Courtright. Anything he wants, go right  
19 through because he is -- they are his  
20 puppets. Bill Gaughan is going to be you're  
21 only one up here for the people. Hopefully  
22 Jack Loscombe will continue through the way  
23 he has, and please sustain this veto. Thank  
24 you.

25 MS. EVANS: Thank you. Is there



1 anyone else who cares to address council?

2 Mrs. Krake?

3 MS. KRAKE: 5-A. MOTIONS.

4 MS. EVANS: Councilman McGoff, do  
5 you have any comments or motions tonight?

6 MR. MCGOFF: I'll just I think that  
7 we have debated this enough and I'm ready to  
8 vote and I will respect the considered vote  
9 of all of my colleagues.

10 MS. EVANS: Thank you.

11 MR. JOYCE: Thank you.

12 MS. EVANS: And, Councilman Rogan,  
13 do you have any comments or motions?

14 MR. ROGAN: Yes, I'll be very brief,  
15 only because it's the one item and we may  
16 debate it a little bit more when it gets  
17 time for the vote, but there are a couple of  
18 things in the mayor's veto message that I  
19 want to dispute, and I do want to read a  
20 letter that I received just today from PEL,  
21 and this regarding, starting off with item  
22 two, on the veto message, administrative  
23 meetings with the Pennsylvania Economy  
24 League. The mayor goes on to say that PEL  
25 supports his budget, and basically the mayor

1           cites that as a reason for vetoing it.

2                       I received this at 5:05 today, from  
3           PE. It says, "Dear Councilman Rogan, this  
4           letter is in response to your request of  
5           December 15, 2013, for a review by the Act  
6           47 coordinator of the proposed council  
7           amendments to the mayor's proposed 2014  
8           operating budget. We have reviewed the  
9           amendments to the City's proposed budget for  
10          both the effect on the budget's total  
11          revenues and expenditures and for the  
12          amendment relationship to the City's adopted  
13          2012 Revised Recovery Plan.

14                      Based on the review, the amended  
15          changes will not result in a material change  
16          to the total revenues or expenditures as  
17          proposed in the mayor's budget. The changes  
18          will effect budget positions on both number  
19          and costs and will also change the proposed  
20          salary levels for certain positions that are  
21          included in the proposed budget.

22                      We know that one additional position  
23          is created in the Department of Business  
24          Administration. This additional position  
25          was included in the Pennsylvania Economy

1 League's memo to DCED reviewing proposed  
2 staff levels in the Department of Business  
3 Administration. We did take note that the  
4 amended changes to the proposed Office of  
5 Community and Economic Development resulted  
6 in a decrease of \$1,000 in expenditures, an  
7 amount that is not material in the context  
8 of the office budget and is not otherwise  
9 available for use under the city's general  
10 fund.

11 We also note that the amendment  
12 provides for a reduction in budgeted  
13 expenditures for unpaid bills/court awards.  
14 We believe there is a significant budgeted  
15 amount in the contingency line item so that  
16 reduction in funding will not have an impact  
17 on the total category.

18 Regarding the amendments in the  
19 adopted 2012 Revised Recovery Plan, there  
20 does not appear to be a conflict between the  
21 plan's requirements for revenues to match  
22 expenditures and there does not appear to be  
23 a conflict with any current plan initiatives  
24 for 2014."

25 So regarding Item II in the mayor's

1 veto letter, PEL basically just reviewed the  
2 whole thing stating that the amendments in  
3 their eyes are fine, which is what the mayor  
4 was using as one of his reasons against the  
5 amendments.

6 Next, the mayor goes onto say  
7 regarding the Department of Public Works  
8 readying its fleet for a major winter storm,  
9 maybe the mayor hasn't read the amendments  
10 in full, but the amendments are to DPW  
11 refuse, not DPW highways, which the overtime  
12 for snow removal is billed out of. I don't  
13 think anyone would have supported reducing  
14 money for snow removal or highway overtime.  
15 This overtime money was specifically in the  
16 refuse division.

