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SCRANTON CITY COUNCIL MEETING

HELD:

Thursday, March 13, 2014

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:

ROBERT MCGOFF, PRESIDENT

PATRICK ROGAN, VICE-PRESIDENT

JOHN LOSCOMBE

JOSEPH WECHSLER

WILLIAM GAUGHAN

LORI REED, CITY CLERK

KATHY CARRERA, ASSISTANT CITY CLERK

AMIL MINORA, SOLICITOR

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

3 MR. MCGOFF: Roll call, please.

4 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

5 MR. WECHSLER: Here.

6 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

7 MR. ROGAN: Here.

8 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Loscombe.

9 MR. LOSCOMBE: Here.

10 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

11 MR. GAUGHAN: Here.

12 MS. CARRERA: Mr. McGoff.

13 MR. MCGOFF: Here. Dispense with
14 the reading of the minutes.

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

16 MINUTES OF THE SCRANTON HOUSING AUTHORITIES
17 REGULAR MEETING HELD FEBRUARY 3, 2014.

18 MR. MCGOFF: Are there any comments?
19 If not, received and filed.

20 MS. REED: 3-C. LACKAWANNA COUNTY
21 PLANNING COMMISSION SUBDIVISION AND LAND
22 DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION RECEIVED FEBRUARY 12,
23 2014.

24 MR. MCGOFF: Are there any comments?
25 If not, received and filed.

1 Clerks notes?

2 MS. REED: None this evening,
3 Mr. McGoff.

4 MR. MCGOFF: Any council members
5 have announcements at this time?

6 MR. LOSCOMBE: If I could, I would
7 just to like to thank everyone for their
8 prayers and their calls, their cards and
9 their offers of condolences on the passing
10 of my sister, Kathy Martin, in this past
11 week. It's been a bittersweet week, because
12 also during that time we enjoyed the birth
13 of our newest grand daughter, Grace Lynn,
14 and just today I received the word from my
15 other daughter that she will be having a
16 child in September, so I must be getting
17 old, that will be my sixth grandchild.

18 But it's been a week of, you know, a
19 lot of mixture, but thank you everyone for
20 praying for us and giving us that strength.
21 Thank you.

22 MR. MCGOFF: Anyone else? I would
23 just like to remind everyone that this
24 coming Saturday is the St. Patrick's Day
25 parade in downtown Scranton. To me it's a

1 great day for the City of Scranton and
2 surrounding communities. I just ask that
3 everyone be responsible. Please don't make
4 it a day that people will regret. It's a
5 fun time for families and the parade and
6 hopefully everyone in the city and the
7 surrounding communities can enjoy it. So
8 again, just be responsible. And that is
9 all.

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

12 MR. MCGOFF: First speaker is
13 Mr. Bill Jackowitz.

14 MR. JACKOWITZ: Good evening,
15 Scranton City Council and Amil, Mrs. Reed.

16 First of all, I'd like to start off
17 by saying it was a long time coming where we
18 finally got some people in here that were
19 able to answer some questions and give us
20 some advice on how to get the city out of
21 the situation it's been in for 22 years.

22 My question to Scranton City Council
23 is will you be committed to following
24 Mr. Amaro's solutions and suggestions when
25 you finally get his final report or are we

1 just going to continue to play politics?

2 MR. MCGOFF: Do you want a response
3 at this time or --

4 MR. JACKOWITZ: Can you give me a
5 response during motions, please?

6 MR. MCGOFF: Sure.

7 MR. JACKOWITZ: I'd appreciate that
8 and I think the citizens throughout the city
9 would probably appreciate that.

10 Going in the same line of
11 questioning or thought, after 12 years and
12 113 questions I finally got an answer from
13 Councilman Gaughan. He called me last week
14 and gave me an answer to one of my questions
15 and I really appreciate that, councilman
16 Gaughan. It's the first time in 12 years I
17 actually got an answer to my question.

18 Now, on along the same lines again I
19 submitted ten questions twice to city
20 council. I'm hoping that during motions
21 today some of my ten questions will be
22 answered. I have been assured by the
23 secretary that the council members have
24 received my questions, so I followed the
25 rules and submitted them in writing so I

1 hope that city council follows the same
2 rules and answers some of these questions
3 for me. I would greatly appreciate that.

4 Changing subjects a little bit, what
5 some of the citizens have been talking for
6 years, 10 years, 12 years, myself 12 years,
7 what we were saying was going to happen is
8 actually happening now, and I'm seeing some
9 change of opinions on some people's thinking
10 and they are actually doing maybe a 180 or a
11 360 because they are actually agreeing with
12 what citizens have been saying for years.
13 Some of us knew that this was going to
14 happen. There was no way it could not have
15 happened. The house of cards, the financial
16 house of cards had to crumble, and it's
17 finally -- it's coming to fruition now, and
18 people in the city are finally starting to
19 wake up and they are finally starting to
20 realize that, you know, some of this could
21 have been prevented.

22 You know, those three to two votes
23 we had for years, they put the City of
24 Scranton 50 years behind in my humble
25 opinion, at least. Those 3-2 votes killed

1 us, and I have think people know what 3 to 2
2 votes I'm talking about. It set us way
3 behind and we continue to go deeper and
4 deeper in the hole and nothing was ever
5 being accomplished.

6 I mean, the money went downtown, but
7 looks at what's happened downtown. People
8 are leaving downtown. Yeah, people are
9 moving in, they are moving into apartments.
10 Yeah, we are getting students, we are
11 getting medical college students to move in,
12 but the only people making any money of this
13 are the realtors and the landlords and the
14 developers. The city is not making any
15 money because the students are not working
16 in most cases, so they are not paying wage
17 taxes, they are not paying any property
18 taxes because they don't own the property,
19 they are renting. Yeah, they are -- they
20 are probably helping the landlord out by
21 paying the rent and by paying their rent and
22 the landlord paying their property taxes,
23 but again, the city is really not making
24 out, and the taxpayers, the property owners,
25 the ones who do pay the bills and pay the

1 taxes, they are not really getting, you
2 know, anything out of this. The developers
3 they are doing pretty well for themselves
4 and I'm glad to see the development, don't
5 get me wrong, but we need to do something to
6 bring more tax money and revenue into the
7 city. We have talked about this for year
8 and years and years and I'm just hoping that
9 some day it will eventually happen and the
10 city will get back on the right track.

11 Again, that's why I asked will city
12 council support the recommendations and the
13 decisions that Mr. Amaro makes when he
14 finally comes out with his final report in I
15 think six months or three more months or
16 however long it's going to be because it's
17 going to hurt. You are probably going to
18 hurt a lot of people's feelings, you know,
19 but it's been a long time coming and it
20 might have to happen and I just hope that
21 city council supports whatever
22 recommendations that come out and we can
23 finally get the City of Scranton back on
24 track.

25 Well, I guess that's about it for

1 tonight. Have a good evening.

2 MR. LOSCOMBE: Thank you.

3 MR. MCGOFF: I would just like to
4 answer your one question at this point at
5 this time, I think all of the council is
6 committed to not blindly follow the
7 recommendations of Mr. Amaroso, but I think
8 we are all committed to working with the
9 administration and with the consultants to
10 resolve the issues that we have. I don't
11 think anyone here has indicated any
12 differently. And we look -- as I said,
13 during the caucus we look forward to working
14 with the administration to solve the mutual
15 problems, the problems of the City of
16 Scranton.

17 Next speaker is Mr. Doug Miller.

18 MR. MILLER: Good evening, Council.
19 Doug Miller, Scranton. Am I'm very pleased
20 that we had such an informative session this
21 evening with Mr. Amaroso. I came out of
22 that learning a great deal, a lot of
23 information that, you know, a lot of us I'm
24 sure weren't aware of.

25 You know, when the idea of a

1 consultant came about a short time ago by
2 the new administration, I certainly was
3 quite baffled and puzzled by that idea. I
4 asked myself why did we just go through the
5 process of electing a new mayor who claimed
6 to have a vision for the city, why did we go
7 through the process of electing new
8 individuals to a council who also claimed to
9 have a vision for the city?

10 You know, as I stood here this
11 evening and I listened to Mr. Amaroso
12 discuss his findings in the short
13 three-month time he has been here, I
14 couldn't just help but acknowledge the fact
15 that yet again there is not one thing that
16 he discussed that we didn't already know. I
17 can recall in multiple occasions our
18 previous Finance Chair sat right here as he
19 did and gave similar Power Point
20 presentations on the state of the city, and
21 he discussed factual information such as we
22 currently at a 86 percent tax collection
23 rate. I think anybody that paid attention
24 would have already been aware of that and we
25 discussed measures that needed to be taken,

1 so it's no secret that we all should be
2 been aware of that piece of information.

3 We also talked about the biggest
4 gorilla in the closet and that's nonprofits
5 and PILOTS. We have been discussing that
6 for the last 12 years. Again, not a secret.
7 So out of all of the discussion and all of
8 the time we have taken to gather all of
9 this, you know, research by Mr. Amaroso I
10 think we have to ask ourselves are we really
11 going somewhere or are we just continuing to
12 just spin around and chase our tail so to
13 speak because we have accomplished a
14 single, solitary thing.

15 And then I took the time to do some
16 homework on Mr. Amaroso and I found some
17 things that are somewhat disturbing, and
18 I'm not here to make accusations or, you
19 know, accuse individuals of wrongdoing, I
20 can only cite things that are in black and
21 white and hope that we can hopefully
22 possibly get answers to these questions, but
23 upon doing research I found that Mr. Amaroso
24 was a former hospital CEO of St. Vincent's
25 Hospital dating back to 2006, and according

1 to my research from articles that came from
2 the New York Post, he oversaw excessive
3 spending at this institution that lead to a
4 billion dollars in debt and bankruptcy.

5 And upon further research it was
6 discussed in these articles and
7 investigations that were undertaken by the
8 District Attorney's Office in New York City
9 and lawyers who represented doctors and
10 nurses that were working at this hospital
11 that this was a grand scheme, a well thought
12 out plan, and Mr. Amaroso was the captain of
13 this ship and he oversaw the fiscal
14 mismanagement of St. Vincent's Hospital.

15 Millions and millions of dollars
16 were squandered on golf outings, luxurious
17 vacations, employees making multi-million
18 dollar salaries, all of this done so that th
19 institution could file bankruptcy because
20 obviously they had to have a reason to allow
21 the institution to be shut down because the
22 state obviously wasn't going it allow it.
23 This was a hospital that was overseen by a
24 Catholic charity in New York City.

25 And so after concluding my research

1 I did reach out to Tom Shannehan who was a
2 lawyer who did, as I said, represent doctors
3 and nurses who did sue St. Vincent's
4 Hospital and Mr. Amaroso and I did place
5 that call and I am waiting to hear back from
6 him because I do have many questions.

7 And, you know, it's really
8 disturbing to see that Mr. Amaroso, who
9 allegedly, you know, oversaw this and
10 allowed this to happen, that this was
11 something that was, you know, grand scheme
12 all planned out so that this institution can
13 be, you know, closed and sold off to a group
14 of developers who according to this article
15 here are the Rubin family who evidently
16 allegedly had some sort of ties to
17 Mr. Amaroso and those around him so that
18 they can take this property and develop it
19 to what they saw it fit their needs at the
20 time.

21 And so tonight when we sit here and
22 we listen to Mr. Amaroso give a presentation
23 on what his alleged vision is for the city,
24 I think we have to question his integrity,
25 his accountability, and most of all his

1 qualifications and my question I guess
2 before I leave the podium is was this
3 council aware of any of this and did you
4 take the time to do some research on Mr.
5 Amaroso? But I think the most important
6 question we could ask this evening is did
7 Mr. Courtright take the time to do this
8 investigation because that was his
9 handpicked individual to come and help lead
10 the way for us. Were we aware of this? And
11 that's my question.

12 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you, Mr. Miller.

13 MR. MILLER: That was a question, I
14 posed to council. Were you aware of any of
15 this information?

16 MR. MCGOFF: I was not aware of
17 anything that you said concerning
18 Mr. Amaroso.

19 MR. MILLER: Do you --

20 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you.

21 MR. MILLER: Well, I do believe that
22 this council shouldn't just let this get
23 swept under the rug like we seem to let
24 everything get swept under the rug. We face
25 serious financial challenges and we have an

1 obligation to take it serious. If this
2 individual did definitely do this, then I
3 don't understand why we are taking any of
4 his advice. We have an obligation to solve
5 our own problems, so maybe it's time we roll
6 up our own sleeves --

7 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you, Mr. Miller.

8 MR. MILLER: -- and do our homework.
9 You're welcome. Thank you.

10 MR. MCGOFF: Mr. Ellman.

11 MR. ELLMAN: Council.

12 MR. LOSCOMBE: Good evening.

13 MR. ELLMAN: I had my usual four or
14 five people at the grocery store comment to
15 me that after I mentioned 40 houses for \$4
16 million off the payroll council had nothing
17 to comment. It just bounced off of you
18 people. Keystone has over 100 pieces of
19 property they are not paying taxes on now.
20 Who is going to make it up for crying out
21 loud?

22 You know, I don't care what this
23 Pure Charity Act says, these are businesses,
24 they are not -- they are not charities or
25 nothing, they are businesses. They don't

1 fit into the Pure Charity Act anymore. The
2 University brags they made \$400 million.
3 Keystone got over 100 houses off.
4 Lackawanna College says they are going to
5 grow 40 percent. The medical school wants
6 five acres of land around them, do you know
7 how many houses are on the five acres around
8 there? It just goes on and on and on and
9 you people aren't doing nothing against the
10 people that are causing this destruction of
11 this city.

12 It's the all of these nonprofits,
13 they all phony. They are a bunch of greedy
14 parasites that have just sucked the blood
15 out of this city and I'm not mad at council,
16 I'm just -- it's my opinion about it. You
17 know what we need, we need about 10 or 20
18 thousand homeowners to come stand in front
19 of this building maybe they would get your
20 attention because enough is enough and you
21 people just don't listen to all of these
22 gentleman and ladies that get up here week
23 after week, it just bounces off of you.

24 Brother McGoff, before this year is
25 over you are going to have to sit there and

1 tell the people of this city there is
2 another substantial tax raise coming. You
3 know it, I know it, and people are expecting
4 it. How did you expect us to pay?

5 Let me tell you something, when I
6 got our house 20 years ago Mr. DeNaples told
7 me my insurance, my house note and my taxes
8 will be one week's salary and I managed
9 that. Now, it takes me 20 weeks of my
10 social security money to pay the same thing.
11 I was supposed to be retired. I'm not
12 supposed to have to sell stuff to pay taxes
13 and pay for school kids. I'm not supposed
14 to have to do that, but that's what's
15 happening in your city.

16 And as far as downtown and that
17 mall, right there is what kills the mall. A
18 jerk like this kickboxing downtown. You
19 don't think that scares the hell out of
20 women? It's bad enough having to cross the
21 street to go to the mall and it's a death
22 trap. I don't think -- it scarce the hell
23 out of anybody trying to cross Lackawanna
24 and then you are approached by a bunch of
25 druggies that want \$2 and they want

1 cigarettes and they want to know if you want
2 a nickle bag and until that's cleaned up
3 your mall is going to be a failure and it's
4 all over the place over there now. It's
5 just gotten out of hand.

6 I appreciate you all letting me get
7 up here and get it off my chest, but it's
8 time something is done about the nonprofits
9 and you people just are fearful to attack
10 them and somebody has got to do it sooner or
11 later. Thank you.

12 MR. LOSCOMBE: Thank you.

13 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you, Mr. Ellman.
14 Lee Morgan.

15 MR. MORGAN: Hello, Council. I
16 think a very troubling thing tonight has
17 come to light by Mr. Douglas here. I think
18 it's the most troubling thing to say about
19 city government that anybody could ever
20 imagine, and I think that when -- I don't
21 know, I think that when a district attorney
22 is doing an investigation of somebody the
23 government doesn't waste it's time
24 investigating people generally, okay, so
25 there is more to this than we will even know

1 at this point, and for this council to not
2 know that and Mr. Courtright not to know
3 that, it's a very troubling, very, very
4 troubling thing. Very troubling.

5 Now, let me say this, Mr. Amaroso
6 owe did say one thing today, that Scranton
7 is very attractive destination and he is
8 probably right about that for carpet baggers
9 and vultures because they are going to pick
10 every bit of flesh off the residents of this
11 city they can take. I don't see anything
12 funny, Mr. Rogan, but you probably do. Now,
13 my question -- because you wouldn't be
14 smiling if you didn't something was funny,
15 but, you know, here is what I want to know,
16 how much did we spend to build these parking
17 garages and what are we going to liquidate
18 them for? How much are we going to ask the
19 taxpayers to lose? Not just Scranton
20 taxpayers, but taxpayers across the
21 Commonwealth who invested in those parking
22 garages and the residents? And as we see
23 all of the city's assets off, all right, to
24 fund our debt, look it, I feel bad for the
25 city employees because really when you take

1 a look what they are trying to do to Act 47
2 now in Harrisburg what I read in the paper
3 is after five years they are going to let
4 communities file bankruptcy. And the state
5 is trying to sell pension bonds because the
6 states pensions are under water.

7 And, you know, when you talk to
8 people in this city they are disgusted. I
9 have had a lot of people tell me they can't
10 pay their taxes this year and are not going
11 to. We are still tearing buildings now and
12 the question I have to ask this council and
13 the mayor and the residents of this city is
14 give it your wildest thought about how much
15 it costs to build a home in the city and see
16 how many we are tearing down and how many
17 people think that people are going to come
18 out from outside of this city, get a
19 building permit and spend the amount of
20 money it takes to build a home in this city?

21 And when you talk about the mall,
22 well, look it, people without disposal
23 income don't spend money and that's the
24 major problem this mall has. My personal
25 opinion is that Mr. Amaroso's plan isn't a

1 plan at all. It's just another step in the
2 destruction of this city and that's my
3 opinion.

4 And I think that, Mr. Gaughan, you
5 asked a very serious question in the
6 newspaper, and I didn't have the opportunity
7 to be here and if I remember what is correct
8 in the paper you asked what the plan was.
9 And I think that all five of you council
10 members need to ask what that plan is, and
11 then you need to ask yourself one more
12 question, can the residents of this city
13 afford that plan and take another thing into
14 consideration, what is the average of the
15 residents in this city and what is their
16 income?

17 When you talk to people on social
18 security making 800 or 900 dollars a month
19 these people are trying to give their home
20 away so they can get in the high rise and
21 it's just a crime. Look it, like I said, I
22 feel bad for the city's pension plans and
23 the city employees, and in the end, I think
24 in the end statewide and citywide these
25 people are going to take a beating when it

1 takes time, when the time comes to get their
2 pension because you can't take money off
3 ordinary citizens who aren't earning any
4 money themselves.

5 And then, look it, no disrespect to
6 you Mr. Rogan, but, I mean, to sit there and
7 smile about it. I just can't understand how
8 you could do that. I mean, I sat here and
9 watched you smile --

10 MR. ROGAN: Mr. Morgan --

11 MR. MORGAN: Hold on.

12 MR. ROGAN: No.

13 MR. MORGAN: Hold on.

14 MR. ROGAN: I'm referring to your
15 comment referring to the people that want to
16 come to this city as leeches and parasites.

17 MR. MORGAN: What people?

18 MR. ROGAN: What you said.

19 MR. MORGAN: Did you read about the
20 civil war?

21 MR. ROGAN: And that's absolutely
22 out of line.

23 MR. MORGAN: Read about the Civil
24 War.

25 MR. ROGAN: Wait a minute.

1 MR. MORGAN: Read about the Civil
2 War.

3 MR. ROGAN: There's a lot of good
4 people here in the city and what's --

5 MR. MORGAN: You're right and I'm
6 not talking about the people in this city,
7 I'm talking about all of the people that are
8 coming here and buying our debt and sucking
9 the life out of us, like the people that
10 took over the Parking Authority, like the
11 people who formerly took over the Scranton
12 Sewer Authority, like all of those vultures
13 and all of the people that we are going to
14 buy bonds off of. Those are the vultures.
15 And they have got willing accomplices here
16 on that council who keep leveraging more
17 debt on the residents of this city that have
18 no money. That's what I'm talking about.

19 And if you took a little time to
20 open a book and read something you would
21 know what a carpet bagger was because you go
22 to the old south and see what happened after
23 the south lost the Civil War and how the
24 northerners went down there and picked the
25 flesh off of them. So, please, read a

1 little bit and understand what somebody is
2 saying to you before you try to respond,
3 okay?

4 And the truth of the matter here is
5 this, the residents of this city have no
6 more money, borrowing more money is not the
7 answer either. Thank you.

8 MR. ROGAN: I just want to reply
9 really quick, when anyone comes and refers
10 to people that want to come in this city as
11 carpet baggers and leeches that's completely
12 inappropriate for a city council meeting and
13 for a forum. One of the biggest problems
14 with this city is people are leaving our
15 city. We need to invite people to come here
16 and live and move into our neighborhoods.
17 We see neighborhoods all around us in other
18 cities filled with crime and problems and
19 there are good people in those neighborhoods
20 dying to get out and they are the people we
21 want to come here and have a family in the
22 city. They are not parasites and leeches,
23 Mr. Morgan. They are the people we want to
24 come to this city and to raise a family, to
25 work here and to pay taxes here.

1 MR. MCGOFF: Joan Hodowanitz.

2 MS. HODOWANITZ: Good evening. Joan
3 Hodowanitz, taxpayer.

4 MR. LOSCOMBE: Good evening.

5 MS. HODOWANITZ: I'm going to have
6 to go against the grain here or else I'm in
7 the Twilight zone, but I was very happy to
8 sit in the caucus and I was very happy that
9 it took place. I was one of the people that
10 asked you that you could get Mr. Amaroso in
11 here and brief us on his financial
12 recommendations.

13 My understanding is this is a
14 preliminary report, okay, and he is not up
15 to the point of making many recommendations.
16 Now, I don't know anything about his past
17 history, I did not Google him, I did not vet
18 him, but I am interested in the contents of
19 his briefing and I think that there is a
20 possibility sitting down and analyzing his
21 briefing to us and saying, you know, what's
22 valid in it, and I think there a lot of good
23 information in there.

24 It was not pitched as attempt to,
25 "This is my plan ahead, this my way

1 forward," this was his initial findings.

2 I think with the city needs is
3 governmental transparency and that's why I
4 was happy to see the mayor and his
5 administrative leaders here with him as part
6 of this briefing taking questions from the
7 council.

8 Now, if there is bad information in
9 that briefing I think we will be able to
10 pull it out. I don't see usefulness of
11 simply attacking Mr. Amaroso and ignoring
12 his findings offhand, dismissing them
13 offhand. I think that's too early to be
14 doing that. I want to see transparency from
15 the municipal leadership and from city
16 council. I think this is a first step in
17 this direction. If the information
18 presented to us is inaccurate or bogus,
19 well, we'll get to that point and we'll find
20 that out, but this is the first step in
21 reestablishing credibility as far as I'm
22 concerned and I think it was a good faith
23 effort, which leads to me to two questions.

24 Number one, is there any possibility
25 that we can request a copy of that briefing

1 for Mr. Amaroso so IT can put it on the
2 website? I think that would be good so that
3 citizens can pull it up again and give it a
4 relook because there was a lot of the
5 information in there.

6 And my second thing is I think it
7 would be a good idea if maybe at the
8 four-month point and the six-month point he
9 can be invited back with the city leadership
10 to say, "Okay, this is the next piece that I
11 want to brief you on and these are my final
12 conclusions at the end of six months and
13 this with what I'm handing off to the city
14 leadership and the city council."

15 I would be very happy to see that.
16 But, again, you know, I was happy to be
17 sitting there. This is a breath of fresh
18 air as far as I'm concerned and I hope that
19 you continue this process. Thank you.

20 MR. LOSCOMBE: Thank you.

21 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you very much.

22 Mrs. Franus.

23 MS. FRANUS Fay Franus, Scranton. I
24 may be reading some of this tonight because
25 I have a lot of stuff I want to cover.

1 MR. LOSCOMBE: Good evening.

2 MS. FRANUS: Forgive me for reading
3 things because I don't normally like to do
4 that. I want to maybe comments about
5 Mr. Amaroso in the paper even today saying
6 that the reason the city is in the financial
7 shape it is because of the default of the
8 Parking Authority. I don't agree with that
9 at all and I'm going to try to explain to
10 the people that maybe don't know about this.
11 Mr. Rogan and Mr. Loscombe certainly do
12 because they spoke out.

13 And today I looked at the caucus
14 from May 31, 2012, that meeting with the
15 Scranton Parking Authority when they came in
16 here, Mr. Scopelliti and Mr. Kelly, Paul
17 Kelly was the lawyer for the city and he was
18 the lawyer for the Parking Authority at the
19 same time, he was getting paid by both, so
20 who was he representing, the city or the
21 Scranton Parking Authority? That was a huge
22 conflict of interest, although he was asked
23 by Mr. Rogan I believe, and he didn't think
24 it was at all. He was very rude.

25 Now, another thing, Boyd Hughes

1 pointed out to the whole caucus, and he
2 spent a long time on that issue, if you
3 recall, about the budget, and, Mr. Rogan,
4 you even said it was like a two-page budget
5 and you were given one page of a
6 multi-million dollars authority and you got
7 a two-page budget.

8 So Mr. Hughes went through this and
9 they didn't expect it because what he found
10 out was unbelievable. They came to this
11 caucus to explain the expenditures and the
12 revenues of the Scranton Parking Authority,
13 but Attorney Hughes did was he said your
14 May -- January, February, March you have
15 expenditures of -- well, say you are going
16 to spend \$30,000, but in actuality that
17 month you spent 52,000, so he rounded it
18 out, and I'll round it up for you. He took
19 each month and he took all of the figures,
20 he said at the end of the year what you have
21 down in your budget what you are going to
22 spend is \$850,000 more that was in your
23 budget over of what they had in their
24 budget, and this is the budget they
25 presented to you on that day.

1 So, Mr. Hughes said, "Take the
2 salaries." He said, "Some of the salaries
3 were 40,000 and then they were really
4 62,000," but that wasn't in the budget.
5 Nothing was accounted for. Nothing was
6 accounted for. And then Mr. Scopelliti
7 said, "Well the people that usually do our
8 budget and do our finances they are on
9 vacation."

10 Mrs. Renda and some other man, they
11 were on vacation. Well, how about this,
12 that year Mrs. Renda her position was taken
13 out of the budget of council. She didn't
14 even have a job anymore. She was taken out
15 of the budget. They kept her there and paid
16 her from money that wasn't even allocated
17 for her and they are wondering why their
18 budget was over what they expected? That's
19 just a small example. That's just one of
20 the examples.

21 And how could all of the loans that
22 the Scranton Parking Authority got without
23 coming in front of council that's against
24 the law. The city doesn't have to guarantee
25 any loans that don't come in front of

1 council for approval, and they did this
2 knowingly, knowingly, and they did it.

3 Dave Bulzoni did this when he worked
4 for Landmark Bank and this is the man that
5 Billy Courtright hired for a business
6 administration, just like Mr. Amaroso, like
7 Doug Miller said. Boy, you should really
8 check into the people in this
9 administration.

10 Now, let me see here. Landmark Bank
11 has a lawsuit against the city to get the
12 money back. That's just an example of some
13 of the stuff, so what they figured out, when
14 the new council figured out, Mr. Rogan and
15 Mr. Loscombe said this authority needed to
16 be disbanded because of the all
17 mismanagement that was taking place and if
18 you didn't have a default this would still
19 be going on today. You would have maybe
20 different people would point to the
21 different people other than Bob Scopelliti,
22 but Scopelliti was here in 2008 he ran rough
23 shot over everything, so all of this money
24 there was no accountability. You didn't
25 know how it was spent.

1 That \$35 million loan, nobody knows
2 where it went, knows how it was spent, so if
3 city council did not default on that loan
4 this would still be going on today and this
5 the city would be such bad shape and
6 Mr. Amaroso is insinuating because the city
7 defaulted on that that we are in such
8 financial -- thank God the city -- thank God
9 you did default on that. And by the way, it
10 was paid a couple of weeks later and every
11 payment of that, every payment since then
12 for 2011, 2012, 2013, every payment has been
13 made on time and in full so where he keeps
14 coming off and saying that this default is
15 causing the city financial distress that's
16 totally crazy because the Scranton Parking
17 Authority ran this city into the ground and
18 they wouldn't tell anybody how they were
19 spending the money.

20 You saw the budget, wasn't it a
21 joke, Mr. Rogan?

22 MR. ROGAN: It was terrible.

23 MS. FRANUS: I mean, did you get any
24 answers to them as to how they spent their
25 money?

1 MR. ROGAN: No.

2 MS. FANUCCI: Didn't you pick up on
3 Mr. Hughes saying all the money, \$850,000
4 over budget for one year, and they said they
5 had a deficit of \$1.6 million, actually it
6 was a deficit of \$2.5 million.

7 Just one more question, please, this
8 is not regarding this, the City of Scranton,
9 I believe, purchased a pothole machine, does
10 anybody know where that is and if it's being
11 used? Could somebody check and see? I
12 believe we bought it pothole machine to
13 repair potholes. Does somebody know about
14 that?

15 MR. GAUGHAN: No, that's -- my
16 committee is the DPW so I'll look into that.

17 MS. FRANUS: Will you, please?

18 MR. GAUGHAN: I'm not sure, but I
19 will look into it.

20 MS. FRANUS: And if they do have one
21 where is it and when are they going to use,
22 and if not why not.

23 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you.

24 MS. FRANUS: Thank you very much.

25 MR. MCGOFF: Mr. Quinn.

1 MR. QUINN: Good evening. Ozzie
2 Quinn, Scranton. In two months citizens of
3 Lackawanna County will be voting on what
4 type of government we are going to have in
5 the future, the Lackawanna County Study
6 Commission had 14 meetings and two public
7 hearings and there hasn't been a debate on
8 the matter so far so the Scranton/Lackawanna
9 County Taxpayers' and Citizens' Association,
10 Incorporated, will hold a debate next
11 Tuesday evening March 18 at 6:30 p.m. here
12 in Scranton City Council chambers. It will
13 be televised by ECTV and those that do not
14 get ECTV the public are welcome to attend.

15 Representing the county
16 commissioners will be Attorney Joseph
17 O'Brien, former solicitor for the county for
18 many terms under Alberigi and Corcoran,
19 former Lackawanna County Democratic legal
20 counsel and secretary.

21 Representing the Lackawanna County
22 Study Commission will be Attorney Frank
23 Ruggiero. He is the general counsel for the
24 Lackawanna County Study Commission.

25 We are hoping that we'll be able to

1 have these two gentlemen representing the
2 commissioners and the commission to give the
3 pros and cons of both sides of the aisle so
4 people can look at what type of government
5 they want to vote on in May.

6 So, also, I want to tell you about
7 the Hill Neighborhood Association will meet
8 on Thursday, March 20, at the Immaculate
9 Conception Church basement Hall 800 Taylor
10 Avenue to discuss blight in households,
11 blight, vacant apartment households, blight,
12 occupied households, vacant land, crime
13 prevention, crime prevention, taxes, but
14 above all we want to know what the people
15 want to hear, want us to address.

16 We want to be proactive up in the
17 Hill Section. We want to back to the days
18 when Eddie Pisano was running the
19 Neighborhood Association. He was one hell
20 of a leader and we want to try to get the
21 Hill Section back and running like it was
22 and back in the days of Pisano. We also
23 want at that meeting we have invited
24 representative, State Representative Kevin
25 Haggerty. He is in the 112 District and he

1 is running again and Representative Farino
2 and Representative Munley. Representative
3 Haggerty is invited because of the fact he
4 is going to help us with state, federal, and
5 corporate loans. We are the only 501 (c)
6 (3) neighborhood organization throughout
7 city and we can apply for federal, state and
8 corporations throughout Pennsylvania
9 Department of Community and Economic
10 Development programs.

11 So we are hoping that also he is
12 also the only one who so far that I know the
13 other candidates, Mr. Munley has not
14 committed himself on Act 76, House Bill 76,
15 which is the elimination of school property
16 taxes, Mr. Haggerty has and we want him to
17 speak about it at the meeting. So anybody
18 is welcome and hope city council will come
19 up, it's next Thursday, at 7:00 p.m. and
20 that's all I have to say. Thank you very
21 much.

22 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you.

23 MR. WECHSLER: Mr. Quinn, just one
24 moment, perhaps your April meeting could be
25 scheduled to a night other than a Thursday.

1 I know that we would like to attend
2 neighborhood meetings but being on Thursdays
3 we already have an obligation here, so maybe
4 in April you could have your meeting on
5 another night that we can attend and get an
6 update on what you discover at your March
7 meeting.

8 MR. QUINN: Sure. Thank you.
9 Appreciate that.

10 MR. MCGOFF: Mr. Sbaraglia?

11 MR. SBARAGLIA: Andy Sbaraglia,
12 citizen of Scranton, Fellow Scrantonians.
13 Being Ozzie brought up 76, I wasn't going
14 to, but being he brought it you tell me what
15 piece in that legislation says people that
16 do not own property does not have to pay the
17 increase in all of the taxes they want
18 increased? All it is saying that the
19 property owners don't have to pay but the
20 renters have to pay because the property is
21 going to get the rebate their taxes they
22 don't have to pay to the school, but the
23 property owners -- I mean, the people who
24 rent will still have to pay all of the
25 penalty that goes with that deal.

1 I don't count it as a win-win
2 situation, all it is the have nots attacking
3 the haves, so that's the way it goes.

4 I listened to the presentation, I
5 didn't find anything wrong with it. You
6 know my son is a college professor who
7 teaches economics and has licenses and CPA,
8 he is a CPA and everything else that goes
9 with the deal. He is well educated, teaches
10 college in Florida, though, so really not
11 too much help here, but I listened to him
12 and what he said was you should raise taxes
13 every year. That was in his plan. Keep
14 raising taxes and taxes and taxes. I don't
15 see that as really a great solution, but
16 there is a lot of things that could be, like
17 he said, we can sign contracts with doctors
18 or with hospitals and sometimes we will see
19 if that holds down the medical bills. After
20 all, we really wouldn't have this problem
21 with though if we listened to Mr. Reap and
22 we said we don't have to pay these guys all
23 of the way up until they drop dead
24 hospitalization, just cover them until they
25 get social security. That's what he wanted

1 but they got him out of that council seat.
2 He was too much for the people. I always
3 bring him up.

4 But the presentation that we saw was
5 similar to the one that PEL put in. If you
6 remember, PEL was here and did the same kind
7 of thing and they're recommending the same
8 thing raise taxes, but you have raised
9 taxes. He finds that the taxes that you
10 raised ain't enough, that means you have to
11 keep raising taxes and that's really not a
12 great solution.

13 The paper said that we are pretty
14 close to Waverly as oppression goes. All
15 taxes are oppressive, but I tell you are if
16 the paper put in the \$300 we paid for refuse
17 removal and the high cost of the sewer
18 system in this city we probably would have
19 been above Waverly in oppression to the
20 people, so you got to look at that. You got
21 to look the everything.

22 Like I said before, this city isn't
23 going away overnight, we are going to still
24 be here 100 years from now even if there
25 were only a few people in it we would still

1 be here, but the solution to keep raising
2 taxes is not. That's the only thing he did
3 say. Other than in the paper he said
4 something about the business taxes, he
5 thought it would be a great idea to get away
6 from them and that may come up when he gives
7 you the solutions, but before he does that
8 and brings that up, you say dollar amount.
9 If we drop them two taxes and put another
10 tax on payroll would the dollar amount be
11 the same or greater?

12 You got to look at everything in
13 dollar amounts, that's the only way to do
14 it. A dollar here saving this, ever dollar
15 an offset. You can you use an offset to
16 some of the deals in the budget? It was
17 never brought up, but he says your budget
18 was wrong anyway. It probably would be.
19 I'm saying it was right because of the fact
20 is all of the budgets have been wrong since
21 about 2012 all the way up. They have been
22 understaffed when it came to money. We
23 always were in debt and he brought up a year
24 ago 2006, in and around 2007 that's when Mr.
25 McGoff came on council, them years, and then

1 he said it has been out of kilter all the
2 way out. Now, I don't know if you can blame
3 Mr. McGoff for it all, but you do have to
4 remember that he has been here for seven
5 years of this hardship, and three of the
6 other members are already giving you 100
7 percent tax hike. I hope you remember that
8 and keep getting it through your mind who
9 raised your taxes. Thank you.

10 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you. Anyone else
11 who wishes to address council?

12 MR. DOBRZYN: Good evening. Dave
13 Dobrzyn, resident.

14 MR. LOSCOMBE: Good evening.

15 MR. DOBRZYN: Taxes paid, be it in
16 escrow. I was at home for part of
17 Mr. Amaro's presentation. I think it's
18 10:00 tomorrow morning it's rebroadcast?
19 Could you find that out and then announce
20 it, the council meeting and the caucus so
21 that I could possibly record it and go over
22 it and little more. I think it's like ten
23 tomorrow, noon time Saturday and so on.

24 Okay, now, from what I have been
25 hearing on the parking garages I have to say

1 it's a 50/50 proposition, there is going to
2 be a lot of principal and a lot of the
3 interest owed and if we are going to wind up
4 with \$200,000 wholes thanks to corporations
5 moving out of central city, even though a
6 lot of this was probably built for them
7 taking into consideration, it might be a
8 fair idea to dump them.

9 And I'd also like to point out that
10 this KOZ was turned down a few years ago
11 and, for instance, it would be interesting
12 now Vac Serve definitely left because of KOZ
13 offer, and Diversified I have a question
14 mark because I haven't heard anything or
15 seen anything, but I would like to point out
16 that a lot of these KOZs when it comes to
17 the rank and file working person it's not
18 a -- it's not a utopia because a lot of
19 times there is very poor public
20 transportation available. In Olyphant they
21 have KOZs and Jessup the first question out
22 of their mouth is, "Do you have reliable
23 transportation?"

24 Now, what they offer you to start is
25 it \$9.00 an hour. Reliable transportation

1 cost a little more than \$9 an hour when you
2 consider all of the other bills that an
3 average person has to pay. They are trying
4 to keep the roof over their head in addition
5 they are running out and buying a \$15,000
6 car for a tin can basically, so they
7 definitely don't take into consideration any
8 of the woes of the working class.

9 And on the unions, I get the picture
10 that they may be cooperative, but
11 Mr. Courtright has his work cut out for him
12 because I don't think they are going to be
13 interested in backing up too far either.

14 And last week I mentioned on the
15 electric bills and I was also relating it to
16 a sewer plant with privatizing utilities, I
17 was pleased to hear during the speech
18 that -- during the caucus that he wasn't
19 interested in privatizing the sewer plant
20 and I hope it says that way.

21 Now, on the electric, last week,
22 maybe two weeks ago, my phone rang in the
23 morning, I was still asleep. I picked it
24 up, I found out that it was one of those
25 electric shysters, I hung it up and it

1 continued to ring. I picked it up again, it
2 was the electric shyster. I hung it up
3 again and I picked it up again and it was
4 the electric shyster and I started screaming
5 even though it was a robocall.

6 Well, this week I got a little nasty
7 and it was a person and I started using
8 expletives on him and, well, I got a good
9 nights sleep last night, I unplugged the
10 phone, so it wasn't ringing first thing in
11 the morning and waking me up.

12 But the point being that these
13 people are trying to sell electricity for
14 four -- three and 400 percent of what you
15 could get out of PPL and they may even --
16 the state there is a movement in the
17 legislature to just assign you to one of
18 these people, so buyer beware. We don't
19 need to be policed anymore than we are.

20 And I don't like calling people
21 names with nonprofits, but it is time -- and
22 tax exempts, but it is time that we have a
23 fee for DPW and public safety levied onto
24 all tax exempts and if you check your PA
25 constitution it does not require me -- it's

1 specifically gives me as a citizen the right
2 to not have to pay somebody else's bill just
3 because they are tax exempt. If they need a
4 street maintained in front of them or a DPW
5 services, fire and police, they should be
6 paying something for that, so it's time we
7 just convert that to a fee, I think Andy
8 mentioned it before, and that would be your
9 PILOT. Thank you and have a good night.

10 MR. ROGAN: Thank you. Is there
11 anyone else who would like to address
12 council?

13 MS. SCHUMACHER: Good evening,
14 Council. Marie Schumacher, will be a
15 taxpayer on the last possible day for the
16 discount. This evening I'm wondering out
17 loud, I guess, on Boscov's strategy for
18 retaining their property at Steamtown Mall.
19 Because it is a partnership, and obviously
20 they can't buy - any sheriff's sale
21 introduction to the listing always says the
22 owner cannot bid, so I'm wondering if this
23 would work, this same strategy would work
24 sort of in reverse for residential property
25 owners who are facing foreclosure, if they

1 could form an LLC as so many I see in the
2 paper that have the number of the street
3 address with an LLC and then bid on their
4 own house at a sale. Something that some
5 people might want to think of if they are
6 facing foreclosure. I don't know how much
7 it costs to form an LLC, but if Boscov's can
8 do it I don't know why a private person
9 couldn't do it.

10 With respect to the agenda items
11 tonight, 3-C, I looked at the backup and it
12 noted that the comprehensive -- it was in
13 accordance with the Comprehensive Municipal
14 Plan, but can somebody give me the date of
15 that Municipal Comprehensive Plan? I used
16 to go to most of the SAPA meetings and the
17 DCED rep I'm quite sure said that that was a
18 requirement every ten years and I think ours
19 is probably more like 20 years old, so are
20 we going to be budgeting for a new
21 comprehensive plan? Something to put in
22 possibly for 2015 because I think we are
23 probably way out of line. If you could,
24 somebody could tell me next week what the
25 municipal -- the date of our current plan

1 is.

2 And then on 7-B, Mr. Lazor, would he
3 still be the Chair of the Tax Collection
4 Committee as well this appointment if he is
5 approved or is he giving up that post or has
6 he given it up? Okay.

7 And that's a segue into a question
8 that's left over from last year that was
9 never answered which is last year the Tax
10 Collection Committee had a zero budget, zero
11 expenditures. In the current budget, they
12 have \$328,000 for expenses and I would like
13 to know what the difference that it was zero
14 in 2013 and it's now well over a quarter of
15 a million dollars for this year, so
16 whosoever committee that is I would
17 appreciate those answers, and I will get
18 them in over the weekend hopefully.

19 Mr. Amaroso spoke of the health care
20 costs tonight and I wonder when was the last
21 time, because I'm real believer in
22 competition and holding costs down, and I
23 haven't seen anything on pharmacy benefits,
24 manager, when was that last put out to bid?
25 When was the last time the dental coverage

1 was put out to bid? I've got a feeling it's
2 much longer than I think it should have been
3 at least.

4 And I would also like to know how
5 much revenue does the recycling program
6 generate and in what form is that? Maybe,
7 Mr. Gaughan, you can find that out. I know
8 if it's a straight dollar amount that the
9 city gets or if they get a truck or whatever
10 S & H green stamps or something, you are too
11 young to remember those.

12 And this, again, is a repeat
13 question, many times repeated, how many
14 rental properties have been inspected
15 through the end of February and when will
16 monthly reports be instituted so that we
17 know how many rental properties are
18 registered and how many have been inspected?

19 Will garbage, trash, still continue
20 to be collected at properties that have not
21 paid the requisite fee? Last year 75
22 percent of us were pulling the whole load
23 and I think that's wrong and I'm still not
24 convinced that this is not a tax. I mean,
25 this is a tax and not really a fee and I

1 would like to know what the administration's
2 policy is and if you can influence it such
3 that only people who pay for their trash be
4 removed have it removed.

5 MR. ROGAN: I could answer that, I
6 do know that all garbage is picked up. And
7 I agree with you, I think just like any
8 other bill if somebody doesn't pay the bill
9 they shouldn't receive the service.

10 MS. SCHUMACHER: And it's actually
11 in the ordinance. Okay, I've got many more
12 sheets, so I'll see you in the coming weeks
13 and just, Mr. McGoff, how is the -- any
14 progress on my February 5 questions before I
15 submit more?

16 MR. MCGOFF: No.

17 MS. SCHUMACHER: Thank you.

18 MR. MCGOFF: Is there anyone else
19 who wishes to address council?

20 MS. REED: FIFTH ORDER. 5-A.
21 MOTIONS.

22 MR. MCGOFF: Mr. Wechsler?

23 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you,
24 Mr. McGoff. After last week's meeting I
25 wanted to get more information concerning

1 the businesses leaving Scranton, so I met
2 with Mayor Courtright and I also had
3 meetings with Bob Durkin of the Chamber of
4 Commerce and Leslie Collins of Scranton
5 Tomorrow.

6 Mr. Durkin described the efforts
7 that the Chamber and past Mayor Doherty and
8 Mayor Courtright made in keeping Vac Serve
9 and Diversified in downtown. I'm satisfied
10 that the efforts were sufficient and the
11 final decisions were made by large
12 corporations who were looking out for their
13 bottom line.

14 I spoke with Ms. Collins and her
15 group, Scranton Tomorrow, still continues to
16 do their work even though it's a smaller
17 role than they had in the past. They
18 continue to try to help our downtown. Her
19 group brings together many downtown
20 businesses to discuss influence business
21 retentions and they also are working on
22 plans for changing downtown that retains our
23 current companies and attracts new ones.

24 As we heard today, our downtown is
25 changing into more of and additionally it's

1 a neighborhood section, so some of the
2 things that we have to look at as we go
3 forward will be to incorporate a
4 neighborhood setting into downtown. The
5 days of it being the office central perhaps
6 that has passed, I don't know. Perhaps we
7 need some smaller offices that can cooperate
8 more with the apartment-type settings that
9 we are going to have downtown.

10 Based upon and talking to these
11 people, several issues came out that are
12 things that we can work on right away to
13 improve our situation downtown. The one
14 thing that I heard was that the parking
15 garages need to be clean and safe. There
16 are concerns that that is not happening
17 right now. We also need to complete the
18 wireless Internet that was started several
19 years ago and I don't believe to this date
20 that the downtown is totally wireless yet.

21 As Mr. McGoff brought up a couple of
22 weeks ago, we need to fix the traffic
23 signals downtown so it makes it easier for
24 people to drive in downtown and also be able
25 to walk the streets. There also are

1 problems with the downtown streetlights.
2 Some of the people aren't comfortable coming
3 into the downtown because it's not lit well.
4 These are solutions that we can all work
5 together. We need the city and the county
6 and the state and private individuals to sit
7 down and decide these together.

8 Mr. Gaughan asked the question about
9 who was responsible, and I put a lot of
10 thought into this and I thought about it,
11 and I know for myself as an elected official
12 it's my responsibility to work with everyone
13 to try and maintain businesses and attract
14 them. But it's also the responsibility of
15 the administration and the Chamber and
16 Scranton Tomorrow and the businesses that
17 are in Scranton right now. We keep saying
18 that we are optimistic, and we are, but we
19 do have to work together to make these
20 changes happen.

21 In addition, this week Mr. Gaughan
22 and I attended the North Scranton
23 Neighborhood Association meeting in concerns
24 to the Rockwell bridge. Bill can go on to
25 some of things he got out of that meeting.

1 Something that did come up is that the
2 neighbors in that area are concerned about
3 response times from the fire department and
4 from ambulance services. I did speak to
5 Chief DeSarno about that and he is confident
6 that the fire department has a handle on
7 that, but in order to give a peace of mind
8 to the residents of north Scranton, he has
9 committed to me that he will attend a
10 meeting of the North Scranton Residents
11 Association. And once again, this is
12 something that Chief DeSarno is very willing
13 to do and I appreciate him getting back to
14 me so quickly and also making this
15 commitment to the residents of North
16 Scranton. Thank you, Mr. McGoff.

17 MR. MCGOFF: Mr. Rogan?

18 MR. ROGAN: Thank you. First I want
19 to answer a couple of questions that were
20 posed to this council from some residents.
21 The first one was regarding whether or not I
22 was, and I don't know if it was posed that
23 each one of us individually or the board, if
24 we are committed to Mr. Amaroso's plan, and
25 I concur with what Councilman McGoff said

1 that obviously we have to give it a lot of
2 thought and consideration, but the plan has
3 to be formalized first before we could get
4 an answer on that, whether it's something
5 that we would support or oppose it. Likely
6 there are parts of it that many of us will
7 like parts of it, parts that we won't, but
8 it's definitely, you know, what we are
9 definitely looking forward to see it's
10 exactly what's in this plan.

11 And I encourage what some of the
12 things that were mentioned, specifically
13 regarding trying to increase PILOTS in a
14 different way. Instead of going to the
15 University of Scranton or Lackawanna College
16 or Marywood and asking for a check for a
17 million dollars to go into the general fund,
18 by asking them to give \$250,000 over the
19 next four years to buy a new fire truck for
20 the station that closest serves and
21 facilitates everyone else around that
22 facility, it might be a lot easier for the
23 city to obtain PILOTS. We could do the same
24 for police cars, for road paving, and really
25 build up the city's infrastructure, which is

1 in dire need of improvement through PILOTS
2 instead of through the general fund, and by
3 doing that we increase the quality of living
4 for all citizens in the city, and it reduces
5 strain on the general fund because we won't
6 be paying for those items out of the general
7 fund like we would be.

8 Next, regarding the questions that
9 Mr. Jackowitz posed, I believe the only one
10 that was pertaining to my committee was
11 Boscov's whether they paid the loan, and I
12 did report last week that they did not pay
13 that the loan that is owed to the city.

14 I know there was also brought up
15 about the pothole repair machine, and this
16 is something that's been brought up many
17 times over the five years I have been on
18 council, and from my investigation a few
19 years ago what happened with this machine
20 was there was material left in overnight and
21 it froze and that's how the machine broke,
22 and I believe it is sitting delapidated down
23 at the Sewer Authority currently. I could
24 be wrong, but that's what I recall from a
25 couple of years ago regarding that pothole

1 machine and that's why we haven't seen that
2 out for many, many years.

3 So that's those items. And finally,
4 just again to talk a little bit more about
5 on one of the comments that was made that
6 struck a nerve regarding people coming into
7 the city, and I think I have said this a lot
8 over the last few years, and there is a lot
9 of great people in the City of Scranton.
10 Scranton doesn't have the population that it
11 once had. Scranton once had over 100,000
12 people and when you have 100,000 people
13 paying taxes each one of those people has to
14 pay a lot less money. When you have 70,000
15 people paying for the same amount of square
16 miles, more structures, more garbage, each
17 individual person is paying more.

18 By growing the city and encouraging
19 good, hardworking people to come into our
20 city and have a family here that's how we
21 grow. And to say that people that coming in
22 are leeches and vultures is completely
23 inappropriate and it's not the right image
24 that the city wants to propel to perspective
25 residents.

1 going to be the bigger long-term struggle
2 for the city. Obviously, the \$22 million
3 Court award is a short, a big short-term
4 struggle, but it was optimistic what
5 Mr. Amaroso said that the unions are
6 negotiating with the city on that, and once
7 that's taken care of we can move onto the
8 pension, which will be a big long-term issue
9 and it's not unique to Scranton from the
10 read that I have done, so I am optimistic.
11 I'm looking forward to Mr. Amaroso's final
12 report and that's all I have for tonight.
13 Thank you.

14 MR. MCGOFF: Mr. Loscombe.

15 MR. LOSCOMBE: I'm going to take a
16 pass this evening. Thank you.

17 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, thank you. Just
18 a few comments. The first one, I did attend
19 the North Scranton neighborhood meeting on
20 Monday along with Councilman Wechsler and
21 there was -- the number one concern,
22 obviously, was the Rockwell Avenue bridge,
23 so I am committed to updating those
24 residents as news comes through, but right
25 now it's tentatively scheduled to be

1 complete in the Fall of 2015.

2 There was number of the other
3 concerns from residents, and I have them
4 recorded here, however, I was not able to
5 this past week to get to them due to an
6 illness, but I will reach out to our DPW
7 director in the next few days and try to get
8 them taken care of.

9 Just a comment on Mr. Wechsler's
10 comments that the efforts of the Chamber and
11 the administration were sufficient to keep
12 those businesses downtown. That very well
13 may be, but I didn't know what those efforts
14 were and I think they should be made public
15 and I don't think anybody should be
16 satisfied that those businesses left the
17 downtown, took 200 jobs, and went up to
18 Montage Mountain. I'm still not satisfied,
19 I never will be satisfied about that.

20 One of them, Diversified, goes into
21 a Chamber-owned building. That doesn't
22 satisfy me and it shouldn't satisfy anybody
23 and maybe I just wanted to see a little bit
24 more outreach in that.

25 And finally, I would just like to

1 wish everyone a happy St. Patrick's Day. I
2 hope everyone has a safe and fun Saturday
3 downtown Scranton and just that we remember,
4 those of us who have Irish heritage, that we
5 march in the parade, we march because we are
6 Irish and we're proud because at one time we
7 couldn't march. Thank you.

8 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you. A couple of
9 comments. First, I would like to comment on
10 the caucus that was held prior to the
11 meeting with Mr. Amaroso. Mr. Amaroso was
12 hired through the Chamber of Commerce and
13 through private donations to the Chamber of
14 Commerce. His help to the city is looked up
15 upon by many as a very favorable component
16 to dealing with our problems. Does it mean
17 that we are not able to handle our problems
18 ourselves? No. It's simply means that we
19 recognize that some of the problems that
20 exist within the city, especially the
21 financial problems, are ones that require
22 I'll say extraordinary measures and in going
23 out and bringing in one to help with those
24 problems I believe is a great asset.

25 As far as Mr. Amaroso himself, it

1 seems as though one of the traditions in
2 this chamber is that if we somehow disagree
3 with someone or their position that the
4 easiest thing to do is to denigrate them
5 personally and I think that that began to
6 happen this evening.

7 Mr. Amaroso is a highly respected
8 individual, but just to give you a brief
9 resume of Mr. Amaroso, Chairman of the
10 Catholic Charities of Newark and honored by
11 the Diocese of Newark for helping thousands
12 of underprivileged people in that area.

13 Called by Mayor Booker of Newark and
14 extraordinary asset to the city when he went
15 as a financial consultant to the City of
16 Newark. Director of the New York Medical
17 College. CEO of St. Vincent's Catholic
18 Medical Centers. Board of Trustees of the
19 Cancer Research and Treatment Incorporated,
20 and an associate professor of legal studies
21 at Seton Hall University.

22 I think that that resume speaks for
23 itself as far as the credentials of a man
24 coming to, you know, offer assistance to the
25 City of Scranton.

1 The presentation that was made
2 tonight, was it a presentation of the things
3 that we knew? Yes. In many cases it was.
4 I think what Mr. Amaroso has done for us or
5 is in the process of doing for us is
6 quantifying some of those problems,
7 identifying exactly what it is that is the
8 financial situation of the city. What is
9 the situation of the budget and so on, so
10 that we can adequately deal with those
11 problems and I think the presentation
12 tonight started to do that.

13 We saw kind of more solidly what
14 those numbers were that we're looking at and
15 what financial -- what needs to be done or
16 can be done to deal with some of the
17 financial problems that we have. Was it a
18 final report? No. I believe that this is
19 going to be an ongoing kind of
20 eumorphic-type of process that as we
21 identify problems we will deal with them and
22 come up with ways to deal with the problems.

23 Also, as was mentioned by
24 Mr. Bulzoni, there are ongoing negotiations
25 with various entities to deal with the

1 problems that we have. This is not
2 something that you can say this is how it's
3 going to be going to done and move forward.
4 We need to negotiate some of these issues
5 and it's going to take awhile to deal with
6 the many problems that were elicited by
7 Mr. Amaroso and others, and hopefully to
8 answer, as I did before, are we going to
9 support the recommendations of Mr. Amaroso?
10 I believe that all of us will look at what
11 is recommended and it's not something that
12 you are going we are going to have to do as
13 a, you know, one blanket vote and say,
14 "okay, let's go ahead and support
15 everything," this is going to be a process
16 that as things are presented to us we will
17 deal with them individually and some of the
18 recommendations may be things that we feel
19 are beneficial to the city, there may be
20 things that which we disagree and we would
21 rather approach it in a different way.

22 So we look forward to working with
23 the administration. We look forward to the
24 process of a dealing with the problems that
25 the city has and hoping to resolve it.

1 Through the course of the years that we are
2 here, again, it's not something that is
3 going to take place overnight, but I think
4 we are all dedicated to dealing with those
5 problems and to finding a resolution,
6 whatever that resolution may be. And that's
7 all I have for this evening. Thank you.

8 MS. REED: 5-B. FOR INTRODUCTION - A
9 RESOLUTION - APPOINTMENT OF ROBERT WEBER,
10 2309 PITTSTON AVENUE, SCRANTON,
11 PENNSYLVANIA, 18505 AS A MEMBER OF THE
12 PLANNING COMMISSION FOR THE CITY OF
13 SCRANTON. MR. WEBER WILL BE REPLACING JOHN
14 F. KENNEDY WHO RESIGNED EFFECTIVE FEBRUARY
15 7, 2014. MR. WEBER'S TERM WILL EXPIRE ON
16 DECEMBER 31, 2015.

17 MR. MCGOFF: At this time I'll
18 entertain a motion that Item 5-B be
19 introduced into its proper committee.

20 MR. ROGAN: So moved.

21 MR. LOSCOMBE: Second.

22 MR. MCGOFF: On the question? It
23 should be noted that Mr. Weber has presented
24 a resume to the council prior to this being
25 introduced.

1 All those in favor of introduction
2 signify by saying aye.

3 MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

4 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

5 MR. LOSCOMBE: Aye.

6 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

7 MS. MCGOFF: Aye. Opposed? The
8 ayes have it and so moved.

9 MS. REED: SIXTH ORDER. 6-A. NO
10 BUSINESS AT THIS TIME.

11 SEVENTH ORDER. 7-A. FOR
12 CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY
13 DEVELOPMENT -FOR ADOPTION – RESOLUTION NO.
14 31, 2014 - AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND OTHER
15 APPROPRIATE CITY OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE AND
16 ENTER INTO A COOPERATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN
17 THE CITY OF SCRANTON (“MUNICIPALITY”) AND
18 THE UNITED NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS OF
19 NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA (“ORGANIZATION”)
20 IN ORDER TO FILE AN APPLICATION FOR
21 FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE WITH THE COMMONWEALTH
22 OF PENNSYLVANIA, DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND
23 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (“DCED”) FOR KEYSTONE
24 FAÇADE GRANT FUNDING FOR SOUTH SCRANTON ELM
25 STREET PROJECT, FISCAL YEAR 2013-2014.

1 MR. MCGOFF: What is the
2 recommendation of the Chair for the
3 Committee on Community Development?

4 MR. ROGAN: As Chairperson for the
5 Committee on Community Development, I
6 recommend final passage of Item 7-A.

7 MR. ROGAN: Second.

8 MR. MCGOFF: On the question? Roll
9 call, please?

10 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

11 MR. MCGOFF: Yes.

12 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

13 MR. ROGAN: Yes.

14 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Loscombe.

15 MR. LOSCOMBE: Yes.

16 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

17 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

18 MS. CARRERA: Mr. McGoff.

19 MR. MCGOFF: Yes. I hereby declare
20 Item 7-A legally and lawfully adopted.

21 MS. REED: 7-B. FOR CONSIDERATION BY
22 THE COMMITTEE ON RULES -FOR ADOPTION -
23 RESOLUTION NO. 32, 2014 - APPOINTMENT OF
24 WILLIAM LAZOR, 677 MARY STREET, SCRANTON,
25 PENNSYLVANIA, 18508, AS A MEMBER OF THE

1 BOARD OF THE SCRANTON LACKAWANNA HEALTH &
2 WELFARE AUTHORITY. MR. LAZOR WILL FILL THE
3 UNEXPIRED TERM OF WALTER RANAKOSKI, WHO
4 PASSED AWAY JULY 30, 2013. MR. LAZOR'S TERM
5 WILL EXPIRE ON DECEMBER 31, 2015.

6 MR. MCGOFF: As Chair for the
7 Committee on Rules, I recommend final
8 passage of Item 7-B.

9 MR. ROGAN: Second.

10 MR. MCGOFF: On the question? Roll
11 call, please?

12 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

13 MR. MCGOFF: Yes.

14 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

15 MR. ROGAN: Yes.

16 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Loscombe.

17 MR. LOSCOMBE: Yes.

18 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

19 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

20 MS. CARRERA: Mr. McGoff.

21 MR. MCGOFF: Yes. I hereby declare
22 Item 7-B legally and lawfully adopted.

23 Any other business? Once again, I'd
24 like to wish everyone a Happy St. Patrick's
25 Day, a happy parade day, and please

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celebrate responsibly. Motion to adjourn.

MR. LOSCOMBE: Motion to adjourn.

MR. MCGOFF: Meeting adjourned.

C E R T I F I C A T E

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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