

SCRANTON CITY COUNCIL MEETING

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HELD:

Thursday, February 26, 2015

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

WAYNE EVANS

JOSEPH WECHSLER

WILLIAM GAUGHAN

LORI REED, CITY CLERK

JAMIE MARCIANO, ASSISTANT CITY CLERK

AMIL MINORA, SOLICITOR

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

3 MR. MCGOFF: Roll call, please.

4 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Wechsler.

5 MR. WECHSLER: Here.

6 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Rogan.

7 MR. ROGAN: Here.

8 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Evans.

9 MR. EVANS: Here.

10 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Gaughan.

11 MR. GAUGHAN: Here.

12 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. McGoff.

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

15 MS. REED: THIRD ORDER. 3-A. AGENDA  
16 FOR THE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
17 HELD FEBRUARY 25, 2015.

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

20 MS. REED: 3-B. LACKAWANNA COUNTY  
21 SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION  
22 REPORTS REVIEWED JANUARY 15 AND FEBRUARY 4,  
23 2015.

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

1 MS. REED: 3-C. CONTROLLERS REPORT  
2 FOR THE MONTH ENDING JANUARY 31, 2015.

3 MR. MCGOFF: Are there any comments?  
4 If not, received and filed. Are there any  
5 announcements for council?

6 MR. ROGAN: I have two. The first  
7 one is on this Saturday, from 7:00 p.m. at  
8 the Villa Maria II there will there be a  
9 fundraiser, party to benefit the West  
10 Scranton Invaders' baseball team, that will  
11 start from 7 to 10 at the Villa Maria II on  
12 Washburn Street.

13 And, secondly, these are from State  
14 Representative Marty Flynn's Office,  
15 applications for the property tax and rental  
16 rebate program will be available in his  
17 office. This popular program will offer  
18 qualified applicants rebates on their  
19 property taxes or rent paid in 2014. The  
20 deadline to apply is June 30. Those  
21 eligible are Pennsylvania residents 65 or  
22 older, widows and widowers 50 or older, and  
23 disabled people 18 and over. To qualify,  
24 the filers income must be less than \$35,000  
25 per year for homeowners or \$15,000 a year

1 for renters, and only half of their social  
2 security income counts towards that cap. So  
3 if you are receive \$20,000 in social  
4 security only \$10,000 would count towards  
5 the cap for a homeowner of \$35,000 or renter  
6 of \$15,000.

7 If you have any questions, please  
8 stop by Marty Flynn's Office or you can call  
9 him or go online at 1-888-222-9190. Thank  
10 you.

11 MR. MCGOFF: Anyone else?

12 MR. EVANS: Yeah, a short one.  
13 Sunday, March 1, is St. David's Day so I'd  
14 like to wish my Welsh family and friends and  
15 all of those of Welsh descent a very happy  
16 St. David's Day and Crmyu am byth, Wales  
17 forever.

18 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you. Anyone  
19 else? A couple of things, quick items,  
20 first of all, in caucus tonight Chief  
21 Graziano, Carl Graziano, the police chief,  
22 was in our caucus and provided us some  
23 information about two pieces of legislation  
24 that are on this evening, 5-B and 5-C, and  
25 I'm sure that we can speak more to it when

1 the legislation is presented.

2 Also, at the PEL meeting this past  
3 week there was a -- we reviewed the revised  
4 recovery plan and we have tentatively  
5 scheduled for next week at 5:30 a  
6 presentation of the revised recovery plan.  
7 This is I say tentatively because it is not  
8 confirmed completely with PEL that, you  
9 know, they will be able to attend, but  
10 hopefully they will and if it would be -- if  
11 the caucus were to be held it would be  
12 advertised in the newspaper next week, so  
13 watch for it in the newspaper in the  
14 announcements.

15 Also, I know we are little delayed  
16 starting tonight, that was because of the  
17 caucus, and also would like to welcome a  
18 number of students from Scranton Prep who  
19 were here from their AP class, and who are  
20 required to collect a number of signatures  
21 to prove that they were here so we were  
22 providing them with those signatures. I  
23 think that means also that they can leave  
24 earlier since they now have the signatures  
25 in-hand, but we'll make see. Anything else?

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

3 MR. MCGOFF: Les Spindler.

4 MR. SPINDLER: Good evening,  
5 Council. Les Spindler, city residents and  
6 homeowner and taxpayer. Well, the first I  
7 want to talk about is I guess it's on  
8 everybody's mind about the pension problem.  
9 I was thrilled to see last night on the news  
10 that the Auditor General is investigating  
11 this on along with the state police, and the  
12 reporters last night said, "Was it a mistake  
13 or it was criminal?"

14 Well, I've going to say about ten  
15 years now that I think it's criminal, I  
16 thought that the Doherty administration  
17 should have investigated a long time ago and  
18 it was Chris Doherty who is responsible for  
19 that, he is the one that gave these pensions  
20 out and, as I said, I thought a long time  
21 ago he should be sharing a cell with our  
22 former commissioners that are now in prison.

23 And I saw something in the paper  
24 today about Mr. McGoff and Mr. Evans, and I  
25 forget the exact word, you are not happy

1 with this, well, you two supported Mayor  
2 Doherty, and I hope he finally gets what's  
3 coming to him and ends up behind bars  
4 because he is the one that killed this city  
5 and these people blamed past mayors, but he  
6 is the only one to blame. What he tried to  
7 do what he unions is put us behind the eight  
8 ball now and that's most of the problem now.

9 Moving on, last week you voted for  
10 that waiver for David Bulzoni, Councilman  
11 Gaughan you said you voted against it  
12 because you thought it would set a  
13 precedent? No, you are wrong. The  
14 precedent was set 13 years ago when George  
15 Parker was allowed to live out of the city  
16 by Mayor Doherty again and work in the city.  
17 So if I was Dave Bulzoni now I would get an  
18 attorney and fight this because I don't  
19 think he should be forced to move into the  
20 city, and I think council was wrong making  
21 that waiver that he has to move in the city  
22 by the end of this year. I think you made a  
23 mistake. If I was Dave, and I know Dave  
24 personally, I'm going to tell him, get an  
25 attorney, I think he can win that because



1 the precedent was set 13 years ago with  
2 George Parker. He was allowed to live  
3 outside of the city for as long as he wanted  
4 until he left the job. He wasn't forced out  
5 of the job, so I think council was wrong in  
6 doing that.

7 Next thing, I have a question, I  
8 know you passed that ordinance, the one you  
9 have to clear your sidewalks of snow in 24  
10 hours, does anybody know how wide the path  
11 has to be?

12 MR. MCGOFF: I'm not sure.

13 MR. SPINDLER: Could somebody look  
14 into that?

15 MR. MCGOFF: Ms. Schumacher is  
16 signaling me something so when you are done  
17 she may have an answer.

18 MR. SPINDLER: I was watching the  
19 news a few weeks ago on the weather channel  
20 and the mayor of Boston was talking how they  
21 are going to enforce cleaning the sidewalks  
22 and there's is 48 inches. I'm just curious  
23 because in my neighborhood people just make  
24 a path down the width of their sidewalk  
25 maybe the width of their snow shovel, which

1 I don't think is right. I was just curious.

2 Lastly, last time I was here I spoke  
3 about the street signs on my corner that  
4 were ripped down, well, I guess the city was  
5 there to replace the North Rebecca sign, but  
6 they never replaced the Bulworth Street  
7 sign. It's the corner of Bulworth and  
8 North Rebecca, so I think, Mr. Rogan, I  
9 think you probably looked into that if you  
10 would let know again.

11 MR. ROGAN: We'll check again.

12 MR. SPINDLER: Because it did say  
13 North Rebecca Street and now it says North  
14 Rebecca Avenue, but they didn't replace the  
15 Bulworth Street sign. Maybe they are going  
16 to come back, I don't know, but maybe you  
17 could look into that I'd appreciate it.

18 MR. ROGAN: Sure.

19 MR. SPINDLER: That's all I have.

20 Thank you.

21 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you,

22 Mr. Spindler. Ron Ellman.

23 MR. ELLMAN: You taking care of the  
24 dough boy?

25 MR. WECHSLER: We're trying.

1 MR. ELLMAN: You know, these lost  
2 three rooms of stainless steel nobody can  
3 find, the doughboy is a lot smaller. To  
4 reiterate something that I have said years  
5 ago, this place just stinks from the sour  
6 stench of graft and corruption an cronyism,  
7 and I used the employment of Mr. Bulzoni as  
8 my epitome example of all three of these,  
9 but I guess there's hope because this latest  
10 scandalous expose of the pensions to me is  
11 much worse. They have known this since 2007  
12 and nothing was done. These people have  
13 stolen our money. I want our money back.  
14 These people out here want their money back.  
15 You can't just sit on the fence and wait to  
16 see what's going to happen. It's up to  
17 council to move on this to support  
18 something, you know, support them, say  
19 something, do something about this.

20 You know, this all started, some  
21 people don't know how it started, I remember  
22 when it happened, Doherty started replacing  
23 people with his own people, which is a  
24 natural occurrence, and he'd do anything  
25 under the sun to get rid of them. Of

1 course, he doesn't remember all of this now,  
2 but that's what happened. That's why we got  
3 this mess now because it just got passed  
4 along and along and nobody was concerned  
5 about it.

6 You know, council, council isn't  
7 paid to just sit and wait. You are elected  
8 or appointed to act I guess in an  
9 administrative and elective way and advisory  
10 way we don't get this out of you people.  
11 That's your job to us, to me.

12 Sunday I went to Allentown then I  
13 went to Pottstown coming back home at  
14 Schuylkill Haven and they've got that huge  
15 market. There is only 25, 30,000 people  
16 live there, you should see the business this  
17 place does, they could support it. You are  
18 going to have to support something for this  
19 mall, it's going to be going to be one of  
20 these phony nonprofits and you're going to  
21 have to be sitting around, we are going to  
22 have to raise our taxes 60, 80 percent  
23 because we lost the mall. You can't wait.  
24 You got to do something now and get off this  
25 fence you are sitting on top of all of the

1 time.

2 You know, I know I can sit here and  
3 say things and you can't answer me, I just  
4 say what I see and what I hear. It must be  
5 sort of hard not to -- to have to take some  
6 of the things I say. What happened to your  
7 \$60,000 overpaid prima dona there, the  
8 Amoroso plan? Part of his plan was to see  
9 about the pensions. You know, he was a  
10 failure in every which way possible. Now,  
11 you're up there again with the recovery  
12 plan, we need a new recovery plan I guess  
13 written by some people out here that are  
14 paying all of the bills because so far there  
15 isn't one that people can afford that people  
16 want.

17 You know, like I said, I realize  
18 what I say sometimes you want to answer me  
19 and you can't, I sort of like that position.  
20 This week I talked to the lunch and supper a  
21 couple of intelligent, knowledgeable people  
22 of the city and they say this can't be, you  
23 just can't wait on this. You are going to  
24 have to do something and show these people  
25 they are not going to get away with anymore

1 of this thievery. That's outright -- that's  
2 all this was, and last week, Mr. McGoff, you  
3 said you would need to wait and see if  
4 something would happens, another week's gone  
5 by and nothing has been done to start  
6 recovering our money.

7 MR. MCGOFF: Yes, it has.

8 MR. ELLMAN: Well, not very much. I  
9 haven't seen anything that says we are going  
10 to get some money back. All I see is a  
11 bunch of bleeding heart lawyers giving a  
12 better case for them than us. I don't feel  
13 sorry for one of these people. Nobody on  
14 the face of the earth, nobody gets twice the  
15 money they are supposed to and doesn't know  
16 it. That's not a defense. They didn't know  
17 it. Every last one of them knew it, they  
18 are liars, they are thieves.

19 MR. MCGOFF: Excuse me.

20 MR. ELLMAN: It's time to do  
21 something to get our damn money make and I  
22 mean it. You people, you don't listen to  
23 the talk shows, I don't guess you read the  
24 letters to the editor because you just never  
25 comment on nothing that's being said all

1           around town.

2                   MR. MCGOFF: Thank you.

3                   MR. ELLMAN: Thank you.

4                   MR. MCGOFF: David Bergerhoff.

5                   MR. BERGERHOFF: How you doing, Dave  
6 Bergerhoff, Scranton taxpayer. I wasn't  
7 going to speak tonight, I don't have  
8 anything prepared and I prefer to be  
9 prepared when I speak, but I'm just going to  
10 wing it. Probably what I'm going to say is  
11 not going to make me a lot of friends, but  
12 I'm just trying to make a little bit of  
13 sense.

14                   I agree 100 percent of what the last  
15 speaker had just said and I want to remind  
16 to people out there as I raise my son I  
17 always told him you don't get rewarded for  
18 good behavior you get punished for bad. You  
19 know, I don't now how these double pensions  
20 occurred, I don't know who is going to go to  
21 jail over it, let's hope someone, but  
22 individuals who received this money are  
23 going to making all kinds of excuses, I  
24 assume, why they can't pay it back. At the  
25 end of the day, you weren't entitled to that

1 money and banks don't maker errors in your  
2 favor. You owe that money back and there is  
3 no recourse and there is no story you can  
4 tell.

5 Now, I'm not saying that you have to  
6 pay it all back in a lump sum, and I hope  
7 that we do get paid back and I hope that you  
8 can work something out else where it doesn't  
9 necessarily break your bank, because the one  
10 thing I'm seeing as a problem in Scranton,  
11 forget the legislators, forget the elected  
12 officials we know they are failures, but the  
13 biggest failure I see in you are city is our  
14 neighborhoods. The things I cannot stand  
15 about Scranton anymore is the victory, all  
16 the hatred towards our own citizens. I'm  
17 not clammering and going nuts that these  
18 people pay this money back, I want them to  
19 out of the goodness and the kindness of  
20 their heart and just doing what's right.  
21 I'm not saying you should be rewarded for  
22 doing what's right because you shouldn't,  
23 that's why you are supposed to do, that what  
24 makes you a good citizen.

25 It's ridiculous -- when I used to



1 work for the Social Security Administration,  
2 I also worked for the unemployment  
3 compensation service center, people would  
4 call me up and say, "I got this check in  
5 error what should I do with it, I'm trying  
6 to do the right thing?"

7 And I said, "Well, the right thing  
8 if you know you got it in error is to return  
9 it."

10 And then they returned it on me and  
11 get upset and say, "Oh, so I'm trying to do  
12 the right thing and now you are going to  
13 punish me and take my money from me?"

14 No, see, because the right thing was  
15 you weren't entitled to that money in the  
16 first place and if you do keep it you broke  
17 the law. Whether you did that intentionally  
18 or accidentally a law was violated and the  
19 money needs to come back, and all we need to  
20 do is have these people step up. Why should  
21 it take an investigation? Why don't the  
22 people come forward, let us know who they  
23 are and say, "We are going to work out some  
24 way to pay this money back."

25 We know that won't happen, but we

1 can hope it will. What I don't want to see  
2 is Scranton residents attacking Scranton  
3 residents. We have these back garbage fees  
4 and all you see is the names in the paper,  
5 the back taxes, the names in the paper just  
6 embarrassing people and everybody jumps on  
7 them and makes the calls to the talk shows  
8 on tells them how wonderful you are because  
9 you pay your bills and what jerks they are  
10 because they don't. Well, you know what,  
11 you pay your bills because you're a good  
12 person, that's what you're supposed to do.  
13 That's what we do as good people. We don't  
14 stand up and brag about doing what's right,  
15 what we do is do what's right and hope that  
16 other people follow our example. Of course,  
17 we would like our leaders to set a good  
18 example which never apparently happens, but  
19 then it's up to us citizens to not only step  
20 and set examples for our children and our  
21 neighbors, but to set it for local officials  
22 that we are going to elect.

23 As they say, you get the government  
24 you deserve, Scranton has exactly that. The  
25 United States is exactly that. Some day we

1 will get the government we deserve, some day  
2 we will wake up. Some day all of the people  
3 in Scranton who owe everybody up there and  
4 somewhere else a favor are out of their jobs  
5 then maybe people won't be so afraid to  
6 speak up. Maybe people won't be afraid to  
7 look into what we can cut and where cuts can  
8 be saved because then they won't be so  
9 worried about their jobs and just worrying  
10 about themselves.

11 We have one of the most selfish  
12 cities out there and it's not the city I  
13 grew up in. We knew all our neighbors, we  
14 all talked to each other, I still know most  
15 of my neighbors. I come from a fairly  
16 decent neighborhood still, many of us  
17 hopefully can still say the same, but when I  
18 hear the talk shows and I read the  
19 newspapers and I see the way that we talk  
20 about each other, and how we want  
21 enforcement against our own neighbors, how  
22 we are on the phone calling and complaining  
23 about a neighbor you don't like the color of  
24 his house or the coach on his front porch,  
25 that's not a city, that's not a

1 neighborhood. So before we save the City of  
2 Scranton, let's save the residents of  
3 Scranton. Let's get together and let's  
4 about be sociable, let's be friendly, let's  
5 find solutions and let's offer them together  
6 and then maybe our government can work with  
7 us. Thank you.

8 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you.

9 MR. MCGOFF: Before the next speaker  
10 I do want to just say one thing as all of  
11 this is taking place, and you are right,  
12 people attacking other people is  
13 inappropriate for this venue. People that  
14 accepted the pensions were told that they  
15 were eligible. Under the law they believed  
16 that they there eligible. That is, you  
17 know, basically what took place. If you  
18 were told that you were getting a raise, I  
19 don't think you would question it. You  
20 would just say, "Thank you," and, you know,  
21 do whatever was appropriate, so when we  
22 start attacking the people that took these  
23 pensions we are really -- in many cases I  
24 believe that these people were innocent of  
25 any wrongdoing, and that's what the

1 investigations are going to do. They are  
2 going to determine, you know, what was  
3 appropriate and what wasn't. That's not our  
4 job. We had no power to do that. These  
5 investigations are being conducted by the  
6 Auditor General's Office and by the State  
7 Police. They are far better at  
8 investigating this than we are.

9 And also, a third thing, there are  
10 going to be arbitration hearings before a  
11 competent, you know, arbitrator who will  
12 determine what took place and the legality  
13 of what took place. Before we started  
14 attacking people, let's at least know what  
15 happened. I just hate it as people come up  
16 here and start accusing others of  
17 wrongdoing. I don't think that that's  
18 appropriate and I would, please, you know,  
19 wait until will you have information before  
20 you make accusations, and that's all, I'm  
21 sorry.

22 Joan Hodowanitz.

23 MS. HODOWANITZ: Joan Hodowanitz,  
24 Scranton resident. I just want to remind  
25 everyone that next week the Friends of the

1           Library will have their quarterly book sale  
2           at the Library Express, second floor of the  
3           mall, and such bargains to be had, hardcover  
4           books, two and three dollars a piece, brand  
5           new. If you like to give books or get books  
6           it's a bargain.

7                        I want to give kudos to the  
8           Times-Tribune, especially to Terry  
9           Morgan-Besecker, who did most of the  
10          articles on this pension issue, and starting  
11          last December and it was her articles that  
12          brought this whole matter to the attention  
13          of the State Auditor General's Office, and  
14          you are correct in that we have to withhold  
15          judgment until we see what these  
16          investigations undercover.

17                       That having been said, I went to the  
18          press conference that the State AG gave and  
19          one thing he did say was that our pension  
20          funds are the most distressed in the state  
21          and unless we fix them Scranton will, not  
22          may, will go bankrupt in less than four  
23          years. Did you catch that when he was  
24          there, Mr. McGoff?

25                       MR. MCGOFF: Yes.

1 MS. HODOWANITZ: Mr. Evans?

2 MR. EVANS: Yes.

3 MS. HODOWANITZ: He said will go  
4 bankrupt in less than four years, so this  
5 issue of the double pensions is one thing,  
6 but fixing the overall pension underfunded  
7 liability problem is something that we  
8 cannot ignore. That is the 800 pound  
9 gorilla in the room. If there is a problem  
10 with these double pensions you are talking  
11 what \$450,000, but the millions upon  
12 millions of the underfunded liability that's  
13 what's going to bring us into bankruptcy.

14 And speaking of audits, I did ask  
15 him about our 2013 audit problem, and I'm  
16 just wondering if have heard any rumors  
17 about a possible completion date?

18 MR. MCGOFF: Rumors nor anything  
19 else, Mrs. Hodowanitz.

20 MS. HODOWANITZ: Well, I ask because  
21 I saw in the paper the request for proposal  
22 for the 2014 through 2017 audits for the  
23 city, that's a four-year window and those  
24 RFP's are due on March 27, but my question  
25 to you and to the administration is what are

1           you going to do if you bid this out? The  
2           auditor can't start the 2014 audit until the  
3           2013 one is done, I mean, what are we doing  
4           here?

5                        I did talk to Mr. DePasquale and his  
6           staff about the fact that we don't have the  
7           Parking Authority financial statements and  
8           that's one of the issues holding up the  
9           audit, so he said he would try to find out,  
10          you know, who Mr. Washo answers to so maybe  
11          we can fix a few doors because he answers to  
12          no one in the city.

13                       And just the last thing is I saw the  
14          January Controller's report and I was  
15          looking at the general fund revenue report  
16          and I noticed that there is payments in lieu  
17          of taxes of \$175,000 for the month of  
18          January, could that be the demonized  
19          University of Scranton making a PILOT  
20          payment in January because that's usually  
21          what they give when they give is \$175,000.

22                       MR. MCGOFF: It could have been, I'm  
23          not sure.

24                       MS. HODOWANITZ: I know people don't  
25          like the University and they have a lot of



1 problems, but you got to keep in mind that  
2 legally they don't have to give the city and  
3 we demonize institutions in this city, one  
4 is the University and the other one is the  
5 Times-Tribune and maybe they are not all of  
6 that bad, all things considered. Thank you.

7 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you, Ms.  
8 Hodowanitz. Anyone else who wishes to  
9 address council?

10 MR. SBARAGLIA: Andy Sbaraglia,  
11 citizen of Scranton, Fellow Scrantonian.  
12 I'm not going to get into the financing of  
13 this city, but if you really want to know  
14 what happened in 2002 contact Brian Reap.  
15 He stood on that council at that time. Like  
16 I told you many, many times he was the only  
17 one that ever made sense.

18 Okay, let's look at the Scranton  
19 Parking Authority which is under  
20 receivership I was told, who actually owns  
21 the Parking Authority, the receiver or the  
22 city? I wonder because Courtright is out  
23 trying to sell different parts of these  
24 garages. If you don't -- if we don't own  
25 the garages it's like selling the Brooklyn

1 Bridge. You got to own something before you  
2 can sell it, but, yet, he is out there  
3 trying to get this contract. Something is  
4 wrong somewhere in this city. You got to  
5 own something to sell it. Now, if he says  
6 he has talked to the bondholders, they are  
7 willing to sell it, just get people to come  
8 up and give them a fair price, fine, I can  
9 believe that, but not what's going on now.  
10 I have never heard of something so  
11 ridiculous in my life as trying to sell  
12 something you don't own.

13 It's like people with the mall,  
14 Boscov didn't own the mall when it went into  
15 receivership and the bondholders bought it  
16 back themselves so Boscov really has nothing  
17 to do with the mall at all other than as a  
18 tenant, but something is wrong somewhere.  
19 No one knows who actually owns the parking  
20 authority, the parking garages not the  
21 authority, you construe them people and put  
22 them back on. You brought the dead back to  
23 life, like I said before, there is no reason  
24 for it.

25 Now with these parking citation

1           issuers, you can cross all you want, Mr.  
2           McGoff, everybody is saying the same thing  
3           about you. You cannot do what you are  
4           doing, you got to come out and tell people  
5           what's actually going on. If you know  
6           something about the Parking Authority who  
7           actually owns it or what kind of deals are  
8           being made then come out and say it. You  
9           don't have to give the specifics, but the  
10          general outline.

11                   MR. MCGOFF: We have been talking  
12                   about it for over a year.

13                   MR. SBARAGLIA: I realize, I have  
14                   been talking longer than that. I have been  
15                   coming here for almost 14 years.

16                   MR. MCGOFF: Mr. Sbaraglia, you said  
17                   I should something, I said we have been  
18                   talking about the monetization of the  
19                   Parking Authority for over a year.

20                   MR. SBARAGLIA: You have been  
21                   talking about it, I have been talking about  
22                   it longer.

23                   MR. MCGOFF: Good.

24                   MR. SBARAGLIA: I have been talking  
25                   when Courtright was sitting --

1 MR. MCGOFF: It doesn't make any  
2 difference how long you have been talking  
3 about it, you said that nothing was being  
4 told to you.

5 MR. SBARAGLIA: What has been told?  
6 Who actually owns the parking garages, the  
7 bondholders or the city?

8 MR. MCGOFF: The reason for  
9 recreating the Parking Authority is so that  
10 we could go through the monetization  
11 process.

12 MR. SBARAGLIA: We can't afford to  
13 modernize anything in this darn city, you  
14 know that and I know that.

15 MR. MCGOFF: I didn't say modernize,  
16 I said monetize.

17 MR. SBARAGLIA: Monetize, okay. So  
18 what has the Parking Authority got to do  
19 with it if they don't own it? If the city  
20 actually owns the garages or they don't own  
21 the garages the bondholders own the garage,  
22 it has nothing to do with -- you have to go  
23 to the bondholders or Mr. Washo and ask him  
24 what he wants to do with the garages.

25 MR. MCGOFF: And that's what they

1 are doing.

2 MR. SBARAGLIA: Have you --

3 MR. MCGOFF: We've had numerous  
4 discussions and we have talked about them  
5 here.

6 MR. SBARAGLIA: I have been coming a  
7 long time and you don't really talk about  
8 them.

9 MR. MCGOFF: Okay.

10 MR. SBARAGLIA: You might glance  
11 through them but you don't really talk or  
12 give the ins and outs of something.  
13 Everybody knows that. They are all telling  
14 me, why don't they tell you anything? Maybe  
15 they don't know, I said that. Maybe they  
16 just don't know or if they do know I don't  
17 know why they want to tell anything.

18 But let's get down to the citation  
19 issuers. Now, we are talking about millions  
20 of dollars in fines. How do you actually  
21 expect people to come up with millions of  
22 dollars to pay off fines? I mean, this  
23 isn't -- your own quota says millions of  
24 dollars in fines. Are you going to give  
25 millions of dollars in fines? I know you

1 are going to get a lot of lawsuits, that I  
2 know of, a lot of people, probably a lot of  
3 hate mail, too, but you are going to have to  
4 accept that. When you send people out to go  
5 through the city, like I said, marking off  
6 the fire hydrant 15 foot one way, 50 foot  
7 the other, so many feet away from the stop  
8 sign and so forth and so on them people  
9 don't exactly know. Now, I get tape  
10 measures, I can measure them off, but when  
11 it comes time for a citation given then I  
12 don't know how they are doing it? Are they  
13 going to keep tape rolls, too, or do they  
14 have an electronic device? All of these  
15 things are up in the air. All I know is you  
16 are going to get a lot of lawsuits and you  
17 are going to get a lot of hate, and you are  
18 going to have to accept it.

19 Like I said before, you got to take  
20 what you do. You sat there for a long time,  
21 and as far as the pensions if you want to  
22 find somebody at fault Hazzouri and Pocius,  
23 how did they get a pension?

24 MS. SCHUMACHER: Good evening,  
25 Council. Marie Schumacher.

1 MR. GAUGHAN: Good evening.

2 MS. SCHUMACHER: City taxpayer. On  
3 7-A, during motions would somebody please  
4 read what streets are involved in this  
5 because I know many of the city streets have  
6 already had the handicap curb cuts done  
7 twice. I think we are wasting a lot of  
8 money. I'd rather see some decent sidewalks  
9 where there aren't any than renewing for a  
10 third time the handicap curb cuts.

11 I attended the Pension Board meeting  
12 yesterday morning because I had read the  
13 legislation that approved -- the city  
14 council approved I believe it was File of  
15 the Council 131 of 2003 for the pensions,  
16 the double pensions, the only problem is  
17 when you read that it doesn't say double  
18 pensions, it says, "Pensions and health  
19 care."

20 So I wanted to know where the double  
21 pensions came from. I did not get an  
22 answer, I got a little bit of an Irish jig  
23 around the issue, but I never got an answer  
24 and I hope that will come out.

25 And then somebody gave me -- one of

1 the attendees gave me a sheet and I looked  
2 at and it was on the Pension Board, and I  
3 looked at the composition and I'll read it  
4 to you. It says, "The Pension Board shall  
5 consist of the Mayor, City Controller,  
6 President of City Council, and two employees  
7 to be chosen by the employees contributing  
8 to such a pension fund."

9 And I thought, oh, well, this is  
10 something old. So I went home and,  
11 Mr. McGoff, you had said a couple of weeks  
12 ago all of the ordinances have been brought  
13 up-to-date, I went there, it still reads  
14 exactly the same way. So do we even have a  
15 Pension Board that is legitimate that has  
16 been taking all of these actions?

17 MR. ROGAN: I can just say I know  
18 that the reports we get for -- as long as I  
19 have been on council, the mayor and the city  
20 controller and council has always had a  
21 proxy in attendance at the meeting. Now,  
22 city council, there is an argument that  
23 council shouldn't even have a seat on there  
24 because nobody on council receives them --

25 MS. SCHUMACHER: Well, you can



1 discuss that later, okay, thanks, so you are  
2 saying you have proxies there?

3 MR. ROGAN: That's what the minutes  
4 state.

5 MS. SCHUMACHER: Okay. Thank you,  
6 and I assume you proxy this week was -- is  
7 it the same person all the time or is it  
8 whoever from the city --

9 MR. MCGOFF: If I do not attend the  
10 city clerk attends.

11 MS. SCHUMACHER: Well, the city  
12 clerk wasn't sitting at the table with the  
13 Pension Board yesterday, she was sitting  
14 behind me in the second row. That's, I  
15 mean, this is a voting -- this would be a  
16 voting member so you might want to -- okay.

17 A couple of other things, just  
18 little things, I have asked this question  
19 before, Wayne, I don't know if you had an  
20 answer yet, but Joan talked about unfunded  
21 liabilities taking us down and I asked what  
22 happened to the -- during the last three  
23 years we had the unfunded liabilities  
24 covered by court action to increase the  
25 taxes and put it in a lockbox as it were.

1 Now, we had a substantial unfunded liability  
2 at the end of last year, where did it go? I  
3 can't find it in the 2015 budget, does it  
4 magically disappear?

5 MR. EVANS: Well, if has been paid  
6 by the TAN --

7 MS. SCHUMACHER: Pardon?

8 MR. EVANS: It could have been paid  
9 by the TAN, but I'll have to look into that  
10 for you.

11 MS. SCHUMACHER: I would appreciate  
12 an answer on that because to me it should be  
13 carried forward and I don't care what remedy  
14 you use to pay for it but it's certainly in  
15 the 2015 budget.

16 And then, Mr. Gaughan, you are  
17 Public Works; right? Who is in charge of  
18 seeing that our fire hydrants are  
19 accessible? I know time -- in the case of a  
20 fire time is of the essence and I was coming  
21 down Harrison Avenue yesterday and I noticed  
22 one at Linden and Harrison was all -- I  
23 mean, you could see the top of it, but it  
24 was all iced in and I thought somebody must  
25 be responsible for doing this so --

1 MR. GAUGHAN: I'm not exactly sure,  
2 but I can definitely find out.

3 MS. SCHUMACHER: Would you find that  
4 out?

5 MR. GAUGHAN: Um-hum.

6 MS. SCHUMACHER: And then back to, I  
7 know I asked this during the budget, if the  
8 budget included money for new stop signs and  
9 I was told no, it didn't, but we need to do  
10 something. I know up in Clarks Green  
11 they -- of course, they have a readable  
12 reflective stop signs, but if I may finish  
13 this?

14 MR. MCGOFF: Please.

15 MS. SCHUMACHER: They have on the  
16 posts, they have reflective tape all the way  
17 down bright cherry red and it does, you  
18 know, it does look -- you can see it and you  
19 know that it's identified with it, and I  
20 haven't written down all of them, but I knew  
21 at Beech and Cedar when you come down Beech  
22 Street you can't see that sign. It is  
23 practically white. There is nothing  
24 reflective left on it, the same at Hickory  
25 Street, come down Hickory Street and Cedar

1 and you can't read it and there are many  
2 others, I didn't have time to -- so I would  
3 like to know what we are going to do about  
4 that, that is a real safety item. If you  
5 could find out for next week what they  
6 intend to do, if they are not going to buy  
7 new signs what they are going to do about  
8 all of these faded out signs? All right,  
9 the rest I guess I'll hold for next week.  
10 Thank you.

11 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you.

12 MR. DOBRZYN: Good evening. Dave  
13 Dobrzyn, resident, homeowner. Last week,  
14 Joe, you mentioned about Comcast moving out  
15 of the mall, I think we should get a  
16 petition going and start pressing them. I  
17 pay my bill down there, also, and as a  
18 result seeing that I'm there I visit the  
19 music store, for your entertainment, I  
20 bought records there or recordings. The  
21 Shoe shore with bedding slippers and you  
22 name it, Radio Shack, I like dabbling with  
23 electronics so shame on Comcast for moving  
24 out of the mall.

25 And on everybody's bright idea with

1 the mall I would hope that it would be a  
2 private enterprise as opposed to a lot of  
3 the public money being sunk into it, a free  
4 market approach, and also with all of the  
5 editorials that are going on what should be  
6 done with the mall that sounds great, but  
7 it's the economy, silly. People don't have  
8 any more money for more and more Chinese  
9 trinkets. Their houses are filled up and  
10 their pockets are empty, so let's face it.

11 We have the Chamber of Commerce get  
12 us all kinds of grants and they go up valley  
13 and down valley, they are looking to the  
14 defoliate the top of Jessup right now, and  
15 get some tax exemptions and what have you,  
16 but they are contributing the sprawl which  
17 is exactly what SAPA was all about  
18 originally is that too many things are  
19 sprawling out and as a result you have sewer  
20 plants and all kinds of the infrastructure  
21 and nothing else works. Public  
22 transportation doesn't work, clearing the  
23 roads don't work, schools get cancelled at a  
24 horrendous rate nowadays compared to what it  
25 was 50 years ago, you never had a

1           cancellation from school unless you had two  
2           feet of snow on the ground not two inches.

3                       On the pensions, okay, take charge  
4           yourself, enough has been said about the  
5           double payments and stuff, but I'd like to  
6           ask a question for the people who are living  
7           in Scranton and voting for the individuals  
8           that came up with the this bright idea of  
9           pension people that were probably would have  
10          been happier if they had just continued to  
11          work, what was the purpose, what was the  
12          point when a person wears the white shirt  
13          and a tie to work every day at 55 years old  
14          what was the point in retirement? Was it  
15          just to get rid of people that didn't  
16          necessarily favor your point of view or I  
17          don't know, but it just seems so pointless  
18          to be running around offering all of these  
19          pensions.

20                      And on our bailout plan and tax  
21          exempts, once again, it was maybe money,  
22          PILOTS are maybe money and they are nothing  
23          we can count out so I would rather not count  
24          on them, and a lot of money is still owed  
25          and I don't see any attempt at collecting it

1 on back fees, I don't know how far back it  
2 can go, but when Mayor Doherty was  
3 confronted with the article in the Times I  
4 think it was in what 2013, it was \$7.5  
5 million was owed in trash fees alone. And I  
6 don't see any point in somebody arguing that  
7 my apartment is only rented out a half a  
8 year. We have to have trucks, we have to  
9 have personnel, we have to send them out, we  
10 have to insure them, fuel, the works, and  
11 just in case their apartment is rented out  
12 so if you own a house in Scranton feel free  
13 to pay what everybody else does. I don't  
14 care. I could have stuck with the winter, I  
15 can afford to go to Florida or not, well, I  
16 was in Florida for six months.

17 And once again, on these  
18 inspections, the coal retrieval operation on  
19 West Side, I'll wrap it up quick, along the  
20 Lackawanna River the trees are starting over  
21 those old dirt banks down by the Baker  
22 Colliery, was it, you know, I see after they  
23 lost their tax exemptions, their K0Z, I seen  
24 a lot of the action going on down there, I  
25 don't see very much more, but they haven't

1 restored the land to gray or anything else  
2 and, once again, it's the same old party  
3 that once to pile trash 400 feet high and  
4 runs a junkyard that's two miles long and  
5 the whole --

6 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you, Mr. Dobrzyn.

7 MR. DOBRZYN: -- appearance of the  
8 valley is -- don't forget the Transpacific  
9 Trade Pack, too.

10 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you.

11 MR. DOBRZYN: If we don't get your  
12 taxes you don't have any money to pay  
13 anybody anyway. Thank you and have a good  
14 night. Call your Congressman.

15 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you.

16 MR. MCGOFF: Anyone else who wishes  
17 to address council?

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

19 MOTIONS.

20 MR. MCGOFF: Mr. Wechlser.

21 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you,  
22 Mr. McGoff. Touching on the two  
23 investigations by the Auditor General and  
24 the State Police, I welcome their  
25 participation in this effort, I believe that



1           they are the most capable of conducting  
2           extensive investigation that's required. I  
3           hope they follow through with restitution  
4           and prosecution wherever possible.

5                     I would ask all involved with the  
6           parties to be cooperative with the  
7           investigation. City Council through the  
8           Clerk's Office has already gathered together  
9           all of the information that has been  
10          requested. I would like to thank the City  
11          Clerk's Office for the fine job that they  
12          did getting this information together and  
13          filing a quick response.

14                    On another matter, I have spoken  
15          with the city engineer, John Pocius, about  
16          the condition of East Mountain Road. After  
17          construction, there was a seam left in  
18          middle of the road and that over the course  
19          of the last few years as we began to open  
20          up. Right now it's kind of past the point  
21          of a quick fix so when the weather breaks  
22          Mr. Pocius will go up and take a look at  
23          what's required for a final repair.

24                    In regards to the Steamtown Market  
25          Group, I have contacted Mr. Donahue, who is

1 part of that group, and offered my support  
2 for the project. As this time, according to  
3 Mr. Donahue, they are actively trying to  
4 keep this a grass root effort. They  
5 appreciated my suggestion to be involved,  
6 but actually at this time they declined my  
7 involvement, but I do support the plan and I  
8 am anxious to get involved when the time  
9 arises. And that's all I have for right  
10 now.

11 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you. Mr. Rogan?

12 MR. ROGAN: Yes, thank you. A few  
13 brief items that were brought up and then a  
14 couple of other items to discuss. First,  
15 I'd like to thank city engineer, John  
16 Pocius, for his timely response to an  
17 inquiry where an oil company was refusing to  
18 deliver oil because of the bridge wasn't  
19 certified. I know the resident contacted  
20 Mr. Pocius, they contacted me as well, and  
21 our city clerk as well they did a great job  
22 and got this taken care of in a day, which  
23 is unheard of in city government.

24 Next, there was a question regarding  
25 the curb cuts and the money being spent and

1 a possible street list, there is no list  
2 developed yet. The letter states that it  
3 will be for reconstruction contracts to be  
4 developed and bid, so as of this point there  
5 is no list of streets that will be -- or the  
6 curb cuts and the paving that will take  
7 place, but with the issue of the curb cuts  
8 the city has to be ADA compliant, so  
9 unfunded payment from the federal government  
10 where if the curb cuts are handicap  
11 accessible they do have to be up to those  
12 standards so that's why I lot of time you  
13 will see the curb cuts being done in  
14 different neighborhoods and they are usually  
15 done in conjunction with paving projects,  
16 you will see the street paving and the curb  
17 cuts being reconstructed and I believe when  
18 PennDOT paves Main Avenue, which is long  
19 overdue, they will be doing curb cuts as  
20 well because of the same issue.

21 Next, regarding the pensions I, too,  
22 am very pleased to hear about the  
23 investigation from the State Police and from  
24 the Auditor General's Office. I am very  
25 hopeful that they will get to the bottom of

1           this issue, and what's most important for me  
2           is to find out who authorized the payment of  
3           these excess pensions. It appears it wasn't  
4           the Pension Board by a vote, so we need to  
5           figure out why it happened and whether it  
6           was done criminally, whether it was done  
7           accidentally. In the one case scenario where  
8           money has gone missing in Scranton so  
9           anything is possible, but I would like to  
10          make a request, in the Scranton Times  
11          article it was mentioned that Attorney  
12          Durkin reviewed documents that he found to  
13          be suspicious and that is why he contacted  
14          the State Police, so if it's agreeable with  
15          my colleagues I would like to request those  
16          documents from the Pension Board whether it  
17          be on a confidential basis just for the  
18          council members or whether it be public  
19          knowledge. I do think we should look at  
20          those documents and see what's in it for our  
21          own investigation as well if it's agreeable?

22                   MR. MCGOFF: Could I just ask,  
23          Attorney Minora, would it be appropriate for  
24          us to request information that is being used  
25          in an ongoing investigation.

1 MR. MINORA: Well, it's probably  
2 public information to begin with, and I have  
3 had a conversation with Attorney Durkin and  
4 I would suspect that he wouldn't have any  
5 problem turning over any documents. He has  
6 been very forthright with everything.

7 MR. MCGOFF: Okay. Thank you.

8 MR. ROGAN: As I was saying, I think  
9 it's important for council members to know  
10 what's going on in this process and what  
11 documents they Attorney Durkin read that  
12 raised the red flag with him that he felt  
13 the need to contact the State Police so I  
14 would like to know what was contained in  
15 those documents.

16 And, finally, I think as was  
17 mentioned by many people tonight, while I'm  
18 hopeful that the investigations by the State  
19 Police and the Auditor General will give us  
20 a full picture of what happened during that  
21 time period in 2001, 2002, when these excess  
22 pensions were authorized I do think if all  
23 of the answers aren't brought out and what  
24 city council is looking for we should  
25 explore the possibility of subpoenas at that

1 point and have right in council chambers a  
2 public question and answer under oath to  
3 find out exactly what happened.

4 Many residents have contacted me  
5 regarding this and they are curious as to  
6 the role of the former mayor and the  
7 controller, whether they were -- we'll see  
8 if they are the ones that authorized it, it  
9 doesn't appear that either or them were, but  
10 what role did they take and why did this  
11 take so long to come out is an another  
12 concern that I have. Why did it take nearly  
13 a million dollars being drained out of the  
14 pension fund until that was discovered?

15 As I mentioned last week, when  
16 Councilman Loscombe was appointed to the  
17 board it was matter of weeks when it was  
18 determined that he was ineligible and the  
19 pension was rightfully revoked, but in this  
20 case it lingered for many, many years and  
21 it's only thanks to the reporting of the  
22 Scranton Times that this really started to  
23 get out there, so I think we need to get to  
24 the bottom of that issue.

25 Secondly, regarding the article in

1 the paper on snow removal on the pedestrian  
2 bridges, and this has been an ongoing issues  
3 I think as long as I have been on council  
4 and probably the same for Councilman McGoff  
5 who has been here a bit longer than me, I  
6 did speak to the mayor when that article ran  
7 regarding this issue and it has since been  
8 cleaned, so I'm glad that the mayor and our  
9 DPW Director Denny Gallagher did get that  
10 taken care of, but what was explained to me  
11 the sidewalks were cleared once the initial  
12 snowstorm came, and then when PennDOT came  
13 along it pushed much of the slush and the  
14 snow back onto the sidewalk that they froze  
15 over, and once it freezes over, and anyone  
16 who gets a little behind on doing their own  
17 driveway knows it's much more difficult to  
18 remove at that point.

19 We also discussed a couple of other  
20 ideas regarding the changes to how the city  
21 sidewalks were brought up, some people have  
22 on Facebook or where I saw some groups  
23 commenting where there used to be a prison  
24 release for this issue, that -- I did bring  
25 that up to the mayor, that program has sent

1           went away, I don't know if it's because of  
2           the issue the county had with that program  
3           under former commissioners, I think everyone  
4           remembers that, and the other issue was one  
5           of insurance where if say city council  
6           wanted to adopt a bridge and the five of us  
7           would be in charge of clearing the Linden  
8           Street bridge, that there is an issue or  
9           insurance and their could possibly be union  
10          issues, unfortunately.

11                         And that gets me into the second  
12          part of what I wanted to talk about  
13          regarding Public Works. While I commend our  
14          DP Director Denny Gallagher for certainly  
15          doing the best job that he can, and for the  
16          time I have been on council he has been the  
17          best DPW director as far as requests from  
18          council and residents that we have had to  
19          deal with, but at the end of day it's not  
20          the director that goes out and does the work  
21          it's the employees. I'm hopeful that when  
22          the revised recovery plan is released it  
23          will contain an efficiency study for the DPW  
24          and I hope that efficiency study is carried  
25          out and the Public Works trucks and every



1 position are followed and surveyed for a day  
2 to find quicker ways to do these jobs. I  
3 have long believed that garbage collection  
4 in the City of Scranton can be completed in  
5 four days leaving the fifth day to do other  
6 things, pothole repair, which we know are  
7 solely needed, cleaning the bridges, the  
8 many other things, the parks, signs. We  
9 need more people on those jobs, too, and  
10 obviously the garbage collection is a big  
11 part of that job and it takes up most of the  
12 time and manpower.

13 That being said, I have longed  
14 advocated for privatization of the refuse  
15 division of the DPW. Many other towns and  
16 cities have done it and their garbage fees  
17 are less than \$300 a year. By privatizing  
18 the refuse portion, the city could keep a  
19 smaller, more efficient DPW crew to go out  
20 and do these sidewalks, to clean the  
21 bridges, to fill potholes, to clean the  
22 parks, do signs, the things that we are  
23 hearing all of the time that are falling  
24 through the cracks because so much of the  
25 focus is put on the top priority which is

1 collecting garbage and recyclables.

2 So bottom line regarding these  
3 issues, I am hopeful that the revised  
4 recovery plan when we receive that copy  
5 still contains that language. The first  
6 draft copy we received did have language  
7 regarding efficiency studies for the DPW and  
8 possible changes in that department, I hope  
9 that the new document that we should be  
10 receiving shortly will still contain those  
11 items so an overhaul can be looked at and  
12 hopefully a partial privatization of that  
13 department. Thank you.

14 MR. MCGOFF: Mr. Evans?

15 MR. EVANS: Thank you. First, I'd  
16 like to sort of go back to the bridge and  
17 the snow sidewalk issue. It can be said  
18 that when we no longer provide basic  
19 services we are failing in our mission so it  
20 made me extremely happy that the sidewalk  
21 discussed last week at our council meeting  
22 had been cleaned of ice and snow and that  
23 pedestrians are once again traveling safely  
24 into downtown Scranton from South Side and  
25 West Side. This basic service has been once

1           again provided. So thank you,  
2           Mr. Gallagher, and the DPW crew for all of  
3           your hard work in the matter.

4                         With that said, as far as what got  
5           us to that point I'm not interested in  
6           playing the blame game or pointing fingers  
7           or I'm not interested -- I'm only interested  
8           in finding a solution to this decades old  
9           problem that seems to go away every spring  
10          but returns every winter. My comments last  
11          week were not meant to be a reflection on  
12          the job performance of the DPW, as  
13          Mr. Gallagher put it those are the cards  
14          that he was dealt.

15                        But it should not be a reflection on  
16          how we solve this problem going forward.  
17          Whether it's hiring casual part-timers,  
18          outsourcing the work to private contractors  
19          through an RFP or even working with the Work  
20          Release Center we need to find a permanent  
21          solution that will solve this problem once  
22          and for all every winter, every year from  
23          this point on. I'm confident that  
24          Councilman Gaughan, as the Chairperson of  
25          Public Works Committee can work with

1 Mr. Gallagher and the administration and  
2 formulate a plan and bring something back to  
3 city council if necessary that we would be  
4 able to be supportive of. I will, of  
5 course, help in any way I can. No one wants  
6 to see this to continue and certainly no one  
7 wants to see anyone get hurt.

8 On the pension, a day can hardly go  
9 by without another shocking discovery about  
10 our pension plan. Along with Councilman  
11 McGoff, I attended the news conference by  
12 the Auditor General yesterday in the Chamber  
13 building. First, we certainly have an ally  
14 in the AG's Office because he is definitely  
15 a proponent of the pension reform, but for  
16 some reason the House and the Senate and the  
17 new Governor in office do not appear to have  
18 that same sense of urgency.

19 As stated by the Auditor General, if  
20 things are not changed the pension issue  
21 will force Scranton into bankruptcy within  
22 four years. Time is of the essence and real  
23 pension reform must begin soon. I will  
24 continue to ask questions needed as I gather  
25 more information on what is being done on

1 local and state levels and across the  
2 country with municipal and state pension  
3 reform. This is a very complex issue and we  
4 all need to be informed about what real  
5 pension reform should look like. At some  
6 point, I would expect the administration to  
7 put forth their recommendations of pension  
8 reform for all of new hires and for the  
9 non-union personnel that work for the city  
10 as well as creating a dialogue and  
11 recommendation on Pension Boards and the  
12 rules that govern pension oversight, but as  
13 the Auditor General forewarned we cannot  
14 wait much longer, the clock is ticking.

15 In fact, the AG later took to  
16 Twitter to make the following revised  
17 comments, "If Scranton doesn't have a  
18 comprehensive fix to it's pension situation  
19 within the next three years the city will be  
20 bankrupt."

21 Our track record on pensions, as we  
22 all know, has been abysmal, and many of the  
23 dominans that were in place for the ongoing  
24 and shocking pension revelations continue to  
25 be in place today. That should not be

1 acceptable to anyone. That's all I have for  
2 now. Thank you.

3 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you.  
4 Mr. Gaughan?

5 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, thank you. I was  
6 contacted by resident who had concerns about  
7 heavy truck traffic that travels on Kane  
8 Street and in light of Kane Street being  
9 paved with the money from the PIP loan from  
10 the state this resident was concerned that  
11 maybe we should I think about inquiring if a  
12 weight limit sign or banning truck traffic  
13 completely on that street would be possible.  
14 So our office has sent correspondence to  
15 city engineer John Pocius to get his  
16 expertise and his opinion on this subject  
17 and I will update that resident and my  
18 colleagues as we receive a response.

19 It's clear that the city has made  
20 some costly mistakes as it relates to our  
21 pension system. The investigation by the  
22 Scranton Times a few months ago put into  
23 full focus our major problems with  
24 disability pensions within the police and  
25 fire department. In trying to be proactive

1 and seek solutions to some of these issues,  
2 I have assembled over the past few weeks  
3 pension ordinances from other cities to see  
4 what safeguards they put in place to avoid  
5 potential fraud and abuse. I have asked  
6 Attorney Minora, our solicitor, to provide a  
7 legal review of these ordinances and  
8 possible amendments to our own ordinances to  
9 add much needed safeguards against fraud and  
10 abuse. There are a few areas that we are  
11 currently examining, and Councilman Evans is  
12 also helping and I hope to be able to have  
13 something concrete that we can put on the  
14 agenda in the next few weeks. I think all  
15 of this information has come out and I think  
16 this is a particularly important time to act  
17 and I think as council we have a legislative  
18 responsibility to examine these ordinances  
19 and see what changes that we can make to  
20 them because the longer that we wait,  
21 supposed else goes out on disability we  
22 should headache sure that these safeguards  
23 are place to protect against that.

24 A few months ago I also mentioned  
25 the idea of a land bank. I have contacted

1 Liz Hersh from the Pennsylvania Housing  
2 Alliance to request that she give a  
3 presentation on land banks to city council  
4 during a public caucus. Ms. Hersh gave a  
5 very informative presentation to the  
6 Pittston City Council a few months ago about  
7 land banks and Pittston eventually  
8 implemented a land bank authority, and I  
9 think it would be very beneficial for  
10 council and the public to learn more about  
11 this tool that the state give us in 2012 for  
12 municipalities to fight blight.

13 Regarding the sidewalk issue on the  
14 bridges during snowstorms, I have contacted  
15 DPW Director Dennis Gallagher to discuss  
16 this situation, I have not heard back from  
17 him yet. I also reached out to the mayor to  
18 sit down and meet with him and I have not  
19 heard back from him yet, but I hope to some  
20 time within the next week. I realize that  
21 the DPW is working with less employees and I  
22 understand that this is very difficult, and  
23 I would point out Councilman Evans and I  
24 think Councilman Rogan touched on them  
25 having less employees, the previous council



1           decimated the casual program that they had.  
2           Casual employees, I think they only get paid  
3           11 or 12 dollars an hour, they don't get any  
4           health care benefits and they're extremely  
5           important to the operation of the DPW and  
6           they were -- that program was completely  
7           abolished. So I think in the future we  
8           ought to think about bringing that back and  
9           giving the DPW some extra support at really  
10          not that much cost, but they end of the day  
11          the priority should be clearing snow from  
12          sidewalks on bridges that create unsafe  
13          conditions.

14                 As I mentioned previously, last year  
15          when I first became a councilman I had sat  
16          down with Director Gallagher and the mayor  
17          and talked about a snow emergency plan and  
18          we talked about what other cities have done  
19          so I have done my due diligence on this  
20          topic a year ago and continue to talk about  
21          it, whether it be alternate side of the  
22          street parking or coming up with some kind  
23          of strategic plan to take care of some of  
24          these issues, so moving forward hopefully  
25          that can be done because it is a major

1 issue. And that is all I have this week.  
2 Thank you very much.

3 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you, Mr. Gaughan.  
4 I'm sorry that in the moment of reflection  
5 earlier that I neglected to mention the  
6 passing of Mr. Bob Spagna. Mr. Spagna was  
7 very significant in the lives of many  
8 Scranton residents and for his many  
9 contributions to the Scranton area in  
10 education, sports, and just society in  
11 general. He was a terrific man, he will be  
12 missed and my condolences to his family and  
13 many friends.

14 Also, I was asked by the -- I was  
15 getting a haircut the other day and the lady  
16 that was in the shop asked me if Greenbush  
17 Street was ever going to be paved, and I  
18 just asked Mr. Gaughan if I could take a  
19 look at the proposed paving list and I know  
20 that this has been an ongoing question for  
21 quite awhile. All I can say is that from  
22 the list the four and five hundred blocks of  
23 Greenbush Street are on the proposed paving  
24 list, and I say proposed because things have  
25 a tendency to change, but certainly

1 Greenbush Street is something that is being  
2 looked at and contemplated for paving.

3 As far as the Pension Board meetings  
4 and somebody mentioned attendance at them, I  
5 guess there are a number of Pension Boards  
6 that meet. In the past, I have attended  
7 meetings of the Composite Pension Board. I  
8 have not attended the meetings of the  
9 Non-uniform Pension Board. If I'm not in  
10 attendance at the Composite one the city  
11 clerk does have my proxy to attend.  
12 Actually, until a few weeks ago, a month  
13 ago, I was not -- I did not realize that I  
14 was also as president had a seat on the  
15 Non-uniform Pension Board and when this  
16 issue was going to be discussed when they  
17 were meeting this past week I inadvertently  
18 attended the wrong pension board meeting. I  
19 thought that the issue was going to be  
20 discussed at the composite one, I attended  
21 that, I was not in attendance at the  
22 non-uniform meeting. The city clerk was and  
23 did take notes for council.

24 However, also, at the Composite  
25 Pension Board meeting Attorney Durkin is the

1           solicitor for both of those boards and I did  
2           speak to Attorney Durkin about the situation  
3           and about their proposes plans for dealing  
4           with the situation and the arbitrations that  
5           will be taking -- meetings, I guess, that  
6           will be taking place. So we were informed  
7           about the process, and I'm sorry that I was  
8           a little bit confused on which meeting to  
9           attend.

10                         Also, there was something  
11           Mr. Gaughan mentioned about the Pension  
12           Board and the safeguards that are in place  
13           within the pension law, I guess. The  
14           Attorney General did mention the other day  
15           that part of the investigation that they  
16           will conduct will include looking at how  
17           this -- not only how this problem took  
18           place, but whether there were safeguards in  
19           place that should have kind of been  
20           triggered at the time and so hopefully that,  
21           you know, out of this investigation there  
22           will be something as far as what safeguards  
23           there are and if there is a need for, you  
24           know, further legislation to ensure that  
25           this type of situation does not recur.

1                   The other thing, and I forget until  
2                   somebody mentioned something about the  
3                   nonprofits, the Auditor General did mention  
4                   that he would be in Scranton on March 19, I  
5                   don't have any specific time or place, but  
6                   that he would be in Scranton on March 19 to  
7                   speak on nonprofits designations and what  
8                   possible changes could be contemplated, so I  
9                   would advise that if we get --or if there is  
10                  anything in the newspaper, you know, I'm  
11                  sure it will be open to the public and very  
12                  informative. If we get any further  
13                  information on it, certainly we will provide  
14                  that information at the appropriate time.  
15                  And that's all. Thank you.

16                   MS. REED: FIFTH ORDER. 5-B. FOR  
17                   INTRODUCTION - AN ORDINANCE - AUTHORIZING  
18                   THE MAYOR AND OTHER APPROPRIATE CITY  
19                   OFFICIALS TO APPROVE THE EXPANSION OF  
20                   PARKING ENFORCEMENT WITHIN THE SCRANTON  
21                   POLICE DEPARTMENT BY REASSIGNING TWO (2)  
22                   CIVILIAN CLERKS TO THE PATROL DIVISION TO  
23                   ENFORCE PARKING VIOLATIONS THROUGHOUT THE  
24                   CITY.

25                   MR. MCGOFF: At this time I'll

1           entertain a motion that Item 5-B be  
2           introduced into its proper committee.

3           MR. ROGAN:    So moved.

4           MR. WECHSLER:   Second.

5           MR. MCGOFF:    On the question?

6           MR. GAUGHAN:   Yes, on the question.

7           In the caucus that Chief Graziano attended,  
8           which I would like to thank him for coming  
9           and explaining some of the legislation that  
10          deals with the police department tonight, I  
11          did ask that the administration provide  
12          council with quarterly or monthly revenue  
13          reports from this new program so that we can  
14          keep track and make sure that the targeted  
15          amount is on -- that we are on track with  
16          that. Thank you.

17          MR. MCGOFF:   And I would just like  
18          to comment that this legislation allows for  
19          people to enforce the parking regulations  
20          that we have. This is not something that we  
21          are introducing, you know, new laws, new  
22          restrictions, this is simply let's enforce  
23          the law that we have. If people are  
24          violating parking regulations, they should  
25          be cited, you know. If it's a question of,

1           you know, close to a meter or something or  
2           close -- I'm sorry, a corner or a fire  
3           hydrant I'm sure these are things that they  
4           will be trained to deal with. And far as  
5           measuring, let's face it, we all know when  
6           we are too close to a fire hydrant. You  
7           know, we may ignore it, but we know the  
8           distance and approximate distance and I'm  
9           sure that, you know, these people that are  
10          assigned will, you know, be trained and be  
11          adequate to the task of enforcing the  
12          regulations we have.

13                       MR. ROGAN: I would just add, one  
14          area that has -- I know I have had a lot of  
15          complaints, and I'm sure others have, are  
16          the residents in the Hill Section or at the  
17          hospitals where they have permit only  
18          parking or often times get very upset  
19          because people are parking in their spots  
20          when they go to the hospitals or go to visit  
21          relatives and that's the reason why their  
22          area was set up with permit parking. This  
23          will hopefully increase the enforcement in  
24          that area so people can park in front of  
25          their own houses.

1 MR. WECHSLER: And the one thing  
2 that the chief did add was that the these  
3 clerks are going to use electronic devices  
4 to issue tickets and track tickets which  
5 will allow the tickets to be paid online to  
6 make the collection of the fines easier.

7 MR. MCGOFF: All those in favor of  
8 introduction signify by saying aye.

9 MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

10 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

11 MR. EVANS: Aye.

12 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

13 MS. MCGOFF: Aye. Opposed? The  
14 ayes have it and so moved.

15 MS. REED: 5-C. FOR INTRODUCTION - A  
16 RESOLUTION - A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE  
17 CITY OF SCRANTON POLICE DEPARTMENT'S  
18 PARTICIPATION IN A NALOXONE ADMINISTRATION  
19 PROGRAM IN WHICH APPROPRIATELY TRAINED  
20 POLICE PERSONNEL, PURSUANT TO PA. ACT 139 OF  
21 2014 (ATTACHED), WILL BE EQUIPPED TO  
22 ADMINISTER NALOXONE (NARCAN) TO INDIVIDUALS  
23 WHO ARE IN RESPIRATORY DISTRESS AS A RESULT  
24 OF OPIOID OVERDOSE AND EXECUTE MEMORANDUM OF  
25 UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE SCRANTON POLICE



1 DEPARTMENT AND PENNSYLVANIA AMBULANCE, LLC.

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

5 MR. ROGAN: So moved.

6 MR. WECHSLER: Second.

7 MR. MCGOFF: On the question? Chief  
8 Graziano also spoke to this piece of  
9 legislation and he said to date all of the  
10 entire police force has been certified to  
11 use this. Also, a state law, and what's the  
12 proper terminology, I'm sorry, Attorney  
13 Minora, that there is no liability --

14 MR. MINORA: You're immune, immune  
15 from liability.

16 MR. MCGOFF: Immunity from  
17 prosecution or for use of this. He also  
18 stated that the side effects of the use, of  
19 the use of this product, are nothing. That  
20 if it is given to somebody who is not under  
21 an opiate overdose it will not effect them.  
22 There are other things that he mentioned  
23 that were appropriate to the legislation and  
24 it is a countywide -- it's being introduced  
25 countywide so that throughout the county

1           this will be utilized.

2                   MR. WECHSLER: Mr. McGoff, I'd just  
3           like to add, and I was not aware of this  
4           until this evening, the chief did mention  
5           this also going to be used for accidental  
6           pharmaceutical overdoses that my occur in a  
7           home either by someone accidentally taking too  
8           much prescription medicine or even a child  
9           perhaps getting into parents' medications so  
10          this is not exclusively for drug abusers,  
11          but this also has a practical application  
12          for accident overdoses in the home.

13                   MR. MCGOFF: All those in favor of  
14          introduction signify by saying aye.

15                   MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

16                   MR. ROGAN: Aye.

17                   MR. EVANS: Aye.

18                   MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

19                   MS. MCGOFF: Aye. Opposed? The  
20          eyes have it and so moved.

21                   MS. REED: 5-D. FOR INTRODUCTION -  
22          A RESOLUTION - RATIFYING AND APPROVING THE  
23          EXECUTION AND SUBMISSION OF AN APPLICATION  
24          BY THE CITY OF SCRANTON FIRE DEPARTMENT FOR  
25          A PENNSYLVANIA AMERICAN WATER FIREFIGHTING

1 SUPPORT GRANT TO PURCHASE SMOKE DETECTORS  
2 AND CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS AND  
3 AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND OTHER APPROPRIATE  
4 CITY OFFICIALS TO ACCEPT THE GRANT AND  
5 DISBURSE THE GRANT FUNDS IN THE AMOUNT OF  
6 \$1,000 FOR THE PURCHASE OF THE SMOKE  
7 DETECTORS AND CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS.

8 MR. MCGOFF: At this time I'll  
9 entertain a motion that Item 5-D be  
10 introduced into its proper committee.

11 MR. ROGAN: So moved.

12 MR. WECHSLER: Second.

13 MR. MCGOFF: On the question? This  
14 is a program that has been ongoing in the  
15 Scranton Fire Department when they purchased  
16 the smoke detectors and carbon monoxide  
17 detectors they are then available to the  
18 public for use and I'm sure that when this  
19 grant is approved and these detectors are  
20 purchased and made available we will ask  
21 that Chief DeSarno come in and explain the  
22 process for getting those detectors.

23 All those in favor of introduction  
24 signify by saying aye.

25 MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

1 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

2 MR. EVANS: Aye.

3 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

4 MS. MCGOFF: Aye. Opposed? The  
5 ayes have it and so moved.

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

7 READING BY TITLE - FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO.  
8 83, 2015 - AN ORDINANCE - AMENDING FILE OF  
9 THE COUNCIL NO. 51, 1977 AN ORDINANCE,  
10 AMENDING FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO. 44, 1926,  
11 ENTITLED "AN ORDINANCE REGULATING THE  
12 CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE OF ADVERTISING  
13 SIGNS AND SIMILAR STRUCTURES: PROVIDING FOR  
14 THE INSPECTION THEREOF, PRESCRIBING LICENSE  
15 FEES IN REFERENCE THERETO AND PROVIDING  
16 PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS," AMENDED BY FILE  
17 OF THE COUNCIL NO. 5, 1963 TO PROVIDE FOR  
18 THE INCREASE IN FEES, AS AMENDED BY FILE OF  
19 THE COUNCIL NO. 83, 1976 BY DEFINING THE  
20 SIGNED AREA AS THE BASIS FOR CHARGE BY  
21 UPDATING AND INCREASING THE ANNUAL SIGN  
22 FEES.

23 MR. MCGOFF: You've heard reading by  
24 title of Item 6-A, what is your pleasure?

25 MR. ROGAN: I move that Item 6-A

1 pass reading by title.

2 MR. WECHSLER: Second.

3 MS. MCGOFF: On the question?

4 MR. WECHSLER: Yes, Mr. McGoff, on  
5 the question, this week myself and  
6 Councilman Evans we made some inquiry as to  
7 the financial impact of this new fee and a  
8 determination to see if it's worth the  
9 effort to raise it or will it cause a  
10 problem with the business community so  
11 before the final vote next week myself, and  
12 I know I'm going to do some more  
13 investigation into this either modifying the  
14 increase or spreading the increase over  
15 perhaps a two-year period. Either way, I  
16 think this has to be looked at little bit  
17 more before the final vote is taken.

18 MR. EVANS: Yeah, on the question.  
19 Again, I said it last week, this is not a  
20 crippling increase on the surface, but it  
21 can be perceived as another chance to just  
22 dip further into the pockets of our small  
23 business community. You know, especially a  
24 300 percent increase. We need to send a  
25 different kind of message to our small

1 business owners in the city and elsewhere  
2 that Scranton is open for business. We can  
3 no longer tax and impose or way with higher  
4 fees as a way out of our financial quagmire.  
5 We must find a way to somehow grow ourselves  
6 out of this situation so I am hopeful that  
7 as this legislation moves into Seventh Order  
8 for a final vote next week that there may be  
9 some compromise and I concur with Councilman  
10 Wechsler I think there is a way to increase  
11 the fees and have a much smaller impact and  
12 send the business community a message that  
13 we are listening and we are paying attention  
14 and that we want to grow the small business  
15 community in the city. Thank you. That's  
16 all I have.

17 MR. MCGOFF: Just to add to that,  
18 certainly before final vote this can even be  
19 amended or if we can't find some answer to  
20 or some resolution it can certainly be  
21 tabled until there is some resolution to the  
22 situation.

23 All those in favor signify by saying  
24 aye.

25 MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

1 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

2 MR. EVANS: Aye.

3 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

4 MR. MCGOFF: Aye. Opposed? The  
5 ayes have it and so moved.

6 MS. REED: SEVENTH ORDER. 7-A.  
7 FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMITTEE ON  
8 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT - FOR ADOPTION  
9 RESOLUTION NO. 127, 2015 - AUTHORIZING THE  
10 MAYOR AND OTHER APPROPRIATE CITY OFFICIALS  
11 TO EXECUTE AND ENTER INTO A DESIGN AND  
12 CONSTRUCTION INSPECTION SERVICES CONTRACT  
13 WITH REILLY ASSOCIATES TO PROVIDE DESIGN AND  
14 CONSTRUCTION INSPECTION SERVICES FOR THE  
15 CONSTRUCTION WORK FOR THE PROJECT ENTITLED:  
16 "RE-CONSTRUCTION OF CITY STREETS TO INCLUDE  
17 HANDICAPPED CURB CUTS."

18 MR. MCGOFF: What is the  
19 recommendation of the Chair for the  
20 Committee on Community Development?

21 MR. ROGAN: As Chairperson for the  
22 Committee on Community Development, I  
23 recommend final passage of Item 7-A.

24 MR. WECHSLER: Second.

25 MR. MCGOFF: On the question? Roll

1 call, please?

2 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Wechsler.

3 MR. WECHSLER: Yes.

4 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Rogan.

5 MR. ROGAN: Yes.

6 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Evans.

7 MR. EVANS: Yes.

8 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Gaughan.

9 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

10 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. McGoff.

11 MR. MCGOFF: Yes. I hereby declare

12 Item 7-A legally and lawfully adopted.

13 If there is no further business,

14 I'll entertain a motion to adjourn.

15 MR. ROGAN: Motion to adjourn.

16 MR. MCGOFF: And I would also like  
17 to mention that we our students did stay  
18 through the entire meeting so we can verify  
19 with your teacher. This meeting is  
20 adjourned.

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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