17 Finally, the mayor states that it  
18 comes to his attention that the amendments  
19 are regarding an alleged letter between PEL  
20 and DCED. He states that the administration  
21 has reached out to the Pennsylvania Economy  
22 League and PEL indicated it was not aware of  
23 the said correspondence from DCED, and I'm  
24 just going to call a spade a spade on this.  
25 The mayor is lying. The letter right here

1 from DCED -- from PEL to DCED that I read  
2 last week. "To: Fred Redding. From:  
3 Joseph L. Boyle, Senior Research Associate.  
4 Dated" November 27, 2013. Subject: PEL  
5 analysis of the City Business Administration  
6 staffing."

7 If the mayor is unaware of this and  
8 if he actually did call PEL, which I don't  
9 believe he did, because I have the letter  
10 right here and I will provide it to the  
11 Scranton Times after the meeting.

12 So I did want to just rebut a couple  
13 of the errors that were in the mayor's veto  
14 letter. Other than that, I do agree with  
15 Councilman McGoff's sentiment that these  
16 items have been debated and I do believe we  
17 should vote on them and where the votes lie  
18 they lie, so that is it all I have for now  
19 and I'll probably comment a little more when  
20 we get to the vote. Thank you.

21 MS. EVANS: Thank you. Councilman  
22 Loscombe, do you have any comments or  
23 motions?

24 MR. LOSCOMBE: Yes, just briefly. I  
25 again, most of it's been said at the last

1 meeting, what our reasonings are for  
2 different things. The bottom line is the  
3 taxes are going to remain the same  
4 regardless of which budget is passed. I had  
5 to look over the whole package and,  
6 regardless, if the mayor can open his budget  
7 or whatever, anybody that's coming in should  
8 start out with the right tools, and the  
9 right tools are what I believe were some of  
10 the amendments in the budget there.

11 One critical tool is going to be a  
12 Business Administrator. If you recall, when  
13 Mr. Doherty came into office his Business  
14 Administrator's position was \$85,000. I  
15 would be the first one to reduce that salary  
16 to \$40,000 for the next budget if they did  
17 not perform their tasks, but we need  
18 qualified people, as has been said in the  
19 past administration, and I'm sure future  
20 administrations will agree to that.

21 Another increase was the fire  
22 chief's salary. Now, this was a slap in the  
23 face to the current fire chief because last  
24 year this current mayor wanted to increase  
25 the current fire chief's pay quite a bit.

1 Now, he is reducing the incoming fire  
2 chief's salary almost \$20,000, which would  
3 be below the rank and file.

4 I mean, some of these things are a  
5 little bit ridiculous, but I had to look at  
6 the whole picture. My mother is going to be  
7 paying significantly more and more so me.  
8 My property is on one of the upper ends of  
9 the level. I know where the taxes have to  
10 be.

11 We have been told many times, we've  
12 argued, we fought with PEL, DCED, yes, they  
13 have been asleep at the wheel, believe me,  
14 but now we are at the edge of the cliff so  
15 there was no way we could reduce the taxes  
16 at this point. So whatever budget passes at  
17 this point your taxes aren't going to change  
18 either way.

19 I looked at the whole picture and  
20 said if our amended budget gives the  
21 incoming mayor the tools to at least try to  
22 right what's been wronged that's where I'm  
23 going and that's why I'm leaning that way.

24 The mayor's budget takes away some  
25 tools and adds some insult to injury, and

1           one of our speakers has said he is going  
2           out, let him go out gracefully, you know,  
3           but he doesn't want to do that.

4                         And I do want to quell some rumors,  
5           which I found quite amusing after last  
6           meeting. After the meeting was over I  
7           walked out the door here and I was told that  
8           I voted for these amendments, especially the  
9           DPW amendment, because my son was getting  
10          the job. Well, I want to make it perfectly  
11          clear as I sit here, anyone that knows me  
12          personally knows what I have sacrificed and  
13          will sacrifice knows that's a lie. Now, he  
14          may have been joking with someone, hell, I  
15          joked with a few people and said, "I'm going  
16          to be head of LIPS, I'm going to be the fire  
17          chief."

18                        It's the last thing I want to do,  
19          but it was a joke, but to be accused that my  
20          vote is pending on any political vote that I  
21          make is totally incorrect because if you  
22          know the history of me, I'm totally open,  
23          you could ask me any question and my son  
24          lost his job in the school district because  
25          of my votes here and I would have been



1           dammed if I went and kissed anybody's butt  
2           to bring him back and keep him there.

3                       I would never compromise a vote that  
4           I make on this panel for anybody, even in my  
5           family and they know that. He was in the  
6           school district years before I came onto  
7           city council here. Unfortunately, he wasn't  
8           in the union so he wasn't protected by the  
9           union, but we made some budget decisions  
10          here that affected some friends and he lost  
11          his position and we lived with that.

12                      But I would never, and I know a lot  
13          of people don't believe that and they will  
14          continue these rumors and accuse me of stuff  
15          but, those that know me personally know what  
16          kind of person I am and my sacrifices know  
17          that that is not true, and I just want to  
18          clarify that because I'm hearing from  
19          different people different rumors, so I got  
20          a call today from someone he said, "I want  
21          to tell you something."

22                      So the first thing I said, "What, am  
23          I going to be fire chief now?"

24                      I honestly can tell everyone that's  
25          watching this that I have never sold my soul

1 for any position nor would I sell the soul  
2 of any of my family members. What I vote on  
3 is personally my own beliefs. If my family  
4 had their way I would have been out of here  
5 a long time ago.

6 I do believe we are on the edge of  
7 greatness in this city. I do believe we  
8 could turn this city around, but we have to  
9 stop the squabbling, we have to provide the  
10 tools, and we have to work together, but no  
11 matter what way this budget turns out  
12 everyone out there is going to pay the same  
13 amount of taxes. So to me, it's about the  
14 tools for the administration at this point  
15 and that's why I'm going to vote the way I  
16 voted at the last meeting.

17 And I just wanted to clarify a few  
18 things, but if anybody has any questions  
19 personally about me or my family don't  
20 hesitate to come to me and I will give you  
21 the facts. And that's all I have to say.  
22 Thank you.

23 MS. EVANS: Thank you. And,  
24 Councilman Joyce, do you have any comments  
25 or motions?

1 MR. JOYCE: Yes, I do. I respect  
2 everyone's opinion on this panel regardless  
3 of which way they vote tonight, but like my  
4 colleagues I stand by my position that I  
5 made last week. I did take the time to look  
6 at the amendments a little bit more  
7 in-depth, and I do have some issues with the  
8 amendments.

9 Number one is that the amendments  
10 made will make the budget imbalanced on  
11 paper. In no way, shape or form were the  
12 raises and created position in the Business  
13 Administrator's Office that is an additional  
14 expenditure reflected on the revenue side in  
15 the additional line item for a grant.

16 Number two, in the amendments no  
17 allotment was made for health care expenses  
18 for the new position created in the Business  
19 Administrator's Office, which on average is  
20 about \$14,000 a year.

21 Also, one thing I noticed with the  
22 amendments is, okay, I agree that the fire  
23 chief's salary should be equal to what Mayor  
24 Doherty's fire chief salary is, but that's  
25 simply an easy opening of the budget for

1 Mr. Courtright in 2014. He has the power to  
2 do that and send that one item before  
3 council.

4 Now, as far as the some other things  
5 that were said about DPW refuse and DPW  
6 highways, and I know this because I was  
7 criticized on it before when I made  
8 amendments to a budget years ago, when DPW  
9 highways overtime is used up for snow  
10 removal, whatnot, money is drawn out of the  
11 DPW refuse account and, furthermore, the DPW  
12 refuse account is generally a said amount to  
13 cover the days off, being holidays like  
14 Christmas, Thanksgiving, etcetera, where the  
15 DPW doesn't work, and that those overtime  
16 expenditures cover the overtime needed for  
17 the DPW to collect garbage and recyclables  
18 on those extra days where they are required  
19 to work a Saturday or possibly even a  
20 Sunday.

21 So I do agree with the mayor's  
22 assertion that cutting that line item may be  
23 harmful.

24 Now, besides all of that, in the  
25 amendments there's a 16.08 percent increase

1 for the mayor's confidential secretary.  
2 There are other confidential secretaries  
3 working in city hall that receive the lesser  
4 salary, so I don't see how we could justify  
5 giving a raise of a little bit over 16  
6 percent to the mayor's confidential  
7 secretary, which will be Bill Courtright's  
8 secretary but not giving an identical raise  
9 to the other confidential secretaries, which  
10 would be the HR secretary and the  
11 secretaries, for instance, in the law  
12 office. You know, I think that's doing an  
13 injustice to them.

14 Second of all, in the amendments  
15 there's a 58.73 percent increase in the  
16 Business Administrator's salary, and a 33.69  
17 percent increase in the Finance Manager's  
18 salary while other administrative employees  
19 they won't get any raise.

20 Now, there has been some discussion  
21 that these raises are needed to find  
22 qualified people. Years ago -- or not years  
23 ago, but four years ago we made amendments  
24 to cut these salaries to save the city money  
25 and now we are going to with all of the

1 amendments raise them with a grant that is  
2 not guaranteed in stone. We don't know 100  
3 percent if we would get that.

4 Now, in addition, I just wanted to  
5 point out something that I forgot, the  
6 amendments there are also no adjustments to  
7 pension obligations or necessary workers'  
8 compensation insurance for the positions  
9 that were created, so I would say whoever  
10 spoke to or whoever created these amendments  
11 I wish they would have spoke to me or the  
12 Business Administrator to obtain just some  
13 basic and necessary information because  
14 there are adjustments that would needed to  
15 be made. I don't know if some of the these  
16 amendments were reviewed by Mr. Courtright's  
17 finance team or if they were just created,  
18 but there was some pieces left out and  
19 believe me, I know, I have amended budgets  
20 before and that's -- I made that same rookie  
21 mistake in 2010 and I learned from it by  
22 working with the administration, whether I  
23 liked them or not.

24 But it seems like no one really  
25 reached out to the administration here to

1 get their opinion or feedback on these  
2 amendments and that they were just created  
3 somewhat haphazardly.

4 Now, I'm not in favor of either  
5 budgets. As you know, there is definitely  
6 missed opportunities. In the mayor's  
7 proposed budget we missed the boat on  
8 various revenue sources that could have been  
9 sought after, but like I said, not  
10 Mr. McGoff, not Mr. Rogan, not Mrs. Evans,  
11 not Mr. Loscombe, nor myself have control  
12 over that.

13 I think both budgets place undue  
14 harm on the taxpayers in this city. There  
15 are no benefits to the amendments that were  
16 proposed on Thursday night to help the  
17 people of Scranton. In my opinion, the  
18 amendments that were proposed on Thursday  
19 night only help Bill Courtright. And when I  
20 ran for office I ran on a slogan it was  
21 called "Putting People First," not putting  
22 Bill Courtright first, and I stand by that.  
23 I stand by what I ran on and that's how I  
24 feel about this and I will be voting tonight  
25 to sustain the mayor's veto because one

1 thing that I firmly believe it's bad enough  
2 that the two choices that we have at this  
3 point are massive tax increases, but what's  
4 even more worse is in the face of a massive  
5 tax increase there could still be almost a  
6 59 percent raise for the BA, a 33.7 percent  
7 raise for the finance manager, and  
8 significant raise for the mayor's secretary.  
9 And that's all I have.

10 MS. EVANS: Thank you. Good  
11 evening. I wish to make clear that I do not  
12 support the mayor's proposed 2014 budget nor  
13 do I support the amendments to this budget.  
14 The new mayor had the opportunity to include  
15 his amendments in this budget, but he  
16 declined.

17 Further, he will have the authority  
18 on January 6, 2014, to open and amend the  
19 budget if he truly wishes to do so.

20 Ladies and gentlemen, government  
21 service and leadership are not a political  
22 game because the winners and losers are the  
23 people who we are elected to represent.  
24 Therefore, in the face of the most drastic  
25 city tax hike and fee increases in decades,



1 I will not support these amendments. The  
2 salary increases and job creations they  
3 include, and the gamesmanship they  
4 represent.

5 In addition, I so oppose the mayor's  
6 budget that as city council president I  
7 refused to affix my signature to the 2014  
8 operating budget legislation. Should an  
9 override of the veto occur this evening to  
10 include these amendments, again, I will not  
11 sign that legislation. The people deserve  
12 much better.

13 And just as a final note, concerning  
14 the letter from PEL, in the last four years  
15 almost all of the letters from the  
16 Pennsylvania Economy League have been  
17 specifically addressed to Mayor Doherty and  
18 to me as council president. This is the  
19 first time the letter that Mr. Rogan has,  
20 this the first time I never received that  
21 letter. And so though I have not spoken  
22 with the mayor about it, I would tend to  
23 believe that the mayor did not receive that  
24 letter either, just as I know I wasn't aware  
25 of the correspondence that occurred today

1           between Mr. Rogan and the PEL, but as our  
2           Finance Chair has shown these amendments are  
3           incorrect.

4                       And I think what's important to pick  
5           up from all of this is PEL wasn't aware of  
6           that. PEL didn't mention any of that, did  
7           they? PEL is interested in one thing only  
8           and that's big tax increases. PEL was  
9           interested in taking us all the way to the  
10          Supreme Court, and if the new administration  
11          is already so interested in all of these  
12          deals with the Pennsylvania Economy League I  
13          think that the hopes that the people had for  
14          the next four years are quickly turning to  
15          disappointment. And that's it. Mrs. Krake?

16                       MS. KRAKE: 5-B. NO BUSINESS AT  
17          THIS TIME.

18                       SIXTH ORDER. NO BUSINESS AT THIS  
19          TIME.

20                       SEVENTH ORDER. FOR CONSIDERATION BY  
21          THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE - FOR ADOPTION -  
22          FILE OF COUNCIL NO. 55 - 2013, (AS AMENDED,)   
23          APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR THE EXPENSES OF THE  
24          CITY GOVERNMENT FOR THE PERIOD COMMENCING ON  
25          THE FIRST DAY OF JANUARY, 2014 TO AND

1 INCLUDING DECEMBER 31, 2014 BY THE ADOPTION  
2 OF THE GENERAL CITY OPERATING BUDGET FOR THE  
3 YEAR 2014. THIS VOTE WOULD BE TO OVERRIDE  
4 THE MAYOR'S VETO.

5 MS. EVANS: What is the  
6 recommendation of the Chair for the  
7 Committee on Finance?

8 MR. JOYCE: As Chairperson for the  
9 Committee on Finance, I recommend City  
10 Council sustain the mayor's veto of Item  
11 7-A, as amended.

12 MS. EVANS: Second. On the  
13 question? Roll call, please?

14 MR. MCGOFF: Excuse me, yes. On the  
15 question, maybe I misread it.

16 MS. EVANS: No, here's -- Mr. Joyce  
17 rather than recommending an override,  
18 recommended that council sustain the veto,  
19 so a "yes" vote would be to sustain the  
20 veto, a "no" vote would be to override it.

21 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you.

22 MS. EVANS: You are welcome. Is  
23 there anyone else on the question? Roll  
24 call, please.

25 MS. CARRERA: Mr. McGoff.

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

MR. MCGOFF: No.

MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

MR. ROGAN: No.

MS. CARRERA: Mr. Loscombe.

MR. LOSCOMBE: No.

MS. CARRERA: Mr. Joyce.

MR. JOYCE: Yes.

MS. CARRERA: Mrs. Evans.

MS. EVANS: Yes. I hereby declare  
the Mayor's veto of Item 7-A, File of  
Council No. 55, 2013, sustained legally and  
lawfully.

I'd like to wish everyone once again  
a very blessed and Merry Christmas and a  
happy and healthy New Year's. If there is  
no further business, I'll entertain a motion  
to adjourn much.

MR. JOYCE: Motion to adjourn.

MS. EVANS: This meeting is  
adjourned.

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

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  
OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER