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SCRANTON CITY COUNCIL MEETING

HELD:

Thursday, April 30, 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

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.

7 MR. ROGAN: Here.

8 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

9 MR. EVANS: Here.

10 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

11 MR. GAUGHAN: Here.

12 MS. CARRERA: Mr. McGoff.

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

15 MS. REED: THIRD ORDER. 3-A. TAX
16 ASSESSOR'S REPORTS FOR HEARING DATES TO BE
17 HELD MAY 13 AND MAY 20, 2015.

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

20 MS. REED: 3-B. MINUTES OF THE
21 NON-UNIFORM MUNICIPAL PENSION BOARD MEETING
22 HELD MARCH 25, 2015.

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

25 MS. REED: 3-C. MINUTES OF THE

1 COMPOSITE PENSION BOARD MEETING HELD MARCH
2 25, 2015.

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

5 MS. REED: 3-D. MINUTES OF THE
6 SCRANTON POLICE PENSION COMMISSION MEETING
7 HELD MARCH 25, 2015.

8 MR. MCGOFF: Are there any comments?
9 If not, received and filed.

10 MS. REED: 3-E. MINUTES OF THE
11 SCRANTON FIREFIGHTERS PENSION COMMISSION
12 MEETING HELD MARCH 25, 2015.

13 MR. MCGOFF: Are there any comments?
14 If not, received and filed.

15 Any announcements from council?

16 MR. GAUGHAN: I have one. The
17 Scranton Notre Dame Club and the Greenridge
18 Neighborhood Association are organizing a
19 clean up of Crowley Park Saturday May 9,
20 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and all are welcome to
21 join and help. Thank you.

22 MR. MCGOFF: Anyone else? A couple
23 of announcements. First of all, 6-A is on
24 the agenda tonight and we had a public
25 hearing concerning it, it is the money that

1 was sent from Boscov's Department Store to
2 OECD. After it's voted upon, if it is
3 approved this evening in Sixth Order it will
4 be tabled per statute for 30 days for a
5 public comment period and then reintroduced
6 at a later date.

7 Also, the state of the city address
8 will be given tomorrow at the Chamber of
9 Commerce, it is open to the public, and I'm
10 not quite sure of the time. I will find the
11 time before we leave this evening.

12 MS. HODOWANITZ: It's noon.

13 MR. MCGOFF: At noon. Thank you,
14 Ms. Hodowanitz. So that's the state of the
15 city address at noon at the Chamber of
16 Commerce building and it is open to the
17 public.

18 Just a couple of things, on the
19 agenda this evening 5-B is the request to
20 increase the LST tax to triple it from \$52
21 to \$156. Just for information's sake, 5-C
22 it may look similar to some legislation we
23 had before. It was found out that the
24 account for the quality of life tickets
25 needed to be in two separate banks, not just

1 a separate account, and so we are taking
2 care of that little situation; and then "D"
3 and "E" are two appointments, one to the
4 Redevelopment Authority and also one to the
5 Recreation Authority.

6 MS. REED: FOURTH ORDER. CITIZENS'
7 PARTICIPATION.

8 MR. MCGOFF: Ron Heusner.

9 MR. HEUSNER: Gentlemen, ladies,
10 good evening. My name is Ron Heusner, I
11 have been a city resident for all of my
12 life. I'm currently, or should I say for
13 the last 11 years I have working as an
14 auditor for the City's controller. I have
15 to give you some of my background so that
16 you will have a better understanding of how
17 I'm able to say the things I'm able to say.

18 For 30 years I have been an internal
19 auditor. I was a certified fraud examiner,
20 I have had numerous occasions where my work
21 has been turned over to the FBI, the OCC and
22 the local district attorney resulting in
23 arrests, convictions and incarcerations for
24 a number of people.

25 Now that you know me, I'm here

1 tonight to talk about the remarks made last
2 week by Sean McAndrew. Mr. McAndrew stated
3 that three weeks ago he sent a letter that
4 to me closely resembles a written
5 interrogation to Mrs. Novembrino requesting
6 information that relates to the ongoing
7 investigation into certain pension
8 activities. That letter, as he stated,
9 remains unanswered.

10 With a bit of sarcasm, he stated he
11 suspects he will get the response by May 20.
12 He was asking, if I understood him
13 correctly, for council's help to gain
14 information from Mrs. Novembrino. Again, I
15 suspect he had another agenda. He hasn't
16 asked any other Pension Board member to
17 supply any information, only Mrs. Novembrino
18 and she has exact same authority and
19 oversight responsibility as any other
20 Pension Board member. That puts his motive
21 in question.

22 Attorney Larry Durkin, the solicitor
23 for the Pension Board, has instructed Mrs.
24 Novembrino not to discuss the investigations
25 into the pension and with anyone, not even

1 me, and not supply any information she might
2 have relating to it and Mr. McAndrew knows
3 this.

4 The information that is involved or
5 related to these investigations is exempt
6 under the Pennsylvania Right-to-Know Act
7 Section 14, Part M and N. We don't have to
8 supply it. I have suggested personally to
9 Mrs. Novembrino to ignore McAndrew's request
10 and contact the FBI and the Pennsylvania
11 State Police to inform them of his requests
12 and ask for their guidance. She could be
13 criticized by investigators for providing
14 any information she might have to anyone.
15 McAndrew is not a trained investigator
16 employed by any regulatory agency and based
17 upon McAndrew's lack of investigative
18 experience, no understanding of pension
19 operations and no exposure to law
20 enforcement procedures other than the TV
21 programs he watches. His interpretation and
22 opinions of any material he might receive
23 may interfere with ongoing investigation
24 which could result in himself being subject
25 to severe criticism.

1 His lack of understanding became
2 quite apparent to me when he said that Mrs.
3 Novembrino's deputy has a family member
4 collecting a double pension. Her current
5 deputy has held that position for 12 years
6 and has no family member collecting any city
7 pension. The previous deputy --

8 MR. ROGAN: What about former
9 deputies?

10 MR. HEUSNER: Pardon me?

11 MR. ROGAN: What about former deputy
12 family members?

13 MR. HEUSNER: Former deputy, I just
14 said that. The previous deputy that was
15 there for five years --

16 MR. ROGAN: No, you said the current
17 deputy.

18 MR. HEUSNER: I said the current and
19 her previous deputy of five years has no
20 family members.

21 MR. ROGAN: So the family member of
22 no employees in that office were receiving
23 double pensions?

24 MR. HEUSNER: No. No. I'm sorry, as
25 he stated, deputy. The deputy that she

1 currently has no relative collecting a
2 pension.

3 MR. ROGAN: I asked employee?

4 MR. HEUSNER: Employee?

5 MR. GAUGHAN: I think we should

6 let--

7 MR. HEUSNER: We have no --

8 MR. GAUGHAN: I think you should let
9 the gentleman finish his speech and then
10 instead of interrogating him while he is
11 trying to talk.

12 MR. MCGOFF: Let him finish. I'm
13 sorry.

14 MR. HEUSNER: That's okay. That's
15 okay. There is no employee from that office
16 collecting a double pension and I have
17 overstepped what I want to say, but there is
18 no --

19 MR. MCGOFF: I'm sorry to --

20 MR. HEUSNER: That's okay. So my
21 suggestion is that council also ignore his
22 request. I don't know, but I suspect what
23 the investigators may do should any
24 information be made public that could
25 possibly be false. That's my facts.

1 On a personal note, Mrs. Novembrino
2 and her family have been and will remain
3 highly respected in this city. Considering
4 the vote tally during here past election she
5 could have probably run for any elected
6 office and won, but she only ran for the
7 city controller because she loves the job.
8 Her integrity and moral standards are at
9 levels that other people should aspire to.
10 For her to be treated with such disrespect
11 is something I cannot understand nor
12 condone. With that, I say thank you and
13 good night.

14 MR. ROGAN: Just one question since
15 you brought it up, were there any former
16 employees family members that are receiving
17 a double pension?

18 MR. HEUSNER: Former -- I'm not
19 going to answer that.

20 MR. ROGAN: His answer is yes.

21 MR. HEUSNER: Okay. I'm not going
22 to answer that.

23 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you.

24 MR. HEUSNER: As I said, I'm not
25 going to put myself in that position where

1 somebody is calling me.

2 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you.

3 MR. HEUSNER: Thank you.

4 MR. MCGOFF: Joan Hodowanitz.

5 MS. HODOWANITZ: Joan Hodowanitz,
6 city resident and taxpayer. I want to thank
7 Jim Lockwood of the Scranton Times for
8 posting the notice in this morning's paper
9 about the state of the city address, which
10 is tomorrow, May 1, at noon at the Chamber
11 of Commerce building, and it is open to the
12 public. I'm going to quote from that short
13 article, "The speech will focus on progress
14 of the recovery plan and initiatives aimed
15 at improving the city's credit and finances
16 as well as union contract negotiations and
17 pension funds."

18 I'm happy that the mayor is going to
19 provide some information to the public on
20 these issues. I'm not overly pleased at the
21 venue he has chosen to do so. The noon hour
22 is not convenient for most people who work.
23 The Chamber of Commerce cannot host a very
24 large crowd and I wonder why the mayor chose
25 that venue. I understand that all the

1 previous mayors have been using the Chamber
2 of Commerce, but think about it, the Chamber
3 of Commerce is going to be a relatively
4 friendly crowd to please, and I'm not even
5 sure all of the members that he may be
6 addressing are residents of Scranton, but
7 the mayor's first duty is to the residents
8 of the city who pay taxes and to business
9 owners who pay taxes to the City of Scranton
10 and he needs to do this in a fashion where
11 he can address the largest number of people
12 possible at the most convenient time.

13 I don't know whether ECTV is going
14 to broadcast this live or whether they are
15 even going to tape it, it would be wonderful
16 if this event every year could be broadcast
17 live. It's as important as any city council
18 meeting, especially considering our
19 distressed status so I'm hoping that next
20 year this will be done perhaps in a larger
21 auditorium setting, well publicized in
22 advance and in the evening so those people
23 who work during the day have the opportunity
24 to attend.

25 I also hope that the mayor will take

1 questions from the public, and he should be
2 doing that in any event. He should be doing
3 town hall meetings for the public. He has
4 been in office 16 months and he has never
5 done that once.

6 A separate issue, again this year
7 I'm going to track the status of the annual
8 audit. Right now I'm waiting to see when
9 Rossi & Company submit their bill for the
10 2013 audit. It hasn't hit the controller's
11 office yet. I'm interested because you have
12 to add \$46,292 to that bill because the
13 administration contracted with Baker-Tilly
14 to bring in a firm to help the people
15 upstairs prepare for the audit so we are
16 looking at one really expensive audit and I
17 also would like to know, hopefully the mayor
18 tomorrow will address the impact of the
19 adverse opinion in the 2013 audit and how he
20 is going to reestablish the city's credit
21 and finance ratings in the future given that
22 we have an adverse opinion in our last
23 annual audit. We're likely to have one
24 again this year if we don't get the Parking
25 Authority's finance statements. That's all

1 I have. Thank you.

2 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you.

3 MR. MCGOFF: Bob Bolus.

4 MR. BOLUS: Good evening, Council.

5 Bob Bolus, Scranton. On I guess "B" here
6 regarding the LST tax, is this on people who
7 work in the city as well if you work here or
8 is it a tax whether you live here or not?
9 Is it on the residents across the board --

10 MR. MCGOFF: It is not --

11 MR. BOLUS: Or is it just for those
12 that work?

13 MR. MCGOFF: It is on all people who
14 work in the City of Scranton.

15 MR. BOLUS: Okay. The only issues I
16 have with this I think, first of all, when
17 we look at the people who work in the city
18 and live in the city we are already paying
19 the taxes, we are already paying fees for
20 garbage, we are already getting hit with
21 everything else out here. I think this is
22 just unfair when this administration and
23 councils in the past and present have failed
24 to go after the KOZ's and the nonprofits.

25 You put it in here, this is a local

1 service tax. Well, if we put a fee on
2 everyone in the community, in the city, we
3 covered the nonprofits, the KOZ's and the
4 people. A 1 percent public service fee
5 covers many, many aspects of what this does,
6 but I don't think people out of the area
7 should have to pay to work in the City of
8 Scranton when we are the ones who screwed up
9 the city. I think it's unfair to people to
10 ask them to pay our debts. If I were every
11 municipality around here I would do the same
12 thing to everybody that lives in the city
13 and works in their town. I mean, it's just
14 wrong.

15 We are not doing anything. Go after
16 the nonprofits, the KOZ's, go to the Courts
17 as you did with and ask them to allow you to
18 charge for your police and fire at the
19 actual rate that they are worth, a minimum
20 two hours for accidents that happen in the
21 city, or if they go to a nonprofit or a KOZ
22 that doesn't pay taxes, they should pay that
23 fee.

24 So you guys are looking in all the
25 wrong directions. There is millions and

1 millions of dollars and you are not paying
2 attention to it, but you are hurting the
3 people and the senior citizens and primarily
4 the people who come here spend more time
5 driving around in a pothole than they do to
6 get to work here and it's bad. I mean,
7 let's be realistic. You can't salvage
8 what's going on here.

9 This is directly for Mr. Rogan, I
10 believe you are the campaign manager for
11 Sean McAndrew?

12 MR. ROGAN: No, I'm not.

13 MR. BOLUS: Pardon?

14 MR. ROGAN: No, I'm not.

15 MR. BOLUS: Do you have any
16 involvement with him in his campaign for
17 controller?

18 MR. ROGAN: We're personal friends.

19 MR. BOLUS: Pardon?

20 MR. ROGAN: I'm personal friends
21 with Mr. McAndrew.

22 MR. BOLUS: You're not involved in
23 campaigning or doing anything regarding his
24 campaign?

25 MR. ROGAN: Not in an official

1 capacity, no.

2 MR. BOLUS: Well, I don't know what
3 capacity that may be.

4 MR. ROGAN: I'm not the campaign
5 manager or any title in the campaign for
6 anyone.

7 MR. BOLUS: Well, just because I
8 have an issue with Mr. McAndrew. We have a
9 solicitor here who is probably one of the
10 most knowledgeable guys in our community as
11 to criminal law and investigations. This
12 gentleman, Mr. McAndrew, sends a letter that
13 he took off his website to Mrs. Novembrino
14 saying that he wants to come into the city,
15 that he could straighten this out, the
16 responsibility of the office I seek that has
17 lead me to write this letter. He is
18 basically saying I'm surprised by her
19 silence, that she remains silent because you
20 have no explanation as to how the city got
21 to this point, and this is about the
22 pensions. They are under a legal
23 investigation right now going on in this
24 city, basically a gag order. Even if you
25 gentlemen had knowledge of it, you can't

1 talk about it. Why then would this
2 inexperienced individual think he could take
3 over the job as controller and not follow
4 the same rules that Mrs. Novembrino has to
5 follow who has been in this city as a
6 controller without question of her character
7 and her credibility, an individual like this
8 comes forward and asks her to break the law,
9 break the silence, and respond to his
10 derogatory remarks whether it was directed
11 at council or anybody else to talk about the
12 pension. When it's under basically a gag
13 order to silence. You cannot talk about an
14 investigation and he wants to know is she a
15 target, he would like to-- it's kind of hard
16 reading it after it came off the thing and I
17 didn't bring a pair of reading glasses so
18 bear with me, please. He would like to know
19 have you been contacted by any law
20 enforcement agency for questioning? Have
21 you been identified as the target of law
22 enforcement? These aren't questions an
23 inexperienced person should be asking. If
24 you had any conceptual knowledge of what the
25 office is and the law he would understand

1 Mrs. Novembrino, whether she wants to or
2 does not want to, cannot speak publically
3 about what is going on in a criminal
4 investigation if it comes down to that.

5 So if you have any association with
6 him take him to the side and educate him,
7 teach him what the real reason to be the
8 controller in the city is, and that's
9 integrity and respect and most importantly
10 honesty, and there is nobody more honest
11 than Mrs. Novembrino so whatever your
12 personal relationship is with him, take him
13 to the side and educate him. Thank you.

14 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you, Mr. Bolus.
15 Ron Ellman.

16 MR. ELLMAN: Hello, Council. No
17 disrespect, but just look at yourselves.
18 You're just completely out of touch with
19 what's going on in this city. You know,
20 I've said this hundred times but I hear
21 people not only dislike council and dislike
22 Courtright they just absolutely have hatred.
23 I have heard some terrible remarks, you
24 know, that I never heard when Doherty was
25 here. The city is just 100 percent totally

1 dysfunctional in being run to the ground day
2 after day after day. I tell you, part of
3 the problem with council you guys got a
4 cushion of \$1,000 a month, there is 70,000
5 people in the city, whatever the population
6 is, that don't. Something effects us
7 immediately. If you sell, for example, the
8 Sewer Authority, they cripple or quadruple
9 whatever they are going to do with -- you
10 don't care. You know, you got a little
11 cushion to get another \$100 a month out or
12 something, I don't, thousands of other
13 people don't, and that's part of the
14 problem. You just don't realize not just
15 the people that I'm in contact with, I'm
16 talking about professional people that I
17 have talked to briefly about what's going on
18 in this city, you know? People are just
19 unhappy with me getting up here and then I
20 have my fan club, too, but when you mess
21 with someone's pocketbook it makes it most
22 irritable.

23 And the past year or so you just
24 have messed with my pocketbook to -- the
25 garbage going up and it's just everything

1 going up and Mr. Bolus just made an
2 excellent -- some excellent facts. We are
3 paying for everything under the sun and then
4 you got this fee. You cannot help the city
5 no more. You are throwing good money after
6 bad. Every time you turn around it's
7 just -- it's going into that big hole. I
8 don't know what your solution is, but think
9 how much money you can save if we didn't
10 have consultants. Everybody needs a
11 consultant, the school board got one, this
12 pathetic auditors they're not doing a good
13 job. The mayor has got to have a
14 consultant. Again, I'm telling you if
15 someone can't do their job that they were
16 hired or elected for they ought to be fired.
17 There shouldn't be no consultants for people
18 and then they should hire someone that lives
19 here in the city, not somebody that breaks
20 the law to get them in their position.

21 Before I leave, isn't there some way
22 to protect the mall from losing its taxes,
23 like a city clause or law or something? I
24 asked you about it last week, you know.
25 There is a nonprofit probably end up with

1 the mall because nobody seems to want it
2 that I've heard about. You know, whether
3 you people realize it or not this city has
4 just been highjacked right from under
5 everybody's nose by the Chamber of Commerce
6 and they have a stooge running the place.
7 The mayor has been replaced, you know, it's
8 just getting worse and worse for everybody
9 in the city.

10 Like Mr. Bolus said, the nonprofits
11 nothing has happened. Pensions, nothing has
12 happened. You guys said, "Let's wait and
13 see what happens with the pensions," what's
14 it's been three months? Nothing has been
15 done. You should have let the field (sic)
16 go after those people to get to the bottom
17 of it. Here the man running the city didn't
18 have an inclining idea in the world about
19 triple pensions and I did. I heard this in
20 conversation a year or two ago. He just
21 couldn't be doing much of a job if he -- or
22 else he is just a blatant liar that he
23 didn't know and didn't do nothing about it.
24 I feel the same way that Mr. Bolus does, the
25 city is just going to pot, you people aren't

1 doing your job. You ought to be doing
2 something about these nonprofits. If they
3 had a reassessment a third of the city won't
4 be reassessed because of them. Thank you
5 for allowing me to speak and get it off my
6 chest.

7 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you, Mr. Ellman.
8 Lee Morgan.

9 MR. MORGAN: Good evening, Council.
10 You know, just some statements that came up,
11 I would just like to say today that for the
12 couple of decades I have come here every
13 time I have gone to Mrs. Novembrino for
14 information I have received every single
15 thing I have asked for and, look it, I'm not
16 telling people how to vote and I'm not
17 telling people who the best candidate is,
18 but I can tell you this that every question
19 I have ever asked was answered and I never
20 had to chase Mrs. Novembrino around to get
21 an answer and any time I walked up those
22 steps and walked in her office I sat right
23 down with her and talked about the issue
24 that I came there to talk about, and if she
25 didn't have the information she asked that

1 find troubling is that the people
2 responsible for this are Democrats and
3 Republicans, they are the people in the
4 Congress and the Senate and the House of
5 Representatives and the State Senate. They
6 are funneling money through nonprofits for
7 all of these things. Go to Cedar Avenue and
8 look at how that project was done. Look all
9 across the city. They are using nonprofits
10 as conduits to move money. There really --
11 somebody, the FBI or somebody needs to come
12 in here and do an investigation and maybe, I
13 don't know, maybe they will arrest some
14 people and convict them, you know?

15 But I find it really troubling that,
16 you know, the city just keeps sliding
17 backwards and I gave council a notarized
18 request to cut the budget by 30 percent, not
19 that it had any weight, but to be honest
20 with you that's the only way for this city
21 to go. It has to cut its budget and it
22 can't fund its debt and it can't fund its
23 personnel and it certainly can't fund its
24 pensions, and the residents and the people
25 who live here they are laughing all the time

1 because they want to sell their property and
2 get out of here. My own son told me that
3 the city is a slum. He is moving to
4 Pittsburgh. He is going to start a job for
5 over \$100,000 a year. He said he would
6 never come back here the longest day of his
7 life. He said the people here don't even
8 pick their head up. It's just amazing, and
9 he is a young man and all of the other young
10 people leave, but what you did you say to
11 all of the fathers and grandfathers whose
12 grandchildren will not be born here?

13 What do you say about a city that's
14 been in the decline for 60 or 70 years but
15 it's played politics for all of those years?
16 And look at all of the money we spent in the
17 downtown as if that was going to cause the
18 city to be born again and it didn't happen.
19 And the mall, it's not Mr. Boscov's fault
20 the mall failed, you know, I had asked if I
21 was a business person and I was a member of
22 the Chamber of Commerce, I would ask the
23 directors and all of the people that make
24 the decisions over there what they have done
25 to make Scranton a business friendly

1 community that's creating a job base that's
2 expanding because that's our major problem.
3 Look around you, you don't have to be Albert
4 Einstein to realize that there is no real
5 development taking place here.

6 And the University of Scranton they
7 even get grant money. It's almost
8 ridiculous. It's really pathetic and then
9 when you look at it and you see that kids
10 are going to bed hungry in this country, the
11 majority of kids probably in the Scranton
12 School District are getting free or reduced
13 lunch. You got seniors who can't buy their
14 medicine and their food and you are driving
15 a whole segment of our population into
16 poverty and we talk utter silliness in the
17 government. No matter if it's a congressman
18 or a senator, an elected official on all
19 levels, they are talking about something
20 changing and all that's changing is the
21 country is just descending further and
22 further and further into poverty, and
23 anybody this doesn't believe that go back
24 into the 50's and 60's and look at what
25 President Eisenhower did and, hey, he was a

1 republican and look what he did for the
2 middle class. I mean, Democrats and
3 Republicans are the problem. The parties
4 are the problem. Thank you.

5 MR. MCGOFF: Anyone else who wishes
6 to address council?

7 MS. SCHUMACHER: Good evening,
8 Council. Marie Schumacher. I'm want to
9 start off with 7-C tonight because
10 Mr. Ungvarsky is not here, couldn't be here
11 tonight, and while he didn't ask me to speak
12 last week when we are leaving he commented
13 that didn't we purchase a bunch of materials
14 to do that very thing not too long ago?

15 So I went back and researched it
16 and, indeed, in 2010 Governor Rendell gave
17 the City of Scranton \$25,800 to purchase
18 levy maintenance equipment including a
19 truck, a brush mower, a riding mower, and a
20 skid mounted sprayer, so I guess I would ask
21 for myself why a mere five years later are
22 we with all of this equipment are we putting
23 this out so that's something for you to
24 think about.

25 Mr. Rogan, in Fifth Order would you

1 please let me know whether or not you
2 received my e-mail and if you did when I can
3 expect an answer?

4 And then I want to go back, May is
5 coming and I always get frustrated in May
6 because it's the anniversary of one of the
7 months that frustrates me the most. When
8 this city as poor shape financially as we
9 are in has revenue on the table and they
10 won't get off their duff to go collect it,
11 it just bothers me as a taxpayer, and so I'm
12 going to back and read you something that I
13 read from the minutes of the 7-11-2013
14 council meeting. "Three years ago this last
15 may, you authorized the sale of eight
16 properties on East Mountain to a Robert
17 Kolankowski, a resident of Scranton, for a
18 total of \$49,000 for the sale's price, but
19 not only has the \$49,000 not been received
20 by the city, but they have had it for three
21 years and the taxes aren't paid. So I guess
22 if you are the right person and know the
23 right people you can get one of these
24 properties in a private sale and not file
25 the deed and not pay taxes until you are

1 ready to develop it or sell it to somebody
2 else. I think it's wrong, I think it's
3 unfair, and I think we are missing income."

4 I did go back that those eight
5 properties are still in the same condition
6 and in addition to the \$49,000 sale price
7 which we have not received the unpaid taxes
8 at this point almost come up to the sale
9 price, just slightly under \$37,500. Now,
10 that's wrong. And, I might add, there are
11 55 additional properties that fall into that
12 same category. One even goes back as far as
13 2006. I mean, why are we -- why are we
14 shooting ourselves in the foot? This is
15 wrong.

16 Now, another thing we could do, I'll
17 just transition so I don't run out of time,
18 but another thing we can do, and we haven't
19 done is we are talking the land banks thing,
20 but I would like to know why we haven't
21 taken steps to hire a structural engineer to
22 review the properties that are on the
23 repository list and see if they are
24 retrievable. Are they in a condition where
25 they could be economically refurbished or

1 should they be put on the demolition list?
2 I went through the current list of 335
3 properties on that list which means they did
4 not sell through a judicial sale. Scranton
5 has 226 of those properties and some of them
6 delinquent I think probably back into the
7 90's so they are probably going to end up on
8 the demo list, I would guess.

9 But why don't we do this, this is
10 something we could have done at any period
11 of time and yet that's too much trouble, but
12 we can get a new committee together to do
13 land banks and to do this and to do blight,
14 this is part of your blight. I mean, come
15 and. We really need to look at what we are
16 doing and how we are doing it.

17 And then I would add, I do see some
18 rays of light in addition to the chair's
19 shirt tonight --

20 MR. MCGOFF: Sweater.

21 MR. SCHUMACHER: -- for the city and
22 I hope it continues, but I would ask
23 Mr. Rogan, I have asked you to follow up,
24 Mr. Gaughan, on the must do things for 2015
25 from the recovery plan, I would like to ask

1 Mr. Rogan if he could start giving us
2 information on the economic development in
3 this city. I have noticed just in the Times
4 companies, new companies coming in and some
5 going out. I think that would be
6 encouraging to people and maybe entice other
7 people to do likewise. Thank you for your
8 time.

9 MR. MCGOFF: Anyone else to address
10 council?

11 MR. DOBRZYN: You asked. Dave
12 Dobrzyn, resident, taxpayer. Okay, once
13 again on Transpacific packs, I'll announce
14 the phone number to call for all in the
15 Congress 1-202-224-3121. For Matt Cartright
16 1-202-225-5346, he may have a local number
17 and I'm sure Casey has a local number, too.
18 You could have always get a message through
19 and 1-202-456-1111 for the White House.
20 Please call them. If you are a public
21 employee and you are sick and tired of
22 fighting for a raise for seven or eight
23 years understand that other people have to
24 have money to pay the taxes. If you are a
25 social security retiree or a military

1 retiree or whatever that depends on a
2 government check then people -- the more
3 taxes people pay and the more money they
4 make the more secure your retirement is. If
5 you are tired of no jobs call them up and
6 tell them that, and you might want to cite
7 what's going on in Baltimore right now with
8 50 percent unemployment and, you know, an
9 unfortunate incident, whether or not it was
10 intentional or not we don't know. If you
11 are sick and tired of high property taxes
12 call because wage taxes used to take care of
13 lower property taxes, so please call your
14 congress and let them know that that's
15 unacceptable.

16 Now, back to city, I'll try to talk
17 fast because I have a lot. Paving, on the
18 100 block of Wheeler I have a friendly
19 acquaintance and he said he had a gas leak
20 and it went on forever and when they took
21 the valve out it was like swiss cheese.
22 Well, they still smell gas after they fixed
23 his valve so they fixed three, four or five
24 more valves on the same street. Now, I'd
25 like to know that in Allentown they had a

1 gas explosion of that type of nature and it
2 killed four other people -- four people and
3 that five-month-old infant so it's serious
4 business, and the reason they did it one at
5 a time was so that they didn't have to
6 repave the whole street. If you go up there
7 turn off on Roslyn right after the bridge
8 and it's between Roslyn and Linden Street.
9 Either way, you will notice all of the
10 bouncy bouncies.

11 Trash fees. We really need to
12 collect back trash fees, and if somebody is
13 unable to pay then perhaps we can help them
14 out, let it drift until the house is sold,
15 put a lien against the house, but it's not 7
16 1/2 million, not, not acceptable and who
17 knows maybe it will more after this year or
18 last year.

19 On the Chamber of Commerce and Mr.
20 Amoroso we need a second opinion. We should
21 take second opinions. Frank Joyce you could
22 probably call him and just ask him a few
23 things, and former councilman and we really
24 need a second opinion. I feel that too many
25 times these study groups are hired mainly to

1 give solutions to the somewhat guilty
2 parties. For instance, we don't do an exit
3 analysis on KOZ's, and I think if we did one
4 on the Sanofi-Pasteur we would find out that
5 we might have lost a lot of money instead of
6 created job. Maybe we created jobs but they
7 weren't employing people from Scranton
8 anyway so then we just have all the more
9 liability, and if they don't want to pay
10 taxes, and they don't to pay for the
11 property like down at the Ice Box, I'd like
12 to compliment the mayor for trying to bring
13 that to a head, who need them? Do we need
14 them? No. We don't need them. They are
15 just costing us more money so who cares.

16 And once again, I will make it
17 quick, I talked to a person whose mother's
18 house was condemned and torn down after she
19 passed away, and the current licensing
20 inspections would not even allow her to get
21 in there to get family heirlooms out. All
22 she got was her mother's Bible out of that
23 house and that's shameful. She should have
24 been left to go in there and get a few
25 mementos, pictures, who knows, but it was

1 all thrown out and the house was knocked
2 down and there is a big hole in the ground
3 now. Thank you and have a good night.

4 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you.

5 MR. MCANDREW: My name is Sean
6 McAndrew, taxpayer. As to the city
7 controller employee who came in and
8 questioned my letter, the reason I directed
9 my letter to Mrs. Novembrino was because she
10 was on the Pension Board and is still on the
11 Pension Board. She is the only remaining
12 Pension Board person still on the board, so
13 that's why my letter was directed to her.

14 As for me asking the questions, I
15 pay my taxes, pay my garbage bill, I own a
16 home, that gives me the right to ask these
17 legitimate questions on a big issue in the
18 city. I didn't know you had to be a private
19 investigator to ask any questions.

20 Also, in regarding to my campaign
21 manager, Mr. Bolus wanted to ask me, it's my
22 uncle Chris Canavey. When I first started
23 decided to run he was the first person to
24 back me and help me out and that's the only
25 people running is myself and him.

1 Unfortunately, you know, an employee from
2 the controller's office are speaking here to
3 make a political attack against me and that
4 wasn't my reasoning for coming to council or
5 writing my letter, it was to raise an
6 awareness to the problem that is going on
7 and ask legitimate questions to somebody who
8 was on the Pension Board at the time, the
9 controller at the time and still is the
10 controller and still is on the Pension
11 Board. If they are under investigation and
12 they can't talk about it, then
13 Mrs. Novembrino could have came down here
14 and said herself instead of sending somebody
15 from her office.

16 Again, I pay my taxes, I have every
17 right just as anybody else to ask these
18 questions? So, again, I apologize if it
19 turned into that, but it was just me, you
20 know, wanting to get some answers to an
21 important situation, or I'm sorry, to an
22 important topic that's in the city because
23 it has been going on for months, and as I
24 stated last week, every month that it keeps
25 going on we keep losing money so I want to

1 thank you guys, and I apologize that it
2 turned into something like and you guys have
3 a good night.

4 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you. Anyone
5 else?

6 MS. REED: FIFTH ORDER 5-A.
7 MOTIONS.

8 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you,
9 Mr. McGoff, just a few items tonight. The
10 first thing I'd like to talk about is I'm
11 happy to see all the candidates for county
12 commissioner have expressed their desire to
13 have a reassessment for the county. The one
14 thing I didn't agree about is that it's
15 something that we shouldn't have to wait
16 for. I know that we can't use the entire
17 surplus the county has for the reassessment,
18 but there is some money available to start
19 the process. It is the County's
20 responsibility to make sure that taxes are
21 fair for everyone in the county. The older
22 cities like Scranton we have had quite the
23 burden assessed on us and it is a problem
24 for us that we don't collect -- or tax too
25 much for the properties that we have.

1 I do believe that the county should
2 begin to start the process of reassessment
3 by looking to see what type of grants are
4 out there and what kind of assistance. I
5 also think that since Scranton is going to
6 be a part of SAPA we understand that there
7 are some additional grants available for
8 SAPA cities and I think if Scranton can
9 participate with any grants towards the
10 reassessment it's something that we should
11 look at, but I don't believe that waiting
12 for something as important as this is a
13 solution to our problem.

14 I would like to comment on the issue
15 that was raised yesterday -- today in the
16 paper about the Scranton Recreation
17 Authority. I think the current Rec Board
18 was caught by surprise with the free
19 swimming that came up. I know for myself I
20 hadn't heard anything about free swimming
21 coming up and this would be a problem with
22 this year if free swimming was -- when free
23 swimming comes because it will almost
24 deplete the entire budget that the
25 Recreation Authority has.

1 I also don't believe that Nay Aug
2 was prepared for staffing. Nay Aug Pool if
3 it is free swimming this year, and I also
4 heard some concerns from our police
5 department about uncontrolled access to Nay
6 Aug Park.

7 I do believe that there is a
8 solution if we look at this together, I know
9 last year we kind of talked about reduced
10 fees to see if that was a suitable answer,
11 but I think really what we have to do is
12 right now is take a look at the Rec
13 Authority and see what purpose it is going
14 to serve now into the future.

15 I'm not calling for the elimination
16 of the Rec Authority. I think there has
17 been a lot of great work done in the past
18 and current members have done a lot of good
19 work there, but I do think it's an
20 opportunity to take a look and see what we
21 can do with the Recreation Authority in
22 terms of the entire park system, not just
23 Nay Aug. We have had some people in
24 neighborhoods approach us about taking over
25 some of the neighborhood parks. I think if

1 that was handled through the Recreation
2 Authority, the Recreation Authority since it
3 is an independent board does have the
4 ability to go out and seek grants on their
5 own and that may be something that will help
6 our smaller city parks.

7 But I do think we should take a look
8 at how this operates. There is too much
9 cost involved with the swimming pool that if
10 it can't be managed properly I think it
11 should come back under the city umbrella.

12 I would like to offer my condolences
13 to the Bhutanese community in the City of
14 Scranton. These people are the latest
15 immigrants to our city that are hardworking
16 and family oriented people. I understand
17 that the Scranton Diocese will be holding a
18 special collection this week for the
19 earthquake relief and I would encourage
20 everyone to give generously.

21 Finally, I would also like to take
22 the opportunity to thank the organizers for
23 the kick off event of the 150th anniversary
24 of Scranton. I was very happy being a part
25 of that, and very happy to see the turn out

1 and the parade and the activity that was at
2 the mall. We have to remember though that
3 this is an all-year celebration so as it's
4 kick off I can feel there was more
5 excitement coming, a lot of people were
6 unaware of what was happening, but I think
7 momentum on this is growing, so I think as
8 the year goes on it will a very enjoyable
9 experience.

10 I also would like to thank the
11 people that organized the trivia contest
12 that was at Montage Mountain on Saturday
13 night. We had a council team, we had two
14 pinch hitters come in because Mr. McGoff and
15 Mr. Gaughan were unable to make it so my
16 wife and a friend of Wayne's and mine, Joe
17 Erish, chipped in on our team and to our
18 surprise actually we made it to the
19 semi-finals and we were doing quite well in
20 the semi-finals until a category on medical
21 history of the City of Scranton -- the
22 County came up and I knew I drew a major
23 blank on that, but we did win one game so we
24 were happy with that night, and I did have a
25 good time and I think I would like to

1 participate again next year, but thank you.
2 That's all I have.

3 MR. MCGOFF: Mr. Rogan?

4 MR. ROGAN: Thank you. A couple of
5 items. First, I'd like to congratulate
6 Councilman Wechsler and Councilman Evans for
7 there win. I apologize I couldn't join, but
8 as I mentioned I was in Pittsburgh for my
9 brother's college graduation, but I'm
10 looking forward to hopefully having a
11 council team next we are and maybe we will
12 do a little studying before the meetings.

13 Just a few items, the first one is,
14 and this is an item we talked about at our
15 caucus quite a bit, which is the idea of a
16 land bank, that the mayor did send us a
17 response and I know Mrs. Schumacher
18 mentioned this as well. There will be an
19 exploratory committee formed in the near
20 future. I think this a good step. I know
21 council is eager, all five of us on council
22 are eager to see this become a reality.

23 Also, on in the same vein of blight
24 and those type of issues, this week I did
25 meet with an individual who works for a

1 company that they do what they call a
2 foreclosure registration program. I spoke
3 very briefly about it at caucus last week
4 and I did send an e-mail to our city clerk
5 to distribute to our colleagues on the
6 board. What this program would do is when a
7 bank forecloses on a home this company would
8 get the contact information for the bank,
9 charge that bank a fee for registering. At
10 that point in time we would have appoint a
11 contact person within a certain distance of
12 the city for if there are issues with the
13 property. If the windows get broken, if
14 somebody breaks in, things of that nature to
15 maintain that foreclosed home, and the fee
16 would be split between the city and the
17 county. So the city would receive some
18 revenue from it.

19 Currently, there are 311 foreclosed
20 properties within the City of Scranton there
21 are bank owned. At that rate the city would
22 bring in around \$30,000 a year, which is a
23 little bit of money, but, more importantly,
24 it could establish a contact, a chain of
25 communication between the city departments

1 and the banks who have foreclosed on those
2 properties. I will be -- I meant to mention
3 this earlier, but I will be working with our
4 council president and city clerk to try and
5 coordinate and public caucus so this program
6 can be fully displayed to the public. It
7 does seem like an item that really can help
8 both on the revenue end and on the cracking
9 down on blight.

10 And finally, just two responses to
11 Ms. Schumacher, the first regarding the
12 economic updates, I agree. There are a lot
13 of good things that are happening and I will
14 try to be proactive in mentioning a lot of
15 these from the podium. You know, I think us
16 up here and the speakers sometimes are
17 guilty of dwelling too much on the negatives
18 and I do think a lot of positive items do
19 need to be focused from business and
20 community groups within the city.

21 Secondly, and I just double checked,
22 I did not receive an e-mail. You may have
23 sent it to my city account, and I will give
24 me e-mail address out for the public so
25 everyone has it, and it's also on the city

1 website, it's PatRogan P-A-T-R-O-G-A-N, the
2 number one, at gmail.com, and this on the
3 cities website as well. Thank you.

4 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you. Mr. Evans.

5 MR. EVANS: Reassessment is going to
6 be a hot topic of discussion this week.
7 County Commissioner candidates weighed in
8 the subject, their common themes seem to be
9 "We want to do reassessment, but it will
10 cost too much."

11 Saying they would like to do a
12 reassessment but there is no money is not a
13 solution or an answer it's an excuse. While
14 I was the director of the Assessment Office
15 during the actual phase of reassessment, 90
16 percent of the inventories properties was
17 completed by 21st Century Appraisals, a
18 company hired by the county to do the
19 reassessment, and much of the necessary
20 mapping was completed by the county through
21 the Assessor's Office.

22 Nearly \$3 million was spent at that
23 point to complete the reassessment and
24 another estimated 2 to \$3 million would be
25 necessary to totally complete it.

1 Because the county commissioners in
2 2009 pulled the plug on reassessment that
3 figure has grown to \$8 million or more. It
4 was a bad decision then, and it remains a
5 bad decision today.

6 Recently the current commissioners
7 eagerly pointed out that there is now \$8
8 million budget surplus as one of their
9 crowning achievements. It is ironic that \$8
10 million is also the proposed cost of the
11 countywide reassessment. There is nothing
12 more important to the economic vitality of
13 our city and county than tax fairness
14 through a reassessment, so is money the real
15 issue or is the perceived political cost
16 simply too high?

17 And here we are 45 years removed
18 from the last reassessment and the City of
19 Scranton and it's property owners continue
20 to struggle with assessments that are simply
21 unfair. Let me gave you an example of one I
22 ran across recently which is symbolic of the
23 skewed assessed values of properties in our
24 county. House A, there was a property in
25 Scranton, a nice old house, but it needs a

1 lot of TLC. It is 3,100 square feet on a 40
2 foot by 90 foot lot with a shared driveway.
3 The value of the house is estimated at less
4 than \$100,000. House B is house in Clarks
5 Summit, is in immaculate condition. It is
6 4,300 square feet on 1.75 acres with a large
7 driveway, and three car garage. The value
8 of this home would be over \$500,000. House
9 A, the Scranton house, House A, pays \$6,631
10 in property taxes. House B, the Clarks
11 Summit house, pays \$6,229 in property tax.
12 But here's where it gets more interesting,
13 looking further into the numbers you will
14 see that the assessed value of the land,
15 House A in Scranton, again, a 40 by 90 foot
16 lot with a shared driveway is \$7,750. The
17 assessed value of the land of House B in
18 Clarks Summit with the 1.75 acres and a
19 large driveway is \$1,500.

20 Even in 1970 it would hard to
21 believe that those assessments were
22 accurate, but today it another example of
23 the unfairness built into this 45-year gap
24 without reassessment. This is a scenario
25 that I would estimate plays out hundreds, if

1 not thousands of times, within the county.

2 The other culprit in this mess is
3 the State of Pennsylvania who claims they
4 require reassessment but never do anything
5 about it. The state needs to come up with a
6 formula shared cost of the counties to
7 promote and make reassessment more viable.
8 They must also be progressive like other
9 states and allow for rolling reassessments
10 that are tied to property value increases
11 once their reassessment is done, this would
12 keep values current and doubling costs down.

13 Property tax fairness isn't just a
14 county issue or a state issue or a city
15 issue, it is a fundamental right of property
16 owners and should not be ignored like it has
17 been for over 45 years. As I have stated
18 before, if there is continued inaction by
19 the county then there should be some action
20 by the city. That's all I have. Thank you.

21 MR. MCGOFF: Go ahead.

22 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes. Thank you. I
23 would just like to start by saying as
24 Councilman Wechsler mentioned that I would
25 like to express my deep sympathy for the

1 people who are suffering in the recent
2 earthquake in Nepal. It's been reported
3 that the earthquake has taken the lives of
4 over 6,100 people, which is an absolutely
5 staggering figure, and as Mr. Wechsler had
6 mentioned, it's been well-documented over
7 the past few years that Scranton has a
8 growing Bhutanese and Nepal based community
9 and I've had firsthand experience in dealing
10 with these families as I have worked for a
11 short time in the first time home buyer
12 program and I can tell you that these are
13 hardworking and dedicated people and they
14 have become an integral part of our
15 community, so my heart goes out to all of
16 those local residents who have family in
17 Nepal and during this tragedy.

18 The street sweeper is scheduled to
19 be in the West Mountain area and Keyser
20 Valley area May 4 to May 8, Jackson Street
21 to Pettibone Street, including North-South
22 Road. As my colleagues had mentioned on the
23 issue of reassessment, I couldn't agree more
24 with both of them. It's been clear for
25 years that we desperately need reassessment.

1 We have a tax structure that's unfair,
2 outdated, and it hinders economic
3 development in our city. Mr. Evans had
4 mentioned last week about the palatial pace
5 of government, and I couldn't agree more.
6 Moving slowly and waiting for things to
7 happen will never work. We need to be
8 progressive. We need action on a number of
9 different fronts whether it be land bank
10 reassessment, the foreclosure registration
11 that Mr. Rogan --the idea that Mr. Rogan
12 mentioned, reforming rental registration, a
13 number of different things. So I would urge
14 the commissioners to find a way to get
15 reassessment done and remind them of a
16 saying that President Kennedy used to bring
17 up all the time, "We must use time as a tool
18 not as a couch."

19 And I would also like to touch on
20 the foreclosure registration idea that Mr.
21 Rogan had mentioned. I think it's something
22 that we are all extremely interested in, I
23 think it would be very beneficial for the
24 city. I think in the documents that
25 Mr. Rogan had sent us and in doing my own

1 research I think that this registration on
2 foreclosed properties would increase the
3 accountability of the lending institution,
4 which as we know temporarily owns the
5 property, for keeping the property up to
6 code until it is sold to a new owner, and I
7 think it's going to be beneficial for us to
8 look at Susquehanna and Allentown as
9 reference points because they have
10 successful foreclosure registration
11 programs, and I also think that as we are
12 delving into this process we should also
13 consider, and other municipalities are
14 considering, a single ordinance to cover
15 both properties facing foreclosure and
16 vacant properties, rather than instituting a
17 vacant property registration ordinance
18 separate from a foreclosed property
19 registration ordinance so these are all
20 things that we will be working together on
21 in the next few weeks. And that is all I
22 have for this week. Thank you.

23 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you, Mr. Gaughan.
24 Once again, the state of the city address
25 tomorrow at noon at the Chamber of Commerce.

1 I know there has often been questions about
2 the site. We have a traditionally, at least
3 as far as -- since I have been on council
4 the state of the city address has been done
5 at the Chamber of Commerce. Why that site I
6 don't know. I think perhaps people are
7 right, that if we are going to do the state
8 of the city address it probably should be
9 somewhere within the confines of city
10 government somehow. This room is too small,
11 Governor's room probably the same thing, I
12 don't know what the answer is, but
13 certainly, you know, there is some merit to
14 the idea of having the state of the city
15 address within the confines of the city
16 building.

17 I do know that it has been broadcast
18 in the past, the problem is that as far as
19 ECTV is concerned they can't do a live
20 broadcast from the chamber building and so
21 anything that they would do would have to be
22 on a replay. I don't know if any of the
23 local channels, broadcast channels would do
24 it live, I don't know if that is scheduled
25 or not.

1 One of the things that I have always
2 thought about council meetings is that we
3 should try and remove politics from
4 government. At election time that becomes a
5 very difficult situation. There has been
6 some criticism this evening and to some
7 extent I want to apologize to Mr. McAndrew.
8 He did contact me prior to last week's
9 meeting and asked me about what I thought
10 about reading a letter that he had sent to
11 Mrs. Novembrino. I cautioned him that I'm
12 not sure what that -- you know, where that
13 would go and how it would be perceived, and
14 I thought that as he spoke last week he made
15 an attempt to remove kind of the politics
16 from the questions that he had.

17 Anyone can ask a question, as was
18 said. I don't care -- people that come to
19 this podium for the nine years that I have
20 been here and have asked questions of public
21 officials. The simple thing is either
22 answer them or say no. This is nothing
23 wrong with that and to question somebody
24 just for asking a question I think is
25 inappropriate. Sometimes the questions can

1 be inappropriate and should be monitored
2 from here if somebody is speaking at the
3 dies.

4 And the last thing, most of what was
5 contained in the letter that Mr. McAndrew
6 sent to Mrs. Novembrino was made public by
7 others not by him and then to criticize him
8 for being public.

9 So, again, I'm not, again, I'm not
10 trying to favor any candidate over another.
11 My hope is that that podium, this dais, does
12 not become a center for political activity.
13 This is for the governance of the City of
14 Scranton and not for the politics of the
15 City of Scranton or Lackawanna County.

16 On a positive note, I guess this
17 past week I attended six meetings with
18 bidders on the parking monetization. These
19 bidders came from all over the country as
20 far away as Los Angeles, Puerto Rico, so
21 there is interest. I thought it was
22 interesting to just sit and listen to these
23 people and see that there was a competition
24 that they wanted to bring about, you know,
25 to help Scranton solve a problem and that

1 they were interested in the City of
2 Scranton, and their perception of the City
3 of Scranton, unlike what some people said at
4 the podium, their perspective of the City of
5 Scranton was one that was very positive.

6 They looked at the architecture,
7 they looked at the restaurants, the hotels,
8 the activity that was taking place and all
9 of this gave a very positive impression.
10 These people were looking at bidding for a
11 lease on the parking garages and the
12 off-street parking in Scranton for up to 50
13 years. They are not bidding if they don't
14 think this city has a future, and I think
15 that that -- I came away with that idea that
16 we have people from outside of City of
17 Scranton looking at it and saying this city
18 has a future and we want to be a part of it.

19 There is a timeline for the parking
20 monetization that is somewhat constricted by
21 the Scranton -- or the revised recovery plan
22 but most of these bidders felt that they
23 could abide by that timeline. What we are
24 looking at in the future is that there will
25 be concession agreements drawn up, they will

1 be given to the bidders, the bidders may be
2 asked for an indicative bid, which is kind
3 of like a ballpark figure for what they feel
4 this monetization would be worth, RFP's
5 would then be prepared, bidders would
6 respond, the city would choose one of the
7 bid. All of this hopefully done by the end
8 of 2015.

9 That is one step in the plan to get
10 the city back to financial credibility and
11 all of these people thought that they could
12 help the City of Scranton do that. They had
13 trust in the City of Scranton that we could
14 move forward in a positive way. And that's
15 all.

16 MS. REED: 5-B. FOR INTRODUCTION -
17 AN ORDINANCE - AMENDING FILE OF THE COUNCIL
18 NO. 79 OF 2015, AN ORDINANCE AMENDING FILE
19 OF THE COUNCIL NO. 145 OF 2007 ENTITLED "AN
20 ORDINANCE RENAMING THE EMERGENCY AND
21 MUNICIPAL SERVICES TAX" ("EMST") TO LOCAL
22 SERVICE TAX ("LST") AND BY IMPOSING A
23 WITHHOLDING OF \$52.00 FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR
24 2015 AND THE SAME SHALL REMAIN IN FULL FORCE
25 AND EFFECT ANNUALLY THEREAFTER BY INCREASING

1 THE LOCAL SERVICES TAX WITHHOLDING FROM
2 \$52.00 TO \$156.00 FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR
3 2015, AND PROVIDING FOR AN EXEMPTION FROM
4 TAXATION FOR ANY PERSON WHOSE TOTAL EARNED
5 INCOME AND NET PROFITS FROM ALL SOURCES
6 WITHIN THE MUNICIPALITY IS LESS THAN
7 \$15,600.00 FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR 2015, UNDER
8 AND PURSUANT TO THE LOCAL TAX ENABLING ACT,
9 ACT 511 OF 1965, P.L.1257, 53 P.S.§6924.101
10 ET.SEQ., AND THE MUNICIPALITIES RECOVERY
11 ACT, ACT 47 OF 1987, P.L.246, 53
12 P.S.§11701.101 ET.SEQ. AND THEIR RESPECTIVE
13 AMENDMENTS, EFFECTIVE RETROACTIVE TO JANUARY
14 1, 2015. THIS TAX IS EXPECTED TO GENERATE
15 APPROXIMATELY FOUR-MILLION TWO-HUNDRED
16 EIGHTY-SEVEN THOUSAND FIVE-HUNDRED
17 (\$4,287,500.00) DOLLARS IN REVENUE IN
18 CALENDAR YEAR 2015.

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

22 MR. ROGAN: So moved.

23 MR. WECHSLER: Second.

24 MR. MCGOFF: On the question?

25 MR. WECHSLER: Yes, Mr. McGoff, just

1 one quick comment. This new tax is one of
2 the few tools that the state has given us to
3 help with our financial problems. It's a
4 step that we need to take and just one thing
5 I'd like to caution everybody is this --
6 every dollar that's collected with this tax
7 is one dollar that does not have to be
8 collected from the property tax, and I think
9 that is the -- if there is such a thing as a
10 good part of the tax I think that's the good
11 part of this tax.

12 MR. MCGOFF: Anyone else? All those
13 in favor of introduction signify by saying
14 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 Mrs. Reed, just one second, it
22 should be noted that we have received a
23 letter from the Solicitor's Office asking if
24 we would consider suspending the rules next
25 week to move this from Sixth Order to

1 Seventh Order for final passage given the
2 timeliness of the LST tax and the fact that
3 it would be retroactive to January 1. I'm
4 not saying that this will be happen, it will
5 be a vote on council to do that.

6 MS. REED: 5-C. FOR INTRODUCTION -
7 AN ORDINANCE - AMENDING FILE OF THE COUNCIL
8 NO. 58, 2014, AN ORDINANCE "ENTITLED GENERAL
9 CITY OPERATING BUDGET 2015" BY CREATING A
10 NEW REVENUE ACCOUNT NO. 01.331.33121 QUALITY
11 OF LIFE ENFORCEMENT TICKETS.

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

15 MR. ROGAN: So moved.

16 MR. WECHSLER: Second.

17 MR. MCGOFF: On the question?

18 MR. EVANS: On the question, if I
19 may, Director Hinton in our packets tonight
20 as far as what the packet is concerned gave
21 us an update of the quality of life tickets
22 and is it okay if I read some of these with
23 your permission?

24 MR. MCGOFF: Okay.

25 MR. EVANS: Thanks. The program

1 started March 16, that's when the tickets
2 were started. To date, there has been 176
3 tickets issued, 124 were issued by the
4 police department, 52 by the health
5 inspectors. Overall \$8,525 was taken in by
6 the city and there is an outstanding balance
7 of \$22,100 to be collected.

8 A couple of takeaways. Number one,
9 I think the police are doing a great job.
10 These are the COM-D patrolmen mostly. My
11 only concern with that is the COM-D patrol
12 only can patrol in certain low to moderate
13 areas, and as we discussed previously, the
14 low to moderate map, the census maps, are
15 woefully inaccurate for lack of a better
16 word and they should be corrected, but we
17 just don't know how to do that. We have
18 asked OECD to take a look at that and I'll
19 ask them again if we can take a look at maps
20 and see what can be done.

21 I'm a little concerned only 52
22 tickets were issued by the housing
23 inspectors. There is three housing
24 inspectors and 52 tickets in approximately
25 29, 30 work days. We'll have to look at

1 that. I know Director Hinton is doing his
2 best, but, you know, it's something we might
3 have to find out what the problem is. This
4 may have to be outsourced, there may have to
5 be part-timers hired, I really don't know
6 what the answer is, but it's something that
7 we can maybe discuss as we approach budget
8 time or whatever if we don't see the
9 workload is there for the employees.

10 But I applaud him for his due
11 diligence, he is doing a great job, Director
12 Hinton is, and hopefully we can see this
13 pick up as time goes by and just monitor
14 this as best as time goes by. That's all I
15 have. Thanks.

16 MR. MCGOFF: I should also mention
17 that I will report that we are made aware
18 that according to the statute the account
19 for this particular tax needed to be in a
20 bank separate from one in which other were
21 put, and the reason for this is that we can
22 rectify that situation.

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: 5-D. FOR INTRODUCTION - A
7 RESOLUTION - APPOINTMENT OF ROBERT TIMLIN,
8 325 WARREN STREET, SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA,
9 18508, AS A MEMBER OF THE SCRANTON
10 REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY. MR. TIMLIN WILL BE
11 REPLACING JACK EMILIANI WHO RESIGNED
12 EFFECTIVE APRIL 1, 2015. MR. TIMLIN WILL
13 FULFILL THE UNEXPIRED TERM OF MR. EMILIANI
14 WHOSE TERM IS SCHEDULED TO EXPIRE ON
15 FEBRUARY 14, 2017.

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

19 MR. ROGAN: So moved.

20 MR. WECHSLER: Second.

21 MR. MCGOFF: On the question? All
22 those in favor of introduction signify by
23 saying aye.

24 MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

25 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

1 MR. EVANS: Aye.

2 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

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

5 MS. REED: 5-E. FOR INTRODUCTION -
6 A RESOLUTION - APPOINTMENT OF JENNIFER
7 HERMAN, 127 SOUTH MERRIFIELD AVENUE,
8 SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA, 18504, AS A MEMBER
9 OF THE SCRANTON MUNICIPAL RECREATION
10 AUTHORITY. MS. HERMAN WILL BE REPLACING
11 DANNY J. DAVIS WHO RESIGNED EFFECTIVE APRIL
12 7, 2015. MS. HERMAN WILL FULFILL THE
13 UNEXPIRED TERM OF MR. DAVIS WHOSE TERM IS
14 SCHEDULED TO EXPIRE ON JUNE 17, 2016.

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

18 MR. ROGAN: So moved.

19 MR. WECHSLER: Second.

20 MR. MCGOFF: On the question? I
21 would just like to respond to something that
22 was in the paper today as well, this is not
23 a question of whether the Scranton
24 Recreation Authority should exist or not.
25 It does at this time, as Mr. Wechsler

1 brought up earlier, perhaps it should be
2 reviewed at a time in the future to see if
3 the Recreation Authority is appropriate. It
4 does exist now, there is an empty seat, and
5 that empty seat should be filled.

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

8 MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

9 MR. ROGAN: 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 97, 2015 - AN ORDINANCE - AMENDING FILE OF
17 THE COUNCIL NO. 47, 2013, ENTITLED, "AN
18 ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND OTHER
19 APPROPRIATE OFFICIALS OF THE CITY OF
20 SCRANTON TO TAKE ALL NECESSARY ACTIONS TO
21 IMPLEMENT THE CONSOLIDATED SUBMISSION FOR
22 COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS
23 TO BE FUNDED UNDER THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
24 BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) PROGRAM, HOME INVESTMENT
25 PARTNERSHIP (HOME) PROGRAM AND EMERGENCY

1 SOLUTIONS GRANT (ESG) PROGRAM", BY ACCEPTING
2 AND DISBURSING A PERSONAL CONTRIBUTION FROM
3 BOSCOV'S DEPARTMENT STORE TO PAY AN OVERDUE
4 SECTION 108 LOAN OWED BY STEAMTOWN MALL
5 PARTNERS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$715,173.00 AND
6 TRANSFERRING THESE FUNDS TO PROJECT 14-04
7 RE-CONSTRUCTION OF CITY STREETS TO INCLUDE
8 HANDICAPPED CURB CUTS.

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

11 MR. ROGAN: I move that Item 6-A
12 pass reading by title.

13 MR. WECHSLER: Second.

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

16 MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

17 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

18 MR. EVANS: Aye.

19 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

20 MR. MCGOFF: Aye. Opposed? The
21 ayes have it and so moved.

22 MR. ROGAN: I make a motion to table
23 Item 6-A per the legally required 30-day
24 comment period.

25 MR. WECHSLER: Second.

1 MR. MCGOFF: On the question? All
2 those in favor signify by saying aye.

3 MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

4 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

5 MR. EVANS: Aye.

6 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

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

9 MS. REED: SEVENTH ORDER. 7-A. FOR
10 CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC
11 SAFETY- FOR ADOPTION - RESOLUTION NO. 140,
12 2015 - AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND OTHER
13 APPROPRIATE CITY OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE AND
14 ENTER INTO A LEASE AGREEMENT WITH HORSEPOWER
15 HARLEY DAVIDSON, INC. TO LEASE FIVE (5)
16 POLICE PACKAGE MOTORCYCLES FOR THE CITY OF
17 SCRANTON POLICE DEPARTMENT.

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

21 MR. WECHSLER: As Chairperson for
22 the Committee on Public Safety, I recommend
23 final passage of Item 7-A.

24 MR. ROGAN: Second.

25 MR. MCGOFF: On the question? Roll

1 call, please?

2 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

3 MR. WECHSLER: Yes.

4 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

5 MR. ROGAN: Yes.

6 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

7 MR. EVANS: Yes.

8 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

9 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

10 MS. CARRERA: Mr. McGoff.

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

13 MS. REED: 7-B. FOR CONSIDERATION
14 BY THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS- FOR
15 ADOPTION - RESOLUTION NO. 141, 2015 -
16 AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND OTHER APPROPRIATE
17 CITY OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE AND ENTER INTO A
18 CONTRACT WITH REUTHER & BOWEN, PC TO PROVIDE
19 ENGINEERING SERVICES FOR THE CITY OF
20 SCRANTON 2015 ROADWAY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT.

21 MR. MCGOFF: What is the
22 recommendation of the Chair for the
23 Committee on Public Works?

24 MR. GAUGHAN: As Chairperson for the
25 Committee on Public Works, I recommend final

1 passage of Item 7-B.

2 MR. ROGAN: Second.

3 MR. MCGOFF: On the question? Roll
4 call, please?

5 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

6 MR. WECHSLER: Yes.

7 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

8 MR. ROGAN: Yes.

9 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

10 MR. EVANS: Yes.

11 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

12 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

13 MS. CARRERA: Mr. McGoff.

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

16 MS. REED: 7-C. FOR CONSIDERATION BY
17 THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS- FOR ADOPTION
18 - RESOLUTION NO. 142, 2015 - AUTHORIZING THE
19 MAYOR AND OTHER APPROPRIATE CITY OFFICIALS
20 TO EXECUTE AND ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH
21 DUNBAR'S EVERGREEN LANDSCAPING, INC. FOR
22 FLOOD PROJECT LEVEE CUTTING OF SOUTH
23 SCRANTON, ALBRIGHT, PLOT AND GREENRIDGE
24 LEVEES FOR A TWO YEAR SEASONAL PERIOD
25 BEGINNING MAY 15, 2015 THROUGH OCTOBER 31,

1 2015 AND MAY 15, 2016 THROUGH OCTOBER 31,
2 2016 FOR A TOTAL BID PRICE OF \$24,400.00.

3 MR. MCGOFF: What is the
4 recommendation of the Chair for the
5 Committee on Public Works?

6 MR. GAUGHAN: As Chairperson for the
7 Committee on Public Works, I recommend final
8 passage of Item 7-C.

9 MR. ROGAN: Second.

10 MR. MCGOFF: On the question?
11 Perhaps to answer a question that was
12 brought up earlier, the reason for hiring an
13 outside firm as far as my understanding is
14 that we do not have the work force to do the
15 work that is needed to be done on the
16 levies. Roll call, please?

17 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

18 MR. WECHSLER: Yes.

19 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

20 MR. ROGAN: Yes.

21 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

22 MR. EVANS: Yes.

23 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

24 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

25 MS. CARRERA: Mr. McGoff.

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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. ROGAN: Motion to adjourn.

MR. MCGOFF: Meeting adjourned.

C E R T I F I C A T E

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

CATHENE S. NARDOZZI, RPR
OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER