

SCRANTON CITY COUNCIL MEETING

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HELD:

Thursday, March 5, 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  
(Not present)

WAYNE EVANS

JOSEPH WECHSLER

WILLIAM GAUGHAN

LORI REED, CITY CLERK

KATHY CARRERA, 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. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

5 MR. WECHSLER: Here.

6 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan. Mr. Evans.

7 MR. EVANS: Here.

8 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

9 MR. GAUGHAN: Here.

10 MS. CARRERA: Mr. McGoff.

11 MR. MCGOFF: Here.

12 MR. MCGOFF: Let the record reflect  
13 that Mr. Rogan did contact the office and  
14 that he will be unable to be here this  
15 evening. At this time we do have a  
16 proclamation to be presented. We would like  
17 to have the recipients come forward, please.

18 MR. WECHSLER: "WHEREAS, the month of  
19 March mobilizes hundreds of local MEALS ON  
20 WHEELS programs across the country to reach  
21 out to their communities and build the  
22 support that will sustain them all year  
23 long; and

24 WHEREAS, founded in 1969, MEALS ON  
25 WHEELS OF NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA, was one

1 of the original agencies funded under the  
2 Older American Acts to provide nutritional  
3 services to homebound older persons. The  
4 agency's founder, and first director,  
5 alerted the nation to the unmet nutritional  
6 needs of the elderly during congressional  
7 hearings in the late nineteen sixties; and

8 WHEREAS, from its modest origins in  
9 the unused hospital building, over the years  
10 the agency has developed to become the major  
11 provider of nutritional services to the  
12 elderly and disabled population of  
13 Lackawanna County, serving more than eight  
14 hundred elderly and disabled persons a home  
15 delivered lunch each day, Monday through  
16 Friday. This hot meal is the main meal of  
17 the day for most of the recipients, and for  
18 some, contact with the volunteer delivering  
19 the meal is the only consistent visit they  
20 receive; and

21 WHEREAS, the emphasis on the elderly  
22 is very appropriate in a county that ranks  
23 as one of the highest concentrations of  
24 older persons in the nation. The percentage  
25 of elderly in this Northeastern Pennsylvania

1 Community is twice the national average; and  
2 WHEREAS, the Home Delivered Meal  
3 Program could not succeed without the  
4 support of one hundred ten plus volunteers  
5 willing to deliver meals on a regular basis.  
6 Many of these volunteers are older person  
7 themselves providing vital community service  
8 in their retirement.

9 WHEREAS, this year, MEALS ON WHEELS  
10 OF NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA is celebrating  
11 45 years of serving the seniors and  
12 physically challenged people of Lackawanna  
13 County.

14 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that  
15 on Thursday, March 5, 2015 Scranton City  
16 Council wishes to designate that month of  
17 March 2015 as "MARCH FOR MEALS MONTHS" in  
18 Scranton.

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that his  
20 Proclamation be made a permanent part of the  
21 Minutes of this Council."

22 MS. COOPER: I just wanted to take  
23 this opportunity to thank you very much for  
24 the recognition that you have given us, and  
25 as you mentioned we service over 800

1 recipients here in Lackawanna County doing  
2 about a 1,000 meals a day, but 300 here in  
3 Scranton and our office and kitchen are  
4 located here in Scranton so we are very  
5 proud to be part of this community and we  
6 appreciate again your recognition.

7 MS. WOOD: As Chairman of the Board  
8 of Meals on Wheels, I would like to also  
9 thank you from the Board of Directors, all  
10 of the paid staff and volunteers that are so  
11 vital to this service that we provide. I  
12 personally am so proud to be a part of this  
13 organization and I thank you again for  
14 proclamation and help.

15 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you.  
16 Congratulations.

17 MS. WOOD: Thank you.

18 MR. MCGOFF: It is us who need to  
19 thank you for the great service that you  
20 provide to our elderly throughout Lackawanna  
21 County.

22 Dispense with the reading of the  
23 minutes.

24 MS. REED: THIRD ORDER. 3-A. TAX  
25 ASSESSOR'S REPORT FOR HEARING DATE TO BE

1 HELD MARCH 11, 2015.

2 MR. MCGOFF: Are there any comments?

3 If not, received and filed.

4 MS. REED: 3-B. MINUTES OF THE  
5 COMPOSITE PENSION BOARD MEETING HELD JANUARY  
6 28, 2015.

7 MR. MCGOFF: Are there any comments?

8 If not, received and filed.

9 MS. REED: 3-C. MINUTES OF THE  
10 SCRANTON FIREFIGHTERS PENSION COMMISSION  
11 MEETING HELD JANUARY 28, 2015.

12 MR. MCGOFF: Are there any comments?

13 If not, received and filed.

14 MS. REED: 3-D. AGENDA FOR THE  
15 NON-UNIFORM MUNICIPAL PENSION MEETING HELD  
16 FEBRUARY 25, 2015.

17 MR. MCGOFF: Are there any comments?

18 If not, received and filed.

19 MS. REED: 3-E. MINUTES OF THE  
20 NON-UNIFORM MUNICIPAL PENSION MEETING HELD  
21 JANUARY 28, 2015.

22 MR. MCGOFF: Are there any comments?

23 If not, received and filed.

24 MS. REED: 3-F. MINUTES OF THE  
25 SCRANTON POLICE PENSION COMMISSION MEETINGS

1 HELD DECEMBER 10, 2014 AND JANUARY 28, 2015.

2 MR. MCGOFF: Are there any comments?

3 If not, received and filed.

4 MS. REED: 3-G. MINUTES OF THE  
5 SCRANTON-LACKAWANNA HEALTH & WELFARE  
6 AUTHORITY'S REGULAR BOARD MEETING HELD  
7 JANUARY 15, 2015.

8 MR. MCGOFF: Are there any comments?

9 If not, received and filed.

10 MS. REED: 3-H. TAX ASSESSOR'S  
11 RESULTS REPORT FOR HEARING HELD FEBRUARY 18,  
12 2015.

13 MR. MCGOFF: Are there any comments?

14 If not, received and filed.

15 MS. REED: 3-I. AUDIT STATUS REPORT  
16 FROM ROBERT ROSSI & COMPANY RECEIVED  
17 FEBRUARY 26, 2015.

18 MR. MCGOFF: Are there any comments?

19 If not, received and filed.

20 Any Clerk's notes?

21 MS. REED: Nothing, Mr. McGoff.

22 MR. MCGOFF: Any announcements from  
23 the council? A couple of announcements just  
24 for information's sake, and also, first of  
25 all, I'd like to thank there are a number of



1 students from Scranton Prep here once again  
2 fulfilling a class obligation, I'm sure, and  
3 we will make sure you stay for the entire  
4 meeting and that your teacher knows, but  
5 thank you for attending our meeting.

6 A couple of the things, it was  
7 reported in the -- I'm sorry, I didn't turn  
8 the microphone on. It was reported in the  
9 newspaper about a problem in the pension  
10 legislation for the police department, the  
11 retirement, what was found is that that was  
12 a clerical error and discussions between the  
13 solicitor's resulted in legislation that  
14 will be sent to us next week that will  
15 rectify the error in that piece of  
16 legislation.

17 Also, last week I announced that the  
18 Auditor General would be having a public  
19 hearing, it will be on March 19 in council  
20 chambers at 1:00 regarding Senate Bill 4  
21 which deals with nonprofit tax exempt  
22 designations.

23 Also, this evening, on or agenda,  
24 Item 7-A which was legislation dealing with  
25 an increase in fees for signs, that

1           legislation will be tabled pending further  
2           review. There was some apparent conflict  
3           with prior legislation and the solicitors  
4           are looking at when that or if there needs  
5           be a change in that or whether it needs to  
6           be taken back.

7                         Also, I understand that there was a  
8           problem with the rental registration  
9           mailings. The office -- the people dealing  
10          with the rental registration were using a  
11          new mailing list for the rental registration  
12          and apparently it was not accurate and some  
13          people received notices that should not  
14          have. Please, if you received a notice from  
15          rental registration and you do not -- you  
16          are not the owner or operator of a rental  
17          property please contact the office so that  
18          they can remove your name from that list.

19                        It is, you know, our error or the  
20          city's error and, please, you know, bear  
21          with us and allow us to rectify that list  
22          and the problem that occurred. And that is  
23          all.

24                        MS. REED:   FOURTH ORDER.   CITIZENS'  
25          PARTICIPATION.

1 MR. MCGOFF: Joan Hodowanitz.

2 MS. HODOWANITZ: Joan Hodowanitz,  
3 city resident and taxpayer. Section 313 o  
4 the Home Rule Charter reads as follows:

5 "Council shall provide for an  
6 independent audit of all city revenue and  
7 accounts by certified public accountant who  
8 has no private interest in the fiscal  
9 affairs of the city government or any of its  
10 elected or appointed officers. Council may  
11 provide for more frequent audits as it deems  
12 necessary. Said special audit shall be  
13 conducted by a certified public accountant.  
14 The complete annual audit shall be submitted  
15 to city council who shall conform to  
16 existing legislation. A summary of the  
17 fiscal affairs shall be published in the  
18 local newspaper by May 31 of each year."

19 Now, since there's an RFP for the  
20 audits from 2014 through 2017, which has a  
21 submission date of March 27, that would not  
22 leave much more than two months to complete  
23 the 2014 audit by May 31, 2015. Is it your  
24 intention to amend the Home Rule Charter to  
25 facilitate a later completion date for the

1 2014 and future audits?

2 MR. MCGOFF: I don't think that  
3 there is an intent at this time, it is  
4 certainly something that needs to be done  
5 because, in fact, I don't remember the last  
6 time that an audit met that deadline date.

7 MS. HODOWANITZ: I looked at all of  
8 the audits and the website since 2002. None  
9 of them met the May 31 deadline and the last  
10 six or seven were not completed until  
11 October, November, and about three or four  
12 of them the following year, so there is a  
13 long history of not making that date and I  
14 think either the Home Rule Charter should be  
15 amended or we shouldn't go with a May 31  
16 date, one or the other, but I think you need  
17 to amend the charter, which brings us to the  
18 status of the 2013 audit.

19 I see Mr. Rossi gave an update as of  
20 February 26. It appears the Scranton  
21 Parking Authority submitted it's audited  
22 financial statements since they are not  
23 listed as an omission, which leaves the city  
24 with having to do it's GASBE 45 and 47  
25 post-employment benefit calculations, and

1           that's a city responsibility, and the letter  
2           ends, "The financial statements cannot be  
3           issued until we have a received the city's  
4           management and discussion analysis of the  
5           financial statement, the city's  
6           representation letter, receipt of attorney  
7           letters, that's 19 letters, and an exit  
8           conference is held."

9                     Do we have a projected date for the  
10           completion of the 2013 audit?

11                    MR. MCGOFF: No.

12                    MS. HODOWANITZ: For shame, that's  
13           all I can say on that subject.

14                    And finally, I was one of those  
15           people who received a remember from  
16           Licensing, Inspections and Permits about  
17           rental registration. It was a form letter  
18           not dated, not signed. It's one of those  
19           computer-generated form letters where they  
20           print in your name and your address and  
21           basically it says, "Please fully complete  
22           this enclosed application along with a check  
23           or money order made payable to the City of  
24           Scranton," and then they have the  
25           application enclosed.

1                   So I went to the LIPS and I said,  
2                   "What is this all about? I have never been  
3                   a landlord, never will be a landlord and I'm  
4                   currently not a landlord, how did you get my  
5                   name?"

6                   It wasn't a matter of, "Dear  
7                   Citizen, if you are a landlord please  
8                   register your unit, this is the annual  
9                   registration update," it was, "No, please  
10                  send us a check."

11                  They told me my name came from the  
12                  County Assessor's Office who sent them a PDF  
13                  file of 8,000 names. I went to the County  
14                  Assessor and I went in there and they said,  
15                  "Say what? We don't know what you are  
16                  talking about."

17                  So I talked to a gentleman there and  
18                  he says, "Well, I'll call Mr. Hinton and see  
19                  what's going on," because he had heard other  
20                  complaints. Interestingly, the letter was a  
21                  first class letter and I'm just curious did  
22                  Mr. Hinton send out 8,000 first class  
23                  letters on this? That would be terribly  
24                  expensive.

25                  MR. MCGOFF: I'm not sure of the

1 number that was sent.

2 MS. HODOWANITZ: Well, it would be  
3 terribly expensive. What they asked me for  
4 was a notarized letter saying that I was  
5 living in the property and I told them where  
6 they could put their notarized letter  
7 because it was not my responsibility to seek  
8 out a notary public. They told me Mrs.  
9 Aebli would do it for me, unfortunately, she  
10 was gone for the day so I let them make a  
11 copy of my driver's license, which showed my  
12 address and showed them my voter's  
13 registration, and I told them I could bring  
14 in all my tax documents to show I paid my  
15 real estate taxes, but I wasn't going to  
16 give them any notarized letter and they  
17 could put it in their fourth point of  
18 contact.

19 MR. MCGOFF: Ron Ellman.

20 MR. ELLMAN: I'd really like to  
21 resume where I left off last week before I  
22 was rudely interrupted by that bell, but  
23 I'll just forego the arguments tonight. You  
24 know, these gentlemen they just talk much  
25 and say little. I tell you what,

1 Mr. McGoff, just a approximations, how many  
2 people are -- how many taxable properties  
3 are there in town, 36,000 something?

4 MR. MCGOFF: I have no idea.

5 MR. ELLMAN: How much is the total  
6 taxes when they are paid? In the millions?  
7 I've never done this, I just think  
8 listening --

9 MR. MCGOFF: I don't have this  
10 information to comment on.

11 MR. ELLMAN: I understand that.

12 MR. MCGOFF: So I can't answer you.

13 MR. ELLMAN: If you take the taxable  
14 properties 35, 36,000 and the income and  
15 keep dividing you'll come up with a figure  
16 that is so monumental you will realize it  
17 can't be paid, it's impossible. It's not  
18 there. They talked in the paper last week  
19 raising taxes maybe 50 percent to try to  
20 achieve his goal. It's not there. It's  
21 just the people just don't have it. A  
22 quarter, let's just say a quarter of the  
23 people of this city aren't making it.

24 You know, see, these guys don't care  
25 where we get our money. I paid may taxes



1 Tuesday. Nobody cared where I got my money,  
2 if I borrowed it, if I stole it or what. I  
3 got a broken strut on my car, nobody cares  
4 that I got to buy two struts for a Cadillac,  
5 you know what that's going to cost? You  
6 don't care about that. You don't care about  
7 people needing a water heater or a roof on  
8 their house, all you talk about is raising  
9 taxes so we can achieve and we can drop it  
10 into this huge black hole where the money  
11 disappears every year. That's not the way  
12 to run the city. That's how it's being run.

13 I know you don't know those figures  
14 but if you find them out and start dabbling  
15 with it you will see it's unachievable.  
16 It's impossible. When you were there a  
17 couple of years ago with Mrs. Evans they  
18 used to talk about owing what \$500 million?  
19 Whatever 36,000 properties divided in and  
20 then divided again it'd take 100 years to  
21 pay out that debt and it's increasing every  
22 year. It's time to be realistic and it just  
23 can't be done with the people here. You  
24 can't just keep going down this spiral we  
25 are.

1                   You know, sometimes just like  
2                   beating your head on a stone wall coming in  
3                   here but I have to -- I really have to sort  
4                   of admire Mr. Cross. When I worked for my  
5                   boss years ago I missed work, I was late to  
6                   work, I was sleeping at work, I was drunk at  
7                   work, and he never fired me, but there is a  
8                   man sitting there 20 something years without  
9                   one positive good result of his work. Only  
10                  in America. Only in America could he just  
11                  stay on the job like that.

12                 MR. MCGOFF: Just for the record,  
13                 Mr. Cross has not been here for 20 years.  
14                 There has been a change in the coordinators.  
15                 Lee Morgan.

16                 MR. MORGAN: Good evening, Council.  
17                 You know, I'm glad to see that the students  
18                 from Scranton Prep are here. I just hope  
19                 that they read some of the history of this  
20                 nation from it's inception and realize what  
21                 is so really wrong in this country as far as  
22                 taxation is concerned and, you know, with  
23                 the latest moves in the Senate and the House  
24                 in Washington on trying to ban ammunition  
25                 for weapons I think that there is a real

1           understanding that this country is on fire.  
2           They have had it with the elected officials  
3           that are bleeding them completely dry and  
4           even the government itself is afraid, and  
5           giving police personnel carriers and all of  
6           the silliness they have done isn't going to  
7           cause the problem because it's just going to  
8           come to push to shove and we are way beyond  
9           that.

10                         The City's recovery plans they were  
11           a fantasy from inception, read them if they  
12           are still at the Scranton Public Library.  
13           And, you know, when you see the grinding  
14           poverty in this city all around you, I had a  
15           discussion with Mr. Cross, he called me on a  
16           Sunday, he understood that the residents of  
17           this city have no money left. He  
18           understands the situation as it really is,  
19           but his way out was to tell me that in 2012  
20           the city could have filed bankruptcy but it  
21           chose not to, so really what's going on here  
22           is that the elected officials of this city  
23           weren't concerned with the best interest of  
24           the voters, they were interested in somebody  
25           else's opinions and we have just continually

1 driven this debt to the point where, you  
2 know, Mr. Evans, I remember asking you to  
3 run for the council seat, I don't know what  
4 you are going to do, but I have to be very  
5 honest and tell you that I have signatures  
6 to put my name on the ballot, I wouldn't  
7 even think about. Wouldn't even think about  
8 it.

9 Five council members over decades  
10 that couldn't come together and salvage a  
11 city, and as the council just acknowledged  
12 we have the highest elderly population  
13 probably in the country. Elderly people  
14 with no money and blight throughout the  
15 whole city, and the city that drove its own  
16 blight by condemning homes. You know, we  
17 can all assume what's happened, but, you  
18 know, when I asked for council to go  
19 upstairs and get the condemnation book and  
20 bring it down in public and let the people  
21 know what's happening and then compare it to  
22 some of the homes that aren't even listed in  
23 that condemnation book, this city has just  
24 been so mismanaged it's beyond belief, and  
25 the recovery plan, this one, that was

1 written around the police and fire  
2 contracts. That's why it took so long for  
3 it to get here and now they are saying to  
4 the council, "Expedite the process, suspend  
5 your rules and let's ram it through."

6 But, you know, I have a question,  
7 can the people in this city go to the Court  
8 and ask the Court to set aside this recovery  
9 plan until the residents of this city can  
10 vote on it? It's my opinion that the  
11 Scranton Sewer Authority is worth over a  
12 billion dollars and everybody wants to sell  
13 it, but how much would it cost to dig all of  
14 these streets up and run all those lines to  
15 every home, and what about the investments  
16 that the public and the city made to create  
17 that authority?

18 You know, and the Parking Authority,  
19 the members there understood the last time I  
20 had an opportunity to speak with them that  
21 they were out of their mind. It's real  
22 simple here, if two people in this city vote  
23 out of all of the residents in this city and  
24 somebody is elected do they have an  
25 obligation to move in the best interest of

1 all of the rest of the citizens? That's a  
2 question you should ask yourself because,  
3 you know, we have seem to have forgotten one  
4 thing, okay, how to represent the people.  
5 We have taken care off organized labor here  
6 because evidently we need them to win  
7 elections and they need them in Harrisburg,  
8 too, so we have shielded them, but everybody  
9 else they are going under the bus except the  
10 nonprofits who may have connections to the  
11 people we elect in Harrisburg.

12 It's really very, very troubling  
13 where we stand and the last people we are  
14 worried about are the people who are the  
15 stakeholders in this city possibly for  
16 generations. They have lived here, their  
17 parents lived here, their grandparents lived  
18 here, and it's just very troubling to find  
19 out where we are today and, you know, the  
20 best thing that we could do in this city at  
21 this point is go into receivership and let a  
22 receiver come in here and then let a judge  
23 look at facts and reality and let there be a  
24 legal argument made by attorneys on what we  
25 should do because evidently when the council

1 ran these last contracts through they tabled  
2 them for one week and then voted on them and  
3 had no information. Does that sound like  
4 legitimate government to anybody in this  
5 room? I hope not. Thank you.

6 MR. MCGOFF: Mr. Bolus?

7 MR. BOLUS: Good evening, Council.  
8 Bob Bolus, Scranton. It was nice to see a  
9 dialogue back and forth question and answer,  
10 but what I'd really like to see is a full  
11 public meeting where the public, the  
12 taxpayers, those that live here have a voice  
13 in what's going on here. It's important to  
14 hear from everyone, not just a handful of  
15 people following a channel vision down the  
16 road.

17 I kind of laugh, I sit back and find  
18 it a real joke actually, it's called a  
19 recovery plan. When did it start or did it  
20 start with the bias and we didn't even see  
21 it because we haven't gone anywhere but  
22 backwards. There is no recovery here. This  
23 is a liquidation of assets to people who can  
24 show you how to make money with them. Yet  
25 we the people and the council and the

1 administration and the people in this city  
2 can't make a bloody dime out of them and  
3 make them profitable, yet somebody with a  
4 business sense, Mr. Evans, Mr. Wechsler, we  
5 run businesses. We couldn't operate our  
6 business like the city is operated today.  
7 None of us would be in business. There  
8 would be no such thing called a business,  
9 and that's what we are doing to this city.

10 You don't sell the Sewer Authority  
11 you make it make money, it's an asset, it  
12 produces revenue. You got to make cuts.  
13 You don't have people driving around in  
14 company cars, going home with them, doing  
15 this or doing that, or going here, going  
16 there, you make cuts. You make them  
17 efficient. There is no efficiency. That's  
18 our problem here.

19 Look how efficiently we were with  
20 the Ice Box. Did PEL tell you tonight a  
21 plan how to get that money sooner? No, you  
22 didn't hear that. Did PEL come out and say,  
23 "Geez, there is some creative ways out here,  
24 let's explore the leachate line coming from  
25 Dunmore, can we make millions on it?"



1                   We don't know that, but did we look  
2                   into it, did you hear that tonight? No.

3                   Did you hear that we could possibly  
4                   take the police and fire department, we're  
5                   paying hundreds of thousands of dollars for  
6                   fire trucks, we are going out for \$15, a  
7                   \$100, \$500 to somebody that's a nonprofit or  
8                   a KOZ, let's get realistic the taxpayers are  
9                   paying for that. It's a business, create it  
10                  as a business. Charge what it's worth.  
11                  Charge with the manpower. That's how you  
12                  make money here. You take it off the  
13                  people. I didn't hear one thing about that  
14                  tonight.

15                  And lo and behold did we hear about  
16                  the magnificent Taj Mahal called University  
17                  of the Scranton and the other KOZ's and the  
18                  nonprofits? Did they come up with a  
19                  suggestion today how to figure out a fee, a  
20                  creative fee that's passed across everybody  
21                  in this city including the nonprofits and  
22                  KOZ's? How to make it legal, how to make it  
23                  a work and bring in millions of dollars  
24                  rather than turn around and hammer the  
25                  people with another tax? Did you hear that

1           tonight? I didn't hear any of that. I  
2 haven't heard one bloody thing in this  
3 chamber over the years that's creative how  
4 we save our assets.

5           We blew the money at the golf  
6 course, it made money, we got rid of it  
7 because it was political and we blew the  
8 money and the people sweltered in the hot  
9 heat because we couldn't fix the pools, we  
10 couldn't run the zoo, we couldn't run Nay  
11 Aug. We give everything away. That's  
12 what's wrong here. We don't charge for our  
13 services, but you want to make the poor  
14 people and businesses in this city be the  
15 scapegoats for the misconception that we  
16 know what we are doing, that we are a  
17 business. The city has to be run as a  
18 business. People say, "Oh, no, it's a  
19 municipality, we can't do that."

20           You rush through contacts, and who  
21 did you put the screws to, the DPW and the  
22 clerical unions. Why didn't you do them at  
23 all one time? Why did you favor some and  
24 not the others, is that fair? I don't  
25 think. There is no fairness, there is no

1 equality here. This is a political chess  
2 game and you are hurting the people in this  
3 city.

4 Did you look at creativity,  
5 windmills. No. Nobody bothered to do it,  
6 it's been brought up hundreds of times. A  
7 lot of ideas came here, that's why I want to  
8 see a public hearing with PEL there and  
9 council and the administration and the  
10 attorney and figure out legally from the  
11 concept conceptual ideas, creativity.  
12 That's the key word creativity. We don't  
13 have that. The only creativity is how do we  
14 put the screws to the people in the City of  
15 Scranton and that's what's wrong here.

16 And I'm not here to insult, I'm not  
17 here to berate anybody, I'm here to sa open  
18 our eyes, gentlemen. You are the leaders,  
19 as Kathleen Kane said, the Attorney General,  
20 she doesn't know how real people survive  
21 because they don't have the wherewithal she  
22 has or others have. You are our  
23 wherewithal. You are our checkpoint.  
24 Remember, that you are our check and  
25 balance. You need to take an effort and

1 make things happen. You have to become  
2 leaders, not just sit here and follow the  
3 channel, become leaders and make it happen.

4 And my last thing is I brought up  
5 about Carrie Newcomb the last time about the  
6 derogatory remarks about me. She is a  
7 public official, she sat in an important  
8 position as the president on the board and  
9 she made negative comments publically,  
10 however they were. I had no issue with her,  
11 she created an issue and I have asked  
12 council to remove her from that board. And  
13 I'm asking council again tonight to remove  
14 her from that board. She made her bed, she  
15 needs to lay it in.

16 And, Mr. McGoff, you can shake your  
17 head all day long, I will take the action to  
18 force the action to remove her. Thank you.  
19 Do your job.

20 MR. MCGOFF: That's your  
21 prerogative. Doug Miller.

22 MR. MILLER: Doug Miller, Scranton.  
23 You know, coming here a long time, listening  
24 to a lot, heard a lot, we have gone over  
25 recovery plans in the past for those of us

1           that were here, we can all recall what took  
2           place in 2012, difficult decisions were  
3           made, tough -- a lot of pain and suffering  
4           took place throughout that time and now we  
5           fast forward a little bit and we are in a  
6           similar situation, but in this case it's  
7           gotten a heck of a lot worse.

8                         Now, in 2012 we had a council that  
9           implemented a recovery plan that called for  
10          tax increases, called for some cuts, but  
11          also had some alternative revenue sources  
12          but, unfortunately, we are a city with a  
13          mentality where we don't follow through on a  
14          lot of the enhancements that we put into  
15          place so now as we head into 2015 where we  
16          thought maybe we'd have a bright spot we  
17          have completely just backtracked and  
18          backtracked pretty far.

19                        There is not one optimistic thing to  
20          look forward to. There is no light at the  
21          end of this tunnel. All we have is pain,  
22          suffering and misery ahead and that's  
23          exactly what's going to happen if this  
24          council intends on passing this recovery  
25          plan where I like to call it more of a

1 suicide mission than anything because that's  
2 exactly what it is.

3 You know, we heard speakers prior to  
4 myself tonight, Mr. Bolus, Mr. Morgan, Ms.  
5 Hodowanitz, Ms. Schumacher -- or excuse me,  
6 Mr. Ellman, Ms. Schumacher who also comes  
7 forward and offers a lot of valid points,  
8 and we talked about a senior population with  
9 no money and yet we come forward with a 19  
10 percent tax increase this year, last year 57  
11 percent. Now, we want to talk about  
12 tripling the LST tax and selling assets off  
13 and I step back and I ask myself are these  
14 really solutions? Are these really common  
15 sense solutions where we actually sat down  
16 and took time to really come up with  
17 something that made sense and are we really  
18 protecting the interests of the residents of  
19 this city? Because when you put garbage  
20 like that forward it certainly doesn't show  
21 it.

22 You know, Mr. Gaughan and Mr. Evans  
23 I really appreciate the common sense that  
24 they bring in the table. I wish their  
25 colleagues would follow their lead, but the

1           problem in this city is really simple, we  
2           haven't had any leadership. We've had some  
3           leaders, but not many, but what we have  
4           dealt with are more of political lapdogs who  
5           carry at water for administrations, who  
6           carry the water for certain unionized labor  
7           and is that because they hand select our  
8           candidates for mayor and for council? Most  
9           likely. Is that why we went ahead and we  
10          have expedited those contracts before we  
11          initiated this recovery plan? I do believe  
12          that in my heart, yes, I do. I do honestly  
13          believe that and now at the other end we  
14          want to tell DPW and the clerical union to  
15          do more with less. Is that really the right  
16          thing to do? Whose interest are we really  
17          looking out for?

18                    You were elected to represent the  
19                    residents of this city. Granted, when you  
20                    have 23 percent of the voters come out to  
21                    vote that is very disturbing as an  
22                    understatement, and the residents have had  
23                    an obligation themselves for decades to come  
24                    out and vote, and they haven't done it.  
25                    They have definitely failed miserably on the

1 report card in that aspect and I'm not  
2 trying to pick on anybody, but when we want  
3 to stand back and complain about what's  
4 going on that we have an inability to, you  
5 know, get anywhere the residents have to  
6 come forward and do their part and they  
7 haven't done that, unfortunately. And those  
8 that have come out and voted, you know, they  
9 have voted based on just utter silliness.  
10 Yard signs, political affiliation, you know,  
11 he is my best friend, she is my best friend,  
12 went to school with him or her, nothing  
13 based on reality, nothing based on  
14 qualifications or what they could bring to  
15 the table, this city needs independent  
16 leaders and we have lacked that for a long  
17 time.

18 You know, I'm great for the  
19 expertise that Mr. Evans and Mr. Gaughan  
20 have brought forward and, you know, I  
21 highlight these two because I feel that  
22 throughout this time, for the short time  
23 that you have been here, I believe you  
24 deserve the recognition. Do I agree with  
25 everything? No, I don't.



1                   But what I believe a leader needs to  
2 do is to step back and not be a political  
3 puppet, but to be open minded and take a  
4 look at the big picture. Where do we want  
5 to be not today but five, ten, 15, 20 years  
6 done the road. What kind of future are we  
7 going to have for the next generation? The  
8 young folks, the students here tonight, what  
9 opportunity do they have? Are they going to  
10 graduate and move outside of the city like  
11 thousands of other students are doing each  
12 year? I can tell you half of the folks I  
13 graduated with they are long gone, they are  
14 not coming back. Why would they? There is  
15 no reason to, there is no opportunity here.

16                   We have blight all over this city,  
17 the neighborhoods are in decay, there is no  
18 jobs, there is nothing here, just a dying,  
19 depressing city and it's really sad and  
20 pathetic where we are, but unless we do  
21 something quick, you know, we are pretty  
22 much on the Titanic and at this point we  
23 should just start talking about handing out  
24 life jackets because that's where we were  
25 right now and unless we get together here

1 and come up with a realistic solution to  
2 save this city, but it's going to take  
3 leadership, independence, people who put  
4 politics to the side and represent everyone  
5 not just the select few, but everyone and  
6 that's what we need to do.

7 MR. MCGOFF: Anyone else who wishes  
8 to address council?

9 MR. UNGVARSKY: Good evening, City  
10 Council. I'm Tom Ungvarsky. Tonight on the  
11 agenda you are going to vote to raise the  
12 parking fine violations. The only thing  
13 that it is designed to do is to raise more  
14 revenue for the city. This past year the  
15 city has raised salaries, increased benefits  
16 and hired more people. You have also passed  
17 the quality of life imposing 27 new  
18 ordinances on the people and also raising  
19 the fees. You have raised taxes almost  
20 every year. You have raised fees every year  
21 and you have raised fines every year.

22 Tonight PEL was here and the only  
23 thing I heard out of PEL was for you to sell  
24 off whatever we have left to sell to impose  
25 more fines and to raise rates.

1                   Tonight on the agenda was something  
2                   else to raise fees. You wanted to raise the  
3                   fees on people putting signs in their window  
4                   or hanging a sign. Several months ago you  
5                   joined SAPA with the idea of having the  
6                   Abingtons send down the people they didn't  
7                   want in their neighborhood to open  
8                   businesses in our neighborhood. With that  
9                   kind of fees and ordinances that you pass I  
10                  can't see you are going to get anyone down  
11                  here, plus especially with what SAPA has  
12                  proposed again this year with a 56 percent  
13                  increase over the next three years I think  
14                  you are going to see a mass exodus. Thank  
15                  you.

16                   MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you.

17                   MR. DOBRZYN: Good evening. Dave  
18                  Dobryn, resident, taxpayer. I keep  
19                  listening to these proposals and it does  
20                  constantly raise property taxes and it's  
21                  starting to put a bite. We have a county  
22                  who wants to start a fair, a county fair,  
23                  well, if you have to raise my taxes 38  
24                  percent like the baseball field skip it.  
25                  It's getting kind of hard to afford all of

1           these affairs anyway.

2                       But what the bottom line is, and  
3 I've been preaching it for awhile, I think  
4 we need to find a way to sue the county and  
5 the state under the 14th Amendment on excess  
6 tax exempts in Federal Court. I think the  
7 county and the state profits off of our  
8 loss. We have 33 percent tax exempts and  
9 growing and if somebody wants to buy  
10 something like the medical center over on  
11 the corner of Adams and Mulberry and Vine  
12 Street they bought the whole block lock,  
13 stock and barrel, and now we have to give  
14 them the tax exemption. Isn't that lovely.

15                       On the sewer plant, what is a  
16 private corporation, profit driven private  
17 corporation going to charge for sewer rates?  
18 My sewer rate is, I just got a bill for two  
19 months, about \$65. Is it going to go up to  
20 \$200? Probably. Because that's what  
21 service corporations do, they provide a  
22 service and they charge the daylight's out of  
23 you on an essential service. Ford Motor  
24 Company manufacturers cars, puts them on the  
25 lot, gives 90 day credit to the dealership

1 in the hope that you like that car, in the  
2 hope that you like that car. So they got  
3 skin in the game and a service corporation  
4 that's owned from somebody in Dubai has no  
5 skin in the game America. Period.

6 Now, I keep hearing about the DPW  
7 and efficiency and all kinds of stuff and  
8 just go some night when you have a heavy  
9 barrel of trash don't dress too warm because  
10 they are out there six or eight hours and  
11 carry it back and forth ten times because  
12 that's the thing that I'm thinking about  
13 what it's like to perform a job that isn't  
14 particularly a pleasure to do. It just  
15 provides food on the table and hopefully  
16 pays for a roof over your head.

17 And, once again, the pensions were  
18 the paper and I agree in some cases, I mean,  
19 there are so many holes that are just being  
20 found that apparently that happened during  
21 Mayor Wenzel where a 21-year-old could be  
22 hired by the police department, he qualifies  
23 for retirement by 46 years old, you are  
24 stuck paying his medical bills for 20 years,  
25 do you realize how much money that is? Even

1 a crummy plan is \$5,000 a year, you know? A  
2 crummy plan is \$5,000 a year.

3 And on the authorities, it would be  
4 nice if they asked permission from council  
5 to do something. We put a whole bunch of  
6 facade on the one down on Washington Avenue  
7 and last year there was a major portions of  
8 the concrete falling and it had to be shut  
9 down for a long period of time last winter  
10 so structurally it wasn't sound it just  
11 attracted a steakhouse, but once again we  
12 are taking money out of the taxpayers'  
13 pocket and putting into a steakhouse or some  
14 fancy Philly thing that, you know, it's okay  
15 for them but it cost me. Don't need it.

16 And I know I sound like a broken  
17 record, but I love to see you folks start to  
18 become lobbyists. Once again TTP is up and  
19 two days ago I found that China is investing  
20 \$100 billion supplied by the Chinese  
21 government to corner the US Transportation  
22 Parks market. The average worker has not  
23 had a raise in 30 years adjusted for  
24 inflation and two-thirds of the people who  
25 lost their jobs since 2007 start back for 30

1           percent less. Is there any further  
2           explanation need as to why we can't provide  
3           raises for the public employees on an  
4           ongoing and open-ended basis? You know, you  
5           are losing so much in taxes that could be  
6           paid in wage taxes that forget about, all  
7           you have left is the property taxes and who  
8           knows. So whatever decisions you make  
9           please keep the small guy in mind.

10                   Don't forget to carry that garbage  
11           can back and forth, dress rather scantily so  
12           it's like eight hours ten times and --

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

14                   MR. DOBRZYN: -- think about that  
15           job. Have a good night.

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

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

19           MOTIONS.

20                   MR. MCGOFF: Mr. Wechsler?

21                   MR. WECHSLER: Thank you,  
22           Mr. McGoff. Tonight I believe we did have a  
23           starting point on the discussion about the  
24           recovery plan. The thing that I'm taking  
25           from that plan itself is that the emphasize

1 of our future efforts to get out of this  
2 financial hole that we are in is to avoid  
3 increases in the property taxes. You have  
4 heard several discussions that were at the  
5 breaking point now in terms of where we  
6 we're at with our taxes and we reached the  
7 point now that it does not add anything to  
8 the city to increase those taxes.

9 With that in mind, I do believe even  
10 though there will be some opposition we do  
11 have to pursue the sale of the parking  
12 authorities and finding some way to get  
13 money out of the Sewer Authority. The  
14 concern that I have as we spoke before  
15 though is these things we are doing most of  
16 them are driven by the pensions and our  
17 pensions need a great influx of cash to make  
18 them solvent.

19 With that in mind, I was listening  
20 to the answers from Mr. Cross today and the  
21 first thing he talked about that we could do  
22 was to work on our pension ordinances and we  
23 had been taking about this for quite awhile,  
24 the issue that came up in the paper today --  
25 or the other day kind of accelerated that,



1 and even though we have been talking about  
2 it I would like the council and the  
3 administration to agree upon a deadline for  
4 having that review completed. You know, it  
5 is the beginning of March and I would like  
6 to see if we could get that completed by the  
7 end of April, that we could have this in  
8 place going forward. It is one of the  
9 things that we can do that we don't have to  
10 rely on anyone else and I think those are  
11 the things we have to concentrate on.

12 One of the things that was talked  
13 about tonight is I am not too comfortable  
14 with accelerating the vote on the recovery  
15 plan. I understand that there is a time  
16 constraint on it, also, and if that is under  
17 consideration I would hope that we could  
18 have perhaps a special meeting earlier next  
19 week to just discuss and take comment on the  
20 recovery plan.

21 One issue this week that came up  
22 once again on East Mountain, there has been  
23 a series of activity up there that's quite  
24 disturbing to me. A single person has been  
25 looking in homes and trying to determine if

1 people are home. Scranton Police Department  
2 has been working on this, but I also would  
3 like to commend my neighbors on East  
4 Mountain for taking an interest in this and  
5 policing it themselves and providing tips  
6 and information to the police department for  
7 the apprehension of this person. I would  
8 like to caution that person that East  
9 Mountain is not a place that you want to get  
10 in trouble, I can tell you that, and I think  
11 I'll just leave it at that, but I think  
12 everyone in this city has to be vigilant.  
13 In this hard economic time there are people  
14 that are desperate, that are other problems  
15 out there, but I think your home is where  
16 you want to feel safe and your neighbors  
17 should watch out for you as well as what we  
18 can do from the city's stand point. That's  
19 all I have at this time.

20 MR. MCGOFF: Mr. Evans?

21 MR. EVANS: Thank you. On the  
22 recovery plan again, I'm going to circle  
23 back to that, repeatedly I have said that we  
24 cannot pick and choose those items that we  
25 like or don't like. In fact, in the Amoroso

1 plan it's stated, "It is vitally important  
2 that the individual elements of the overall  
3 strategy occur essentially in tandem."

4 I have remained steadfast and  
5 consistent in my support for the plan. I  
6 voted for Act 205, the commuter tax, because  
7 it was part of the plan and consistent with  
8 the plan. I didn't like it but essentially  
9 I voted for the plan. I voted against the  
10 police and fire contracts for many reasons,  
11 including the fact that many parts of the  
12 contract were inconsistent and in violation  
13 of the language in the previous recovery  
14 plan and the revised recovery plan but,  
15 again, I voted for the plan.

16 Do I like this recovery plan? Not  
17 by a long shot. It's a tough pill to  
18 swallow, but the alternatives are large tax  
19 increases and or receivership or bankruptcy.

20 Again, to remind everyone of the  
21 position I spelled out during the budget  
22 discussions, if the answer is more double  
23 digit tax increases on our property owners  
24 then we should petition the Governor under  
25 Section 6 and 7 of Act 47 and declare a

1 fiscal emergency sooner than later. Again,  
2 I'm not recommending receivership or  
3 bankruptcy at this time, but I believe that  
4 another significant property tax increase or  
5 further increases in any of our taxes will  
6 send the city into an economic tailspin  
7 unlike anything we have seen during our  
8 distressed status. We can no longer simply  
9 tax our way out of this situation.

10 The taxpayers can no longer absorb  
11 large tax increase upon large tax increase,  
12 five point million dollars in disability  
13 pensions, continuing structural deficits,  
14 union contracts with enhanced benefits and a  
15 government seemingly employee-centric when  
16 it should be taxpayer and citizen-centric.  
17 That's all I have for now.

18 MR. MCGOFF: Mr. Gaughan?

19 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes. Thank you. I  
20 had a conversation with Mayor Courtright  
21 last Friday regarding the clearing of bridge  
22 sidewalks throughout the city. Mayor  
23 Courtright explained that he plans on  
24 looking into trying to purchase special  
25 equipment to assist in plowing the sidewalks

1 and he also mentioned he is working with our  
2 business administrator, Dave Bulzoni, to try  
3 and find funding to add casual employees at  
4 the DPW that may help with the manpower  
5 shortages.

6 I had a resident contact me  
7 regarding truck traffic in Hamm Court  
8 between Kane Street and Sander Street in  
9 Minooka. The road cannot handle the traffic  
10 and is in really poor condition. Our office  
11 has sent correspondence to city engineer  
12 John Pocius to inquire if it's possible to  
13 put signs up to ban truck traffic in that  
14 alley, and we also sent a similar letter  
15 about truck traffic on Kane Street last  
16 week.

17 Several residents inquired about who  
18 is responsible for clearing the snow from  
19 fire hydrants throughout the city. Chief  
20 DeSarno responded to our office that each  
21 engine company takes a hydrant list and  
22 physically visits each one to clear them  
23 manually, and this is done after a heavy  
24 snow fall. In the case of sporadic snow  
25 fall engine companies are directed to note

1 the conditions of hydrants as they pass them  
2 in the course of their duties during the  
3 day. The fire department is not in charge  
4 of maintaining the fire hydrants, however.  
5 That responsibility lies with the water  
6 company and I'd like to thank Chief DeSarno  
7 for his quick response to those concerns.

8 And I will hold the rest of my  
9 comments for agenda items. Thank you.

10 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you. Just a  
11 couple of quick comments, actually  
12 responses. First of all, we all recognize  
13 the fact that the 2013 audit is late, and  
14 also that the RFP for the 2014 through '17  
15 audit is I don't want to say late, but will  
16 be difficult for anybody taking over the  
17 audit at that time to really have it end at  
18 the designated date. This is, as was  
19 mentioned, has been an ongoing concern and  
20 certainly something that needs to be  
21 addressed, whether it's something that needs  
22 to be changed in the Home Rule Charter,  
23 whether it's an operational thing between  
24 the city and the auditor, not quite sure,  
25 but, yes, we do need to do something about

1 the audit.

2 Right now the audit is being held  
3 up, the completion of it, because there is a  
4 disagreement over a designation that the  
5 auditor wants to make and that issue needs  
6 to be resolved before the final audit is  
7 completed.

8 As far as someone making a comment  
9 that none of us care about the city,  
10 everyone on this council is a property owner  
11 and a taxpayer with a real stake in this  
12 city. The fact that we ran for these  
13 offices indicates that we care for this city  
14 and the fact that we were able to go out and  
15 speak to people and get enough votes to be  
16 elected to these chairs is another  
17 indication that we do speak to people in the  
18 city and that we do care for what's going on  
19 in the city and I think it's insulting for  
20 all of us that anyone would indicate that we  
21 do not care about the citizens of the City  
22 of Scranton.

23 As far as, the students have left,  
24 I'm sorry, somebody said they should look  
25 into the history of taxation in this

1 country. Just a reminder that the Boston  
2 Tea Party was held because England passed  
3 the Tea Act which reduced the tax on tea so  
4 our history is that we actually have  
5 revolutions when we reduce taxes, you know,  
6 just being facetious, but that is the truth  
7 about the Tea Act.

8 Also, somebody suggested that there  
9 should be a business model for, you know,  
10 the operation of the city, most business  
11 models are based on either dictatorship or  
12 autocracy. I don't think we want to give up  
13 our Democratic form of government so that we  
14 can move toward a business model for  
15 governing the City of Scranton.

16 Also, a citywide fee has been  
17 investigated. It was investigated as a  
18 public safety fee that would be placed on  
19 everyone living in the city. This was  
20 investigated and found that it was not -- we  
21 are not able to do that. That is in  
22 violation of the tax exempt or nonprofit  
23 status of schools and hospitals and, you  
24 know, whatever so that type of fee we cannot  
25 enact and it has been looked at.



1                   And as far as the contacts with  
2                   the -- I wasn't really going to mention  
3                   this, but as far as the contacts with any of  
4                   the entities in the city we as council  
5                   members by law cannot engage or initiate  
6                   contract negotiations. We are outside that.  
7                   That is the, you know, Laborer Relations Act  
8                   in the Commonwealth of the Pennsylvania so  
9                   to say that we should be involved in labor  
10                  negotiations is really outside of the  
11                  purview of our ability. That is something  
12                  that is incumbent upon the administration.  
13                  It is solely their power to negotiate  
14                  contacts, not ours.

15                  And last, I'm on a rant, I guess,  
16                  there is nothing on our agenda to increase  
17                  parking fees, there is a piece of  
18                  legislation there that would allow for the  
19                  enforcement, greater enforcement of the  
20                  parking regulations that we have in the  
21                  city, and that's all.

22                  MR. GAUGHAN: Could I add just one  
23                  comment just to piggyback on what you said?  
24                  A speaker did mention about the fairness of  
25                  the administration negotiating a police and

1 fire contract before the revised recovery  
2 plan and apparently the DPW and clerical are  
3 not getting that same opportunity, and I  
4 tend to agree with that speaker, but, you  
5 know, negotiating contracts, as Mr. McGoff  
6 said, is not our responsibility. That is  
7 the responsibility of Mayor Courtright, so  
8 I'm not sure the reason that Mayor  
9 Courtright chose to negotiate with only two  
10 and not all, that's a question that will  
11 have to be posed to him and his  
12 administration. Thank you.

13 MS. REED: 5-B. FOR INTRODUCTION -  
14 AN ORDINANCE - APPROVING THE TRANSFER OF A  
15 RESTAURANT LIQUOR LICENSE CURRENTLY OWNED BY  
16 KOSMART ENTERPRISES, INC. D/B/A PIZZA HUT OF  
17 DUNMORE LICENSE NO. R-14852 TO BAR PAZZO,  
18 INC. FOR USE AT 131-133 NORTH WASHINGTON  
19 AVENUE, SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA AS REQUIRED  
20 BY THE PENNSYLVANIA LIQUOR CONTROL BOARD.

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

24 MR. WECHSLER: So moved.

25 MR. EVANS: Second.

1 MR. MCGOFF: On the question? I  
2 would just like to say that I'm anticipating  
3 the opening of Bar Pazzo. If anybody has  
4 gone to the other restaurants, the Pazzo  
5 Restaurant down is it 115 -- or 315, great  
6 food, great restaurant. Also, the family  
7 that owns the restaurant in West Pittston,  
8 Anglio's or -- I forget the name.  
9 Angelino's?

10 MS. CARRERA: Agalino's.

11 MR. MCGOFF: Agalino's, thank you,  
12 Cathy, another great restaurant, so Bar  
13 Pazzo has a possibility of being a great  
14 place for downtown Scranton so -- sorry.

15 MR. EVANS: That's all right. Is  
16 this the former Brixx.

17 MR. MCGOFF: I'm sorry?

18 MR. EVANS: Is this the former  
19 Brixx's location?

20 MR. MCGOFF: No, Bar Pazzo is going  
21 into the 500 of Lackawanna.

22 MR. EVANS: Oh, it says 131-133  
23 North Washington so that's where I thought  
24 it would be.

25 MR. MINORA: I think that's the

1 Connell building.

2 MR. EVANS: What?

3 MR. MINORA: I think that's the  
4 Connell Building?

5 MR. EVANS: Oh, so he has an office  
6 there, okay. It says, "For use at 131-133  
7 North Washington."

8 MR. MCGOFF: Perhaps we should look  
9 into the address and see if it's  
10 appropriate.

11 MS. REED: Sure.

12 MR. MCGOFF: I know the initial  
13 intent for Bar Pazzo was in the 500 of  
14 Lackawanna Avenue.

15 MR. EVANS: Maybe they have an  
16 office there, I don't know.

17 MR. MCGOFF: We will resolve that by  
18 the next meeting. All those in favor of  
19 introduction signify by saying aye.

20 MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

21 MR. EVANS: Aye.

22 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

23 MS. MCGOFF: Aye. Opposed? The  
24 ayes have it and so moved.

25 MS. REED: 5-C. FOR INTRODUCTION-

1 AN ORDINANCE - AMENDING THE REVISED RECOVERY  
2 PLAN FOR THE CITY OF SCRANTON PURSUANT TO  
3 THE FINANCIALLY DISTRESSED MUNICIPALITIES  
4 ACT; AND AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR OF THE CITY  
5 OF SCRANTON TO ISSUE AN ORDER DIRECTING THE  
6 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REVISED RECOVERY PLAN  
7 WHICH WILL BECOME EFFECTIVE UPON ADOPTION  
8 ATTACHED HERETO AS EXHIBIT "A" IN ACCORDANCE  
9 WITH THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 249 OF THE  
10 FINANCIALLY DISTRESSED MUNICIPALITIES ACT.

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

14 MR. WECHSLER: So moved.

15 MR. EVANS: Second.

16 MR. MCGOFF: On the question?

17 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, on the question.

18 The next few years are going to be extremely  
19 difficult financially for the city. We face  
20 the possibility of an \$8 1/2 million deficit  
21 in 2016 and a \$19 1/2 million deficit in  
22 2020. The cumulative general fund deficit  
23 for the period of 2016 through 2020 is  
24 nearly \$78 million. Our pension minimum  
25 municipal obligation will increase from \$9

1 million a year to \$17 million a year in  
2 2017.

3 I'm hoping that the recovery plan  
4 will search as a framework for this  
5 administration to avoid receivership and  
6 move forward towards a fiscally sound  
7 future. It is unfortunate that we had an  
8 original version of this recovery plan ready  
9 to be put on the agenda in January and the  
10 mayor decided to push the police and fire  
11 contracts through. I think Mayor Courtright  
12 missed a great opportunity to address some  
13 of the workforce provisions in the recovery  
14 plan to control costs in both departments.

15 The bottom line is that the police  
16 and fire department spending accounts for  
17 nearly 70 percent of our budget and it was a  
18 major mistake to ignore recommendations in  
19 the recovery plan that addressed some of  
20 those major issues. Unfortunately, what's  
21 done is done and the contracts are signed  
22 and in place until 2021.

23 I do believe that there are  
24 recommendations that will help the city  
25 moving forward in this recovery plan such as

1           refinancing our debt, replacing the business  
2           privilege and mercantile tax, reducing the  
3           rate of increase in employee health care  
4           costs, examining the status of each property  
5           in the city that is tax exempt,  
6           restructuring the city staff assignments,  
7           updating our human resources management plan  
8           and redesigning pension plans for non-union  
9           city employees and investigating whether or  
10          not we can do that for our collective  
11          bargaining units.

12                        The easy answer, as been mentioned  
13                        tonight, is to always go back to the  
14                        taxpayers and ask them to give a little bit  
15                        more, but in a year and a half on council  
16                        it's quite clear to me that the taxpayers  
17                        are tapped out. It's time that we do the  
18                        difficult things to enable the city to be  
19                        successful in the future and not just keep  
20                        providing empty promises to the residents  
21                        and businesses that pay for our bloated  
22                        government and it's time for effectively  
23                        leadership moving forward. Thank you.

24                        MR. MCGOFF: Anyone else?

25                        MR. WECHSLER: Yes. I'd just like

1 to disagree with what my colleague just  
2 said, the police and fire contacts were  
3 implemented to begin savings that we can  
4 take advantage of right now. If these  
5 contacts were not approved there would have  
6 been no adjustments to the contracts until  
7 2017. In the interim, we saw tonight that  
8 the plan requires savings in those years.  
9 Without these contracts in place, the only  
10 place that those savings could have come  
11 from or the revenue could have come from is  
12 increased taxes. So we did take the  
13 opportunity to make some corrections to the  
14 work rules, we did receive concessions. We  
15 did have to give concessions back as well.  
16 Those are off in the future, and as we heard  
17 tonight from PEL they are going to have to  
18 be negotiated, we know that, but I don't  
19 think that if we sat and did nothing for two  
20 years that this recovery plan, my idea, I  
21 think it would look worse than it did  
22 tonight when it was presented.

23 MR. GAUGHAN: I would just comment  
24 and say that, you know, we are in no --  
25 Mr. Wechsler said that we had to give



1           concessions. I think what's quite clear  
2           after hearing from PEL and reading this  
3           recovery plan is that we were in no position  
4           to give up anything. We weren't in any  
5           position to give raises, we weren't in any  
6           position to give back retiree health care  
7           and some of the other things.

8                     Mr. Wechsler is correct we did gain  
9           concessions from the unions, and I  
10          appreciate that, but overall both contracts  
11          I believe were a bad deal, and extending  
12          them to 2021, which I have mentioned for the  
13          past month and a half, I think is going to  
14          come back to bit us in the end.

15                    MR. MCGOFF: Thank you. Brief  
16          comment on the recovery plan, Mr. Gaughan  
17          used a great word, it's a framework for  
18          recovery. I have always used it as a  
19          guideline for recovery. It is a living  
20          document, a movable, malleable document that  
21          can guide us toward getting out of our  
22          distressed status and hopefully toward, you  
23          know, recovery, economic recovery for the  
24          City of Scranton.

25                    We need a revised recovery plan. By

1 law we need to have one. If it's not this  
2 one, then somebody needs to get to PEL and,  
3 you know, have them make changes that would  
4 be acceptable. This is something that in  
5 order for the city to move forward needs to  
6 be incorporated and passed and hopefully  
7 that will take place over the course of the  
8 next couple of weeks.

9 All those in favor of introduction  
10 signify by saying aye.

11 MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

12 MR. EVANS: Aye.

13 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

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

16 MS. REED: 5-D. FOR INTRODUCTION - A  
17 RESOLUTION - RATIFYING AND APPROVING THE  
18 SUBMISSION OF AN ACT 101, SECTION 902  
19 RECYCLING DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION  
20 GRANT APPLICATION SUBMITTED BY THE  
21 DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND THE  
22 DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION TO THE  
23 DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION  
24 ("DEP"), AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND OTHER  
25 APPROPRIATE CITY OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE AND

1 ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE  
2 COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, DEPARTMENT OF  
3 ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ("DEP") AND TO  
4 ACCEPT THE ACT 101, SECTION 902 RECYCLING  
5 DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION GRANT IN THE  
6 AMOUNT OF \$250,000.00.

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

10 MR. WECHSLER: So moved.

11 MR. EVANS: Second.

12 MR. MCGOFF: On the question?

13 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, on the question.

14 I would just like to take a second to  
15 explain what was in the grant. Some of the  
16 City's desired outcomes from being awarded  
17 this grant in the amount of \$250,000 are the  
18 following:

19 Increases in amounts of recycling  
20 materials presently collected with the  
21 addition of a new operational vehicle for  
22 the DPW. This new vehicle will provide  
23 improved efficiency for the employees of the  
24 DPW and allow for greater flexibility in  
25 route distribution, increase in residential

1 and commercial collections and increase in  
2 the retention of resident and commercial  
3 education providing a greater understanding  
4 of items accepted for collection. Thank  
5 you.

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

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

9 MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

10 MR. EVANS: Aye.

11 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

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

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

15 READING BY TITLE - FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO.  
16 84, 2015- AN ORDINANCE - AUTHORIZING THE  
17 MAYOR AND OTHER APPROPRIATE CITY OFFICIALS  
18 TO APPROVE THE EXPANSION OF PARKING  
19 ENFORCEMENT WITHIN THE SCRANTON POLICE  
20 DEPARTMENT BY REASSIGNING TWO (2) CIVILIAN  
21 CLERKS TO THE PATROL DIVISION TO ENFORCE  
22 PARKING VIOLATIONS THROUGHOUT THE CITY.

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

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

1 pass reading by title.

2 MR. EVANS: Second.

3 MS. MCGOFF: On the question? All  
4 those in favor signify by saying aye.

5 MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

6 MR. EVANS: Aye.

7 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

8 MR. MCGOFF: Aye. Opposed? The  
9 ayes have it and so moved.

10 MS. REED: SEVENTH ORDER. 7-A.

11 MR. EVANS: I like a table 7-A. FOR  
12 CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE -  
13 FOR ADOPTION FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO. 83,  
14 2015 - AMENDING FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO. 51,  
15 1977 AN ORDINANCE, AMENDING FILE OF THE  
16 COUNCIL NO. 44, 1926, ENTITLED "AN ORDINANCE  
17 REGULATING THE CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE  
18 OF ADVERTISING SIGNS AND SIMILAR STRUCTURES:  
19 PROVIDING FOR THE INSPECTION THEREOF,  
20 PRESCRIBING LICENSE FEES IN REFERENCE  
21 THERETO AND PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR  
22 VIOLATIONS," AS AMENDED BY FILE OF THE  
23 COUNCIL NO. 5, 1963 TO PROVIDE FOR THE  
24 INCREASE IN FEES, AS AMENDED BY FILE OF THE  
25 COUNCIL NO. 83, 1976 BY DEFINING THE SIGNED

1 AREA AS THE BASIS FOR CHARGE BY UPDATING AND  
2 INCREASING THE ANNUAL SIGN FEES.

3 MR. EVANS: I would like to make a  
4 motion to table Item 7-A.

5 MR. WECHSLER: Second.

6 MR. MCGOFF: On the question? As we  
7 stated at the beginning of the meeting, the  
8 reason for tabling this, or a motion to  
9 table, is because of some conflicts that  
10 arose in the legislation and it needs to be  
11 placed under further review.

12 All those in favor of tabling Item  
13 7-A signify by saying aye.

14 MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

15 MR. EVANS: Aye.

16 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

17 MS. MCGOFF: Aye. Opposed? The  
18 ayes have it and so moved. I hereby declare  
19 number 7-A tabled.

20 MS. REED: 7-B. FOR CONSIDERATION BY  
21 THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY- FOR ADOPTION  
22 RESOLUTION NO. 128, 2015 - A RESOLUTION  
23 AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF SCRANTON POLICE  
24 DEPARTMENT'S PARTICIPATION IN A NALOXONE  
25 ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM IN WHICH

1 APPROPRIATELY TRAINED POLICE PERSONNEL,  
2 PURSUANT TO PA. ACT 139 OF 2014 (ATTACHED),  
3 WILL BE EQUIPPED TO ADMINISTER NALOXONE  
4 (NARCAN) TO INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE IN  
5 RESPIRATORY DISTRESS AS A RESULT OF OPIOID  
6 OVERDOSE AND EXECUTE MEMORANDUM OF  
7 UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE SCRANTON POLICE  
8 DEPARTMENT AND PENNSYLVANIA AMBULANCE, LLC.

9 MR. MCGOFF: What is the  
10 recommendation of the Chair for the  
11 Committee on Public Safety?

12 MR. WECHSLER: As Chairperson for  
13 the Committee on Public Safety, I recommend  
14 final passage of Item 7-B.

15 MR. EVANS: Second.

16 MR. MCGOFF: On the question? Roll  
17 call, please?

18 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

19 MR. WECHSLER: Yes.

20 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

21 MR. EVANS: Yes.

22 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

23 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

24 MS. CARRERA: Mr. McGoff.

25 MR. MCGOFF: Yes. I hereby declare

1 Item 7-B legally and lawfully adopted.

2 MS. REED: 7-C. FOR CONSIDERATION BY  
3 THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY- FOR ADOPTION  
4 RESOLUTION NO. 129, 2015 - RATIFYING AND  
5 APPROVING THE EXECUTION AND SUBMISSION OF AN  
6 APPLICATION BY THE CITY OF SCRANTON FIRE  
7 DEPARTMENT FOR A PENNSYLVANIA AMERICAN WATER  
8 FIREFIGHTING SUPPORT GRANT TO PURCHASE SMOKE  
9 DETECTORS AND CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS AND  
10 AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND OTHER APPROPRIATE  
11 CITY OFFICIALS TO ACCEPT THE GRANT AND  
12 DISBURSE THE GRANT FUNDS IN THE AMOUNT OF  
13 \$1,000 FOR THE PURCHASE OF THE SMOKE  
14 DETECTORS AND CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS.

15 MR. MCGOFF: What is the  
16 recommendation of the Chair for the  
17 Committee on Public Safety?

18 MR. WECHSLER: As Chairperson for  
19 the Committee on Public Safety, I recommend  
20 final passage of Item 7-C.

21 MR. EVANS: Second.

22 MR. MCGOFF: On the question? Roll  
23 call, please?

24 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

25 MR. WECHSLER: Yes.



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MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

MR. EVANS: Yes.

MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

MS. CARRERA: Mr. McGoff.

MR. MCGOFF: Yes. I hereby declare  
Item 7-C legally and lawfully adopted. If  
there is no further business, I'll entertain  
a motion to adjourn.

MR. EVANS: So moved.

MR. MCGOFF: This meeting is  
adjourned.

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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

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CATHENE S. NARDOZZI, RPR  
OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER