

SCRANTON CITY COUNCIL MEETING

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HELD:

Thursday, July 31, 2014

LOCATION:

Council Chambers

Scranton City Hall

340 North Washington Avenue

Scranton, Pennsylvania

CATHENE S. NARDOZZI, RPR - OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER

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CITY OF SCRANTON COUNCIL:

ROBERT MCGOFF, PRESIDENT

PATRICK ROGAN, VICE-PRESIDENT

JOHN LOSCOMBE

JOSEPH WECHSLER

WILLIAM GAUGHAN

LORI REED, CITY CLERK

JAMIE MARCIANO, ASSISTANT CITY CLERK

AMIL MINORA, SOLICITOR

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

3 MR. MCGOFF: Roll call, please.

4 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Wechsler.

5 MR. WECHSLER: Here.

6 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Rogan.

7 MR. ROGAN: Here.

8 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Evans.

9 MR. EVANS: Here.

10 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Gaughan.

11 MR. GAUGHAN: Here.

12 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. McGoff.

13 MR. MCGOFF: Here.

14 For the record, I would like to
15 welcome Mr. Evans to city council.

16 Mr. Evans was appointed at our last meeting
17 and was sworn in earlier today, so he is now
18 a full-fledged member of the Scranton City
19 Council.

20 MR. EVANS: Thank you very much.

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

22 MINUTES OF THE SCRANTON POLICE PENSION
23 COMMISSION MEETING HELD ON JUNE 25, 2014.

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

1 MS. REED: 3-B. TAX ASSESSOR'S
2 REPORT FOR THE HEARING DATE TO BE HELD ON
3 AUGUST 13, 2014.

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

6 MS. REED: 3-C. AUDIT STATUS REPORT
7 RECEIVED FROM ROBERT ROSSI & CO. ON JULY 24,
8 2014.

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

11 MS. REED: 3-D. SINGLE TAX OFFICE
12 CITY FUNDS DISTRIBUTED COMPARISON REPORT FOR
13 JULY 2013 AND 2014.

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

16 I skipped over dispense with the
17 reading of the minutes, my apologies. One
18 thing that was received late and were unable
19 to place on the agenda in Third Order was
20 the agenda for the Board of Zoning Appeals.
21 They will hold a meeting in city hall on
22 Wednesday, August 13, at 6:00 p.m. Included
23 on their agenda is a submission for a
24 variance for a cell tower by Verizon at
25 Cayuga Park. It is the only one of the

1 three that had been mentioned in the past.
2 Weston Field and Nay Aug are not included in
3 this -- in their agenda, so it is simply the
4 variance for the Cayuga Park cell tower, but
5 I know that that has come up in discussion
6 before and I just wanted people to be aware
7 of that meeting.

8 Anyone else have announcements? A
9 couple of things, first of all, the National
10 Night Out is Tuesday, August 5, from 6 to 8
11 p.m. in the Scranton High School parking
12 lot. It is conducted by the Scranton Police
13 Department so National Night out Tuesday,
14 August 5, 6 to 8 p.m. at Scranton High
15 School.

16 Also, this past week we did receive
17 a letter of resignation from Mr. Joseph
18 Gilhooley, a resignation as an alternate
19 member of the Scranton Board of Zoning
20 Appeals and we will address that vacancy
21 when we return in September.

22 Also, asked to announce the August 1
23 the 3-on-3 basketball tournament conducted
24 by Lackawanna County. Five player maximum
25 per team, \$75 to register if you register by

1 July 1. There is division, boys, girls,
2 men, women, all types of different options
3 for play. It's a unique event and it's held
4 in downtown Scranton at this time. One of
5 those nights -- those days, the one and two
6 blocks of Wyoming Avenue will be closed.
7 That would Friday and Saturday, August 1 and
8 2, and the intersections affected by the
9 event will be closed from 8 a.m. Friday
10 through Sunday evening if necessary. Colts
11 will pick up and discharge in the 100 block
12 of Franklin Avenue on Friday and Saturday,
13 August 1 and 2, all right?

14 MR. ROGAN: Mr. McGoff, before
15 public participation begins, when speakers
16 -- because we opened it up for residents and
17 nonresidents at the last couple of week's
18 meetings, I see on the speaker sheet that
19 the address is left blank for most
20 individuals, so could we request speakers
21 state if they are a resident or nonresident?

22 MR. MCGOFF: Yes.

23 MR. ROGAN: Thank you.

24 MR. MCGOFF: As per Mr. Rogan's
25 request, please just state your name and

1 residence when you come to the podium to
2 speak.

3 MS. REED: FOURTH ORDER. CITIZENS'
4 PARTICIPATION.

5 MR. MCGOFF: Before we begin, I'm
6 sorry, there was one other -- on the agenda
7 this evening in Sixth Order, 6-A and B are
8 pieces of legislation for LHGA. As was
9 announced last week, if these pass in Sixth
10 Order there will be a motion to move these
11 to Seventh Order. If anyone wishes to speak
12 to these two pieces of legislation, please
13 do so during citizens' participation. We
14 will not have an additional speaking time
15 prior to Sixth Order.

16 First speaker on the list is Joan
17 Hodowanitz.

18 MS. HODOWANITZ: Joan Hodowanitz,
19 Scranton resident. I noted Item 3-C, the
20 audit status report for Robert Rossi dated
21 24 July, and I looked at that in the Clerk's
22 Office, and once again, we have 26 items
23 outstanding in the audit, which is the same
24 as last month, and the month before and the
25 month before, and the audit was supposed to

1 be completed on May 31. It's already two
2 months overdue and I am very doubtful that
3 the audit will be completed in time for the
4 administration to use it as they prepare a
5 budget due to you I believe on November 13
6 and that really gives me pause because
7 considering all of the financial problems in
8 the city and the accounting difficulties
9 that have come to the light in the past
10 year, you really do need that audit report
11 and I think the explanation of they're
12 understaffed no longer cuts it. We need to
13 see why that number hasn't gone down in
14 three months.

15 With regard to the caucus that took
16 place tonight, I'm really discombobulated.
17 It's about the only word I could come up
18 with. I did not get a warm and fuzzy that
19 the administration has a handle on the
20 pensions and pension reform. It just blew
21 my mind when the administration said that
22 basically they were in discussions vice
23 negotiations. I simply hope I live long
24 enough to see negotiations begin and
25 conclude. Just blows my mind. Yet, we are

1 pushing forward with the commuter tax.

2 If I recall, Mr. Amoroso said that
3 his plan had to be implemented as an
4 entirety, not piecemeal. Yet, you know, we
5 can't say that Mr. Amoroso's plan, was
6 administration's plan and then change it,
7 but we have.

8 And the last thing I want to comment
9 on is the article in this morning's paper
10 about the Scranton Chamber of Commerce
11 asking the administration to proceed with
12 negotiations and then the mayor asking to
13 bring Mr. Amoroso back for another six
14 months. Can some explain to me why we need
15 Mr. Amoroso back for another six months when
16 we have hired PFM in March for a four-year
17 stint? Wasn't PFM to pick up the work of
18 Mr. Amoroso after he left? Why do we need
19 Mr. Amoroso back? Has anyone talked to the
20 mayor. Has the mayor talked to anyone?

21 MR. MCGOFF: I would say that the
22 work that PFM is doing is in negotiating
23 with various investment entities for various
24 revenues that we need to implement part of
25 the plan.

1 MS. HODOWANITZ: That may be true,
2 but Mr. Amoroso said in his plan that I
3 downloaded from your website, you know, that
4 PFM would take over once he and his group
5 concluded their work. What exactly did
6 Mr. Amoroso do for another six months? You
7 know, I think that the administration is
8 behind the power curve, I really do, and I
9 would still like to see the mayor come
10 before the public in some kind of a town
11 hall meeting, both residents and the
12 nonresidents and explain to us, you know,
13 what is going on, what his vision is, what
14 the numbers are, because I do not have a
15 warm and fuzzy. Thank you.

16 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you. Bill
17 Jackowitz.

18 MR. JACKOWITZ: Good evening,
19 Scranton City Council, Jamie, Stenographer,
20 Lori, and Amil. How did this happen? How
21 did Scranton become distressed for 22 and
22 one half years? My answer, elected
23 officials, politicians. They are the ones
24 that took the votes. They are the ones who
25 made the decisions. They are the ones who

1 did not listen to the speakers who spoke at
2 city council and other places. They made
3 their own decisions and they made all bad
4 decisions.

5 Mr. Courtright was on council, he is
6 responsible for this, he was on council for
7 six years, some of his votes. We have two
8 city councilmen right now who have made
9 votes that put the city where it is now. It
10 was not the commuters, it was not the
11 residents, it was the elected officials.
12 All the elected officials of Scranton from
13 Mayor Hanlon until the present. That's as
14 far as I can go back to is Mayor Hanlon
15 because I'm only 66 years old.

16 Okay, solutions. I did not hear one
17 solution in this caucus. Everything was
18 speculation. I can remember standing here
19 at this podium and being ridiculed and
20 reprimanded about sitting city councilmen
21 about speculation, but yet tonight you allow
22 those three people, the three leaders, a
23 mayor and two attorneys, to speculate on
24 every single question that they were asked
25 tonight. They did not answer one question

1 affirmatively. Not one. And I hope you
2 take that into consideration when it comes
3 time to vote. There is no plan. Why don't
4 we admit it, we have no plan to get the city
5 out of this distressed status because it's
6 an impossibility. It's as simple as that.
7 We have been speaking about this for years
8 and years and years and years only to be
9 ignored.

10 I can remember being locked out of
11 city hall. I can remember going through a
12 metal detector by sitting city council
13 members. I can remember five minute speech,
14 three minute speech, why? Because the
15 elected officials did not want to hear what
16 the citizens had to say. If they would have
17 listened, we would not be in the position
18 the city is in right now. We have had two
19 failed recovery plans, I pray to God that we
20 don't have the third recovery plan failure
21 with this vote that's going to happen
22 tonight because it's not going to solve
23 anything.

24 Again, responsibility. Who is
25 responsible for it? Some people want to

1 blame the nonprofits. Some people want to
2 blame the fire and police. Some people want
3 to blame the neighborhoods. Some people
4 want to blame everybody but the people who
5 should be blamed. The people who should be
6 blamed are the elected officials. We have
7 seven of them. We have a mayor, five city
8 council members and a city controller. That
9 is it where 100 percent of the blame for the
10 City of Scranton rests, with our elected
11 officials because you are the ones who have
12 made the decisions for the past 22 half
13 years, not Bill Jackowitz and none of these
14 people in this audience. Some people even
15 want to blame the Scranton Times, but they
16 didn't make the decisions either, all they
17 did was print nonsense is what they did,
18 okay? It all rests on the backs of the
19 elected officials and you are getting ready
20 to make the same mistake all over again.

21 As far as security clearance, I have
22 had a top secret, expanded background
23 security clearance, triple security
24 clearance since 1968 so I'm pretty sure that
25 I can be responsible enough to find out what

1 the plan is for the City of Scranton. I
2 have had the clearance. I've got the same
3 clearance that the President of the United
4 States has and I've had it since 1968. So,
5 please, I'm an adult, tell me what's going
6 on. No more secret meetings. No more
7 talking behind closed doors. Bring it out
8 to the public. The mayor was here tonight,
9 he did not answer one question. Everything
10 was speculation not one question was
11 answered.

12 As far as the school board goes,
13 they are a joke. That's why nobody wants to
14 come to the City of Scranton. That's why
15 you can done whatever you want to do, no
16 businesses are going to come here, why?
17 Because of our elected officials and the
18 politics in the City of Scranton.

19 Okay, and also I'd like you all to
20 enjoy your vacation, take the month off
21 because when you come back North Scranton
22 High School will still be in the position
23 it's in right now, although we were promised
24 it would be done by April 15. The Lace
25 factory will have the same problem that

1 they've had so enjoy your vacations, we'll
2 see you guys in September.

3 MR. MCGOFF: Lee Morgan.

4 MR. MORGAN: Good evening, Council.
5 The first thing I have to say, with all
6 honesty, you know what I got to say, "Hi,
7 suits," and I really appreciate the suits
8 that the people that were sitting here were
9 wearing and, you know, we have elected a lot
10 of suits in this city and a lot of decisions
11 that have been made about the way people
12 dress, and just utterly the silliness that I
13 have ever seen in my life, and one of the
14 really troubling things today for me at this
15 meeting was that I thought, with all
16 honesty, Mr. Gaughan, you asked some very
17 important questions, you didn't receive any
18 answers.

19 And, Mr. Rogan, I mean, I don't know
20 where you were at because from what I saw he
21 was asking legitimate questions, and it
22 just -- it just goes to prove how really
23 broken our government is. We have people
24 that did a presentation here, in other
25 words, for a recovery plan. No information

1 came from them. Everything is just like
2 other speakers said speculation. I have
3 read the report, it's as silly as Mr.
4 Doherty's report because this commuter tax
5 is going to do more damage to this city than
6 you can ever believe and I honestly believe
7 that anybody who is employed here and pays
8 this tax needs to find another job. I think
9 that employers who have employees here need
10 to move, because I think it's time to stop
11 shifting everything to somebody else.

12 Look it, when a ship is going to
13 sink you don't do something about it when
14 it's one foot from being under the water.
15 There is just no excuse for what's going on
16 here. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
17 holds a very fast majority of the blame for
18 what's occurred here, and the city
19 residents. They have listened to all of the
20 spiels that political candidates have put
21 forward for decades, and not just two
22 decades, six or seven. And how a city as
23 nice as this one can be torn apart like it
24 has, we have lost some of the greatest
25 building in our city that have been torn

1 down. I think that one of the first things
2 this city should do is do something about
3 containing the colleges here and put them
4 inside zones that they can't expand out of
5 and force them to build up. I think we use
6 our eminent domain to start going after some
7 of these buildings they have purchased that
8 they have taken off the tax rolls.

9 I think, to be honest with you,
10 Mr. Evans, you are the realtor, I mean, I'm
11 a truck driver, but you know something, when
12 nonprofits start eating up all of your
13 property you got a real problem because you
14 have nobody willing to come here and invest
15 and I think the greatest gift the city can
16 receive is looking where all of these
17 colleges have their money invested in and
18 how many hundreds of millions of dollars
19 they are worth. I think that would be a
20 great think to see.

21 I think there's a lot of other great
22 things we should see and, you know, I have
23 got -- I intend to do about 50
24 Right-to-Knows soon, and I'm going give
25 every councilman a copy of one, every single

1 one and we are going to see if we get the
2 answers because you know, gentlemen, we have
3 been short on answers here in this council
4 chambers for the plus 20 plus years I have
5 been here and we keep talking about it.

6 You know, I asked Mr. Wechsler a
7 question one time if you looked at the debt
8 in the city how much of it is on every
9 single resident and then break it down to
10 how much was on every single citizen of the
11 city's total debt. You know another
12 troubling I think we should look at is how a
13 park built under Project 70 funds was ever
14 sold because it was illegal according to
15 federal law, but it was still done.

16 I think that the city has played
17 fast and loose for so long. You know, I
18 recently attended a viewing in the city of a
19 former resident who left here 30 years ago
20 and everybody in -- almost everybody there
21 had left the city and their opinion in bulk
22 was that the city is mess from the islands
23 all the way to the end of Pinebrook and that
24 just the disrepair of the city in every
25 neighborhood is unbelievable, and we are

1 talking about possibly selling the Sewer
2 Authority when that asset has to worth a
3 billion dollars, and the reason I say that
4 is how much would it cost to dig up every
5 street and put all of that infrastructure in
6 and then physically build a plant, and
7 that's an asset that belongs to Scranton and
8 Dunmore.

9 These sells of the last remaining
10 assets aren't the answer. We need to redo
11 almost everything about the city if it's
12 going to survive. We are down to 70,000
13 people, we lost 30,000 and I'm only 55 years
14 old. So in my 55 years we went from 101,000
15 probably to under 70, and there will be
16 nothing left of the city if we put this plan
17 through. Everybody is going to pat
18 themselves on the back like they always do
19 and talk about how great their decisions
20 were. Talk is cheap, but results aren't,
21 but we haven't seen any. We saw a lot of
22 money invested in the downtown for decades,
23 which hasn't brought anything great around,
24 because we didn't have a council or city
25 government that was functioning. And to be

1 quite honest with you, county government
2 isn't functioning either. Really what
3 branch of government is functioning? It's
4 all driven by innuendos, misinformation and
5 money and the people who go to work every
6 day and hope for the best they are getting
7 the short end of it. Thank you.

8 MR. MCGOFF: Doug Miller.

9 MR. MILLER: Good evening, Council,
10 Doug Miller, Scranton. You know, just to,
11 you know, discuss the caucus we had here
12 this evening, I think the only thing tonight
13 we were missing, gentlemen, was popcorn and
14 soda in all honesty. It was a complete
15 joke, as most of our city government is
16 today at this point. We didn't receive one
17 answer to any question asked other than
18 speculation that has been previously
19 addressed here this evening. No reality has
20 been discussed other than we want to now
21 punish commuters that we are well aware of,
22 placing a burden on commuters that had
23 absolutely nothing to do with the gross
24 incompetence that took place and continues
25 to take place within our city government.

1 We want to punish, as I take it from
2 Mr. McGoff, to quote, "Jane from Dickson
3 City" that we now want to place the burden
4 on her and thousands of others who commute
5 daily to the city to earn a living. Why?
6 Because we caused the problem, and when I
7 say "we", you know, we often talk about our
8 elected leaders causing the brunt of the
9 problems and there is no doubt that you are
10 in the position to where you certainly make
11 the decisions, but ultimately you are put
12 there somehow, and how are you put there?
13 You are put there by voters and for decades
14 voters have gone out and voted misinformed.
15 They have voted based on who has a pretty
16 yard sign going down Main Avenue, whose a
17 Democrat, whose a Republican. Oh, yeah, you
18 know, I graduated with him 20 years ago, he
19 is a nice guy, yet if you ask the one thing
20 about the candidate as to what their plans
21 or what their vision is they can't tell you
22 one thing other than, yeah, he has a nice
23 yard sign going down Main Avenue, and then
24 we stand here today and we wonder why we are
25 in the situation we are in, because we have

1 so many uninformed and uneducated people
2 making decisions that it's completely just
3 discouraging and, quite frankly, disgusting
4 because of the politics in this city that
5 has touched so much things, has destroyed
6 the future of this city.

7 And you know what, the 24-year-old
8 young man who has a vested interest in this
9 city, who has been coming here for 12 years
10 and speaking my mind and offering solutions
11 and suggestions, it's really discouraging to
12 think that there is even a future for this
13 city because we have people that
14 consistently let us down.

15 We had mayor here tonight that
16 couldn't answer one question, did nothing
17 but stagger around every question. And then
18 when we have councilmen such as Mr. Gaughan
19 who, you know, I do have to say in the
20 recent weeks I have gained a lot of respect
21 for Mr. Gaughan. You know, coming into his
22 term, you know, I didn't know really know
23 Mr. Gaughan that well, but I have come to
24 realize one thing, he is asking tough
25 questions and when he has a colleague like

1 Mr. Rogan who wants to criticize him for
2 doing his job and representing the residents
3 of this city that elected him, I think
4 Mr. Rogan should be ashamed of himself. You
5 may want to carry the water for this
6 administration, Mr. Rogan, but remember one
7 thing, you were elected by the residents of
8 this city and you have an obligation to
9 represent them, not Mayor Courtright.

10 So, Mr. Gaughan, I appreciate what
11 you did tonight and I hope continue to ask
12 the tough questions, and I apologize that
13 none of those questions were answered
14 accurately or, quite frankly, even
15 intelligently. I think you were given the
16 run around, but stick to your guns and
17 continue to hold their feet to the fire
18 because, unfortunately, I agree with you
19 this probably will pass tonight because we
20 are dealing with a rubber stamp council
21 majority who has overlooked all of the
22 facts. In fact, they don't even know the
23 facts. That's what rubber stampers do.

24 And by voting this tonight and
25 putting this on the commuters of the city

1 decisions of this council, past councils,
2 past administrations. We want to sell
3 assets, the remaining we have left. We
4 already sold the golf course. We sold the
5 South Side complex. Now we want to sell
6 parking garages and still owe \$30 million on
7 them. That makes a lot of sense. I'm glad
8 we have the common sense in our government.
9 We want to sell a Sewer Authority that as
10 the previous speaker alluded to, Mr. Morgan,
11 probably is worth close to a billion
12 dollars, but have we ever taken the time to
13 research that? No. Because we only have
14 one agenda and that's the political agenda.

15 And I hope you vote with some common
16 sense tonight, even though I don't think
17 that's going to happen because there is no
18 common sense in our government. Do the
19 right thing. Don't put it on the backs of
20 Jane from Dickson City and many others who
21 had absolutely nothing to do with your
22 mismanagement. Thank you.

23 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you, Mr. Miller.
24 Fay Franus.

25 MS. FRANUS: Fay Franus, Scranton.

1 Mr. Evans, I'd like welcome you to council.

2 MR. EVANS: Thank you.

3 MS. FRANUS: You are a breath of
4 fresh air. Mr. Gaughan, I'd like to thank
5 you for letting the people know as much as
6 you could let them know by asking all of the
7 right questions, and you have a councilman
8 like Pat Rogan who is trying to hide the
9 truth even though he knew all of these
10 people that are here tonight, the mayor, and
11 the lawyers, even though he knew they didn't
12 have any answers he tried to silence you so
13 that you couldn't possibly get any answers.
14 But by you asking all of these questions you
15 exposed them for what they are.

16 We didn't elect Mr. Amoroso, we
17 elected Bill Courtright but he hasn't done
18 one thing since he has been in office. He
19 is the one that's supposed to be going to
20 the nonprofits, he hasn't going there once.
21 I don't know what he has done other than
22 gone out with the police for two hours in
23 West Side one night.

24 Another thing, he mentioned the
25 clerical union, that's the one union that he

1 mentioned, they are the lowest paid union.
2 Amazing how he threw them in the mix.
3 Didn't mention the fire or the police at
4 all, but I think he would have wet his pants
5 if he had to do anything with them because
6 he is scared to death of them. They got him
7 elected and he won't dare cross them. So
8 there is no way you can are going to get
9 answers from him. You can pin him up on a
10 cross and he won't give you any because he
11 doesn't know anything. He won't approach
12 them at all. The fact that you are voting
13 for this tonight before any concessions from
14 the union it's disgraceful.

15 And the fact that Scranton residents
16 might pay to the .75 percent wage tax you
17 didn't have any answers, nobody knew it was
18 legal, nobody knew if you could do it, then
19 they said they didn't know if it could ever
20 come off once it went on, but you are voting
21 for something that you don't even know is
22 going to be able to get taken off for the
23 residents. You sit there and make it sound
24 like it is. How you can vote for something,
25 is totally beyond me, that you don't have

1 any answers for. Tonight proved that you
2 had no answers. One question after another
3 from Mr. Gaughan to these people, to the
4 mayor of the city and he didn't know
5 anything.

6 Mr. Jackowitz is right and that's
7 the reasonable there aren't thousands of
8 people tonight because they know better.
9 They know that this council is corrupt.
10 They know that every government person in
11 the city, every city employee, they are all
12 dirty. They are only taking care of
13 themselves, they are not taking care of the
14 people, that's why you are going to vote
15 "yes" for this because you are corrupt,
16 because you don't want the answers, you just
17 want to line your pockets and do whatever
18 you are going to get for doing this, but to
19 make the people out of town pay for bad
20 management is disgraceful. It would be
21 different in this city tried, tried to help
22 the solutions and tried to help the people,
23 but they never once in years ever did it but
24 it's not like they ever tried something so
25 why should the people out of town pay for

1 your mistakes? It's totally disgraceful and
2 your political career will be over, Mr.
3 Rogan, and Mr. Wechsler and Mr. McGoff.

4 Mr. Evans, I'd like to ask you since
5 you said in the paper the other day that it
6 was totally unacceptable if the Scranton
7 people had to pay the wage tax, well, since
8 they didn't have an answer whether it would
9 be legal or not or and whether it really
10 will could happen how can you possibly -- if
11 you vote "yes" how can you possibly vote
12 "yes" to this when there is no answer?

13 MR. EVANS: We'll have to see.

14 MS. FRANUS: Well, let's put it this
15 way, I hope you have -- if you vote "yes"
16 there is nothing you can say that's going to
17 justify why you did it because there is no
18 answers here, there is no answers that were
19 given tonight so we'll see what happens, but
20 I hope you do the right thing for the people
21 that you were elected -- appointed to
22 represent. I really do.

23 MR. EVANS: Thanks.

24 MS. FRANUS: Mr. Gaughan, I hope you
25 keep asking these questions and never stop

1 the likes of Mr. Rogan. Who the hell is he
2 to tell you you can't talk and ask
3 questions? You got elected by the people?
4 You keep asking and thank you for doing
5 that.

6 And the other consultant firm that
7 the woman mentioned before to take over for
8 Mr. Amoroso, this firm that was hired in
9 March until 2018 with no cap on their
10 salary, that's another illegal thing. I
11 have mentioned this at council how many
12 weeks and your own lawyer says it was legal
13 and Mr. McGoff says it was legal. It's not
14 legal. It's not legal. If I had money to
15 go to a lawyer I would be there tomorrow to
16 prove it because it goes against City Code,
17 Administrative City Code Section 613, the
18 money has to in the budget this year to pay
19 them, not next year in January's budget,
20 this budget. It says right in the Code, so
21 you are hired them illegally, but we can't
22 do anything about that because you
23 circumvent the law all the time because you
24 know the people can't take you to court so
25 you just laugh at us.

1 Just like when I went to the caucus
2 that one night and there was four members
3 and Mr. McGoff said, "That's not against the
4 Sunshine Law."

5 Like hell it isn't. He must think
6 we are stupid. We're not stupid. Just like
7 Mr. Jackowitz said, you are the reason, all
8 the politicians in the City of Scranton you
9 are the reason why we are in the shape we
10 are and you want to charge the people out of
11 town. Don't you know that's going to help
12 the businesses in Scranton because they are
13 going to boycott. Gas stations,
14 restaurants, businesses, food courts,
15 everything they are going to boycott and I
16 don't blame them. I would boycott them,
17 too, if I had to pay your mistakes in the
18 City of Scranton. It's not like you tried
19 to do everything right and you should have
20 concessions from this union, and I wish you
21 could impeach Bill Courtright because he has
22 nothing for this city. Thank you.

23 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you, Mrs. Franus.
24 Matthew Ford.

25 MR. FORD: Once again, Matthew Ford,

1 Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. I'd like to
2 thank the council and everyone who showed up
3 once again for those discussions and for my
4 permission to speak here. It's absolutely
5 fantastic that you do invite everybody out,
6 and I want to say, wow, I couldn't be more
7 impressed with the residents of Scranton
8 coming out here educated on point and
9 actively participating in the discussion.

10 Sadly, I feel that that discussion
11 is pretty one-sided and they are the only
12 ones offering some real solutions. I had a
13 whole bunch of notes and things I want to
14 talk about tonight, every single one of them
15 walked up and pretty much went all over my
16 points, but I do want to share a couple of
17 things that I had in individual
18 conversations with members of council and
19 also with attorneys for the mayor here.

20 Last week, you know, I asked
21 Mr. Rogan week one when I was here he said
22 that he wanted to hear what the residents of
23 the city had to say, that was the purpose of
24 these meetings, and I asked him last week
25 after he said that he now supported the bill

1 what happened to hearing discussions for
2 three weeks before making a decision, and he
3 said that the reason he came back to that
4 decision was that he had an overwhelming
5 course of go commuter tax pouring into his
6 phone from different community events that,
7 you know, he attends and my question is
8 where are those citizens because these are
9 the active citizens that I see and they are
10 all saying this they don't want it?

11 I spoke with Mr. Durkin after he
12 stepped out of the meeting, and after he
13 provided his knowledge to you and tried to
14 educate you gentleman on how much they knew
15 about this plan and I asked him a couple of
16 questions of my own and the first thing I
17 asked from him was if he was familiar with
18 equity index funds, which basically is a way
19 that you can participate in some of the
20 markets gains while it goes go up, but you
21 don't expose yourself to any risk while it
22 goes down. He was unaware of that financial
23 products existence.

24 I then asked him if we were paying
25 off \$13 million per year -- well, the City

1 of Scranton, I'm not, but the City of
2 Scranton is paying \$13 million in funds
3 right now for those pensions and they only
4 contributed \$4.2 million in our last
5 figures, what the gap was, because I feel
6 that's a pretty common thing to investigate
7 if you were going to see how much you needed
8 to fun it with, he had no answers for what
9 denomination of money could make up the gap
10 to get us actually paying for all of the
11 contributions that are going out every year.

12 And last week we talked a little bit
13 about planning for what -- it seems
14 everybody wants to plan for the law as it's
15 written today, and I want to point out to
16 you gentlemen that we put a man on the moon
17 based on estimated what ifs and planned
18 ahead, and I urge you to be deliberate with
19 your decision today, I urge you to put it
20 off until you find out all of the facts. I
21 think that this caucus here at least raised
22 some very relevant questions that I feel
23 that voting now after seeing what happened
24 in caucus would be very irresponsible and I
25 urge you guys to deliberate this bill for a

1 little while longer. Thank you.

2 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you, Mr. Ford.
3 Ron Ellman.

4 MR. ELLMAN: You get up and leave
5 when I finish. Sadly, I believe we are
6 always going to be adversarial. I thought
7 well of you though. I'm just uncomfortable
8 with your statement how good a Mayor Doherty
9 was because one of the problems you people
10 are doing is try to correct all of the
11 mistakes and problems that he left in the
12 city.

13 And secondly, I understand that
14 Mr. Sweeney from the zoning board also works
15 for you. I find this a complete conflict of
16 interest. If, in fact, I'm not caring
17 stories, I was told there has already been
18 results of this marriage and that shouldn't
19 be. He should choose one job or the other
20 if you ask me.

21 And next, I'm not trying to pick on
22 you, but I was wandering if you are going to
23 take a paid vacation next month for working
24 one day. As bad as this city needs money, I
25 just would find that that if you are it's

1 reprehensible. It's -- here we are broke, I
2 don't think anybody should take a paid
3 vacation. You people need to try to help
4 the rest of the city. You expect us to just
5 keep sacrificing and suffering in taxes,
6 but, you know, like I said, I'm not trying
7 to --

8 MR. EVANS: I will answer the
9 question partially that I actually got sworn
10 in today on purpose so I don't get paid for
11 last week.

12 MR. ELLMAN: Well, this is just
13 between you and God, I guess, you know. In
14 your support for our Moses plan I just find
15 this nothing but a feeble outsiders adverse
16 -- it's not a plan, you know a four-year-old
17 could just sit around and say raise taxes.
18 I just can't imagine why you spend six more
19 months with him, he has been here six months
20 and he has never done a -- been doing a
21 thing about the Pure Charity Act that has
22 just broke the city. He has said, "Well, I
23 might talk to them."

24 He has had six months to address
25 this. You know, a third of our taxable

1 property is gone and, you know, he doesn't
2 seem to understand that's one of the
3 problems. The problem is not telling
4 everybody you are going to raise taxes. He
5 is using the idea of a reassessment. Almost
6 every house in the city in the past ten or
7 15 years the taxes have doubled. You go to
8 talk to anybody their taxes keep going up
9 and up and up, and the next let's say five
10 years, ten years, they will probably double
11 or triple again the way things are going.
12 We don't need to spend millions on
13 reassessment.

14 You know, I think you people think
15 that taxpayers are just a gigantic piggy
16 bank or something, I don't know, it's just
17 -- you are just not in tune with what's
18 happening to the people of this city. The
19 neighbors -- the neighborhoods are in
20 decline. You know, like I said, my
21 neighborhood was so nice 20 years ago and
22 now it looked like crap. I don't have any
23 sidewalks, I don't have no curbs, people
24 park on the sidewalks. They rent houses
25 with no parking whatsoever, but they park on

1 the sidewalks. Cars come up and down my
2 street late at night on North Main Avenue
3 60, 70, 80 miles per hour one after another.
4 They won't put up stop signs. Dunmore put
5 up stop sign on Electric Street to stop
6 speeding, but I was told they can't do it
7 here. You know, I think chickens will grow
8 lips before anything positive for the
9 taxpayers of the city will happen, and
10 again, I just wish you the best because you
11 got a lousy job to do. Thank you.

12 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you, Mr. Ellman.
13 Les Spindler.

14 MR. SPINDLER: Good evening,
15 Council. Les Spindler, city resident and
16 taxpayer. It's been awhile since I have
17 been here, I'm working two jobs, new shift
18 on my job 12 hours a day so when I work
19 until six it's a rush to get here, but after
20 all the negativity I heard last few weeks I
21 had to come here and say my peace.

22 First off, I want to thank the mayor
23 for coming tonight and answering questions
24 the best he could. He has kept his campaign
25 promises that said he is going to come to

1 the meetings. In seven months he has
2 attended more meetings than the previous
3 mayor and our sixth councilman did in 12
4 years, so I think that proves he is keeping
5 his word.

6 Next, Mr. Evans, I want to
7 congratulate you on your appointment.

8 MR. EVANS: Thank you.

9 MR. SPINDLER: Can't say you were my
10 choice because I know it's no secret you
11 were a Doherty supporter, and I wasn't.

12 MR. EVANS: Fair enough.

13 MR. SPINDLER: You said Chris
14 Doherty is doing a good job, really? That's
15 why we are here today because of Chris
16 Doherty. He put us in the mess we are in.
17 When Mayor Connors left office we had a
18 million dollar surplus. Now God knows how
19 much we are -- and Chris Doherty put us all
20 in bankruptcy, him and his rubber stamp
21 councils, which Mr. McGoff was one of them.
22 It's no secret. He borrowed and spent us
23 into almost bankruptcy and it's a darn
24 shame. I love this city, and that's why I
25 have been coming to these meetings for over

1 12 years now because I can't come as much
2 now, but I had to come tonight. I love this
3 city and I hope you people do the right
4 thing and I do think we need all of the
5 money coming into this city we can get. It
6 doesn't matter how we get it, and I think,
7 Mr. Gaughan, I don't think you are fighting
8 for the people of this city because, and as
9 I said, we could need all of the money
10 coming into this city. For you to say we
11 should delay the commuter -- a vote on the
12 commuter tax until September that's taking
13 money out of the city's pockets. I read
14 where if it's passed now it could enacted by
15 the last quarter of the year, if you wait
16 until September probably couldn't be enacted
17 until next year. We need every penny we can
18 coming into this city and I think it's wrong
19 to say that we should delay it. I don't
20 think that's fighting for the people of this
21 city.

22 Next thing, I was thrilled to see
23 that the unions they are willing to sit down
24 and possibly talk about opening up their
25 contract, because when Mayor Courtright was

1 running he was criticized for saying, oh, he
2 is going to give you the unions everything
3 that, you know, he is going to give whatever
4 they want. This shows that the unions are
5 willing to give back to the city before they
6 even get their big Supreme Court award. So
7 what does that tell us? I think -- I really
8 applaud you for saying that. I mean,
9 nothing is done yet, but at least they said
10 they are willing to sit down and possibly
11 open up their contracts. I give them all of
12 the credit in the world.

13 Next thing, a couple of neighborhood
14 things, I live in Tripp Park on Dorothy
15 Street, Mr. Rogan, I know you are familiar
16 with it, where the playground is, where the
17 ball fields are, it's right across the
18 block, I don't know what block of Dorothy it
19 is, it's right across from the basketball
20 courts, there is about a half a block that
21 there is pavement missing and the street on
22 the side is lower, when it rains there is
23 like a half -- it's almost like a river
24 going six to seven feet out into the street,
25 there is a storm drain there but the rest of

1 the road is so low it doesn't make to the
2 storm drain and it sits there for days and
3 days and days and, unfortunately, sometimes
4 if you walking in that street cars go by and
5 I'll get splashed that's why I walk on the
6 other side if there is water there. So
7 that's been like that, I don't remember,
8 years and years. And I spoke to someone
9 else who lives in Tripp Park, said he would
10 take care of it, but he never did so -- -

11 MR. ROGAN: We'll look into it.

12 MR. SPINDLER: Mr. Gallagher is
13 doing a great job, so I know he helped me
14 out, hopefully we can look into that.

15 And lastly, on the corner of
16 Bullsworth and North Rebecca there is a
17 street light out, it's really, really dark
18 for about a week now, I know you used to be
19 able to call the number on the pole --

20 MR. ROGAN: If you could get the
21 pole number if you call me or call the city
22 council office we could enter that for you
23 and get that taken care of the.

24 MR. SPINDLER: Okay. I think that's
25 all I have tonight. I'll try to make it to

1 few more times, but enjoy your vacation and
2 hope you do the right thing tonight. Thank
3 you.

4 MR. MCGOFF: Dave Dobrzyn.

5 MR. DOBRZYN: Good evening, Dave
6 Dobrzyn, resident, taxes and fees paid. We
7 are here tonight to discuss a lot of issues
8 and I'd like to make a mention, you took a
9 lot of heat for it, Obama froze federal
10 wages so as a result you don't have a
11 government that is going further into
12 deficit at least on wages.

13 Our current governor could have done
14 something like that, and instead he has
15 given guarantees to certain public worker
16 unions that he will not harass us on the
17 wage and he will keep them in mind when he
18 is reelected.

19 I'd also like to mention think
20 tanks. They can be mercenaries. If you
21 want a right wing decision, get a right wing
22 think tank. If you want a middle of the
23 road decision, you get a left -- middle of
24 the road think tank, and if you want a left
25 wing decision get a left wing think tank.

1 Very simple.

2 So now let's go to the Act 205. I'm
3 actually for Act 205 tax, however, we need
4 it to call attention to in every day of our
5 lives 33 percent of the city is tax exempt.
6 It does a lot of things for the state, we
7 have courthouses, we have hospitals, we have
8 schools, and nobody is reimbursing us for
9 it. So I would really love to see some day
10 that would take this to court, to federal
11 court, and force the state revenue share
12 with us. I'm tired of it, I don't have the
13 money to pay everybody else's bills, and I
14 don't want to see the city, which I own two
15 properties, wind up in the trash bin, and if
16 you think people are hollering at you now as
17 far as the residents, just raise their
18 property tax 119 percent, you will hear some
19 roaring. It's really ashame that it has to
20 be done, but we also have 11 percent of
21 residents that either are unable or -- and a
22 few probably unwilling to just pay it. They
23 feel, "Oh, I'm going to dump that house and
24 maybe an absentee landlord two or three
25 years, so by the time they catch up to me it

1 will be -- it will be worth nothing anyway
2 to me so they can take the house and I have
3 my money out of it."

4 On authorities, I think I see
5 something on Mr. Amoroso's on the trash
6 authority. Well, we have had quite a few
7 problems with authorities in the past on the
8 if you lose control of them, what do we do
9 when the trash authority decides we want
10 nice and shiny new trash hauling trucks and
11 we are going to buy them and we don't have
12 to ask you. And, oh, by the way, we don't
13 want a GMC trash truck we want a Mercedes
14 trash truck, damn it.

15 I'm happy to see that speeders -- I
16 heard yesterday that there was some nailed
17 in South Side on Pittston Avenue, I'd like
18 to see that some more because there are some
19 cars zipping even up Mulberry Street at
20 probably 40, 45, 50 miles an hour. The
21 speed limit in Scranton is 25 miles an hour.
22 I like to keep it at 20. I was down Spruce
23 Street, 25 year old at least comes out in
24 front of me with the skateboard down by the
25 old Northeastern Bank there, I don't know

1 what they called it now, they change every
2 week.

3 And on any sale of the Sewer
4 Authority, we are having tentatively on
5 August 19 at 6:30 we are having an expert on
6 the river in there and the implications of
7 privatizing the Sewer Authority, and I have
8 been studying around the state a little bit,
9 I just do studies, I'm no expert on
10 anything, I know a little bit about
11 everything, but some of the sewer rates
12 increased by 300 percent, so it's something
13 to consider. I mean, that can be taxes in
14 our coffers or it could be going for CEO
15 stock options and compensation.

16 And over the weekend or your holiday
17 don't forget, outsourcing, transpacific
18 pack. They keep pushing it and pushing it
19 and pushing it and we will lose twice as
20 much business as we gain on the transpacific
21 pack so, it's time to call your congressmen
22 and just tell them to can it. Thank you and
23 have a good night.

24 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you. Is there
25 anyone else who wishes to address council?

1 Just please state your name for the
2 stenographer.

3 MR. ALBERT: Surely. Good evening.
4 My name is Lieutenant Colonel Joe Albert, US
5 Army retired. I'm a resident of the City of
6 Scranton, I work in the City of Scranton
7 throughout Lackawanna County and other
8 counties. I'd like to speak to you tonight
9 in regard to the proposed commuter tax asked
10 for the mayor, being considered by this
11 council, as a solution to the pension
12 deficit problem facing this distressed Class
13 2A city. This is an extremely complex
14 question that cannot and will not be solved
15 by simply imposing a commuter tax on
16 individuals who work in Scranton, but do not
17 reside in Scranton. Gentlemen, that's
18 simply called taxation without
19 representation and should this council enact
20 that ordinance I guarantee you somebody will
21 fight it in Court on the simple basis of
22 taxation without representation.

23 I strongly suggest that you consider
24 tabling your motion until the state
25 legislature finishes its business with Act

1 205. You lose nothing except a little bit
2 of time. I question whether or not you
3 have, in fact, or the mayor or his
4 administration have examined alternatives.
5 For example, former mayoral candidate,
6 Attorney Jim Mulligan, wrote a letter in our
7 one newspaper town today offering
8 alternatives. Has anybody considered them?
9 If you haven't read the letter, I suggest
10 you do. If you have read the letter, I
11 suggest you read it again. You lose nothing
12 by tabling this question for another time.
13 Thank you very much.

14 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you. Anyone one
15 else who wishes to address council?

16 MR. STEPANOVICH: Hi. My name is
17 Angie Stepanovich. I travel to Scranton
18 every day from Harding and I have a feeling
19 that you guys have already made up your
20 minds about the commuter tax, so I'll make
21 it short. I would rather resign from my job
22 in Scranton than pay a tax to bail out the
23 city that has mishandled the taxpayers'
24 funds for years too many to count. Might I
25 remind you gentlemen that you are civil

1 servants and you are employees for the
2 taxpayers of this great city, and I believe
3 that they have told you what your next move
4 should be. The buck must stop somewhere.
5 Good day.

6 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you.

7 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you.

8 MS. SCHUMACHER: Good evening,
9 Council. Marie Schumacher, city resident
10 and taxpayer. You know my feelings on 7-A,
11 I think it's immoral. I would like to read,
12 again, the first two paragraphs of the
13 letter that was written or the article that
14 was written by David Unkavitch, who was the
15 first receiver of the City of Harrisburg.
16 It's titled "A Critical First and Last Steps
17 in a Municipal Work Out."

18 "The first critical step in a
19 municipal work out, whether inside or
20 outside of bankruptcy, is to get all
21 parties, the debtor and the creditors, to
22 accept that they will all have to incur
23 significant losses as a result of the work
24 out process. Secured creditors will do
25 better than unsecured creditors, but taking

1 that into account, the losses need to be
2 fair and proportionate and the municipal
3 needs to come out of the other end of the
4 process able to operate successfully into
5 the future. Because the municipality is a
6 public entity and a public subdivision of
7 the state, the politics and the finances of
8 the work out are intertwined. Creditors
9 with the most political pull or with
10 overwhelming financial strength, compared
11 with the debtor and the other creditors,
12 will try to exercise that pull or strength
13 to avoid losses and to get a
14 disproportionately better deal. If those
15 powerful creditors are successful, the work
16 out will not produce a good result to the
17 municipality or the creditors."

18 I have provided copies of that
19 article to you all prior to this time. And,
20 Mr. McGoff, I just have to say to you, I'm
21 very disappointed what you did last week,
22 those comments you made, without identifying
23 who the parties are because the personal
24 impact is on me now is to trust nobody.
25 Absolutely trust nobody.

1 Mr. Rogan, you have said you are
2 against the August recess, but I just want
3 to call your attention to the fact that you
4 are able to have meetings in this chamber at
5 any time you so choose. Judy Gatelli did it
6 and you might want to pick some topics and
7 do that and hear from the people.

8 Mr. Wechsler, a couple of things, I
9 was appalled to find out tonight in the
10 auditor's report that the trial balance for
11 the year end 2013 has not yet been received
12 by Rossi & Company. Why? What on earth?
13 We have given the business administrator a
14 big bump in salary, additional personnel,
15 what in the world is the reason that trial
16 balance is not finished? We are entering
17 the eighth month. That is appalling.

18 And then the Single Tax Office
19 report for the year-to-date is one of the
20 third items, and I'd like to know how we are
21 tracking to the budget to the cash flow on
22 that, not just the comparison with
23 year-to-date during motions, and then I
24 would like to ask Mr. McGoff if the Third
25 Order items as they are received will all be

1 listed in your first meeting in September or
2 will they be available in the office? So if
3 you could answer that in Fifth Order because
4 I would like to get through the materials I
5 brought.

6 Because I took the liberty of
7 putting packages together for you all since
8 you have got the whole month off, they come
9 in three sections. The first is pensions, I
10 have an article that I thought was
11 excellent. Since most of you are public
12 employees, I'm not sure you understand how
13 the private pension system works, so I have
14 something on the pension benefit guarantee
15 corporation. What they do, includes the
16 maximum monthly guarantee tables, and also a
17 table going from 1975 through 2012, I
18 believe, on what the average claim per
19 vested employee and then what they are able
20 to get, and then finally an article
21 preparing from Boston College who has a
22 center for retirement research stating that
23 local plans are different from private plans
24 that you might find of interest.

25 And then reassessment is the second

1 section and why we need reassessment. I
2 have provided one sheet that you can use as
3 a worksheet. What I did was I took two
4 months of court notes and I went into all of
5 the deeds and I calculated -- I took all of
6 the properties that were in there, I sorted
7 them by municipality -- if I may finish,
8 please? May I? Thank you. And calculated
9 what the common level ratio is in actuality,
10 so I hope you will do those calculations and
11 I hope you will investigate what other
12 people do around this country, specifically,
13 Northern Virginia where market -- the
14 reassessments are made every year based on
15 actual market values, and then -- yes, and
16 then the final section is the fire station.
17 It's a proposal, it's also a candidate for
18 the test of the Amoroso theory if they can
19 see if they will invest. It describes the
20 situation with the East Mountain fire
21 station, which is in terrible disrepair, and
22 I hope you will look at that, also, and give
23 it your consideration. Thank you. And I
24 will bring these up.

25 Also, when you are doing the

1 reassessment needs, I would also urge you to
2 look at some of the tax -- the assessor's
3 roles. There is one block in my
4 neighborhood, all lots the same size and the
5 land values differ significantly from 1,000
6 to 6,000 dollars and with the taxation the
7 way it is with the land waste four times
8 higher than plus, it's worth reading.

9 MR. MCGOFF: Is there anyone else
10 who wishes to address council?

11 MS. CUMMINGS: Lori Cummings from
12 Old Forge. Do you need my full address?

13 MR. MCGOFF: I'm sorry?

14 MS. CUMMINGS: Do you want my full
15 address?

16 MR. MCGOFF: No, that's fine.

17 MS. CUMMINGS: I'm here against the
18 commuter tax. I didn't realize that we can
19 all speak at this meeting so I apologize. I
20 just came up here after work and I didn't
21 realize you were holding this meeting, but I
22 saw it on the news. I'm just concerned that
23 Scranton has reached a limit of where they
24 need to stop and look at the real problem
25 here and that is your unions, and you need

1 to negotiate with them before you do a
2 commuter tax against all of the other
3 citizens in Lackawanna County and anywhere
4 else. So I'm completely against this. I'm
5 surprised this room isn't packed and I'm a
6 little bit shocked, but next time I'll make
7 sure I do a better job getting more people
8 here, but I hope that Scranton realizes they
9 have to start looking at voting differently
10 because, obviously, it's not just effecting
11 Scranton, but now everybody is going to be
12 effected by your vote tonight. I'm hoping
13 that the next time the Republican party
14 brings up a Republican that should have won
15 this election that the people listen, so
16 that's about all of I have to say and I hope
17 you vote "no" on the commuter. Thank you.

18 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you. Anyone else
19 who wishes to speak?

20 MR. SBARAGLIA: Andy Sbaraglia,
21 citizen of Scranton. Fellow Scrantonians,
22 would you be open to try to pass legislation
23 that has that pension board expanding to
24 outside our area? If you are going to ask
25 people to pay up \$5 million they should have

1 representation on the pension board, so this
2 is something you should do as a decent
3 America. You should give them people
4 representation on the pension board being
5 that's where the money is going, but I know
6 it's going to fall on deaf ears. But
7 anyway, that's what should be done if you
8 care about anything being fair. If you
9 don't care about being fair, just pass the
10 law and say that's to heck with you people.
11 You come to Scranton, pay the money and be
12 part like the stupid people of the city.

13 This is where we stand today. We
14 are not moving forward, we are moving
15 backwards. You've got to have at least
16 fairness. They deserve, if you pass that
17 bill, a commuter tax, they deserve
18 representation on the pension board because
19 you are asking them to pay. To sit there
20 and not think about it is not right. It's
21 your un-America to put it that way. This is
22 the only representation you can give the
23 people who are given that. The legislation
24 that passed the law, they aren't coming to
25 Scranton and say, "Put these people on the

1 board."

2 In fact, you should have never
3 passed the law anyway, but that's our
4 legislation. Our legislature in Harrisburg
5 are a bad bunch. I don't know why they said
6 Pennsylvania is the most fifth corrupt
7 state, but it may be, I don't know. But
8 anyway, they should be given representation
9 on the pension board if you so desire to
10 pass the commuter tax. This is the only
11 fair thing to do. America was built on
12 fairness and we should try to be as fair as
13 we can, I know it's a burden. It's a burden
14 on anybody in the city especially if you
15 ever walk -- because you are not going to be
16 able to do much but probably raise our
17 income tax and the commuter tax, but
18 somewhere along the line you got to look --
19 I told you a long time ago, you charge a fee
20 for the garbage, you charge a fee for the
21 sewer, why didn't you charge a fee for the
22 fire protection and the police protection so
23 everybody that lives in the city would have
24 to pay. The nonprofits, too, but that fell
25 on deaf ears a long time ago. Maybe it

1 cannot be done, maybe it could be done, but
2 you should at least look into it. Somewhere
3 along the line you got to spread the burden
4 and you are not spreading the burden other
5 than the poor people up the line with the
6 commuter tax. Senator Blake had a good
7 idea, he was going to take the emergency
8 service tax. Notice I keep calling it the
9 emergency service tax, because that's what
10 it came out to be, it was only for an
11 emergency, but now it's permanent like
12 anything else that happens, but he was going
13 to triple that and do away with the commuter
14 tax and that was a good idea, because all
15 they would be paying would be about 100 and
16 some dollars instead of God knows what they
17 are going to pay, depends on their salary.

18 I know I paid, I paid it because I
19 love the city. I stayed in the city even
20 though a lot of people said you are crazy,
21 but I paid the tax. I was glad to pay it
22 because I love the city. I grew up in the
23 city and plan to be buried in the city, but
24 you got to look at that, too. You got to
25 look at everybody that's in the city and if

1 you don't you are going to be in trouble. I
2 said I blame the people voting their party
3 and their name. Jackowitz said that. Well,
4 in a way he was right, too, it's the people
5 that we elected, but by voting our party and
6 our name, we put us on the path where we
7 are. If we had looked at people, like you
8 are a Republican, I liked Brian Reap. I
9 agreed with a lot of things he said when he
10 was up there, it's just too bad that
11 happened, but at least he tried, but they
12 didn't want him because he was trying too
13 hard and this is where we started to go down
14 the slope back then. I'm sorry we are at
15 that point. I'm really sorry the people of
16 Scranton are the way they are, but it's
17 something that we got to work through. I
18 don't know how, by taxing a lot of the
19 businesses it's not fair. I know you are
20 going to come in with -- okay. Bye.

21 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you,
22 Mr. Sbaraglia. Anyone else?

23 MR. KAVULICH: Thank you. I'm
24 representative Sid Michaels Kavulich. I
25 represent the 114th District in the State

1 House of Representatives, and like you I
2 came here tonight to hear what the mayor and
3 some representatives of the city had to say,
4 and I appreciate your questions and also
5 your time and your patience in listening to
6 what they had to say.

7 And again, I came here to hear what
8 had to be said and I heard the mayor say
9 that the unions were willing to talk and
10 they were willing to work with the
11 administration. Now, under Act 47 the city
12 is required to exhaust all other avenues
13 before imposing so-called commuter tax, and
14 I'm wondering if the fact that the unions
15 are willing to talk to the administration,
16 whether or not that means that the city has
17 not exhausted all of those avenues before
18 imposing this tax. And, also, as a state
19 representative, I am concerned about those
20 residents who live outside of the City of
21 Scranton and in particular the residents of
22 the 114th district which I represent, and I
23 am wondering and I am investigating now, my
24 staff and I in Harrisburg, whether or not
25 the stipulations of Act 47 would supercede

1 the stipulations of Act 205. So again, I
2 don't have the answers at this particular
3 time, but I am investigating that and
4 looking into that because, again, I hear
5 from my constituents each and every day and
6 it is overwhelming that they do not want to
7 pay this commuter tax, and I realize that
8 the City of Scranton needs to do something
9 to get out of this distressed status, but I
10 do once again hope that it is not at the
11 expense of the people that work in the City
12 of Scranton and reside outside of the city
13 and in particular, my district.

14 And again, I thank you for the time
15 and I thank you for the patience and I thank
16 you for you listening to also not only Mayor
17 Courtright and his representatives, but also
18 the citizens that are here today speaking.
19 Thank you very much.

20 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you,
21 Representative Kavulich.

22 Anyone else who wishes to speak?

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

24 MOTIONS.

25 MR. MCGOFF: Mr. Wechsler.

1 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you,
2 Mr. McGoff. First tonight I would like to
3 congratulate Councilman Evans on taking his
4 seat tonight. I'm looking forward to
5 working with Wayne. I have worked with him
6 on a lot of neighborhood projects and
7 community projects in the past and he is
8 quite capable and I look for great things
9 from him.

10 I'd also like to congratulate Chief
11 DeSarno for becoming the permanent fire
12 chief of Scranton, and I also have worked
13 with Chief DeSarno this year on many
14 different community projects and he is also
15 doing a fine job.

16 I'd like to touch a little bit on
17 the Act 47, as if we haven't done enough of
18 it already. We heard a lot tonight about
19 speculation. The problem with speculation
20 is it's not us speculating. The state is
21 speculating. The state is speculating as to
22 whether they are going to pass the Act 47
23 LST tax. The Act 205 tax is on the books,
24 it's a tool available to the city, and it
25 would be irresponsible for us not to take

1 advantage of that at this time. But in 2014
2 if there is a chance that this tax could be
3 implemented and starting to be collected in
4 October, it could lead to maybe a million
5 dollars for the city to come in. It would
6 be irresponsible for us not to pursue that.

7 Representative Kavulich almost made
8 a point that I spoke of a few weeks ago
9 about this tax, the state did not care about
10 what was happening in Scranton in terms of
11 the Act 205 until we introduced it and
12 started talking about it. Finally now they
13 have some input from Senator Eikelberger who
14 is concerned about Scranton implementing a
15 tax all of a sudden. Our representatives
16 have been working to get that Act 47 tax
17 passed for years, and finally now maybe the
18 fact that we are putting some pressure on
19 them by passing Act 205 is having the
20 intended result of getting them to move
21 along.

22 Looking at this, I can understand
23 the questions about the taxes without
24 representation. There are over 40
25 municipalities in the state that already

1 have this tax. This is not a tax that's
2 been invented for Scranton, there are
3 communities collecting this tax successfully
4 and there has been argument against taxation
5 without representation and the tax was
6 collected.

7 And I agree with Mr. Mulligan's
8 article in the paper today. That would be
9 great, but right now this is on the table.
10 We are not going to collect \$8 million in
11 garbage taxes by the end of December. We
12 are not going to get these delinquent
13 properties sold. This is on the table
14 tonight. This is something that the city
15 can begin as part of a plan. It's
16 impossible for the entire plan to be
17 presented at one time. It's impossible.
18 There is too many working parts. This all
19 has to be put together so we can start
20 preparing a budget for 2014 -- I'm sorry,
21 2015, 2016 and 2017 just as we looked at
22 Mr. Amoroso's plan.

23 So tonight I will be voting to move
24 this along, and then that does not mean the
25 job is finished, we do have to consider if

1 the state passes that Act 47. If it passes
2 in time that we can use it as a tax in 2015,
3 maybe Act 205 does get repealed. I don't
4 know if everyone who realizes it when they
5 talk about Act 47 that's also going to put a
6 burden on the commuters that come into the
7 city. There is no way the commuters are not
8 going to pay some increased tax to the City
9 of Scranton. Either they are going to be
10 through Act 47 or it's going to be through
11 Act 205, that's going to happen.

12 And the one last thing I would like
13 to discuss tonight, and I really don't want
14 to talk about it again, but it was mentioned
15 a few times about the summer vacation that
16 we are going on. I took office in January,
17 the council reorganized and it was decided
18 that we would take August off as a break.
19 As such, I have not missed one meeting, I
20 have not missed one caucus. I have
21 scheduled my time off with my family
22 toward-- two-thirds is at the end of the
23 August. Because we are not here does not
24 mean that we are not being councilmen. My
25 calendar next week already has three things

1 I have to attend to in the evenings during
2 the week. The fact that we are not here at
3 this time to prepare for some legislation
4 that's go to be coming for us in the fall,
5 we have a lot of things that we are going to
6 get started on again. By the time we get
7 back it will be time to start talking about
8 the snow removal plan for this winter.

9 So there is things that we have to
10 get together on and discuss, and I will be
11 out all the time during the recess. I see
12 citizens all the time, so we are family
13 people, we do have scheduled time off, I
14 scheduled my time off during the break and
15 that's my responsibility to be here when I
16 am supposed to be here, and I will be off
17 two Thursdays, if anything comes up on the
18 other Thursdays I will be available. And
19 that's all I have, Mr. McGoff.

20 MR. MCGOFF: Mr. Rogan.

21 MR. ROGAN: Yes, thank you. Just
22 two housekeeping items to begin. I'd like
23 to also welcome Mr. Evans.

24 MR. EVANS: Thank you.

25 MR. ROGAN: I look forward to

1 working with you and definitely will be
2 leaning on you for expertise in the real
3 estate issues that will be coming up.

4 And secondly, I would like to
5 apologize to Mr. Gaughan for my choice of
6 words with my -- the statement that I made
7 during the caucus. That certainly wasn't my
8 intent. My frustration during this entire
9 process, and Mr. Wechsler touched on this as
10 well, is much of the questioning from -- and
11 especially from the media regarding this
12 issue hasn't been on the current state of
13 the law. As I mentioned before, there is a
14 difference between a proposal, a bill, and a
15 law. The law as it currently stands in the
16 State of Pennsylvania Act 205 tax can be
17 implemented, and that's why it's being
18 explored by the city.

19 I appreciate the input from
20 Representative Kavulich. We agree many
21 times and this time, unfortunately, we are
22 on other sides, but, you know, I understand
23 you are here to fight for the people of your
24 district and the same for the mayor of the
25 Clarks Summit who was here last week, and we

1 certainly appreciate those thoughts from
2 outside of the city, but at the end of the
3 day city council, the mayor, the city
4 controller have to look out for the best
5 interests of the residents of Scranton and
6 at this time this is one tool the state has
7 given to us to help shore up our pension
8 problem.

9 Whether the state decides six months
10 from now, two years from now or ever to make
11 changes, at that point in time all that
12 means is more work for city council and the
13 mayor to adjust to how the state has changed
14 and we are certainly up for that tax, but as
15 the law currently stands the City of
16 Scranton, number one, can legally implement
17 the 205 tax. That's why you haven't seen
18 the challenges that happen two years ago
19 when the city was considering implementing
20 the Act 47 recovery -- Act 47 commuter tax,
21 that's number one.

22 And number two, which was very
23 important in me decision and to me, is the
24 deciding issue that as the law currently
25 states, currently stands, city residents

1 will not pay an additional cent of tax
2 because of this vote. City residents will
3 actually pay less tax because of this vote.

4 If council and the administration
5 fail to act in shoring up our pensions, we
6 are either going to wind up in receivership
7 or bankruptcy, and neither of those is a
8 good option for the residents of Scranton
9 because when a receiver comes in the first
10 thing they are going to do is they are going
11 to raise your taxes and they are going to
12 implement a 205 tax, and they will implement
13 it and they will also increase the wage tax
14 because the receiver wouldn't be a resident
15 of Scranton like the five of us are on this
16 board who lives here and understands what's
17 going on. That's who we have to look out
18 for.

19 I understand that the state senator
20 from Archbald, Mr. Blake, is against the
21 city doing this. The state senator from
22 Archbald is not the state senator from
23 Scranton. Scranton, as anyone who in
24 Lackawanna County knows, has much different
25 issues than the surrounding areas, and at

1 this time the only proposal that has been
2 brought up by anyone to help shore up the
3 pensions is the 205 tax.

4 I also agree with comments that have
5 been made for new employees that there needs
6 to be major concessions. The idea of a
7 401-K has been floated around, and I think
8 that's something that should be explored for
9 new hires, but in order for a 401-K to be
10 even considered for new hires you have to
11 replace that revenue that you will be losing
12 by employees contributing into the pension
13 system. It's not just like social security,
14 it's the same system where you are a current
15 workers paying for retired workers. That's
16 what it amounts to, and when you take out
17 that stream of income you have to replace
18 it. If the city was not willing to pay the
19 unions what's owed from pensions, we would
20 be sued and we would lose in Court just like
21 we have last time. The issue has to be
22 addressed. It's not something that it's
23 simply not paying.

24 I don't want to pay my mortgage at
25 the end of every month but I have to. If we

1 don't the bank is going to come and take my
2 property. The city doesn't want to pay
3 these pensions but we have to. It's an
4 obligation that's been made. If we don't do
5 it, we wind up in Bankruptcy Court or with a
6 receiver and that means more taxes for the
7 residents. There have not been any
8 alternatives brought up to shore up the
9 pension fund outside of this tax. If this
10 tax on commuters doesn't pass, what is going
11 to happen is your taxes will go up more than
12 they are already going to because of the
13 whole that's been dug for the last four
14 years. That's why I support this tax. It
15 took awhile for me to come to terms with it,
16 but thanks to Attorney Minora for helping
17 educate us, Solicitor Shrive as well I have
18 spoken to numerous times over the last few
19 weeks about this issue, it is the best way
20 for the city to shore up the pension fund
21 without overtaxing our already overtaxed
22 residents. One of the speakers brought up
23 an article by a former mayoral candidate and
24 he mentioned some very good points in that
25 article, and they need to be done in

1 addition to this tax. The city budget
2 outside of the pensions is strapped. We
3 need to do those items to shore up our
4 budget without passing tax increases along
5 to our residents. Because of those reasons,
6 because it doesn't raise taxes on the
7 residents of Scranton who elected us, I
8 fully support the 205 tax, it will pass
9 tonight, it will become law, and I'm
10 confident that it will help shore up our
11 pensions, and once they are shored up then
12 we have a few other big issues to address,
13 including the Court award, concessions from
14 unions, which hopefully will take place. I
15 know the unions have come out and said that
16 they are willing to work with the city,
17 which is certainly a big step forward from
18 the last 12 years when labor relations in
19 the city were completely non-existent
20 because we had a mayor that refused to
21 negotiate.

22 So because of all of those reasons,
23 and I don't want to keep belaboring the
24 point, but the bottom line for me and the
25 reason why I'm supporting this tax is

1 because it will generate revenue for the
2 city without taxing city residents a dime.
3 Thank you.

4 MR. MCGOFF: Mr. Evans.

5 MR. EVANS: Thank you. First of
6 all, I'd like to say that I'm honored,
7 humbled and excited to be part of the
8 Scranton City Council so I thank you for
9 your kind comments last week and tonight.

10 Act 205. I'm a supporter of the
11 Amoroso plan, I think there is no doubt
12 about that and I also support Act 205.
13 However, my decision and my comments that my
14 support of Act 205 is contingent on pension
15 reform. The pension currently is a
16 disaster. You know, we are category three.
17 When I look at the Amoroso proposal one of
18 the most frightening things I saw that
19 expenditures increased since 2008 by 261
20 percent with the Bureau of Fire and 451
21 percent in the Bureau of Police. The
22 appropriations, the city's minimum municipal
23 obligation or the MMO will have grown by 290
24 percent by 2016. That's clearly
25 unsustainable so I agree we need this

1 pension changes only where it would
2 establish a defined benefit for new hires
3 would not. It's quite simple, I feel like
4 Act 205 should equal pension reform. That's
5 my own -- I'll make further comments, you
6 know, as we move to Seventh Order, but
7 that's my comments for now on 205.

8 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you.

9 Mr. Gaughan.

10 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, thank you.

11 First, I'd like to congratulate Mr. Evans on
12 his appointment and look forward to working
13 with him and wish him the best of luck.

14 The residents of Oak Avenue in
15 Minooka would like to thank the DPW for
16 patching some pretty big potholes on their
17 street, it was much appreciated.

18 Last week I mentioned that a
19 resident had contact with me regarding
20 businesses on Main Avenue in West Scranton
21 they were putting objects on the sidewalks
22 making foot traffic difficult at times.
23 Chief Graziano responded to council that a
24 patrolman would be out to ensure this is
25 taken care of and they are going to checkup

1 on the matter frequently so I thank them for
2 that.

3 Residents in Pinebrook had called to
4 complain about a nuisance property on Ward
5 Street. The LIPS Department sent an
6 inspector out to the property and they are
7 going to work in conjunction with the DPW to
8 get that issue taken care of.

9 Council has made a second request to
10 have Joyce Electrical fix a broken street
11 light on Kester Court that neighbors have
12 been concerned about for quite some time.

13 I'd like to give an update on the
14 Rockwell Avenue bridge probable cause ledge.
15 As scheduled by PennDOT, the anticipated
16 notice of receive the construction date is
17 August 20, 2014. Everything is currently
18 moving to that date without issues.

19 The street sweeper is scheduled to
20 be in the North Scranton area next week from
21 Sprint Street to Oak Street including all
22 avenues and streets.

23 Before we recess for the month of
24 August, I'd just like to say what a great
25 job our office staff has done. Mrs. Reed,

1 as city clerk, has done an outstanding job
2 these last seven months along with our
3 secretaries, Kathy Carrera and Jamie
4 Marciano, and Attorney Amil Minora. Their
5 job is not easy and always hectic, but they
6 made our transition smooth and I appreciate
7 that very much.

8 Finally, I'd like to make a motion
9 that we table Agenda Item 7-A.

10 MR. MCGOFF: There's a motion, is
11 there a second? Motion dies for lack of a
12 second.

13 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you. And I'll
14 reserve the rest of my comments for agenda
15 Item 7-A. Thank you.

16 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you. A few
17 things, some people mentioned the audit and
18 the status of the audit. There was a
19 meeting today with the auditor and the
20 employees of the Business Administrator's
21 Office and what they attempted to do was to
22 delineate the plan for preparing the audit.
23 The additional help that was mentioned prior
24 has not materialized. Due to illnesses and
25 other things the BA's Office has been

1 understaffed, and while that is an
2 explanation it may not be an excuse. They
3 do need to, and they understand that the --
4 excuse me, the audit needs to be completed
5 as expeditiously as possible, and so what
6 they did today was they set down and kind of
7 defined roles for preparing the audit and
8 the auditor and the business administrator
9 are hopeful that this plan will get the
10 audit completed perhaps not as timely as we
11 might want, but certainly needs to be done
12 before the end of the calendar year.

13 Somebody mentioned a public safety
14 fee and that we should investigate it, that
15 has been investigated in the past and what
16 we found was that a public safety fee while
17 you can impose it on people living in the
18 city, it cannot be imposed upon anyone in a
19 tax exempt entity, and so the idea of a
20 public safety fee, you know, to include
21 educational institutions and so on just
22 isn't feasible.

23 As far as the Act 205 is concerned,
24 I'm not going to reiterate what was already
25 said. As far as I'm concerned, I supported

1 the commuter tax back when it was introduced
2 earlier, two or three years ago or whatever
3 number. I believe that what we are doing is
4 we did not pass Act 205, as I stated last
5 week. That is something that the state
6 representatives voted upon and enacted. We
7 are simply implementing a tool that is being
8 used by over 40 municipalities throughout
9 the State of Pennsylvania, Commonwealth of
10 Pennsylvania. This is not something new, it
11 is simply something that is available to us
12 and that we can use as needed. And as
13 Mr. Wechsler said, I think it's significant
14 to note that no matter which piece of
15 legislation becomes applicable, whether it's
16 Act 47 or Act 205, that commuters in the
17 City of Scranton, people working in the City
18 of Scranton are going to pay one or the
19 other it would appear, and also as part of
20 the Amoroso plan or now the mayor's plan for
21 fiscal recovery, there are other parts to
22 this plan and one of the things that was
23 part of the plan was a real estate tax
24 increase that would be felt by the citizens
25 of Scranton, so the idea that the citizens

1 of Scranton are not going to be taxed any
2 further is really not true. It's simply
3 that, as Mr. Rogan said as the law states
4 now Act 205 residents would not be taxed.
5 That doesn't mean that as we move forward
6 into 2015 that in the budget there would not
7 be a tax increase on residents of the City
8 of Scranton.

9 There are many stakeholders in this
10 city, be they residents, commuters, union
11 members, whatever, and in order to bring the
12 city back to fiscal responsibility all of
13 the stakeholders in the city will probably
14 need to sacrifice in some way. I think that
15 that's a reality that cannot be escaped, and
16 as we move forward there will probably be
17 other parts of this plan, this recovery plan
18 that will be met with opposition by one
19 group or another, but it is our
20 responsibility to bring the city to fiscal
21 responsibility as soon as we can and my
22 belief that this is, Act 205, is the initial
23 step in implementing that plan. And that's
24 all. Thank you.

25 MS. REED: 5-B. FOR INTRODUCTION- A

1 RESOLUTION – APPOINTMENT OF PATRICK DESARNO,
2 606 HAMPTON STREET, SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA,
3 18504 TO THE PERMANENT POSITION OF
4 SUPERINTENDENT OF FIRE FOR THE SCRANTON FIRE
5 DEPARTMENT EFFECTIVE JULY 26, 2014.

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

9 MR. ROGAN: So moved.

10 MR. WECHSLER: Second.

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

14 MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

15 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

16 MR. EVANS: Aye.

17 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

18 MS. MCGOFF: Aye. Opposed? The
19 ayes have it and so moved.

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

21 READING BY TITLE – FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO.
22 39, 2014 - AN ORDINANCE - AUTHORIZING THE
23 MAYOR AND OTHER APPROPRIATE CITY OFFICIALS
24 TO EXECUTE AND ENTER INTO AN EASEMENT
25 AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF SCRANTON AND

1 LACKAWANNA HERITAGE VALLEY VARIOUS
2 PROPERTIES ALONG NAY AUG AVENUE.

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

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

7 MR. WECHSLER: Second.

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

10 MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

11 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

12 MR. EVANS: Aye.

13 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

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

16 MS. REED: 6-B. READING BY TITLE -
17 FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO. 40, 2014 - AN
18 ORDINANCE - AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND OTHER
19 APPROPRIATE CITY OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE AND
20 ENTER INTO AN EASEMENT AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE
21 CITY OF SCRANTON AND LACKAWANNA HERITAGE
22 VALLEY AUTHORITY FOR A SECTION OF THE
23 LACKAWANNA RIVER HERITAGE TRAIL SITUATE IN
24 SOUTH SCRANTON.

25 MR. MCGOFF: You've heard reading by

1 title of Item 6-B, what is your pleasure?

2 MR. ROGAN: I move that Item 6-B
3 pass reading by title.

4 MR. WECHSLER: Second.

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

7 MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

8 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

9 MR. EVANS: Aye.

10 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

11 MR. MCGOFF: Aye. Opposed? The
12 ayes have it and so moved.

13 MR. WECHSLER: I make a motion to
14 suspend the rules to move Item 6-A and 6-B
15 to Seventh Order for final passage.

16 MR. ROGAN: Second.

17 MR. MCGOFF: On the question? All
18 those in favor of suspending the rules and
19 moving item 6-A and 6-B into Seventh Order
20 for final consideration signify by saying
21 aye.

22 MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

23 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

24 MR. EVANS: Aye.

25 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

1 MS. MCGOFF: Aye. Opposed? The
2 ayes have it and so moved.

3 MS. REED: SEVENTH ORDER. 7-A.
4 FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMITTEE ON
5 FINANCE - FOR ADOPTION - FILE OF THE COUNCIL
6 NO. 36, 2014 - AN ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE
7 REVENUE FUNDING FOR THE SEVERELY DISTRESSED
8 PENSION(S) OF THE CITY OF SCRANTON BY
9 ADOPTING AND IMPOSING AN ADDITIONAL
10 SEVENTY-FIVE HUNDREDTHS (.75%) OF A PERCENT
11 TAX UPON EARNED INCOME RECEIVED AND NET
12 PROFITS EARNED BY NON-RESIDENTS FOR WORK
13 DONE, SERVICES PERFORMED, BUSINESS CONDUCTED
14 AND INCOME EARNED WITHIN THE CITY OF
15 SCRANTON, REQUIRING THE FILING OF RETURNS BY
16 TAXPAYERS SUBJECT TO THE TAX; REQUIRING
17 EMPLOYERS TO COLLECT THE TAX AT SOURCE;
18 PROVIDING FOR THE ADMINISTRATION, COLLECTING
19 AND ENFORCEMENT OF THE SAID TAX; SAID
20 REVENUE TO BE SPECIFICALLY RESTRICTED TO
21 FUNDING OF THE SEVERELY DISTRESSED
22 PENSION(S) OF THE CITY OF SCRANTON, UNDER
23 AND PURSUANT TO THE MUNICIPAL PENSION PLAN
24 FUNDING STANDARD AND RECOVERY ACT, ACT 205
25 OF DECEMBER 18, 1984 (P.L.1005, NO. 205),

1 AND ITS AMENDMENTS, SPECIFICALLY 53 PA.
2 C.S.A. §895.101 ET SEQ. THIS TAX IS EXPECTED
3 TO
4 GENERATE APPROXIMATELY FIVE-MILLION
5 (\$5,000,000.00) DOLLARS IN ANNUAL REVENUE.

6 MR. MCGOFF: What is the
7 recommendation of the Chair for the
8 Committee on Finance?

9 MR. WECHSLER: As Chairperson for
10 the Committee on Finance, I recommend final
11 passage of Item 7-A.

12 MR. ROGAN: Second.

13 MR. MCGOFF: On the question?

14 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, on the question.
15 I again made a motion tonight to table Item
16 7-A, the final reading of the Act 205
17 legislation. For the past two weeks I have
18 voiced my concerns and opposition to this
19 legislation. I will reiterate the reasons
20 why I oppose this legislation.

21 First, I believe voting on this
22 legislation is completely premature and at
23 this point grossly irresponsible. City
24 council should not consider a tax increase
25 in the absence of Mayor Courtright's 2015

1 budget proposal. Every budget, as we know,
2 has many moving pieces and these important
3 components should not be presented piecemeal
4 to city council.

5 Second, as I stated last week, I
6 believe it's only fair that city council
7 knows what concessions and savings the
8 unions agree to before we consider any
9 additional tax burdens for residents or
10 people who are within the city. Mayor
11 Courtright made it very clear that he
12 accepted Mr. Amoroso's recommendations
13 regarding renegotiating certain provisions
14 in the collective bargaining agreements.
15 Mayor Courtright also agreed with
16 Mr. Amoroso's conclusion that the real
17 drivers of Scranton's structural deficit are
18 pension obligations and personnel costs.

19 The proposed Act 205 tax along with
20 the LST tax, property tax increases and
21 assets sales are all extreme measures that
22 only plug holes in the budget.

23 It only makes sense that the mayor
24 address the union concessions first so that
25 we may have meaningful change and no what

1 savings can be found.

2 Third, as I explained in the past
3 two weeks, the general assembly is likely to
4 pass Act 47 legislation which will require
5 that any tax levied against commuters must
6 also been levied against residents in an
7 equal or greater rate. In other words, an
8 increase in the non-resident wage tax will
9 require a match in the resident tax. City
10 residents will face a 33 percent increase in
11 their wage tax which would be crippling.

12 Mr. Rogan stated last week that the
13 city could just lower the wage tax and then
14 raise it again essentially avoiding the 33
15 percent increase. This is not possibly.
16 The Act 205 tax is not a separate tax. It's
17 an adjustment to the earned income tax.
18 Section II of Act 511, the Local Tax
19 Enabling Act, lists 13 type of taxes that
20 can be levied locally. A pension tax, a
21 commuter tax, no where is Act 205 is
22 mentioned as a separate tax, therefore, we
23 can't lower the resident wage tax and raise
24 it within the same budget year, which if
25 that's the route they were going to go poses

1 a major problem.

2 Mr. Rogan also stated last week that
3 40 municipalities use the Act 205 tax. This
4 is also untrue. Only 14 municipalities in
5 the Pennsylvania have levied the Act 205
6 tax. Not one of these 14 municipalities
7 have levied the tax solely on commuters.
8 They have levied against both commuters and
9 residents.

10 As we see tonight from the public
11 caucus that was held, there are numerous
12 questions about the implementation of the
13 tax and about revenue projections. Now, the
14 topic about unions has come up in the last
15 two weeks. I am not against unions
16 whatsoever. I have nothing against unions.
17 My grandfather with a city policeman who
18 started under Mayor Hanlon and served
19 honorably for 20 years. My family been
20 involved in unions for I think about over
21 100 years before Lackawanna County was even
22 Lackawanna County when they came right off
23 of the boat as many of you ancestors have,
24 but I believe in fairness. I believe in
25 fairness. It is not fair to tax commuters

1 or residents and ask them to pay for a
2 pension when we have not made true reform to
3 that pension and we have not had those
4 negotiations with the unions. That's only
5 fair. I don't want to see anybody lose
6 their job, I don't want to see anybody that
7 would be hurt by this, but I can't in good
8 conscience vote on what I have in front of
9 me when we haven't done those things first.

10 This is not the plan. This is a
11 sliver, this is a part, it's a component of
12 the plan. I think we should look at
13 everything with the context of a budget. To
14 me that only makes sense. I have done my
15 homework on this, I have spoken to Senator
16 Blake. I have spoken to Senator
17 Eikelberger. As to my colleagues saying
18 that, you know, as the law currently stands
19 that we can do this, I think as councilmen
20 we should look into the future. There is a
21 very good chance that Act 47 could have an
22 affect on how we levy this tax. So, I mean,
23 what are we supposed to do, just pull the
24 wool over our eyes and pretend it's not
25 there or might not happen? That's a

1 legitimate concern.

2 So in closing, I honestly can't
3 think of any reason to vote "yes" for this
4 tax. I haven't heard a good reason yet as
5 to why the administration is in such a rush
6 to impose this tax. We haven't had the
7 benefit of reviewing this tax within the
8 context of a full budget proposal from Mayor
9 Courtright. The administration has not
10 secured much needed concessions from the
11 unions, and there is pending legislation in
12 Harrisburg that will effect how this tax is
13 levied. Voting "yes" for this tax is not I
14 believe in the best interest of this time of
15 the City of Scranton.

16 I realize that our pension system is
17 severely distressed, however, it makes no
18 sense to ask other people to pay for it
19 until we are sure that we have taken the
20 necessary steps to effect true and
21 meaningful long-term change. So for those
22 reasons that I have given tonight and in the
23 last two weeks my final vote will once again
24 be "no." Thank you.

25 MR. MCGOFF: Anyone else?

1 MR. EVANS: A couple of comments,
2 having stated before I support the Amoroso
3 plan, now the mayor's plan. This is a
4 component of that plan. I'm disappointed
5 that pension reform was not addressed prior
6 to this vote, however, some times you have
7 to take a leap of faith and hope, hope it
8 will get done. I expect though, and I will
9 absolutely ask for this remedy to be a 401-K
10 or 457 for new hires. That should be the
11 minimum that we should expect on Act 205.
12 Thank you.

13 MR. ROGAN: I'd just like to address
14 one item regarding, you know, what Mr.
15 Gaughan said regarding looking to the future
16 of what the state does. The City of
17 Scranton cannot wait on the State of
18 Pennsylvania. We have for many, many years.
19 Act 47 has been the biggest disaster the
20 City of Scranton has ever had. Because of
21 previous administration looking into what --
22 how they thought the Court would rule, it
23 costs us over \$20 million in court
24 settlements. It would be nice if we could
25 have clarity from the state on what reforms

1 they will push, but we don't have that.

2 It's an election year for the
3 governor, it's an election year for our
4 state reps and state senators, they are
5 obviously not looking to go out on a limb
6 for the City of Scranton, they haven't in
7 the past. My vote is we have to look out
8 for our own here in the city. This will
9 help shore up the pension funds without
10 taxing the residents, so I will vote "yes."

11 MR. GAUGHAN: I just want to make
12 one additional comment, I am looking out for
13 the residents of the City of Scranton. I
14 cannot turn a blind eye to legislation that
15 is most likely going to pass in Harrisburg.
16 I have talked to Senator Blake, who is the
17 ranking Democrat on the local government
18 committee, I have talked to Senator
19 Eikelberger who proposed that legislation
20 and every indication when the general
21 assembly reconvenes in September is that
22 this will pass, so why not wait. What is
23 the rush to do this at this point? That's
24 been my question from the beginning, why not
25 wait? And to say that we shouldn't look

1 into the future, to me that makes no sense.
2 We have got to be responsible before we ask
3 other people to pay a tax we got to make
4 sure that we are responsible and we have
5 realized what savings are going on in the
6 City of Scranton. That's fairness to me.

7 Now, I know when we sit up here we
8 are going to have to make tough decisions, I
9 understand that. I will not sit up here and
10 be the naysayer and say no to everything
11 that Mayor Courtright presents. That is not
12 how I intend to be a city councilman, but
13 what is presented in front of me, the
14 questions that I have asked tonight that I
15 don't feel were answered in the slightest
16 makes me very concerned. So again, that is
17 why I am voting "no."

18 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you. Just a
19 brief comment, I do believe that the city
20 needs to be proactive. We have been
21 reactive for a long period of time. The
22 newspapers, citizens, everyone has asked
23 what are you doing? This is what we are
24 doing. This is the first step in a plan, in
25 a coordinated plan, to bring the city to

1 fiscal responsibility. We cannot wait for
2 the state to act. Honestly, I don't believe
3 the state has the very good track record
4 when it comes to the City of Scranton and if
5 we wait for their help it may never occur.
6 I think that what we need to do is, as I
7 said, be proactive, start to implement the
8 plan and move forward. Yes, that's looking
9 into the future, implement a plan that will
10 bring us to future fiscal responsibility.
11 Anyone else? Roll call, please?

12 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Wechsler.

13 MR. WECHSLER: Yes.

14 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Rogan.

15 MR. ROGAN: Yes.

16 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Evans.

17 MR. EVANS: Yes.

18 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Gaughan.

19 MR. GAUGHAN: No.

20 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. McGoff.

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

23 MS. REED: 7-B. FOR CONSIDERATION BY
24 THE COMMITTEE ON RULES -FOR ADOPTION - FILE
25 OF THE COUNCIL NO. 37, 2014 - AN ORDINANCE

1 OF THE CITY OF SCRANTON ADOPTING THE 2009
2 EDITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL PROPERTY
3 MAINTENANCE CODE, REGULATING AND GOVERNING
4 THE CONDITIONS AND MAINTENANCE OF ALL
5 PROPERTY, BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES, BY
6 PROVIDING THE STANDARDS FOR SUPPLIED
7 UTILITIES AND FACILITIES AND OTHER PHYSICAL
8 THINGS AND CONDITIONS ESSENTIAL TO ENSURE
9 THAT STRUCTURES ARE SAFE, SANITARY AND FIT
10 FOR OCCUPATION AND USE; AND THE CONDEMNATION
11 OF BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES UNFIT FOR HUMAN
12 OCCUPANCY AND USE, AND THE DEMOLITION OF
13 SUCH EXISTING STRUCTURES IN THE CITY OF
14 SCRANTON; PROVIDING FOR THE ISSUANCE OF
15 PERMITS AND COLLECTION OF FEES THEREFOR;
16 REPEALING ORDINANCE NO. 2, 2000 OF THE CITY
17 OF SCRANTON AND ALL OTHER ORDINANCES AND
18 PARTS OF ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT THEREWITH.

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

22 MR. ROGAN: Second.

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

25 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Wechsler.

1 MR. WECHSLER: Yes.

2 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Rogan.

3 MR. ROGAN: Yes.

4 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Evans.

5 MR. EVANS: Yes.

6 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Gaughan.

7 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

8 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. McGoff.

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

11 MS. REED: 7-C. FOR CONSIDERATION
12 BY THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE - FOR ADOPTION -
13 FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO. 38, 2014 - CREATING
14 AND ESTABLISHING SPECIAL CITY ACCOUNT NO.
15 02.229611 ENTITLED "TEAMSTERS LOCAL #229
16 REPUBLIC PARKING EMPLOYEES HEALTHCARE
17 CONTRIBUTIONS" FOR THE RECEIPT AND
18 DISBURSEMENT OF THOSE FUNDS RECEIVED UNDER
19 THE CURRENT COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT.

20 MR. MCGOFF: What is the
21 recommendation of the Chair for the
22 Committee on Finance?

23 MR. WECHSLER: As Chairperson for
24 the Committee on Finance, I recommend final
25 passage of Item 7-C.

1 MR. ROGAN: Second.

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

4 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Wechsler.

5 MR. WECHSLER: Yes.

6 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Rogan.

7 MR. ROGAN: Yes.

8 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Evans.

9 MR. EVANS: Yes.

10 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Gaughan.

11 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

12 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. McGoff.

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

15 MS. REED: 7-D. FOR CONSIDERATION
16 BY THE COMMITTEE ON RULES - FOR ADOPTION
17 -RESOLUTION NO. 69, 2014 - RE-APPOINTING
18 STEVEN KOCHIS, 531 HICKORY STREET, SCRANTON,
19 PENNSYLVANIA, 18505, AS A MEMBER OF THE
20 BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS FOR THE CITY OF
21 SCRANTON. MR. KOCHIS'S TERM EXPIRED ON JULY
22 16, 2014 AND HIS NEW TERM WILL EXPIRE
23 ON JULY 15, 2019.

24 MR. MCGOFF: As Chair for the
25 Committee on Rules, I recommend final

1 passage of Item 7-D.

2 MR. ROGAN: Second.

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

5 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Wechsler.

6 MR. WECHSLER: Yes.

7 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Rogan.

8 MR. ROGAN: Yes.

9 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Evans.

10 MR. EVANS: Yes.

11 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Gaughan.

12 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

13 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. McGoff.

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

16 MS. REED: 7-E, FORMERLY 6-A - FOR
17 CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY
18 DEVELOPMENT - FOR ADOPTION - FILE OF THE
19 COUNCIL NO. 39, 2014 - AN ORDINANCE -
20 AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND OTHER APPROPRIATE
21 CITY OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE AND ENTER INTO AN
22 EASEMENT AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF
23 SCRANTON AND LACKAWANNA HERITAGE VALLEY
24 VARIOUS PROPERTIES ALONG NAY AUG AVENUE.

25 MR. MCGOFF: What is the

1 recommendation of the Chair for the
2 Committee on Finance?

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

6 MR. WECHSLER: Second.

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

9 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Wechsler.

10 MR. WECHSLER: Yes.

11 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Rogan.

12 MR. ROGAN: Yes.

13 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Evans.

14 MR. EVANS: Yes.

15 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Gaughan.

16 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

17 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. McGoff.

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

20 MS. REED: 7-F, FORMERLY 6-B, FOR
21 CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY
22 DEVELOPMENT - FOR ADOPTION - AN ORDINANCE -
23 AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND OTHER APPROPRIATE
24 CITY OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE AND ENTER INTO AN
25 EASEMENT AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF

1 SCRANTON AND LACKAWANNA HERITAGE VALLEY
2 AUTHORITY FOR A SECTION OF THE LACKAWANNA
3 RIVER HERITAGE TRAIL SITUATE IN SOUTH
4 SCRANTON.

5 MR. MCGOFF: What is the
6 recommendation of the Chair for the
7 Committee on Community Development?

8 MR. ROGAN: As Chairperson for the
9 Committee on Community Development, I
10 recommend final passage of Item 7-F.

11 MR. WECHSLER: Second.

12 MR. MCGOFF: On the question? Roll
13 call, please?

14 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Wechsler.

15 MR. WECHSLER: Yes.

16 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Rogan.

17 MR. ROGAN: Yes.

18 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Evans.

19 MR. EVANS: Yes.

20 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Gaughan.

21 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

22 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. McGoff.

23 MR. MCGOFF: Yes. I hereby declare
24 Item 7-F legally and lawfully adopted.

25 Prior to adjournment, I would like

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to announce that the next scheduled meeting
for city council will be held September 4.
If there is no further business?

MR. ROGAN: Motion to adjourn.

MR. MCGOFF: Meeting adjourned.

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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

CATHENE S. NARDOZZI, RPR
OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER