

1 SCRANTON CITY COUNCIL MEETING

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4
5 HELD:

6
7 Thursday, November 9, 2017

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9 LOCATION:

10 Council Chambers

11 Scranton City Hall

12 340 North Washington Avenue

13 Scranton, Pennsylvania

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23 CATHENE S. NARDOZZI, RPR - OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER

CITY OF SCRANTON COUNCIL:

JOSEPH WECHSLER, PRESIDENT

PATRICK ROGAN, VICE-PRESIDENT

WAYNE EVANS

WILLIAM GAUGHAN

TIM PERRY

LORI REED, CITY CLERK

KATHY CARRERA, ASSISTANT CITY CLERK

AMIL MINORA, ESQUIRE - SOLICITOR

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

3 MR. WECHSLER: Roll call, please.

4 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Perry.

5 MR. PERRY: 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. Wechsler.

13 MR. WECHSLER: Here.

14 MR. ROGAN: I'd like a motion to take
15 from the table File of Council No. 118-2017.

16 MR. WECHSLER: Is there a second?

17 MR. GAUGHAN: Second.

18 MR. WECHSLER: On the question? This
19 piece is being taken from the table and
20 placed in Seventh Order for final vote. It
21 is the OECD 2018 Action Plan. Anyone who
22 wishes to speak on this particular piece of
23 legislation, may do so during Fourth Order,
24 citizens' participation. All those in favor
25 signify by saying aye.

1 MR. PERRY: Aye.

2 MR. EVANS: Aye.

3 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

4 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

5 MR. WECHSLER: Aye. Opposed? The
6 ayes have it and so moved.

7 Dispense with the reading of the
8 minutes.

9 MS. REED: THIRD ORDER. 3-A.
10 MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
11 LACKAWANNA COUNTY LAND BANK HELD OCTOBER 13,
12 2017.

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

15 MS. REED: 3-B. CHECK RECEIVED
16 NOVEMBER 8, 2017 FROM COMCAST IN THE AMOUNT
17 OF \$267,137.57 FOR QUARTERLY FRANCHISE FEE
18 PAYMENT.

19 MR. WECHSLER: Are there any
20 comments? If not, received and filed.

21 Do any council members have
22 announcements at this time?

23 MR. PERRY: Yes. I have three brief
24 announcements, and I can't believe it's Code
25 Blue already, it just seems like it's too

1 early in the year for that, but we are going
2 to have in Lackawanna County at 6 a.m. on
3 Friday November 10 and ending at 2 p.m.,
4 Saturday 11, they will be issuing a Code
5 Blue, and again, just to remind everybody, a
6 Code Blue is when there is temperatures of
7 20 degrees or lower, and in times of need
8 there are two places where you can go for
9 shelter, that is St. Anthony's Haven, 409
10 Olive Street, in Scranton. Hours there are
11 7:30 p.m. to 8 a.m. And the Community
12 Intervention Center at 445 North Sixth
13 Avenue in Scranton, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. and
14 there is also more information on these at
15 Lackawanna County.org

16 The second one, and this is for
17 Hallock's Hero's again, this is going to be
18 coming up, this is an event which I have
19 been talking about for the last month, it
20 will be coming up a week this Saturday.
21 It's going to be at the FOP Lodge, 401
22 Railroad Avenue. Again, this is for Officer
23 Hallock who was diagnosed with a rare form
24 of leukemia and it's definitely him and his
25 family's time of need. It's going to be \$15

1 per person at the door and all money raised
2 goes to help Chris and his family. So,
3 again, please let's turn out and really be
4 there for him because he, and like all of
5 the police officers, are there for us all of
6 the time. Thank you.

7 City Hall will be closed Friday,
8 November 10, in observance of Veteran's Day.
9 DPW is working tomorrow. There will be
10 refuse and recycling collection. DPW will be
11 off on Monday, November 13. Refuse and
12 recycling will be behind one day next week.

13 On agenda items, just an
14 announcement for next week, a public hearing
15 for the 2018 general city operating budget
16 will be scheduled for next Thursday,
17 November 16, at 5:30 p.m. in council
18 chambers.

19 MS. REED: FOURTH ORDER. CITIZENS'
20 PARTICIPATION.

21 MR. WECHSLER: Commissioner Laureen
22 Cummings.

23 MS. CUMMINGS: Good evening,
24 gentlemen, how are you? Thank you for the
25 opportunity to speak to you all. First, I

1 want to congratulate Mr. Rogan and Mr.
2 Gaughan on reelection, along with the other
3 newly elected candidates, and for those who
4 didn't win you are successful because you
5 did run and try to make a difference in your
6 community, so thank you.

7 With that said, I'm here tonight to
8 discuss reassessment. I understand
9 Mr. Evans has stated he plans on asking the
10 mayor to file a lawsuit on behalf of the
11 city to force the county to perform
12 reassessment. Today we received a letter
13 from Mayor Courtright urging us to do the
14 same. Sorry, I'm a little bit under the
15 weather, I apologize. Recently, I set up
16 informational sessions to discuss and
17 educate citizens on reassessment and
18 property taxes. I plan on continuing those
19 meetings. I have been against reassessment,
20 campaigned against it, and I'm still against
21 performing one now. However, it is not just
22 reassessment that I'm opposed to. It's the
23 flawed property tax law that I'm completely
24 against.

25 After seeing the results of both the

1 state ballot question and the county
2 reassessment question, it is very apparent
3 that I am not alone. A few reasons in
4 regards to reassessment and, Mr. Evans, I
5 would hope that you would correct me if I'm
6 wrong on this. I'm under the impression
7 there is only three reasons for
8 reassessment, one would be an expensive and
9 burdensome countywide reassessment. Two
10 would be the newly constructed buildings.
11 The controversial one would be a change in
12 structure or building, for example, adding a
13 garage or additional rooms to a home, but
14 the controversial issue that starts when
15 property is sold. A lot of people tend to
16 believe that once it's sold or transferred
17 that it's reassessed again

18 MR. EVANS: That's not true.

19 MS. CUMMINGS: Now, that's a spot
20 assessment; correct?

21 MR. EVANS: Correct.

22 MS. CUMMINGS: So that is illegal?

23 MR. EVANS: It is illegal.

24 MS. CUMMINGS: That's the first
25 problem I have with in regards to this

1 property tax law, a lot of people don't
2 though that. And when I went around to the
3 county and told them they were shocked to
4 hear that their houses don't get reassessed
5 on sale or transfer. So what is a
6 municipality supposed to do then?

7 Reassessments when they become inequitable,
8 out of sync, as you all talk about and I
9 agree with, well, the property tax law
10 leaves it up to the municipality or the city
11 to fight for their taxpayers when appeals
12 from property owners occur. Many
13 municipalities, however, either have no idea
14 that they can do this on reverse appeal, or
15 they just cannot -- simply cannot afford to
16 send solicitors to provide the defense needed
17 to keep their appeals in check.

18 Therefore, according to statistics,
19 even after a reassessment is completed,
20 within one year it will be again unequal,
21 unfair requiring yet another reassessment
22 within a few years. This, in my opinion, is
23 the very example of what doing the same
24 thing over and over again and expecting
25 different results comes into play. So then

1 what's the solution? Well, that's why I'm
2 here this evening. I would like to ask this
3 city council to first try to join the county
4 commissioners along with other
5 municipalities to lobby our state
6 representatives to finally to do something
7 at the state level to end property owner's
8 and local government's frustration from this
9 outdated and destructive property tax law
10 that does nothing but divide our
11 communities.

12 Now, I can stand here and go through
13 a litany of reasons why I feel the City of
14 Scranton is in the shape it is in, but you
15 know what, that's not going to get my
16 anywhere and it's not going to get you
17 anywhere. You can complain about anything
18 that happens to the county or other
19 municipal levels, too, you're not going to
20 get anyone anywhere. So I really would hope
21 that you would at least consider an
22 opportunity to solve this dilemma in
23 positive way working together rather than
24 fighting each other as well as putting your
25 city or our county residents through yet

1 another lawsuit and expense that goes along
2 with it. Thank you very much, gentlemen. I
3 appreciate your time. If you have any
4 questions, I'd be happy to answer them.

5 MR. EVANS: Thank you.

6 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you, and we look
7 forward to doing something cooperative to
8 ease the tax burden on our residents.

9 MS. CUMMINGS: I absolutely do, too.

10 MR. WECHSLER: It's good to work
11 together on doing so.

12 MS. CUMMINGS: We are certainly
13 willing to do that. Thank you.

14 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you. Joan
15 Hodowanitz.

16 MS. HODOWANITZ: Joan Hodowanitz,
17 city resident and taxpayer.
18 Congratulations, Mr. Rogan, Mr. Gaughan. I
19 bet you are glad that is all behind you and
20 now you can focus on four more years.

21 Let's talk about the budget. I was
22 surprised to see Mr. Bulzoni in the caucus
23 in this room, I was pleasantly surprised
24 that you opted to bring him out here even
25 though there was a very small public crowd,

1 but it got televised. It's unfortunate, I
2 don't know how many people knew that he
3 would be in your caucus tonight and tune in
4 at 6:00 and heard a little bit about the
5 budget, but hopefully there will be more
6 opportunities for the public in the next
7 couple of weeks.

8 MR. WECHSLER: Joan, I'm just going
9 to interrupt one second while giving the
10 talk. Today actually was Mr. Bulzoni's last
11 day with the city so that's why we wanted to
12 have him here this evening, so that was the
13 last opportunity for him to come as business
14 administrator, that's why it was kind of
15 unscheduled.

16 MS. HODOWANITZ: Understand. I, too,
17 did a quick read of the budget, just printed
18 it up this morning. I understand his
19 comments about not wanting to be too
20 specific about a possible Plan B if any of
21 the lawsuits go against the city. The
22 problem with that is I, as a taxpayer, I
23 have to plan to pay the tax and I have to
24 think in the future years about how big is
25 tax bill going to be for me and that impacts

1 on me.

2 For example, 42 percent of the
3 revenues for 2018 will be Act 511 local
4 taxes, 8 percent will be the refuse fee so
5 50 percent of the projected revenues are
6 coming from sources that are threatened by
7 lawsuits, and that does not include a
8 lawsuit concerning the sale of the Sewer
9 Authority and those proceeds.

10 As you read through the budget you
11 see that there are many assumptions that
12 those proceeds are part of the budget
13 process, so I get very uncomfortable when
14 people don't really want to start discussing
15 a Plan B because I still have to pay the tax
16 however high or low it might be.

17 I, too, saw the rising health care
18 costs. I hope you noticed that overtime is
19 going up 4.5 percent over 2017 budget
20 figures. I thought that overtime was
21 something we were going to control with the
22 new contract, maybe that is controlled. I
23 saw the three new hires, the assistant city
24 solicitor, \$44,500. He is being hired due
25 to increase volume of activity in the Law

1 Department, I wonder what that is. A
2 Director of Parks and Recreation for
3 \$49,000, and the mayor is getting a
4 full-time administrative assistant. I also
5 looked at those non-union pay raises, and
6 the big ones are as follows: The zoning
7 officer in LIPS \$7,500 raise. The finance
8 manager in the BA's Office \$5,000. IT, only
9 three people work there, each one is getting
10 at least a \$5,000 raise and one is getting
11 \$5,650. City solicitor \$5,000. And the
12 Treasurer and Director of Human Resources
13 and DPW each get \$3,000.

14 Oh, Wayne, I noticed that all those
15 special fees and permits under LIPS they are
16 still there.

17 MR. EVANS: That's because we never
18 got the information from LIPS so we'll see
19 if they are there come January.

20 MS. HODOWANITZ: Okay. Also, there
21 is \$25,000 to develop the pocket park on
22 Linden Street for green space, we haven't
23 acquired that yet, have we?

24 MR. EVANS: Yeah. No.

25 MS. HODOWANITZ: That's still

1 tabled. Oh, here's my \$20, where is my
2 Knowel's insurance list?

3 MR. WECHLSER: We are holding out,
4 Joan.

5 MS. HODOWANITZZ: Yeah, Mr. Knowel's
6 gave \$200 to Mr. Courtright --

7 MR. WECHSLER: Well, now you know
8 what you -- (unintelligible) -- the \$500
9 list.

10 MR. EVANS: Somewhere in-between.

11 MS. HODOWANITZ: Where is my Arcadis
12 study on storm water costs?

13 MR. EVANS: Mr. Bulzoni referenced
14 that, I think, we are looking at -- well,
15 according to him we are looking at the first
16 quarter of the year.

17 MS. HODOWANITZ: Well, that ought to
18 be factored into the budget.

19 MR. EVANS: It will be.

20 MS. HODOWANITZ: How much is it going
21 to cost to repair the tree house, have we
22 figured that out yet? We are still
23 contemplating our naval up there.
24 Okey-dokey. I'll see you next week.

25 MR. WECHSLER: Lenny Srebro.

1 MR. SREBRO: City council, Lenny
2 Srebro, resident. How about that, I have no
3 paperwork. You probably know my question,
4 wondering if anybody got anything to tell
5 me. Take up my whole five minutes and you
6 guys talk.

7 MR. PERRY: Unfortunately, I won't be
8 able to do that, and the open thing that we
9 were able to find out is with the invoice
10 from the Fire Department that you received
11 that you brought up, that invoice gets
12 submitted to directly to your insurance
13 company. That's not for you, that's not for
14 personal payment, that all gets submitted to
15 the insurance company.

16 MR. SREBRO: Okay.

17 MR. PERRY: As far as the other
18 issues, I still haven't had any movement on
19 that whatsoever.

20 MR. SREBRO: How about if I find a
21 contractor that will flush that? I am
22 looking into it myself. There is people out
23 there that will do it and every time nobody
24 else is doing it. I understand you are not
25 getting any answers but, you know? Okay,

1 how about I find out what it's going to cost
2 to flush that out and present it to council,
3 what happens after that?

4 MR. PERRY: Well, I still think the
5 issue is whose property is it? I don't even
6 know if that's the city's property.

7 MR. SREBRO: Okay, then why did they
8 come out and flush half of it and then never
9 came back to do the other half?

10 MR. PERRY: That's because we asked
11 them numerous times and I believe but,
12 again, I'm just going off of what, you know,
13 what I'm saying I'm not an expert on whose
14 property that is, but they as a courtesy to
15 us they went out there with the equipment
16 they had on hand and just tried to take care
17 of it what they have, and that's what was
18 performed for us way back.

19 MR. SREBRO: But that was useless to
20 do half of the drain. I don't understand
21 why they even spent the money to do that.
22 You know, you got to know by now I'm a car
23 guy and if brought me your car and I only
24 rebuilt half of the motor and gave it back
25 to you what good does that do? You paid me

1 for rebuilding half of it, you know, but
2 that's absolutely useless.

3 MR. PERRY: I believe they went out
4 there, they did whatever they could for us
5 what with they had. But until they could
6 actually find out concrete who's responsible
7 for that pipe, whose property is the pipe
8 that's where they are now. They don't --
9 they can't go any further because they don't
10 have the equipment to do it and they don't
11 know by law if they could legally be on that
12 property or they could legally hire someone
13 to do that, sub contract it out until they
14 find out who owns it, who installed it, and
15 I believe that's where the stalemate is
16 right now.

17 MR. SREBRO: I'm not really good at
18 this and going to the courthouse for records
19 and all of that, I'm sorry, I admit I'm a
20 bit of a dummy, you know, like the right
21 process of doing everything, but I don't
22 understand why you can't go to the records
23 or wherever you have to go to look and see
24 who owns that property. Am I missing
25 something? You know, that you can't go and

1 find that out?

2 MR. PERRY: It should be there. I
3 mean, it should be there and that's what
4 they were looking up.

5 MR. SREBRO: Gezz, I think --

6 MR. PERRY: Who owns it and who's
7 responsible for the property.

8 MR. SREBRO: Well, I believe that I
9 can go to the records and find that out in
10 about a half hour; am I right? So why is
11 this taking two years to find out who owns
12 it?

13 MR. PERRY: I can't answer that. I
14 don't know.

15 MR. SREBRO: Then who did I go to
16 to get that answer? That's what I thought
17 you guys are all about.

18 MR. GAUGHAN: Here's what I don'tt
19 understand, Mr. Srebro.

20 MR. SREBRO: Go ahead.

21 MR. GAUGHAN: Truthfully. I don't
22 understand, and I have asked for this before
23 and I have asked for it to be put in writing
24 what the issue is and why they can't fix it
25 and they won't do that, but why can't the

1 mayor, the city engineer and the DPW
2 Director invite you to the mayor's office,
3 sit down and go over everything? You pay
4 your taxes; correct?

5 MR. SREBRO: Oh, on time every year,
6 yup.

7 MR. GAUGHAN: Exactly, and if you
8 didn't they would be coming after you. You
9 have an issue at your home, you have
10 detailed here for the past few months, so,
11 Mrs. Reed, if you could, send a letter to
12 the mayor, copy the city engineer and the
13 DPW director and can we please try to set up
14 a meeting between Mr. Srebro the mayor and
15 the city engineer and the DPW director and
16 lay it all out on the table, figure out how
17 to fix this problem because this is just
18 bizarre at this point. And I'm not telling
19 you anything you don't already know, but --
20 you know, you come here every week and you
21 are asking questions that are legitimate
22 because this is your property and nobody can
23 answer them for you. And then, you know, I
24 think we are kind of getting jerked around,
25 you know.

1 MR. SREBRO: I believe so, yeah, I
2 agree with that 100 percent.

3 MR. GAUGHAN: Yeah, so if we can
4 please ask for a meeting, I will attend it
5 as Chairperson of Public Works as well just
6 so, you know, we can give you a finality and
7 an answer. Can you fix it, can't you fix,
8 where is the problem and where do we go from
9 here, end of story. And if we could please
10 have that by next Thursday, okay?

11 MR. SREBRO: Great.

12 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you.

13 MR. SREBRO: Great. Thanks.

14 MR. WECHSLER: Anyone else?

15 MS. SCHUMACHER: Marie Schumacher.

16 First and foremost, I want to thank the
17 veterans and their families for their
18 services, especially those who served in
19 combat as part of their service. I also
20 would like to recognize the grieving people
21 from Texas and I would hope that that would
22 have been acknowledged. I know when I went
23 to the website today for the city not only
24 were they still having -- were they still
25 having -- they were still mourning Las Vegas

1 but there was not one word of sympathy or
2 outpouring for what happened in Texas. I
3 won't even say that. However, they are
4 grieving.

5 I'm grieving personally because of
6 the results of the election. I really and
7 truly thought people wanted change. I was
8 looking forward to some transparency and yes
9 and -- I'll stop there. However, it's
10 apparent that the voters do not want change,
11 they don't want transparency, they don't
12 want answers to question. They want more of
13 the same old, same old, and I think that's
14 really, really sad.

15 But onto business, I will address
16 the budget, of course, at the public
17 hearing, has that been scheduled?

18 MR. WECHSLER: Next week 5:30.

19 MS. SCHUMACHER: One of my questions
20 will definitely be how many of the new
21 recovery plan recommendations are addressed
22 in the budget, and how many are are not, but
23 I can subtract from the total.

24 Mr. Wechsler, do you have the date -- do you
25 have the date for the NDC meeting?

1 MR. WECHSLER: No, not yet.

2 MS. SCHUMACHER: That's been promised
3 since August. Is it going to be this year?

4 MR. WECSHLER: It has to be this y
5 ear.

6 MS. SCHUMACHER: Has to be. Okay,
7 do you have the number of Electric City
8 parking garage parking spaces that were
9 added in the early 90's?

10 MR. WECHSLER: No I do not.

11 MS. SCHUMACHER: When do you expect
12 to get that?

13 MR. WECHSLER: I'm not sure.

14 MS. SCHUMACHER: So I guess I have to
15 go down and do a count. Sad. Mr. Evans, as
16 County Commissioner O'Malley has become the
17 second of the commissioners to oppose
18 property reassessment the gauntlet has been
19 thrown, will you offering a motion tonight
20 to both sue for a countywide assessment,
21 reassessment, and a help test for all of
22 Scranton's, if they don't want to do it for
23 the whole county I don't care, but at least
24 an HUP test for Scranton's federal tax
25 exempt institution that are also property

1 tax exempt?

2 MR. EVANS: I will be offering a
3 motion on reassessment. I'm not up here to
4 comment on the HUP test, but I'll certainly
5 consider that.

6 MS. SCHUMACHER: Well, I would
7 certainly hope so. If you recall, that was
8 in the last recovery plan.

9 MR. EVANS: I know --

10 MS. SCHUMACHER: It's amazing what
11 you institute and what you overlook and
12 that's my great fear for the Act 47 exit
13 plan.

14 MR. EVANS: Well, I asked for it to
15 be in the recovery plan and I totally
16 understand that.

17 MS. SCHUMACHER: Also, do you have
18 the number of construction permits issued
19 since passage of the three-year property tax
20 abatement?

21 MR. EVANS: Five.

22 MS. SCHUMACHER: Five. And when was
23 that offered? When was that passed?

24 MR. EVANS: When was it passed? I
25 don't recall the date it was passed.

1 MS. SCHUMACHER: The year, 2015?

2 MR. EVANS: No. I think it was 2016,
3 wasn't it?

4 MR. WECHSLER: 2016.

5 MS. SCHUMACHER: How long does that
6 three year -- how does it run? Does it run
7 -- I mean, if somebody does it on the last
8 day before that law expires or --

9 MR. EVANS: I think in most cases,
10 you know, you are going to finish the
11 project sometime during the year, so they
12 probably defer it to the following full
13 year. So if completed your home and brand
14 new construction in June of 2017 --

15 MS. SCHUMACHER: It would only be --

16 MR. EVANS: You are going to do it
17 for 2018, 2019 and 2020.

18 MS. SCHUMACHER: Oh, so no matter
19 when you do it you get the three years?

20 MR. EVANS: Yeah.

21 MS. SCHUMACHER: Okay. Mr. Perry,
22 would you please find out for me the money
23 that is being charged property owners even
24 though it goes to their insurance company
25 when there is a fire, what account does that

1 go into? Do you know, Mr. Evans?

2 MR. EVANS: No.

3 MR. ROGAN: It's a special account
4 for the fire department. I remember when we
5 set it up a few years ago I believe it was
6 to fund equipment for the fire department.

7 MS. SCHUMACHER: Interesting. And
8 what was collected on that last year,
9 anybody know, what was the special
10 account -- do you have the -- could we get
11 the number?

12 MR. EVANS: I could get it.

13 MS. SCHUMACHER: Okay. I'll be back
14 for more next week.

15 MS. FRANUS: Fay Franus, Scranton.
16 Tonight I want to talk about something
17 that's dear to me and I would like some
18 reassurance from all of you that you will go
19 along with this, I have been here before
20 about this. Last week someone came to
21 mention they wanted a been on pit bulls. We
22 have been here before, but this person said
23 he is going to keep coming back. I don't
24 know if you realize that it's not the dogs,
25 it's the owners, you know, and I worked --

1 I'd see like 100 dogs a day and a little
2 Poodle bit my leg. I had to get stitches.
3 Should we ban Poodles? A Doberman nearly
4 ripped my head off, do we ban Dobermans?
5 They all have reasons and it's certainly not
6 the dog, so I'd like some reassurance from
7 this council that law will never be passed.
8 Where did you stand on this?

9 MR. WECHSLER: Personally, as a dog
10 owner, I believe people are responsible for
11 their own dogs and no particular breed is
12 worse than another, so I have seen pit bulls
13 that are loving, I have seen -- I have a
14 Westie who is adorable and sometimes he will
15 growl at you, so I can't speak for anybody
16 else on here, but I think people need more
17 control on how people handle their dogs.

18 MS. FRANUS: I think there should be
19 stricter laws on animal abuse and jail time.
20 High fines. I mean, everybody talks about
21 abuse of people, what about abuse of
22 animals? And this person mentioned last
23 week that it was very convenient that I left
24 after he -- you know, before he spoke.
25 Well, not like it's anybody's business why I

1 leave after I speak, but I have my boy home,
2 Mason, and I don't like to leave him.

3 That's why I go home and that's where --
4 that's where I want to be. I come here and
5 say what I want and that's it.

6 But I hope you consider this because
7 I understand this Pit Bull killed this other
8 dog so everybody will be up in arms about
9 that but, again, there is always reason for
10 something and it's not the dog, go back to
11 the owners. You see many of these macho men
12 that sell drugs and want to protect their
13 houses and they have their Pit Bulls and on
14 chains, hooked up to trees and they should
15 be looked into and they should be arrested,
16 that's abuse.

17 MR. EVANS: I would agree that the
18 issues is enforcement not necessarily the
19 animal.

20 MR. FANUS: Pardon me?

21 MR. EVANS: The issue is enforcement
22 not necessarily the animal.

23 MS. FRANUS: Yes.

24 MR. EVANS: I do agree with that.

25 MS. FRANUS: And the city animal

1 control should look further into owner
2 situations.

3 MR. EVANS: Yes, she does a great
4 job, but she is one person.

5 MS. FRANUS: That's good.

6 MR. EVANS: I think we need to do a
7 better job and get her help.

8 MS. FRANUS: Great. And I hope
9 another thing, even though it's Lackawanna
10 County I hope you keep an eye and mention to
11 her, but she goes there all of the time, to
12 keep an eye on Griffin Pond Animal Shelter
13 where they had this million dollar expansion
14 and training rooms for the people and stuff
15 like that, but they didn't have enough room
16 for any animals so they killed them. So now
17 they are saying they are not going to kill
18 them unless it was medically -- well, let's
19 see if that's going to stay true because I
20 don't trust them one speck. They could have
21 done what they did in the past for years and
22 years. It's outrageous they even have a
23 license. So I just don't want people going
24 adopting animals and you keep an eye on them
25 because they are basically a shelter for /AP

1 mass and they are cruel to animals, they
2 kill them for know reason, so to me they
3 should be in jail. They shouldn't just be
4 able to resign, they should be -- that's the
5 problem, they break the laws and they don't
6 -- nothing happens to them, they just walk
7 away. So thank you very much and I hope I
8 don't have to come back here for that reason
9 again. Please, gentlemen, please don't ever
10 enforce a law like that. Thank you.

11 MR. WECHSLER: Anyone else?

12 MR. DOBRZYN: Good evening. Dave
13 Dobrzyn, city resident, taxes paid, fees
14 paid. If anyone out there in TV land or
15 here is interested in some real news out of
16 Washington go online and go to DCReport.org
17 with David K. Johnson, which brings me to
18 the next issue. We had an issue on
19 reassessment. The only reason I feel
20 reassessment would benefit Scranton is so
21 that we could put aside these lawsuits with
22 taxes. We are based on what our appraised
23 value is, it can only be 2 percent or
24 something like that of our appraised value.
25 Our appraised value is back in the 60's. So

1 as much as I don't really feel that maybe
2 \$156 is fair on an EMT tax, we have 35
3 percent tax exempt and the county is also
4 responsible for that and the Dtate of
5 Pennsylvania and they never seem to say gee,
6 guys, do you think it's time that we cut
7 Scranton a break? So I wish some of these
8 people would stay after the comments,
9 especially when you're a public official.

10 PILOTS, once again I heard about
11 money down the black hole. Well, where do I
12 get to direct my taxes paid to my favorite
13 causes? When do I get to say I don't
14 support that, and I don't think that we
15 should be doing that. I was against banning
16 cigarette in all sections of the park, well,
17 it went -- didn't get my way on it. Why
18 should I pay a police officer to be chasing
19 around a wayward cigarette smoker, you know,
20 if it's not a public safety problem, you
21 know, but I have to. I have to pay my
22 property taxes and if we want to spend \$10
23 million a year on that that's the way it is.
24 I have to pay my taxes or I lose my house.

25 Parking Authority, my worse

1 nightmare came true on that. I picked up
2 the paper last week and we're tearing off
3 two stories of the Linden Street garage. If
4 there is anything you folks can do and the
5 mayor to put a stop to that stupid idea and
6 even worse yet tearing two levels of the
7 garage down and then on top of it when are
8 we going to see the elevator get fixed over
9 there? When? When they are done tearing
10 the two layers of the garage off two years
11 from now, four years now, who knows? I have
12 to take care of our friends and our family,
13 you know, construction.

14 And I heard a little rumor, or I
15 hope it's a rumor on the per bag business
16 that the \$300 is going to get inflated in
17 order to get a per bag and, once again, I do
18 not support any trash at the end of
19 anybody's property in a bag. We should have
20 a regulation can if we are going to have
21 that per can, so it doesn't get drug around
22 by animals, skunks, opossum, squirrels, go
23 into it. They used to steal down at work,
24 they used to steal the crust and they
25 wouldn't eat the cheese and the pepperoni,

1 squirrels don't like pepperoni apparently.
2 So, you know, and congratulations to
3 everybody that won and condolences to people
4 that didn't make it. Hopefully, we will
5 have a more enlightened couple of years and,
6 by the way, Henry Amoroso strategies just
7 about everything is in Court or nullified so
8 we have to be careful as to what bill of
9 goods we buy into in the future. Thank you
10 and have a good night.

11 MR. WECHSLER: Anyone else?

12 MS. REED: FIFTH ORDER. 5-A. MOTIONS.

13 MR. WECHSLER: Mr. Perry?

14 MR. PERRY: Yes, thank you. I have a
15 couple of things tonight, hopefully won't be
16 too lengthy. First, is in light of the past
17 Scranton Times' article that made some
18 references on possible fraudulent benefits
19 to the SSA I would like to make the
20 following motion:

21 I make a motion that a letter be
22 sent on behalf of Scranton City Council to
23 the Scranton Sewer Authority requesting them
24 to enlist the Attorney General's Office to
25 investigate any past benefit practices

1 within that Authority which would be in
2 violation of the Pennsylvania Municipal
3 Authorities Act.

4 MR. ROGAN: Second.

5 MR. WECHSLER: There is a motion on
6 the floor and a second, on the question?

7 MR. PERRY: Yes, on the question. I
8 would also like, if it passed, a copy of
9 this letter sent to the Dunmore Borough
10 Council. I'm asking for the Dunmore Council
11 to also support this request. This is
12 basically, as I spoke a little bit about
13 last week, this isn't your -- I don't want
14 this to be grandfather's Scranton politics,
15 I don't want this to be your father's
16 Scranton politics. This is our Scranton and
17 this is just an affirmation that whether you
18 are in the city or the school board or in a
19 surrounding authority we can't tolerate any
20 wrongdoing. Our taxes are too high, our
21 rates are too high, and if there is any
22 wrongdoing out there, you know, we are going
23 to find it.

24 MR. ROGAN: On the question, I just
25 want to address this and I'm glad that this

1 was brought up this week, the last couple of
2 weeks we have seen two instances of this,
3 one in the school district and one within
4 the Scranton Authority and for those who
5 don't know my full-time position is selling
6 group health care to businesses, so I'm very
7 familiar with these rules and non-employees
8 are not allowed to receive health care
9 benefits, end of story. 1099 subcontractor
10 cannot receive health care benefits, so
11 there is a receiver issue here with at least
12 two instances and maybe more.

13 I think all of the city authorities
14 can be looked into to see if this has been a
15 rampant widespread practice in the past. I
16 think we need to look at all of our
17 authorities and I believe the school
18 district need to take a deeper look as well.
19 Generally, we have seen through the city's
20 history when these type of things happen
21 it's not one isolated incident, it is
22 something that is impacted on.

23 Everyone out there knows how
24 expensive health insurance is. It's one of
25 the most expensive things, you know, to any

1 budget for a business or for an individual
2 and any improper benefits that are given out
3 must be stopped, we have to make sure there
4 aren't any others. So I fully agree with
5 Councilman Perry's motion.

6 MR. WECHSLER: All those in favor
7 signify by saying aye.

8 MR. PERRY: Aye.

9 MR. EVANS: Aye.

10 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

11 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

12 MR. WECHSLER: Aye. Opposed? The
13 ayes have it and so moved.

14 MR. PERRY: Thank you. Also, I would
15 like to be copied on communication with
16 Lenny, my goodness, I feel bad for this guy.
17 I hope we get some resolution for him, I
18 hope Councilman Gaughan's request for a
19 meeting comes true and I would love to see
20 him get some kind of resolution. I know we
21 have been working on it for awhile.

22 If we can also send a letter to the
23 Business Administrator with a copy to the
24 Fire Department on that special account and
25 if we can just see what -- I don't know if

1 they have the 2017 numbers, but if they are
2 a running total of 2017 maybe a 2016 total
3 and since that account was created to see
4 how much it's generating and what it has
5 generated.

6 I know Councilman Evans will speak
7 more on the reassessment, or the lack
8 therefore based on the vote, and the two
9 commissioners that are not for it. As I
10 have said many times, I am for the
11 reassessment of Lackawanna County, it's long
12 overdue, it's much needed and not only is it
13 much needed for everybody in the county but
14 more so here for the constituents of the
15 City of Scranton, we are in desperate need
16 of it. So I was a little upset to see the
17 ballot question go the way it did, even
18 though I understand that it didn't have any
19 teeth to it, and also to see to two
20 commissioners come out against it which, you
21 know, we kind of knew that's where the shoe
22 was going to drop anyway, but I'll let
23 Councilman Evans get more into that, but,
24 you know, I'm full steam ahead when it comes
25 to the reassessment of Lackawanna County and

1 what we need to do to get there.

2 Finally, I just want to thank the
3 business administrator, Mr. Bulzoni, for
4 coming in today and giving us the rundown of
5 the 2018 budget. Today, as many of you
6 know, some of may not, today is his last day
7 and let me tell you since my first day on
8 the job I have never met somebody more
9 professional, transparent and readily
10 available than Mr. Bulzoni. He knew his
11 stuff when it came to numbers and the budget
12 and how to handle our debt. I think a lot
13 of where Scranton was in the last three or
14 four years and where it is now can be
15 directly attributed to the efforts and
16 knowledge that Mr. Bulzoni brought to this
17 administration and brought to this city. I
18 know the banking community has done a 180
19 when it comes to Scranton and their respect
20 for us and I know a lot of that is
21 attributed to Mr. Bulzoni's hard word, so I
22 just want to thank you and good luck in the
23 next endeavors and, you know, whoever takes
24 over has big shoes to fill. That's all I
25 have today. Thank you.

1 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you, Mr. Perry.
2 Mr. Rogan?

3 MR. ROGAN: Yes, a number of items to
4 talk about tonight. I'd like to pick up
5 where Mr. Perry left off and thank Business
6 Administrator Bulzoni who has been a great
7 resource for city council and for the city
8 over it's four years. He is one of the
9 smartest people I have ever worked with when
10 it comes to financing, especially when it
11 comes to the financial community, so I want
12 to thank him for his service as business
13 administrator and the next BA will certainly
14 have very large shoes to fill.

15 Next, I want to talk a little bit
16 about the double pensions. The police --
17 council received copies of the police
18 reports. Attorney Minora, again, could
19 explain the legal aspects much better than I
20 can. There have been some more developments
21 over the last week so I'll turn that over to
22 Attorney Minora.

23 MR. MINORA: Yes. Judge Moyle signed
24 an order that was prepared by state police
25 counsel and does allow council to have

1 access to the state police report for the
2 limited purpose of reviewing it with an eye
3 towards preparing legislation to prevent a
4 double pension award in the future without
5 certain guidelines. She also in her order
6 maintained that everything that is reviewed
7 is to remain confidential and backs that up
8 with Contempt of Court if it's revealed.

9 Now, we can obviously talk about
10 things that have been publically put out in
11 the newspaper or otherwise, we just cannot
12 divulge anything directly from the state
13 police reports itself. So I think it will
14 be helpful, but we are limited that way, and
15 we are limited because of CHRIA, I think I
16 mentioned that before, criminal records act
17 prevents police agencies from releasing
18 investigative material to unauthorized
19 personnel and it's a fairly long statute,
20 but they have certain discretion and to
21 decided to allow that discretion in our
22 favor this time.

23 MR. GAUGHAN: Can I just ask a
24 question on this issue, Attorney Minora? So
25 if we read the order and then we can't

1 discuss it or say anything about it, I mean,
2 I just don't understand what would be the
3 benefit to --

4 MR. MINORA: No, no, no. We just
5 can't reveal facts contained in the
6 investigative report.

7 MR. GAUGHAN: Okay.

8 MR. MINORA: You can certainly say
9 based on what we have discovered in the
10 report we are going to propose certain
11 legislation or repeal certain legislation
12 that will be okay, you just can't say, you
13 know, we read the report and, you know, John
14 Doe said "X".

15 MR. GAUGHAN: Right, okay.

16 MR. MINORA: That would be revealing
17 the contents of the report rather than the
18 import behind the use of the report.

19 MR. GAUGHAN: Okay. Got it. Thank
20 you.

21 MR. ROGAN: On this issue, most
22 importantly to me is two items, one is
23 enacting reforms after reviewing this report
24 to make sure that a situation like this can
25 never happen again because there are a lot

1 of victims in this case, particularly the
2 taxpayers in the City of Scranton and,
3 believe it or not, also some of the
4 recipients believed they were receiving a
5 legal benefit. Now, we know it wasn't, but
6 many of them had nothing to do with the
7 issuing of it. Some did, and that's what we
8 need to look into.

9 If the report reveals, you no he,
10 more damaging items I would still support
11 using our subpoena power to bring in key
12 individuals from the Pension Board at the
13 time or others who are involved in awarding
14 these pensions, but we will see what the
15 information reveals, but the most important
16 thing is making sure that this doesn't
17 happen again.

18 Regarding the reassessment, I want
19 to start off by addressing some items
20 Commissioner Cummings mentioned. I will say
21 that I do agree with part of what she
22 mentioned regarding property taxes and
23 property tax reform. I think all of us on
24 this council are supportive of Senate Bill
25 76 which would be the elimination of School

1 Property taxes, but property tax reform has
2 absolutely nothing to do with reassessment.
3 Even if the school property taxes are
4 eliminated and switched to another system
5 you are still going to have assessments on
6 your city and your county taxes. And
7 particularly on county taxes, the residents
8 of Scranton are being shortchanged.

9 I would also want to thank
10 Councilman Evans for his leadership on this
11 issue. That leadership has been lacking
12 from the commissioner's office, especially
13 from Commissioner Cummings, who has used
14 misinformation and scare tactics to put out
15 a false narrative about what reassessment
16 will actually do.

17 Also, on reassessment, and it was
18 brought up during our caucus, the Act 511
19 taxes. Reassessment --if reassessment took
20 place that lawsuit would be out the door.
21 The only reason that lawsuit has any chance
22 of succeeding is because it's based on
23 assessments from 40 and 50 years ago. If
24 those were even multiplied by the common
25 level ratio or reassessed, there would be no

1 Act 511 lawsuit. So there are a number of
2 reasons outside of a pure taxpayer issue on
3 why reassessment needs to happen. I'm
4 looking forward to Councilman Evans making
5 his motion, I'll talk about it a little bit
6 more then, but I fully support what he is
7 doing and what he is doing to try and fight
8 for the residents of not only Scranton but
9 all of Lackawanna County.

10 Finally, I want to talk a little bit
11 about the election. I normally don't talk
12 about politics at meetings. I just want to
13 thank the people of Scranton for their
14 confidence in me reelecting me for another
15 four years. I want to congratulate
16 Councilman Gaughan on his win as well, and
17 our new colleague, Mr. Donahue, who will be
18 joining us in January.

19 I especially want to congratulate
20 our mayor, Bill Courtright, who is
21 criticized on a weekly basis, sometimes
22 justified and many times not justified, from
23 these council meeting. As we saw yesterday,
24 the silent majority in this city has spoken.
25 I know that Mayor Courtright dedicates every

1 day to making this city the best place he
2 can and I'm looking forward to working with
3 him and all of my colleagues for the next
4 four years. So I want to congratulate him
5 as well, and again, thank you to the
6 residents of Scranton.

7 Finally, Veteran's Day coming up, I
8 do want to thank all of our veterans who if
9 it wasn't for them we wouldn't be here
10 exercising these rights and we wouldn't have
11 been able to have that election we had just
12 yesterday -- or just Tuesday, so thank you.

13 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you, Mr. Rogan.
14 Mr. Evans?

15 MR. EVANS: Thank you. First of all,
16 I would like to congratulate publically
17 Mayor Courtright on the second term as mayor
18 and I look forward to working together with
19 him for the betterment of the city. I spoke
20 to the mayor personally today and did offer
21 my congratulations over the phone. I would
22 also like to recognize Jim Mulligan for
23 stepping into the arena, giving a spirited
24 run in the mayor's race, he and his family
25 have a lot to be proud of.

1 Congratulations, also, to my council
2 colleagues Bill Gaughan, Pat Rogan, and to
3 Councilman elect Kyle Donahue. I will be
4 looking to continue our work together and
5 having Mr. Donahue join us in January.

6 I'd also like to briefly recognize
7 Council President Joe Wechsler, who won't be
8 with us next year, for his leadership since
9 the passing of Bob McGoff. It could be say
10 that Joe maybe sacrificed himself because he
11 stepped up to be the leader and, of course,
12 that's what good public servants do. So Joe
13 deserves our respect and our gratitude, so
14 thank you, Joe.

15 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you, Mr. Evans.
16 All right, let's talk about reassessment.

17 MR. WECHSLER: Really?

18 MR. EVANS: Really. First of all, I
19 want to read a letter, part of a letter the
20 mayor sent to County Commissioner's today
21 hand delivered, and I'm just going to read
22 the last couple of paragraphs:

23 "I am disappointed that the board
24 has failed to seriously address this
25 incredibly important issue. I strongly

1 believe the residents and business owners
2 that call Scranton home will benefit from a
3 reassessment. I feel just as strongly that
4 families and businesses looking to move into
5 Scranton see the unfair property assessments
6 and then look elsewhere. It is time for the
7 county to treat this matter with the
8 seriousness it deserves given how important
9 reassessment is for our future.

10 Unfortunately, I'm not encouraged by recent
11 statements that once again kick the can down
12 the road.

13 Please consider this letter my
14 request on behalf of the City of Scranton to
15 you, the Board of County Commissioners, to
16 begin the reassessment process in earnest.
17 If I continue to see no progress at the
18 county level on this issue, then I will be
19 forced to consider all options available to
20 me to see to it the county fulfills it's
21 responsible. Sincerely, Mayor Courtright,
22 Mayor Scranton."

23 So I would like to thank the mayor
24 for sending that letter and being engaged in
25 this very important discussion, so tonight's

1 comments on reassessment are brought to you
2 by the number two and the letters "N" and
3 "0". So for over four decades tax fairness
4 has been held hostage by two votes. The
5 failure of just two county commissioners
6 over that timeframe to continually vote "no"
7 on reassessment has brought us to this
8 point.

9 It is possible in the last 40 plus
10 years that the county has lost hundreds of
11 millions of dollars in assessed valuation
12 through the appeals process driven by the
13 inequity in our county tax system. Scranton
14 would have lost tens of millions of dollars
15 in that same period, maybe more. This is
16 both real and substantial tax dollars lost.

17 Additionally, we are trapped in an
18 unfair two-tier system, tax system, that we
19 cannot change without a reassessment. We
20 have watched neighboring cities and counties
21 experience growth that simply won't in a
22 city and a county without a reassessment.
23 We have a broken system that is unfair to
24 property owners, municipalities, school
25 districts and those who provide additional

1 growth to our communities through
2 development and new construction.

3 We have an appeals process that
4 because of a lack of reassessment protects
5 the well-connected and well off and hurts
6 those that we should be helping in the first
7 place. Every expert, bar none, supports
8 reassessment, but we continue to be held
9 hostage by the number two and the letters
10 "N-0".

11 So when I make the motion as
12 expected tonight it's not done lightly or
13 without forethought. I actually dislike the
14 idea of litigation. We are a society that,
15 quite frankly, is lawsuit driven and I find
16 that regrettable, but we have a
17 responsibility to our citizens to do what we
18 think is the right thing for them and the
19 city overall. When the people elected all
20 of us to our positions on city council, they
21 elected us to make the hard decisions for
22 them. That is when the people spoke because
23 we are a representative democracy and I do
24 not believe the people truly spoke on the
25 issue of reassessment on Tuesday, so I

1 reject the results of a flawed ballot
2 question already rejected by the courts. It
3 is without a doubt a question that was
4 crafted to drive out a "no" vote all while
5 being supported by a false narrative.

6 The governing body of the City of
7 Scranton is made up of two entities, the
8 executive branches, which includes the
9 mayor, and the legislative branch, which
10 includes city council. Hopefully, we would
11 want this initiative to be a partnership.
12 We would want to work with the mayor and be
13 united in a common goal of achieving tax
14 fairness to our property owners and
15 taxpayers, and if we lead I believe others
16 will follow. I would expect school
17 districts and other municipalities up and
18 down the valley to join us in this endeavor.
19 So with all of that said I would like to
20 make the follow motion:

21 That we send a letter asking the
22 Mayor of the City of Scranton on behalf of
23 Scranton taxpayers and the City of Scranton
24 to initiate a lawsuit in the Lackawanna
25 County Court to force a countywide

1 reassessment. We continue to see no
2 progress on this issue in the immediate
3 future as per the mayor's letter.

4 MR. ROGAN: Second.

5 MR. WECHSLER: There's a motion on
6 the floor and a second, on the question?

7 All those in favor -- oh, sorry.

8 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, on the question,
9 sorry, I thought somebody else was going to
10 go first. I agree with everything that
11 Mr. Evans just said and I have said before
12 that I support reassessment. However, I'm
13 going to vote against this motion for a
14 number of different reasons:

15 First of all, I have a concern that
16 the city is already involved now in three
17 major lawsuits, the Act 51e, the trash
18 lawsuit, rental registration, the Sewer
19 Authority Municipalities act lawsuit, and
20 there is probably even more. I think that
21 we should investigate every other avenue, as
22 the mayor rightfully put in his letter that
23 now he is going to be forced to consider all
24 options available. I would like to look at
25 all options available before the city gets

1 involved in another lawsuit.

2 My concern, as I just mentioned, is
3 the city is involved in three major lawsuits
4 at this time and another lawsuit suing
5 another governmental entity at this time may
6 drag on for months, it will probably be
7 appealed to Commonwealth Court and it's
8 probably go to cost the taxpayers and the
9 city a large amount of money. We'll
10 probably have to hire outside council and
11 also hire experts on the assessment issue.
12 So my concern is that we would end up with
13 more legal bills without a reasonable
14 expectation that we would be successful, so
15 while I agree with Mr. Evans' reassessment
16 views, I think that right now would be a
17 concern with getting involved in a lawsuit
18 that may cost the city a small fortune to
19 see it through. Thank you.

20 MR. EVANS: On the question, I
21 purposely did not put a hard date on it
22 because I was aware of the lawsuits that
23 were pending, so it is up to the mayor to
24 make this decision, not city council, we are
25 only asking him to get involved, and I don't

1 think it's really heavy lifting in a lawsuit
2 because the truth of matter is we are the
3 poster child for tax unfairness in the State
4 of Pennsylvania. So I think any reasonable
5 judge will rule in our direction and
6 probably would be relatively speedily as
7 well, so I'm comfortable with the motion and
8 I think that, again, we are not putting a
9 mandate on the administration as far as time
10 is concerned, are we looking in the
11 immediate future? I'm not sure if there is
12 other things that the mayor is talking about
13 that can be done we would support that. We
14 all want to get to the same place, but after
15 40 plus years do we really think the county
16 commissioners are voluntarily going to do a
17 reassessment? Sorry, I think not.

18 MR. ROGAN: I would just like to
19 reiterate my support for Councilman Evans'
20 motion and regarding some of the questions
21 that were brought up by a Councilman
22 Gaughan, and I mentioned this earlier, the
23 511 lawsuit is based on property tax
24 assessments so the lack of reassessment is
25 the cause of that lawsuit. Again, and as

1 Councilman Evans mentioned, 40 years the
2 county commissioners, and again, we put a
3 lot of the blame on the current
4 commissioners, but it's not just on them.
5 You know, 40 years is over -- it's over 40
6 years, is 10 terms of County Commissioners.
7 You think of, you know, Presidential year
8 being four terms so think of how many
9 presidents there have been in that time, how
10 many county commissioners there have been
11 and nothing has happened so we desperately
12 need a reassessment.

13 I know the Chamber of Commerce has
14 come out in favor of reassessment, welcomes
15 business in the city and provide tax
16 fairness, so I support this 100 percent, and
17 again, I'd like to thank Councilman Evans
18 for making the lack of leadership in the
19 County Commissioner's Office that we have
20 seen here tonight. So looking forward to
21 voting "yes" on this motion.

22 MR. PERRY: Yeah, on the question,
23 I'm already on the record by being for the
24 reassessment, I think the key word that
25 Councilman Evans said was voluntarily. We

1 have waited, you know, a bit patiently this
2 last year to see how this referendum was
3 going to play out and I think it will play
4 out exactly how we thought it was, not in
5 our favor, so what choices do we have left?
6 I don't think -- I don't think there is any
7 other way other than to force their hand to
8 make this happen for the citizens of
9 Scranton. So, again, I'm in favor of this
10 motion.

11 MR. WECHSLER: Yes, in terms of the
12 reassessment, by the state constitution the
13 county is required to do an assessment,
14 reassessment. You can't be for it or
15 against it. I'm against taxes, I'd love to
16 say I'm against taxes and we are not going
17 to have them any more either. This is
18 something you are obligated to do. It's not
19 a question of being for it or against it.
20 It's something that we are required to do.

21 Our hands are tied as the council,
22 as a city. Mayor Courtright has stepped up,
23 we were kind of waiting to see what the
24 results were going to be and I would have
25 asked any other person who took over the

1 mayor's office to do the same thing. The
2 city has to stand up to represent us. We
3 are responsible for the City of Scranton, so
4 I support Mr. Evans' motion, I support the
5 mayor's effort to get this done. No one
6 wants to go to Court. Some of the suits
7 that have been brought in the city have been
8 brought by citizens and we can't control
9 that, so we are going to have to deal with
10 every lawsuit that comes our way, but I
11 think this is a lawsuit that we may have to
12 instigate to protect the citizens of
13 Scranton.

14 All those in favor signify by saying
15 aye.

16 MR. PERRY: Aye.

17 MR. EVANS: Aye.

18 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

19 MR. WECHSLER: Aye. Opposed?

20 MR. GAUGHAN: No.

21 MR. WECHSLER: The ayes have it and
22 so moved. You still have the floor, Mr.
23 Evans.

24 MR. EVANS: I'm sorry, I forgot where
25 we were. That's all I have tonight. Thank

1 you very much. Thank you, gentlemen.

2 MR. WECHSLER: Mr. Gaughan?

3 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes. Thank you. Just
4 two brief things, I would like to -- and I
5 already mentioned this to Mrs. Reed, set up
6 a meeting with the executive director of the
7 Area on Aging regarding the issues that I
8 have mentioned over the last few weeks with
9 the residents of the Greenridge Senior
10 Apartments so we are trying to set that
11 meeting up. We have not heard back from
12 this gentlemen yet regarding the letter that
13 council sent last week on all of those
14 issues that were raised, so we are going to
15 start here and then see where this goes, but
16 I continue to be concerned about all of
17 those issues that have been brought up.

18 The second thing, and it was
19 mentioned earlier tonight, I do believe a
20 meeting or a public caucus with NDC and ABM
21 who are running the parking garages in
22 council chambers open to the public to give
23 us an update on all of the issues and the
24 things that have transpired over the last
25 year in relation to the parking garage, the

1 process that has been made and then what's
2 going to happen in 2018 and what their plans
3 are. I think that would be beneficial not
4 only to the council but to the public
5 because there a lot of things that are going
6 on behind the scenes.

7 And, finally, I just want to wish
8 everyone a happy Veteran's Day on the 11th,
9 this Saturday. I'd like to thank all of the
10 veterans for their sacrifices that they have
11 given to this country and I'd also like to
12 wish a happy 242nd birthday to the United
13 States Marine Corp, and I want to thank
14 thigh dad for his service. He is an United
15 States Marine and Semper Fi. Thank you.

16 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you,
17 Mr. Gaughan. This evening I would like to
18 take the opportunity to congratulate Mr.
19 Rogan and Mr. Gaughan. I have worked with
20 them for the past four years. They are
21 dedicated servants, they put the extra time
22 in that's needed and they serve their public
23 well. I would also like to congratulate
24 Councilman-elect Donahue. He was here this
25 evening so I gave him a little sample of the

1 budget so he could start his homework on
2 that and I do wish him the best of luck. I
3 will be here until the end of the year and I
4 would continue to support city council in
5 any way I can. Any questions that my
6 current colleagues have or any questions
7 that Mr. Donahue may have I'll be happy to
8 answer them as well.

9 I would like also to congratulate
10 Mayor Courtright for his victory and I also
11 would like to thank Mr. Mulligan for his
12 efforts. In a campaign such as this we had
13 a healthy debate about the city, really
14 starting Mr. Mulligan never stopped running
15 from when he lost four years ago. We have
16 had a healthy debate over the past four
17 years debating issues that really have
18 impacted the city and the city is in better
19 shape than this. I don't necessarily agree
20 that we should criticize the electorate. The
21 electorate picks who they pick and, you
22 know, in our democracy I do believe that you
23 have to respect the will of the people as
24 they vote and criticizing people for how
25 they voted I don't think does any good with

1 that.

2 In terms of the package that we are
3 going to receive from the pension
4 investigation, I am quite concerned about
5 that dealing with the fact that it requires
6 the utmost security, so as we deal with
7 this, and I'll talk to Attorney Minora about
8 this, I'm actually a bit concerned with
9 having that report in this building. We
10 have high levels of security in our office,
11 our office is always locked. Mrs. Reed's
12 office is locked after we leave, but I'm
13 actually thinking it might not be a better
14 idea to keep it somewhere in your office
15 where you have security of it and we read it
16 there. I'm not sure if it's overkill or
17 not, but I'm not sure how the order set that
18 out. I just want to make sure especially
19 because as there is only going to be I
20 believe the five of us that are currently
21 that are allowed to look at it, and I'm not
22 sure I think there was some mention about
23 employees of the council office as well
24 being allowed to look at it?

25 MR. MINORA: Yeah, I'm not sure

1 that's in the order or necessary for us to
2 do.

3 MR. WECHSLER: Okay.

4 MR. MINORA: Let me work on the
5 security of that because it's actually my
6 Court order, my responsibility, and we can
7 discuss that.

8 MR. WECHSLER: Yeah, especially if
9 it's going to come -- let's say it comes the
10 last week of the December, I'm not going to
11 be here anymore so it doesn't make sense for
12 me to look at if, you know, it's going to
13 carry over and since I won't be able to do
14 anything with it anyway, and also the other
15 councilmen would have the right to read it
16 or not read it. If we choose not to read it,
17 that's our right as well. I would encourage
18 everyone to read it so we can get the most
19 out of this as Councilman Rogan has talked
20 about, we want to prevent this from
21 happening in the future, but I am concerned
22 -- I don't even know what's in it so I don't
23 know if there is names --

24 MR. MINORA: Right.

25 MR. WECHSLER: It says investigative,

1 I don't know what's in it and I do believe
2 that since there is litigation still
3 concerning people receiving that I
4 personally don't want to be involved in
5 anything that may, you know, have an impact
6 on us either positive or negative. So when
7 you get it we'll talk about and see how we
8 want to handle it.

9 MR. MINORA: Exactly. We don't have
10 it yet and when I do I think we need to sit
11 down and talk about a couple of things and
12 that would be in executive session because
13 it effects a number of different litigation
14 problems.

15 MR. WECHSLER: And it is very
16 important that we take steps to, not so much
17 do anything about what happened, but prevent
18 any further instances of this and that's our
19 responsibility as a council and to me that's
20 the benefit of this, not looking back but
21 looking forward --

22 MR. MINORA: Right.

23 MR. WECHSLER: And, like I said,
24 Councilman Rogan has taken the lead on this
25 and I applaud him for that, but we have to

1 be very careful with this information. It
2 may be one piece of paper.

3 MR. MINORA: I have no idea. They
4 haven't told me anything.

5 MR. WECHSLER: Like I said, we will
6 work on that.

7 MR. MINORA: Okay.

8 MR. WECHSLER: The last time I would
9 like to talk about tonight, and I mentioned
10 as well, Business Administrator Bulzoni was
11 here. The one thing that he talked about,
12 which I think is crucial going forward next
13 year is the dialogue between city council,
14 the mayor's office and the Business
15 Administrator's Office. Mr. Bulzoni took
16 the initiative to have the Business
17 Administrator's Office do much more than it
18 was really responsible for. Mr. Bulzoni has
19 taken the lead on several projects that
20 we're seeing the benefit of. He really took
21 the lead on really the lighting. He took
22 the lead on how to do paving. He took the
23 lead on the Novembrino splash park and he
24 was a wealth of information to me. I know
25 he was a wealth of information to other

1 council members, and his best intentions
2 were to improve the city. I think he did
3 that. I think his mark will be left on the
4 city forever and I appreciate the services
5 that he gave us and I wish him good luck in
6 his other ventures and he made a mistake of
7 leaving his phone number, so I'm sure we
8 will be calling him as we can.

9 And I think that's all I have this
10 evening. Thank you.

11 MS. REED: FOURTH ORDER. 5-B. FOR
12 INTRODUCTION - AN ORDINANCE - AUTHORIZING
13 THE ISSUANCE OF TAX AND REVENUE ANTICIPATION
14 NOTES, SERIES OF 2018 IN THE AGGREGATE
15 PRINCIPAL AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$12,750,000;
16 PROVIDING FOR THE DATE, INTEREST RATE,
17 MATURITY DATE, REDEMPTION PROVISIONS,
18 PAYMENT AND PLACE OF PAYMENT IN RESPECT OF
19 THE NOTES; ACCEPTING THE PROPOSAL ATTACHED
20 HERETO AS EXHIBIT "B" FROM THE FINANCIAL
21 INSTITUTION NAMED THEREIN FOR THE PURCHASE
22 OF THE NOTES; NAMING A SINKING FUND
23 DEPOSITARY/PAYING AGENT; AUTHORIZING THE
24 PROPER OFFICERS OF THE CITY TO EXECUTE AND
25 DELIVER THE NOTES AND CERTAIN OTHER

1 DOCUMENTS AND CERTIFICATES IN CONNECTION
2 THEREWITH; AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE
3 PREPARATION, CERTIFICATION AND FILING OF THE
4 NECESSARY DOCUMENTS WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF
5 COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE
6 COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA; SETTING FORTH
7 A FORM OF THE NOTES.

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

11 MR. ROGAN: So moved.

12 MR. EVANS: Second.

13 MR. WECHSLER: On the question? All
14 those in favor of introduction signify by
15 saying aye.

16 MR. PERRY: Aye.

17 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

18 MR. EVANS: Aye.

19 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

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

22 MS. REED: 5-C. FOR INTRODUCTION -
23 AN ORDINANCE - APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR THE
24 EXPENSES OF THE CITY GOVERNMENT FOR THE
25 PERIOD COMMENCING ON THE FIRST DAY OF

1 JANUARY, 2018 TO AND INCLUDING DECEMBER 31,
2 2018 BY THE ADOPTION OF THE GENERAL CITY
3 OPERATING BUDGET FOR THE YEAR 2018.

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

7 MR. ROGAN: So moved.

8 MR. EVANS: Second.

9 MR. WECHSLER: On the question?

10 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, on the question.
11 Just a couple of things. First of all, I
12 haven't really had a chance to review this
13 in full because we only received the budget
14 -- I only received the budget on Wednesday.
15 I would have liked to have received it a lot
16 sooner so that we would have been even more
17 prepared to have a more -- an even more
18 in-depth discussion with the business
19 administrator, so I was disappointed on that
20 front.

21 I also continue to be disappointed
22 in a way that Mayor Courtright does not show
23 up to this budget presentation for a number
24 of different reasons, the major one is that
25 this is his budget. He signs the dotted

1 line when it becomes the budget in finality
2 and I think it had be beneficial, if we are
3 talking about a transparency and keeping an
4 open line of discussion that he comes here
5 to council with the business administrator
6 to discuss his policies, his programs, and
7 the initiatives that are included in this
8 budget.

9 So I think moving forward we really
10 should ask him to do that because I think it
11 would not only be beneficial to this council
12 but for the public to hear from the mayor
13 because this is the budget that he along
14 with the business administrator puts
15 together and it's a reflection on his
16 administration and what direction it's going
17 to move in the next year.

18 I'll be able to prove further
19 comment once I have done a thorough review
20 of the budget in the next two weeks. Thank
21 you.

22 MR. WECHSLER: All those in favor of
23 introduction signify by saying aye.

24 MR. PERRY: Aye.

25 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

1 MR. EVANS: Aye.

2 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

3 MR. WECHSLER: Aye. Opposed? The
4 ayes have it and so moved.

5 MR. EVANS: I make a motion to
6 correct two typographical errors as found
7 within the budget on the following line
8 items:

9 Number one, 01.310.31110, real
10 estate transfer tax 2.70 corrected to read
11 2.20.

12 Two. 01.380.38004, miscellaneous
13 revenues, PA LCB license fees 2018 operating
14 budget total \$38,600 corrected to read 2018
15 operating budget total \$37,600.

16 MR. ROGAN: Second.

17 MR. WECHSLER: There's a motion on
18 the floor and a second, on the question?
19 All those in favor signify by saying aye.

20 MR. PERRY: Aye.

21 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

22 MR. EVANS: Aye.

23 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

24 MR. WECHSLER: Aye. Opposed? The
25 ayes have it and so moved.

1 MS. REED: 5-D. FOR INTRODUCTION -
2 AN ORDINANCE - AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND
3 OTHER APPROPRIATE CITY OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE
4 AND ENTER INTO A TRAIL MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT
5 BETWEEN THE CITY OF SCRANTON AND LACKAWANNA
6 HERITAGE VALLEY AUTHORITY FOR THE
7 MAINTENANCE AND UPKEEP OF THE LACKAWANNA
8 RIVER HERITAGE TRAIL (THE "TRAIL").

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

12 MR. ROGAN: So moved.

13 MR. EVANS: Second.

14 MR. WECHSLER: On the question? All
15 those in favor of introduction signify by
16 saying aye.

17 MR. PERRY: Aye.

18 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

19 MR. EVANS: Aye.

20 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

21 MR. WECHSLER: Aye. Opposed? The
22 ayes have it and so moved.

23 MS. REED: 5-E. FOR INTRODUCTION - AN
24 ORDINANCE - AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND OTHER
25 APPROPRIATE CITY OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE THE

1 DEED CONVEYING TITLE FROM THE CITY OF
2 SCRANTON PARKING AUTHORITY TO THE CITY OF
3 SCRANTON, THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 100 REAR
4 SOUTH WASHINGTON AVENUE, SCRANTON,
5 PENNSYLVANIA TO THE CITY OF SCRANTON, AS
6 MORE FULLY DESCRIBED IN EXHIBIT "A" ATTACHED
7 HERETO AND MADE A PART HEREOF.

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

11 MR. ROGAN: So moved.

12 MR. EVANS: Second.

13 MR. WECHSLER: On the question? All
14 those in favor of introduction signify by
15 saying aye.

16 MR. PERRY: Aye.

17 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

18 MR. EVANS: Aye.

19 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

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

22 MS. REED: 5-F. FOR INTRODUCTION - A
23 RESOLUTION - AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND OTHER
24 APPROPRIATE CITY OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE AND
25 ENTER INTO AN ADDENDUM TO THE CONTRACT

1 BETWEEN THE CITY OF SCRANTON AND CC CLEANING
2 SERVICES FOR JANITORIAL SERVICES FOR
3 SCRANTON CITY HALL AND THE SCRANTON POLICE
4 HEADQUARTERS.

5 MR. WECHSLER: At this time, I'll
6 entertain a motion that Item 5-F be
7 introduced into its proper committee.

8 MR. ROGAN: So moved.

9 MR. EVANS: Second.

10 MR. WECHSLER: On the question? All
11 those in favor of introduction signify by
12 saying aye.

13 MR. PERRY: Aye.

14 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

15 MR. EVANS: Aye.

16 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

17 MR. WECHSLER: Aye. Opposed? The
18 ayes have it and so moved.

19 MS. REED: SIXTH ORDER. 6-A. 6-A.
20 READING BY TITLE - FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO.
21 121, 2017 - AN ORDINANCE - AUTHORIZING THE
22 MAYOR AND OTHER APPROPRIATE CITY OFFICIALS
23 TO EXECUTE AND ENTER INTO A LEASE AGREEMENT
24 WITH GAR MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION ("GAR") TO
25 EXTEND THEIR CURRENT LEASE WHICH IS SET TO

1 EXPIRE ON NOVEMBER 28, 2017 FOR AN
2 ADDITIONAL YEAR FOR A PORTION OF THE
3 BASEMENT OF CITY HALL TO BE USED AS EXHIBIT
4 AND MEETING SPACE.

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

7 MR. ROGAN: I move that Item 6-A
8 pass reading by title.

9 MR. EVANS: Second.

10 MR. WECHSLER: On the question?

11 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, on the question, I
12 would like to make a motion to amend Agenda
13 Item 6-A to extend the lease agreement with
14 the GAR Memorial Association to a five-year
15 period beginning November 28, 2017, and
16 ending November 28, 2022.

17 MR. WECHSLER: The motion fails for
18 lack of a second. All those in favor
19 signify by saying aye.

20 MR. PERRY: Aye.

21 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

22 MR. EVANS: Aye.

23 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

24 MR. WECHSLER: Aye. Opposed? The
25 ayes have it and so moved.

1 MS. REED: 6-B. READING BY TITLE -
2 FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO. 122, 2017 - AN
3 ORDINANCE - AMENDING FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO.
4 65, 2016, AN ORDINANCE ENTITLED "GENERAL
5 CITY OPERATING BUDGET 2017" BY TRANSFERRING
6 \$14,499.00 FROM ACCOUNT NO.
7 01.401.13090.4299 (NON-DEPARTMENTAL
8 EXPENDITURES CONTINGENCY) TO ACCOUNT NO.
9 01.020.00000.4201 (OFFICE OF THE CITY
10 CLERK/CITY COUNCIL-PROFESSIONAL SERVICES) TO
11 PROVIDE SUFFICIENT FUNDING FOR THE PAYMENT
12 OF FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS THROUGH THE 2017
13 BUDGET PERIOD.

14 MR. WECHSLER: You've heard reading
15 by title of Item 6-B, what is your pleasure?

16 MR. ROGAN: I move that Item 6-B
17 pass reading by title.

18 MR. EVANS: Second.

19 MR. WECHSLER: On the question? All
20 those in favor signify by saying aye.

21 MR. PERRY: Aye.

22 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

23 MR. EVANS: Aye.

24 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

25 MR. WECHSLER: Aye. Opposed? The

1 ayes have it and so moved.

2 MS. REED: 6-C. READING BY TITLE -
3 FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO. 123, 2017 - AN
4 ORDINANCE - AMENDING FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO.
5 65, 2016, AN ORDINANCE ENTITLED "GENERAL
6 CITY OPERATING BUDGET 2017" BY TRANSFERRING
7 \$200,000.00 FROM ACCOUNT NO.
8 01.401.13090.4299 (NON-DEPARTMENTAL
9 EXPENDITURES CONTINGENCY) TO ACCOUNT NO.
10 01.051.00082.4448 (DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING,
11 INSPECTIONS & PERMITS-BUREAU OF BUILDINGS
12 PAWC-WATER) TO PROVIDE SUFFICIENT FUNDING
13 FOR THE PAYMENT OF PAWC-WATER INVOICES
14 THROUGH THE 2017 BUDGET PERIOD.

15 MR. WECHSLER: You've heard reading
16 by title of Item 6-C, what is your pleasure?

17 MR. ROGAN: I move that Item 6-C
18 pass reading by title.

19 MR. EVANS: Second.

20 MR. WECHSLER: On the question? All
21 those in favor signify by saying aye.

22 MR. PERRY: Aye.

23 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

24 MR. EVANS: Aye.

25 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

1 MR. WECHSLER: Aye. Opposed? The
2 ayes have it and so moved.

3 MS. REED: SEVENTH ORDER. 7-A -
4 PREVIOUSLY TABLED - FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE
5 COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FOR
6 ADOPTION - FILE OF THE COUNCIL NUMBER
7 118-2017 - AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND OTHER
8 APPROPRIATE OFFICIALS OF THE CITY OF
9 SCRANTON TO TAKE ALL NECESSARY ACTIONS TO
10 IMPLEMENT THE CONSOLIDATED SUBMISSION FOR
11 COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS
12 TO BE FUNDED UNDER THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
13 BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) PROGRAM, HOME INVESTMENT
14 PARTNERSHIP (HOME) PROGRAM AND EMERGENCY
15 SOLUTIONS GRANTS (ESG) PROGRAM FOR THE
16 PERIOD BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2018.

17 MR. WECHSLER: What is the
18 recommendation of the Chairperson for the
19 Committee on Community Development?

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

23 MR. ROGAN: Second.

24 MR. WECHSLER: On the question?
25 Roll call, please?

1 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Perry.

2 MR. PERRY: Yes.

3 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

4 MR. ROGAN: Yes.

5 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

6 MR. EVANS: Yes.

7 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

8 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

9 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

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

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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.

CATHENE S. NARDOZZI, RPR
OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER