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SCRANTON CITY COUNCIL MEETING

HELD:

Thursday, June 25, 2015

LOCATION:

Council Chambers

Scranton City Hall

340 North Washington Avenue

Scranton, Pennsylvania

CATHENE S. NARDOZZI, RPR - OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER

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CITY OF SCRANTON COUNCIL:

ROBERT MCGOFF, PRESIDENT

PATRICK ROGAN, VICE-PRESIDENT  
(Not present)

WAYNE EVANS

JOSEPH WECHSLER

WILLIAM GAUGHAN

LORI REED, CITY CLERK

JAMIE MARCIANO, ASSISTANT CITY CLERK

JOE COLBASSANI, 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. Mr.

7 Evans.

8 MR. EVANS: Here.

9 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Gaughan.

10 MR. GAUGHAN: Here.

11 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. McGoff.

12 MR. MCGOFF: Here. Let the minutes  
13 reflect that Mr. Rogan did contact council  
14 and said that there was a distinct  
15 possibility that he would not be here this  
16 evening.

17 Dispense with the reading of the  
18 minutes.

19 MS. REED: THIRD ORDER. 3-A. TAX  
20 ASSESSOR'S RESULTS REPORT FOR HEARING DATE  
21 HELD JUNE 3, 2015.

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

24 MS. REED: 3-B. MINUTES OF THE  
25 COMPOSITE PENSION BOARD MEETING HELD

1 MAY 27, 2015.

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

4 MS. REED: 3-C. AGENDA FOR CITY  
5 PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING HELD JUNE 24,  
6 2015.

7 MR. MCGOFF: Are there any comments?  
8 If not, received and filed. Any Clerk's  
9 notes?

10 MS. REED: Nothing, Mr. McGoff.

11 MR. MCGOFF: Let the minutes reflect  
12 that Attorney Minora was not able to be here  
13 this evening, but he sent Attorney  
14 Colbassani in his absence.

15 Just a couple of quick notes, next  
16 week's meeting has been rescheduled  
17 Wednesday, July 1, at 6:30. There will be a  
18 caucus at 6:00 as usual. Also, there will  
19 be garbage pickup on Friday, July 3. DPW,  
20 however, will be off on Monday, July 6, and  
21 refuse collection will be delayed a day  
22 during that week, okay?

23 Any other announcements from  
24 council?

25 MR. GAUGHAN: I have one. As part

1 of the Scranton Notre Dame Club's God's  
2 Country Notre Dame initiative the club is  
3 organizing the fundraiser for the American  
4 Legion in Minooka. The Minooka legion needs  
5 funds to repair the flag pole in the Minooka  
6 Cemetery and help with operational expenses  
7 for their club. The event is called "Lift  
8 Your Spirits and Raise the Flag Happy Hour."  
9 It will occur tomorrow, Friday, June 26, at  
10 the Minooka Legion on Birney Avenue from 6  
11 to 8 p.m. It's \$15 to get into the door.  
12 There is a DJ, beer, wine, soda, food, 50/50  
13 raffles and a chance to win two tickets to  
14 the Notre Dame Texas game. And that is all  
15 I have. Thank you.

16 MR. MCGOFF: Anyone else?

17 MS. REED: FOURTH ORDER. CITIZENS'  
18 PARTICIPATION.

19 MR. MCGOFF: Joan Hodowanitz.

20 MS. HODOWANITZ: Joan Hodowanitz,  
21 city resident and taxpayer. I want to point  
22 out the Lackawanna County Historical Society  
23 will conduct an tour of five historic houses  
24 in the Hill Section on Sunday, June 28, from  
25 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. There will be a free

1 trolley rides from site to site. We will  
2 also tour the estate at the University of  
3 Scranton and view restoration work at  
4 Covington Presbyterian Church. If you are  
5 interested in this tour, please call the  
6 historical society for tickets at  
7 570-344-3841.

8 I also would like to point out that  
9 the City Controller's monthly reports are  
10 now available on the city's website so if  
11 you would like to track the city's monthly  
12 expenditures and the status of it's funds  
13 you can view that on-line, and the May  
14 report is already on-line.

15 Now, with regard to the State  
16 Auditor General's press conference yesterday  
17 morning, I was an able to attend. I was  
18 surprised to see very few citizens,  
19 although, there were a lot of press and lot  
20 of city employees there, the AG said he  
21 found the situation astounding. I found it  
22 bizarre. Apparently, the non-uniform  
23 pension fund has been deleted by something  
24 like \$3 million over the last 12 years.

25 Now, as of January 1, 2013, that

1 funds funding ratio was only 23 percent.  
2 God knows what it is today. I understand  
3 that the attorney -- the Auditor General's  
4 Office cannot subpoena people to give  
5 statements, cannot bring charges, really has  
6 no criminal investigative powers, however,  
7 it was clear to me from listening to the AG  
8 that these double pensions were not  
9 authorized, were not proper.

10 I also understand that the state  
11 police and the FBI are continuing their  
12 investigations, but here's the question, are  
13 these pensioners going to continue to  
14 receive these checks in the future?  
15 Apparently so. I listened this afternoon  
16 when Jimmy Connors called Steve Corbett on  
17 WILK and he said he is going to put those  
18 checks in the drawer until someone tells him  
19 what to do with them. I watched WNEP news  
20 tonight and watched Mayor Courtright explain  
21 that he thought the solution was to dissolve  
22 the Municipal Pension Boards and let the  
23 state handle the pensions.

24 Now, I don't -- I'm not a lawyer, so  
25 I don't know where they are -- we are going

1 to be able to prove criminal wrongdoing, but  
2 I have a sense of right and wrong and in my  
3 opinion it is wrong for them to take that  
4 money, to take future payments and even to  
5 hold onto what they were already paid. It  
6 just boggles the mind. I would love to -- I  
7 want to see the mayor if he appears here on  
8 July 19, he is coming on July 19, the mayor?

9 MR. MCGOFF: I'm sorry?

10 MR. HODOWANITZ: Is the mayor still  
11 scheduled to be here on July 9?

12 MR. MCGOFF: I have not received a  
13 confirmation on that.

14 MS. HODOWANITZ: Okay, well, one of  
15 these days I would like to hear him take a  
16 stand on whether he thinks this money should  
17 be repaid and I would like, if you would,  
18 during your motions if you would say what  
19 your opinion is because I think we need to  
20 bring pressure on the leadership of this  
21 city and on those pensioners to do the right  
22 thing.

23 You know, we are certainly in a  
24 drain with regard to these pensions and if  
25 we just allow this to continue, God help us



1 all. That's all I have. Thank you.

2 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you. Fay Franus.

3 MS. FRANUS: Hi, Fay Franus. I want  
4 to address this pension, well, I'd like to  
5 ask each one of you if you feel that these  
6 double pensions should be stopped  
7 immediately? You, Mr. Wechsler?

8 MR. WECHSLER: I'll address that  
9 during motions.

10 MS. FRANUS: I want to know for  
11 myself?

12 MR. WECHSLER: I'm addressing it  
13 during motions.

14 MS. FRANUS: You can't answer me?

15 MR. WECHSLER: I'll say it again,  
16 I'm addressing it during motions.

17 MS. FRANUS: Mr. McGoff, you want to  
18 answer me?

19 MR. MCGOFF: That's a difficult  
20 answer. I don't know that we can stop them  
21 immediately.

22 MS. FRANUS: Well, do you feel it  
23 should be?

24 MR. MCGOFF: It's just not a simple  
25 process to stop that immediately.

1 MS. FRANUS: I know that.

2 MR. MCGOFF: Which is why the  
3 hearings are being held to see that. Do I  
4 think that the double pensions should be  
5 stopped, yes.

6 MS. FRANUS: Considering council  
7 never approved it.

8 MR. MCGOFF: I don't know when we  
9 may be able to do that.

10 MS. FRANUS: Mr. Gaughan?

11 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, I think common  
12 sense would tell you that it should be  
13 stopped. It wasn't right in the first place  
14 and what's right is right and that's not  
15 right.

16 MS. FRANUS: Wayne.

17 MR. EVANS: Well, morally I think  
18 they should be stopped certainly, but  
19 legally we don't know where it's going to  
20 lead us yet.

21 MS. FRANUS: I was just told, I  
22 don't know, that because city council, not  
23 this city council but the previous from way  
24 back, didn't approve this, so I just thought  
25 this council could have an emergency

1 resolution or an amendment to stop these  
2 pensions because since it was never approved  
3 by council I would think you would have the  
4 power to stop it without going through the  
5 Court's or anything else. Have you ever  
6 looked into that? Could you look into that?

7 MR. MCGOFF: And, again, Ms. Franus,  
8 that's the problem is that we don't -- the  
9 hearings are being held to determine what  
10 can be done as far as these pensions are  
11 concerned, what legally can be done or what  
12 rightfully should be done.

13 MS. FRANUS: But you can't ask, you  
14 as a council president, and council body  
15 can't ask a lawyer if you have a right to --  
16 because maybe you have the right to do this  
17 and if you do you can maybe stop it. Just  
18 because you are not asking, maybe you could  
19 be doing it and you don't know it. That's  
20 all I'm saying, so I think you should ask  
21 since council --

22 MR. MCGOFF: I think that if that  
23 were the possible we would have done that.  
24 Our solicitor has been involved in this  
25 process as has been the pension solicitor as

1 well, so if we had the power to stop them  
2 immediately I'm sure that it would have been  
3 done.

4 MS. FRANUS: I also hope there is  
5 going to be a federal grand jury inquiry  
6 into this so this way they have subpoena  
7 power. I mean, I really hope that will  
8 happen because maybe people won't want to  
9 lie under oath for this chance of the  
10 perjury.

11 Now, another matter. Mr. McGoff,  
12 last week you said that you didn't want to  
13 answer Marie Schumacher's questions, you  
14 felt there were too many, but from what I  
15 have been watching all these past months and  
16 months citizens and Marie and everybody else  
17 come to this podium with questions week  
18 after week after week, month after month,  
19 and every time it's, well, we'll check into  
20 it, I don't know the answer yet. There has  
21 never been any answers, I could list ten  
22 questions, so I could see where Marie had to  
23 finally get three pages because nobody has  
24 ever answered the questions for months and  
25 for you to say that they weren't city

1 related, they were, they were about the  
2 budget and pensions and it's all city  
3 related. Marie wouldn't ask questions that  
4 didn't have city matters, you know this,  
5 but, for a council president to tell a  
6 citizen they don't have time to answer  
7 questions that pertain to the city I nearly  
8 jumped through my television set.

9 MR. MCGOFF: I'll answer you, I may  
10 have been too harsh when I said that. I  
11 think that we have answered questions in the  
12 past, you can ask Mrs. Schumacher, but --

13 MS. FRANUS: But apparently the ones  
14 she asked didn't get answers.

15 MR. MCGOFF: I --

16 MS. FRANUS: Go ahead.

17 MR. MCGOFF: That we have provided  
18 answers, you know, to the questions in the  
19 past. I was merely trying to point out that  
20 there are some things that we cannot answer,  
21 that we do not have the ability to answer,  
22 and maybe I went too far in the statements  
23 that I made, but just this evening another  
24 citizen had a number of questions and we  
25 gave a response to those questions, so I

1 think that we have been doing our best to  
2 respond to the needs of the citizens.

3 MS. FRANUS: I, myself, have seen --  
4 I'll give you an example, the question about  
5 the garbage fee, how many times I have  
6 asked, how many times has Marie asked, how  
7 much money has the garbage fee brought in  
8 versus how much money is spent to pay for  
9 the work that money is supposed to be paid  
10 for, that has still yet to be answered.  
11 That's a perfect example and that should  
12 have been answered a long time ago. And,  
13 still, it only makes people wonder that you  
14 don't want the truth to be told.

15 MR. MCGOFF: You are right in that  
16 case.

17 MS. FRANUS: That's just one  
18 question. I'm sure the questions that Marie  
19 asked were asked before, so that's all.  
20 Thank you ery much.

21 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you, Ms. Franus.  
22 Doug Miller.

23 MR. MILLER: Good evening, Council.  
24 Doug Miller, Scranton. Just in regards to  
25 the pensions and, you know, the idea that we

1 are circling down the drain, it's my opinion  
2 that we already went down the drain, went  
3 down the drain a long time ago,  
4 unfortunately. You know, truthfully I  
5 really find this whole thing to be just  
6 quite comical to be honest. I could recall,  
7 I believe it was six years ago, at a council  
8 debate that I actually happened to be a  
9 candidate at that time and that was actually  
10 an issue that was brought up during that  
11 debate, the pension crises at the time, it  
12 certainly hadn't gotten to the point where  
13 it is right now, a lot of things have been  
14 exposed since then, but I can recall  
15 Mr. Morgan actually who was the only one  
16 seated up there who actually discussed that  
17 issue being the, I guess you can call it,  
18 the gorilla in the closet and at the time I  
19 don't think we really understood the  
20 seriousness of that issue at that time and  
21 now here we are today wondering where we go  
22 from here.

23 And it's just it's really  
24 discouraging as yet again just another  
25 obstacle that the city has to overcome and

1 we just can't seem to move forward at all on  
2 anything. You know, we think we are solving  
3 one problem and then another one comes  
4 forward and, you know, we just keep taking  
5 steps back and I don't know where we go from  
6 here honestly because in order to turn the  
7 city around we need leadership and we don't  
8 have it, we lack it. We've lacked it for a  
9 long time from previous councils and  
10 administrations and that's where it all  
11 starts. It starts at the top with the mayor  
12 and then it trickles on down, and when you  
13 don't have those pieces in place you are not  
14 going to succeed you are just going to  
15 continue to kill off a city that at this  
16 point is just ready to die off once and for  
17 all and, you know, it may sound harsh at  
18 this point, but that's the reality of where  
19 we are. I'm not going to come forward and  
20 paint a rosy picture here and deceive people  
21 into thinking that we are actually moving  
22 somewhere that we are not. There is no  
23 common sense, no transparency, there is many  
24 questions that I have and, you know, five  
25 minutes just won't be enough time to ask



1           those questions.

2                         And, you know, as far as individuals  
3           not knowing that they were receiving the  
4           double pension I find that hard to believe  
5           that someone wouldn't know that. I think  
6           that's one of the first things you do is you  
7           determine when you are going to receive your  
8           first check and what you are going to get so  
9           there is a lot of different things that come  
10          into play and that's just one variable.  
11          There is many other ones, but I just don't  
12          think we have the people seated in these  
13          positions that are capable enough of solving  
14          these problems.

15                         Mr. Courtright, believe it or not,  
16          for the first time I may think he has a  
17          little bit of sense in the comments he made  
18          today as far as the state having to come in  
19          and intervene here as far as these pensions  
20          are concerned because we certainly can't  
21          tackle this problem. I mean, we can't even  
22          handle our miniscule problems in community  
23          let alone deal with this issue. This is  
24          something that is just way above the heads  
25          of the people we have seated in these

1 positions because just not capable of doing  
2 it, no leadership. Not everyone, but the  
3 majority.

4 You know, as far as questions being  
5 answered, you know, I feel for Ms.  
6 Schumacher and a lot of other people that  
7 come up here and dedicated residents that  
8 come forward with many questions that have a  
9 lot of validity to them but, you know, the  
10 bottom line is at the end of the day it's  
11 hard to get answers from someone when they  
12 don't possess them and we have dealt with  
13 them for a long time. It's just not this  
14 council majority or the past councils, it's  
15 just gone on and on and on for many years  
16 and I think maybe at this point it's come to  
17 the point where we have to just come forward  
18 with many Right-to-Know requests and get our  
19 answers that way and if that doesn't work  
20 then maybe we just need to start taking a  
21 walk down to the courthouse and get our  
22 answers that way. I mean, it's sad that  
23 it's gotten to that point where we have a  
24 government that just doesn't believe the  
25 interests of the residents of this community

1 is important enough.

2 And, you know, as far as bringing in  
3 the mayor and bringing in Mr. Amoroso a few  
4 weeks and discussing where we are, I just  
5 don't see the point anymore. What's the  
6 point? We have gotten to the point in this  
7 community now where we are just a laughing  
8 stock and it's really sad to say that. I  
9 don't like saying these things, but this is  
10 the truth, this is where we are. And, you  
11 know, when I talk to people and they -- they  
12 know I'm from Scranton they laugh. People  
13 on the outsiders. I mean, we are a mockery  
14 in this area, in this region, nationally, we  
15 have already been embarrassed. We've been  
16 taken to that level, and we haven't done  
17 anything to get ourselves away from that and  
18 that's what is really ultimately  
19 discouraging.

20 You know, a lot of cities face many  
21 challenges, but they overcome them at some  
22 point and we haven't done any of that. We  
23 are not even close, and that's the problem.  
24 Thank you.

25 MR. MCGOFF: Lee Morgan.

1 MR. MORGAN: Good evening, Council.  
2 Lee Morgan. It's my opinion, let me start  
3 off by saying it's my opinion that what's  
4 left of city and it's present state isn't  
5 salvageable and I think -- I think the state  
6 government needs to come here and remove,  
7 you know, nothing personal against the  
8 council or the mayor, but the council and  
9 the mayor needs to be removed by the state  
10 government, and the reason for that is in my  
11 opinion we don't have a legitimate  
12 government here and he haven't for a long  
13 time.

14 You know, when you talk to Mr. Cross  
15 and he says that the city could have filed  
16 bankruptcy in 2012 and the city didn't do  
17 anything to protect the interest of the  
18 people here whose government was this? And  
19 when you come to a government and you try to  
20 interact with your governments, which is a  
21 right of all Americans to interact with  
22 their government, that's what our founding  
23 fathers believed in, and your government  
24 ignores you, you don't really have a  
25 government. What you have elected are

1 people who are so arrogant and disrespectful  
2 to the people they elected that they do  
3 whatever they want and so when you look at a  
4 city that's been in distress for 23 years,  
5 obviously, somebody forget who they worked  
6 for.

7 And when you just look at our  
8 downtown and all of the millions and  
9 millions and hundreds of millions of dollars  
10 that were spent there, you know, I'm  
11 wondering where the state and the federal  
12 government are to come in and ask for  
13 somebody to show where all of that money  
14 went, and when a city government has such a  
15 lack of respect for federal funds that when  
16 the South Side Sports Complex was built  
17 under Section 70 funds, it was illegally to  
18 ever sell them, and yet the city government  
19 did sell them.

20 So you have to ask yourself, and the  
21 people at home, you know, no disrespect to  
22 voters, but to be honest it's my opinion the  
23 super voters have held this mess up because  
24 they have continually gone to the ballot in  
25 many instances and voted for the people that

1 in my opinion they were told were the right  
2 people to vote for because there numbers  
3 were so small, and the rest of the people  
4 they have no dog in this fight. Go up and  
5 hit doors some day and see the response you  
6 get from people and it doesn't, you know, I  
7 can't say so much the Republicans had too  
8 much to do this with because they don't  
9 exist because long ago there was a mayor  
10 that we had in the city that allegedly  
11 killed the Republican party right off with  
12 jobs and patronage. So where did we go  
13 here? We have a government that can't  
14 answer us or won't answer us, we have a city  
15 that's been in financial ruin for decades,  
16 and we have a state and federal government  
17 that's pumped money in here with no  
18 oversight in my opinion so where do we go?

19 We have got a fleeing population  
20 base, as a matter of fact, look it, I went  
21 to look at properties this week because I'm  
22 thinking about buying another property and I  
23 looked at some in the city and the realtor  
24 told me, "You are out of your mind. Nobody  
25 wants to be in this city, you shouldn't even



1           their pension debt.

2                           And you look at the federal  
3           government and SSI and SSD out of money in  
4           2016 and social security getting ready to  
5           roll over, so when the average voter goes  
6           out, and I blame this on the Democrats and  
7           the Republicans because there is no other  
8           party in control, and all our jobs are in  
9           other countries and we worried about the  
10          rich, and to be honest with you, I grew up  
11          in the 60's. I remember when there was a  
12          strong and vibrant middle class that just  
13          doesn't exist anymore and the people who are  
14          getting pensions from the state or the  
15          federal government they feel entitled to  
16          them, but the people that are paying them  
17          have no money, they can't even keep their  
18          properties up. Thank you.

19                       MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you.

20                       MR. MCGOFF: Ozzie Quinn.

21                       MR. QUINN: Good evening. Ozzie  
22          Quinn, Scranton. Hill Neighborhood  
23          Association. Yesterday we started a  
24          fundraiser in the Hill neighborhood, we sent  
25          out letters to 504 members, 30 business,



1 asking them to consider giving \$10 if they  
2 could afford it for free swimming for Hill  
3 section kids, and we said just Hill section  
4 kids. Last year we are able to raise enough  
5 to be able after we took care of everybody  
6 to take outside of the boundaries and take  
7 care of different families and individuals  
8 so all money was gone, then Allied Services  
9 donated \$10,000 and the same criteria is  
10 being used for low to moderate income, you  
11 know, you had to show that you either got a  
12 free or reduced lunch or you had to have an  
13 Access card or federal income tax to show  
14 you are a low income. Low income is a  
15 euphemism for being poor. Years ago you  
16 used to say you are a poor family, there is  
17 no doubt about it, you know? And we are  
18 hoping that we will be able to raise enough  
19 money so we can get our kids, our low income  
20 kids, to be able to swim for the rest of the  
21 year at no cost, okay?

22 Now, somebody approached me  
23 yesterday and they said that someone was  
24 asked up at Nay Aug yesterday about the day  
25 before they said about swimming they were

1 not charging money for swimming if you are  
2 17 and under so I sent an e-mail to Sean  
3 McAndrew, Chairman of the Recreation  
4 Authority, and he sent back and said no. So  
5 I called Weston Field, and Weston Field said  
6 that, yes, they can go in free, and I said  
7 what criteria are using? The only criteria  
8 is -- for the \$5,000 that Allied donated is  
9 they are a resident of the city. So that  
10 means that if somebody's family is making  
11 50,000 or a million dollars a year they can  
12 go down and get a free pass. I don't think  
13 that that was Allied's intent, you know, so  
14 that bothers me, you know, and then I was  
15 asked about a UDAG I wrote letters and to  
16 mayor and what not and I was passed over  
17 like a freight train passes a bum, you know,  
18 and I see in today's agenda here you are  
19 introducing so you could appropriate money  
20 trough the UDAG for Connell Park to finish  
21 repairs and that's really good because to  
22 see them to be able to swim up there, and  
23 I'm sorry that Novembrino pool was put on  
24 the back burner. But, however, it says the  
25 repairs currently being done for the 2000

1 (sic) swim season or until all funds are  
2 exhausted.

3 Now, last week I spoke about UDAG  
4 funds and I said there a lot of money in  
5 there and Mr. Rogan said \$10,000, okay, and  
6 so I e-mailed him and he says he misspoke,  
7 okay? In other words, he said that actually  
8 for repairs it's going to cost for Connell  
9 park \$2,487.27. That will leave a balance  
10 in the UDAG of \$108,442.87. That's a lot of  
11 nickles and what are they going to do with  
12 it? What is the mayor going to do with it?  
13 That's where we are having a fundraiser  
14 because I know that nothing is going to come  
15 our way. I would like to see all of the  
16 kids in the city, and I think you can do it  
17 for \$10,000 of the UDAG money to swim free.

18 However, I think what you should do  
19 with that UDAG money is dismantle the  
20 Recreation Authority and set this money to  
21 pay for chemicals maybe for the next five  
22 years or so. What good is the Recreation  
23 Authority? We can use our own staff, you  
24 know, to attend and take the money and even  
25 afford the Christmas lights. They don't

1 even have a regular audit that would -- how  
2 they control that money. They could be  
3 using a cigar box, you know, holding it in  
4 their pocket. You don't know, nobody knows,  
5 okay? So, I mean, they're really not doing  
6 any good, okay? And, you know, what they  
7 are doing is 12 and under, that's a big  
8 joke, and Mr. McAndrew goes on and on and on  
9 and so these UDAG funds I know we are not  
10 going to get anything for swimming, but  
11 however they should be used in the right  
12 manner so I hope that council when these  
13 UDAG funds do come down that, you know, they  
14 consider either accepting or not accepting  
15 and not just go ahead and approve it because  
16 the mayor sends it down as approved. I'm  
17 not saying they will do this, but when  
18 somebody tells me that there is no money in  
19 there and sidetracks me as I have been  
20 sidetracked many times in the last month and  
21 there is \$108,000 something is amiss  
22 someplace. Thank you very much.

23 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you, Mr. Quinn.

24 Marie Schumacher.

25 MS. SCHUMACHER: Good evening, Marie

1 Schumacher. First I would like to state  
2 that I do hope and pray that the mall has  
3 not been procured by a nonprofit. I think  
4 that would really be the nail in the coffin  
5 of this city if that happened, so I'm very  
6 anxious to hear to the successful bidder is,  
7 as I assume everybody is.

8 And do we have now the revised list  
9 of streets to be paved from the liquid fuels  
10 money?

11 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, we do.

12 MS. SCHUMACHER: Could that be made  
13 available?

14 MR. GAUGHAN: I'm not sure? I'm not  
15 sure if it's finalized yet, but I will check  
16 on that.

17 MS. SCHUMACHER: Thank you. Now, a  
18 couple of weeks ago I asked about the -- I  
19 noted what the fire -- how high the fire  
20 department overtime is and that certainly is  
21 not compliant with what we expected from the  
22 MOU so not wanting to bother you all I did a  
23 Right-to-Know and found the number of  
24 firefighters who have retired and it is  
25 approaching the significant mark. There are

1 two, unfortunately, I grabbed the wrong  
2 folder when I came out tonight, I brought  
3 the overtime one instead of the one, but I  
4 think it's five already and two more in this  
5 pay period, so why are we not replacing  
6 these firefighters, I would assume that's  
7 one of the reasons for the overtime that is  
8 my assumption and why are we not hiring  
9 firefighters, anybody know?

10 MR. WECHSLER: Marie, I'm going to  
11 discuss that during motions.

12 MS. SCHUMACHER: Thank you. I think  
13 that needs to be corrected quickly. And on  
14 5-B what is being done, I know a significant  
15 investment was undoubtedly made in that  
16 Novembrino pool complex and what is being  
17 done to protect that investment? I mean,  
18 it's -- too many times I think government  
19 let's things go and deteriorate to the point  
20 where at the point where they could be saved  
21 if a proper and minimal investment was used  
22 to keep them until such a time as it can be  
23 declared not repairable and then go and do  
24 whatever they want with it, and I don't  
25 think that's a good use of the public

1 monies, so is something being done to  
2 preserve those two pools now so that --  
3 nothing is being done, they are just being  
4 left to deteriorate?

5 MR. MCGOFF: As far as I know, Ms.  
6 Schumacher, there is no plan to deal with  
7 the Novembrino complex. There was a plan  
8 for redoing it and the funding on that fell  
9 through, and I have not heard any other of  
10 anything to update the status of that pool.

11 MS. SCHUMACHER: Okay, would that be  
12 a DPW question, if I called somebody at DPW  
13 would they know if they are at least putting  
14 water, I guess put water in the pool so that  
15 it doesn't crack or something, I don't know,  
16 I don't have a pool, but --

17 MR. MCGOFF: I don't think that they  
18 would have the answers for you either. As I  
19 said, I don't think there is any type of a  
20 plan for dealing with that complex.

21 MS. SCHUMACHER: That's ashame when  
22 our tax dollars make significant investments  
23 like that they are allowed to deteriorate.  
24 Central High School is, of course, the  
25 classic of that. When you read, which I

1 did, I was living out of town and when I  
2 read the description of how terrible Central  
3 High School was, and then at one of my  
4 reunions went to the tour of the Lackawanna  
5 College what a difference. You know, the  
6 marble is only, these frescos there are only  
7 eight in the country and how great this  
8 model is and perfect acoustics in the  
9 auditorium and I don't think we have the  
10 money, we don't have the debt, I know we  
11 don't have the money, but I don't even think  
12 we should be increasing debt to continue  
13 doing things that deteriorate investments  
14 that have already been made.

15 And then tonight during the caucus  
16 there was a discussion on vacant properties  
17 and stuff and I would like to ask you folks,  
18 I brought this up countless times, the  
19 properties on East Mountain that were  
20 bought --

21 MR. MCGOFF: Continue.

22 MS. SCHUMACHER: May I finish?

23 Thank you. That were bought for a dollar --  
24 or \$100 to date which is the \$100 that you  
25 have to put down under the Pittsburgh plan



1 to procure the properties to bring it before  
2 council to get the appraisals to make that  
3 an offer, they were accepted, I think it's  
4 probably about \$80,000 now in these five  
5 years since -- and it was May, it was May of  
6 2010 that they were approved, not only has  
7 the sale price not been paid and the deeds  
8 transferred, obviously, because they are  
9 still in the Wintermantle estate, but you  
10 are not collecting taxes on them. I mean,  
11 how can we afford a city in the terrible  
12 condition we are, how can we afford to let  
13 that kind of revenue go by the wayside. You  
14 approved the sale, I think you should get  
15 what the legislators and get that corrected  
16 in statute and I would also finish by saying  
17 I hope that you are all considering passing  
18 a resolution unanimously tonight stating a  
19 position of this city council since it's  
20 been proven there is no ordinance for the  
21 double pensions, that the double part of the  
22 portion of the pension goes away  
23 immediately. Thank you.

24 MR. MCGOFF: Anyone else who wishes  
25 to address council?

1 MR. SBARAGLIA: Andy Sbaraglia,  
2 citizen of Scranton. Fellow Scrantonians,  
3 I'm not going to bring up the pension plan  
4 because you are right it is complicated, you  
5 have the Supreme Court rulings and you also  
6 have judge rulings on Pocius and Hazzouri,  
7 that went through the Courts, too, so really  
8 there is a lot of ramifications with these  
9 pensions, but it's also obvious that this  
10 government is not functioning, that's the  
11 bad point. That brought out the  
12 shortcomings.

13 I always said that council should  
14 have a full-time member somewhere in that  
15 board, maybe the president should be a  
16 full-time job with two auxiliary people to  
17 help him, but not full-time, part-time and  
18 if the salary \$40,000 a year it wouldn't  
19 cost the city anything because with the  
20 three salaries combined it brings us almost  
21 to 40,000 and then when we have somebody to  
22 blame, somebody to put the finger at because  
23 he is paid to have answers on everything  
24 that come before us considering the rules of  
25 the city. You are a legislative branch.

1           You should know all of the laws or any  
2           ramification with the laws that come to you  
3           before council, but being you are not a  
4           full-time I would say you use the same axiom  
5           that I used to use a kid, ask me no  
6           questions I'll tell you no lies, and this is  
7           what happens with council.

8                         This is bad. We got to reformulate  
9           council so we have somebody to look at and  
10          say you're supposed to have the answer. We  
11          are paying you to have the answers and this  
12          should be done and one step to improving the  
13          city. If nothing else, to improve your  
14          relationship between the citizens and  
15          council. Thank you.

16                        MR. MCGOFF: Thank you,  
17          Mr. Sbaraglia.

18                        MR. UNGVARSKY: Good evening, city  
19          council, I'm Tom Ungvarsky. About 21 years  
20          ago Scranton was declared a distressed city.  
21          At that time, I believe PEL was appointed as  
22          our watchdog. As far as I know their job  
23          was to look over our budgets and make  
24          recommendations and in general approve of  
25          our expenditures. Can anyone on council

1 tell me why PEL didn't catch the double  
2 pavement? I mean, isn't that their duty to  
3 Lackawanna County over the things that this  
4 council passes, the expenditures we make,  
5 does anyone know?

6 MR. MCGOFF: I'll say yes and no to  
7 that, Mr. Ungvarsky. I'm not sure that they  
8 are supposed to look over every item when it  
9 comes through the -- they are supposed to  
10 administer the recovery plan and I don't  
11 know why they would oversee the pension  
12 payments. I'm not sure.

13 MR. UNGVARSKY: Well, wouldn't they  
14 look at the budget from year to the next and  
15 see what we're contributing and especially  
16 now that we are down to what 20 percent in  
17 the pension fund? Wouldn't they realize  
18 that there is a reason that we've fallen  
19 from 75 percent?

20 MR. MCGOFF: Yes.

21 MR. UNGVARSKY: I mean, if he are  
22 going to be advising the City of Scranton  
23 why can't they come up with things like  
24 this? I believe you see them on Mondays; is  
25 that correct?

1 MR. EVANS: Yes.

2 MR. MCGOFF: Yes.

3 MR. UNGVARSKY: Can you find out how  
4 this slipped through the cracks?

5 MR. MCGOFF: Yes.

6 MR. UNGVARSKY: Okay. I don't know  
7 what the recommendation will be, but they  
8 would overlook this, they'd advise Scranton  
9 to go into the lawsuits against the police  
10 and firemen that cost us a pile of money and  
11 they just walk away and say, oh, that's up  
12 to you, Scranton, we are sorry, but they go  
13 and collect their fees from the state. I  
14 think Scranton should do something to  
15 overturn our PEL. Thank you.

16 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you,  
17 Mr. Ungvarsky.

18 MR. DOBRZYN: Good evening, Council.  
19 Dave Dobrzyn, resident. Once again call  
20 your congressman, call your senator,  
21 1-202-234-3121, find out who they voted and  
22 tell them at the very least if you don't  
23 want to change parties then tell them that  
24 you are going to primary them as best you  
25 can. And the President, 1-202-456-1111 for

1 the White House and also tell them that you  
2 don't plan to vote for the status quo, they  
3 have been random person for two years with  
4 the Democrats already and they are the very  
5 person that negotiated the Transpacific  
6 trade pack.

7 Also, there is a VA issue involved  
8 and certain congressmen feel it would  
9 conservative by stripping the Veteran's  
10 Administration. I never served in the  
11 military. I have may draft card and the  
12 draft was active and I wasn't called up, and  
13 in retrospect maybe the fact that I have all  
14 of my arms and all of my legs and I don't  
15 need their support is an asset as opposed  
16 people wanted to go to war and then they  
17 want to forget what you suffered.

18 On the mall, I think the parties  
19 last week decided that when they were going  
20 to get ahead of it with subsidies and loans  
21 and sub-loans and so forth that they just  
22 decided to put in a low bid and if they got  
23 it they got it and if they didn't they  
24 didn't, and that's an asset. Please, no  
25 more sub-loans, no more grants, you want to

1 be a private business, private industry,  
2 free market then let them swim on their own  
3 and let them come up with the way. We have  
4 already taken -- if we consider all of the  
5 money that has been lost with pensions and  
6 loans and going on and on and on, we would  
7 probably have a paid set of bills.

8 Once again, I'd like to mention  
9 there is no responsible way to sell or  
10 monetize the sewer plant. It's going to be  
11 a corporation, in many other states and  
12 probably in and definitely in Pennsylvania,  
13 the sure rates skyrocket. It's an essential  
14 service, you cannot live in your house  
15 without sewer -- your water will be shut  
16 off, if it goes to a private corporation and  
17 they want to get greedy then you are just  
18 going to have your water shut down, your  
19 house can be condemned, and you are out on  
20 the street so really consider that.

21 And I'd like to see an analysis here  
22 of where we went wrong with all of these  
23 sub-loans and whatever. It just keeps going  
24 on and on and on and we never sit down and  
25 analyze everything and all of a sudden we

1           have a new recovery plan and it's so silly.  
2           It's ridiculous. Nothing -- it gets right  
3           back to spending a lot of money and handing  
4           very wealthy people a lot more money, and  
5           they make promises and 10 or 15 years later  
6           they say, oh, okay we are wrong, it just  
7           didn't work out and we are sorry, how about  
8           some more, and it's really ridiculous.

9                         We have 18 million kids in this  
10           country on food -- on free lunch and reduced  
11           lunch and they are not in school right now  
12           and they are probably going hungry and, you  
13           know, it's millions upon millions and  
14           billions of dollars just going to  
15           businessmen that think they have a right to  
16           this -- to every penny they ever earned and  
17           every tax dollar we ever pay. I mean, they  
18           have ten years of tax exemptions with the  
19           mall, and as soon as they started paying  
20           taxes it emptied out. Most of the malls  
21           across the valley all have problems because  
22           of trade packs. People don't have money and  
23           there is other ways to buy things, granted,  
24           but the last time I bought on-line or over  
25           the phone order I got three incorrect



1 orders, and then I had to pay the shipping  
2 back so where was the advantage to that in  
3 addition to listening to my wife because it  
4 was her stuff that I was buying.

5 And, okay, I'll make it quick, but  
6 last week some property owners on East  
7 Mountain, I don't want insight anybody, but  
8 if you got a free set of steps to begin  
9 with, that was a really nice job up there on  
10 East Mountain Road, we don't need to be  
11 fixing other people's properties. How about  
12 fixing mine, too, you know? I'm not asking  
13 for nothing, but they shouldn't get anything  
14 either. Thank you and have a good night.

15 MR. MCGOFF: Anyone else?

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

17 MOTIONS.

18 MR. MCGOFF: Mr. Wechsler?

19 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you,  
20 Mr. McGoff. Tuesday's presentation by  
21 Auditor General Eugene Pasquale was  
22 certainly an eye opener. His findings  
23 indicate that there was a tremendous failure  
24 of the entire city government in regards to  
25 how these pensions were issued. He also

1           acknowledged that the Auditor General's  
2           Office failed in not finding these  
3           discrepancies earlier. I also think the  
4           fund manager had some responsibility in  
5           this, also.

6                        I believe that the state and the  
7           city both felt that an over performing stock  
8           market would provide funding for these  
9           increases. The miscalculations and  
10          contributions in funds performance have lead  
11          to the pension crisis across America, but  
12          what do we do now? The findings of the  
13          Auditor General should be followed yo by the  
14          state police, Attorney General and the FBI,  
15          if necessary. The abuse of authority should  
16          not go unpunished.

17                      As to the pensioners, I think it  
18          will be difficult to retrieve monies that  
19          have been already been paid, but future  
20          payments must be evaluated to establish a  
21          new pension amount that is fair to both the  
22          fund and to the pensioners.

23                      The report also indicated that prior  
24          city councils/-S did not do enough to  
25          prevent this pension abuse. This current

1 council has taken a more active role in this  
2 matter. Council has begun reviewing the  
3 pension legislation. We've started to take  
4 a look at the makeup of the board to improve  
5 fund management. We have also gone on  
6 record requesting that payments be delayed  
7 until the fund is healthy. We also have  
8 gone on record supporting pension reform in  
9 Harrisburg. We also have passed legislation  
10 that requires uniform bargaining units to  
11 contribute more to their pensions.

12 Realistically, we all realize that  
13 increased contributions or slower  
14 withdrawals are required to bring the  
15 pension back to health. Future pension  
16 plans must be at least some type of hybrid  
17 plan that will ease the crises as time goes  
18 on, and before the meeting tonight we were  
19 given a letter written by Mayor Courtright  
20 suggesting that the Scranton pension plans  
21 join the state plan. At first look I think  
22 that this is a very good idea. As was  
23 mentioned, it would bring professional  
24 management to the pension funds and it will  
25 also relieve some of the pressure of the

1 people that are serving on the boards that  
2 are also going to be pension recipients, so  
3 at first look I think that's a very good  
4 idea.

5 On some other matters, I was  
6 surprised that the Mall at Steamtown  
7 actually garnished a \$5.2 million bid. When  
8 we sat here last Thursday night Mr. Boscov  
9 discussed his bid, his starting bid was  
10 around \$700,000 so hopefully the person who  
11 or people who purchased the mall will  
12 continue to make use of it as a retail and  
13 also as perhaps an office or residential  
14 community. I agree with several speakers  
15 tonight, I hope it does not become owned by  
16 a nonprofit.

17 On some other issues, I spoke to  
18 John Pocius earlier this week concerning the  
19 engineering study that is being done for the  
20 paving of the roads that are going to be  
21 funded under the PIB program. Mr. Pocius  
22 told me that he has been in contact with the  
23 engineering firm and he will get back to me  
24 with his update later on this week.

25 Also, Mr. Gaughan and I have also

1           been working to try and relieve a problem up  
2           on East Mountain with the home that is  
3           severely a detriment to the neighborhood.  
4           We have been dealing with Mr. Hinton and  
5           that and he is making progress on getting  
6           that problem corrected.

7                        As Ms. Schumacher brought up, there  
8           has been an increase in overtime over the  
9           past month. The problem with picking  
10          numbers like and just saying that the  
11          overtime is up, it really doesn't give a  
12          full picture on what the situation is. It  
13          is true that overtime from 2015 is up over  
14          2014, but we are also dealing with a  
15          situation where in May of 2014 we had 128  
16          firemen on staff. Currently, this year we  
17          only had 118 so the work is being covered by  
18          overtime so actually there is a savings to  
19          the city of around \$131,000 because the  
20          extra men aren't on right now.

21                        Last week I did speak to Mayor  
22          Courtright and I also am becoming concerned  
23          about not hiring new firemen. Currently,  
24          right now, we are getting very low on staff.  
25          To the best of my knowledge the soonest we

1           could add any officers would be the next  
2           class is in September and if we don't hire  
3           anybody by then I'm not sure when the  
4           following classes.

5                     If we are fortunate enough to  
6           receive the SAFER grant that would allow us  
7           I think to hire 11 new firemen and that  
8           class is large enough that it can be just a  
9           class for Scranton firemen, so it is  
10          something that I believe and it's something  
11          that I hope the mayor is beginning to  
12          realize that we have to get these officers,  
13          fire officers on hand.

14                    And in terms of the police  
15          department, it's the same type of a  
16          situation, the overtime has increased from  
17          2015 to 2014, but that is because there is  
18          currently 13 officers off on heart and lung  
19          related issues. From speaking to the chief,  
20          I am also concerned that some of the  
21          programs that we put in place and waiting  
22          for their effectiveness, one of the things  
23          that he did tell me was that through June  
24          17, 2014, it was 722 shifts off by patrol  
25          officers. For the same period this year,

1 ending June 17, there has only been 373 days  
2 off, so the sick time policy that we have  
3 instituted seems to be paying off. So I am  
4 going to sit down and speak some more with  
5 the Chief and Rebecca McMullen to do some  
6 more analyzing of these numbers and I think  
7 what we have to do is look for the payroll  
8 for the police and fire more as an overall  
9 picture than just an overtime picture.

10 There is a budget number that we have for  
11 what it could cost us for the year for these  
12 services, and my intention is to monitor  
13 this on a quarterly basis to make sure that  
14 we are on target for what we had planned,  
15 and that's all I have tonight, Mr. McGoff.  
16 Thank you.

17 MR. MCGOFF: Mr. Evans?

18 MR. EVANS: Thank you. First of  
19 all, some takeaways from the press  
20 conference from the Auditor General. First  
21 of all, I have a lot of respect for the  
22 Auditor General for continuing to press for  
23 pension reform when many in Harrisburg are  
24 burying their heads in the sand and ignoring  
25 this problem. However, the AG attempted to

1           make a correlation between the double  
2           pensions and the current status of our  
3           pension plans. While it certainly was a  
4           contributing factor, it by no means was the  
5           sole reason for where we are today. Our  
6           issues is systemic and cultural and we need  
7           to make changes far more dramatic than was  
8           proposed by the Auditor General.

9                        Pennsylvania laws for municipal  
10           pensions are very much intertwined with  
11           state law and until state government stops  
12           talking about pension reform and finally  
13           acts we cannot see a clear path to pension  
14           solvency.

15                      On today's announcement by the  
16           mayor, I am fully supportive of Mayor  
17           Courtright's plan to turn the city's pension  
18           plans over the to state. While this is an  
19           action that should have taken place months  
20           ago, I am in total agreement. We are now  
21           going to find once and for all where the  
22           pensions board and the unions stand on this  
23           issue. Will they vote for the status quo or  
24           are they ready to embrace the changes  
25           necessary to start the long process of



1 bringing solvency to Scranton's pension  
2 plans?

3 Last week's discussion about the  
4 mall at Steamtown and the sale at auction  
5 yesterday had me feeling a little nostalgic  
6 about our downtown. I couldn't help but  
7 wonder if the city and school district had a  
8 competitive mercantile tax or no mercantile  
9 tax at all over the last 30 plus years what  
10 would our business community look like  
11 today? How many more businesses would open  
12 in Scranton inside of outside of the city?  
13 How many that left would have stayed? Would  
14 the loss of tax revenue be more than offset  
15 by an increase in commerce and jobs?

16 The same goes for the wage tax  
17 raised years ago to a level that still  
18 chases our middle class from our city. If  
19 it were at least 1 percent less would we  
20 have been more competitive for those young  
21 families that are left or started over in  
22 the suburbs? Can we attract a new  
23 generation and retain those that have stayed  
24 out of loyalty and love for our city?

25 And now with recent increases of 58

1           percent and 19 percent of the property tax  
2           we are depressing our real estate market,  
3           lowering housing values and losing more  
4           valuable property owners hurting young  
5           families and senior citizens the most and  
6           with little hope of reassessment from the  
7           County we need to find other ways to be is  
8           tax bearance.

9                         We are a so far past the point of  
10           diminishing returns with tax increases that  
11           any increase in taxes and fees will actually  
12           in my opinion net less revenue in future  
13           years we somehow have to change course, take  
14           a new direction and reinvent this government  
15           and how it operates completely. We must  
16           find new ways to bore our way out of the  
17           distressed -- our distressed status.

18                        To that end, we need to search out  
19           new ideas, we need to do a better job of  
20           listening and, of course, that includes on  
21           Thursday nights. I am proposing that we, as  
22           a city council, take the lead and beginning  
23           to have a series of idea sessions with our  
24           stakeholders. For example, we can share  
25           ideas with realtors and others to discuss

1 housing; the small business community to  
2 discuss ways to be more business friendly;  
3 the downtown merchants and property owners  
4 to find ways to support their growth;  
5 neighborhood groups to discuss their  
6 important issues; the financial community to  
7 get their input and ideas on our financial  
8 struggles; the creative class on how to  
9 continue to grow the arts community, and  
10 whoever else we may think may bring new,  
11 bold, fresh ideas to the table, but be  
12 forewarned those gatherings are not intended  
13 to be gripe sessions, they must be idea  
14 sessions.

15 I will be talking to my colleagues  
16 to see, first of all, if they are interested  
17 in pursuing this proposal; and secondly, how  
18 can we do this within the confines of city  
19 council, sometimes facing because of the  
20 Sunshine Act requirements and other  
21 restrictions, but I feel strongly that we  
22 have smart, energized, dedicated, loyal  
23 residents and business owners and it's time  
24 for all of us involved in city government to  
25 take a step back, to listen, to learn, and

1 to share ideas and then become the  
2 government our taxpayers and our citizens  
3 deserve. That's all I have for now. Thank  
4 you.

5 MR. MCGOFF: Mr. Gaughan?

6 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, thank you. I did  
7 attend the press conference with the Auditor  
8 General and the mayor about the pension, the  
9 double pension deal, and I think that a lot  
10 of it was things that we are already knew.  
11 The whole double pension deal was a complete  
12 and utter debacle, that went we know, and we  
13 can know that it cost us a lot of money, but  
14 the other thing it cost us that I think is  
15 even more damaging is the trust and faith of  
16 the public in our government, and I think  
17 that on top of all the other recommendations  
18 that the Auditor General gave us that I  
19 think we should follow I think we also have  
20 to work towards restoring that truth in that  
21 faith in our government because it's eroded.  
22 Everywhere I go I hear about it from the  
23 citizens of Scranton. So they want to be  
24 able to trust their government and have  
25 faith in it and I think that's the other

1 part of this whole deal that we have to  
2 really look at as we move forward.

3 As for Councilman Evans' idea I  
4 think it's a great idea, I think there are  
5 many people in this city who have new, bold  
6 and fresh ideas. There is a creative class  
7 in here, the University of Scranton,  
8 Marywood, Lackawanna, and I think that we  
9 should sit down with them and I am excited  
10 to sit down with Councilman Evans and my  
11 colleagues and discuss that idea further.

12 A few months ago was mentioned that  
13 Comcast would be moving from their location  
14 in Steamtown Mall. We did receive a letter  
15 from Liz Sterner from Comcast, effective  
16 August 14 Comcast will move from the mall to  
17 the new Xfinity store at 1128 Commerce  
18 Boulevard in Dickson City so I think it's  
19 important that people know that.

20 Also, customers who wish to pay the  
21 bill may visit the new Xfinity store or use  
22 a third party payment location, and there  
23 are a few in Scranton and one in Dunmore.  
24 Quick and Easy Quik Mart 220 South Seventh  
25 Avenue you can pay your bill there. Weiss

1 Market in South Side Shopping Center,  
2 Riccardo's Market in Dunmore on Wheeler  
3 Avenue and the Giant Food store in the  
4 Greenridge Plaza, so if you don't want to  
5 take the ride up to Dickson City there are  
6 other places that you can pay your bill.

7 I did receive a citizen request  
8 about 1414 Fig Street. They are asking if  
9 DPW can fix the curb and gutter in front of  
10 their house. The water runoff is causing  
11 major problems so we will send  
12 correspondence to DPW Director Gallagher on  
13 that. Also, trying to take care of a  
14 problem at Lavelle Court and O'Hara Street  
15 in South Side with overgrown hedges.

16 Mr. Wechsler mentioned the East  
17 Mountain Road steps, we did check with the  
18 Business Administrator to see if he could  
19 use liquid fuels money on that. The  
20 response from the state was that it would be  
21 ineligible so we are looking at other ways  
22 of funding that, and I think Mr. Dobrzyn  
23 brought it up, I do see your point, but from  
24 what I'm told the people on East Mountain  
25 Road were not involved in that proces and

1           they put cinderblock steps in and maybe a  
2           few months, a year or two afterwards they  
3           started to erode, so that's the issue up  
4           there so they are saying that they really  
5           don't think that they should have to pay for  
6           the improvement.

7                        I received a request for a "Watch  
8           Children" sign at the intersection of Grant  
9           Street and Eagen Avenue in Minooka. DPW  
10          took care of this rather quickly so I thank  
11          them for that.

12                      June 29 to July 3 the street sweeper  
13          is scheduled to be in the Minooka section  
14          from Saginaw Street to Vipond Avenue.

15                      I did read in the newspaper and we  
16          saw on the news about the Villa Maria in  
17          West Side. I am glad to see that they are  
18          up and running. Joe Machako, it should be  
19          noted, I think, that he has been in business  
20          for over 30 years and he has done many  
21          benefits free of charge and many different  
22          things for the public and for the community,  
23          so I'm glad to see that his business is up  
24          and running again in this community.

25                      I participated in a meeting this

1 week along with other city officials to  
2 discuss the Local Safe Roads Community  
3 Program. The City of Scranton had been  
4 selected to participate in this program  
5 based on our ranking according to the list  
6 developed by PennDOT that ranks all  
7 municipalities in Pennsylvania based on  
8 crashes, injuries, and population. We  
9 discussed various high crash locations  
10 throughout the city. An engineer from the  
11 Pennsylvania Local Technical Assistance  
12 Program will eventually write a report that  
13 will provide several recommendations on how  
14 to improve safety at three locations in the  
15 city. The great thing about this program is  
16 that it's at absolutely no cost to the city.  
17 And the report when it is developed can be  
18 used in the future to obtain funds through  
19 various grant applications.

20 I did resend a letter, we had our  
21 office resend a letter, regarding the police  
22 and fire contracts and two specific  
23 questions that I had asked back when this  
24 debate was going on in January and February  
25 were do the health care benefits for the



1 spouse of a fireman or policeman continue  
2 until the spouse reaches the age of 65 or do  
3 the spousal benefits expire when the  
4 firefighter or policeman reaches 65?

5 And secondly, and most importantly,  
6 has an actuarial study been done of the  
7 retirement incentive included in the  
8 firefighter and police department memorandum  
9 of understanding and the effect it would  
10 have on the pension? I think that's  
11 particularly important, because as we heard  
12 at the press conference, one of the major  
13 mistakes that was made back in 2002 was an  
14 actuarial study had not been done until  
15 after the people had retired. So I think  
16 it's important that we pay close attention  
17 to this and I'll be waiting for a response  
18 from the administration.

19 Also, I am going to ask that we send  
20 some kind of correspondence to PEL or maybe  
21 at the meeting my colleagues can ask and  
22 find out what the implications would be on  
23 the budget should the city lose this lawsuit  
24 for the rental registration. That's a  
25 serious concern and how we would fill that

1           void in the budget because we are  
2           approaching budget season for 2016 so very  
3           important. And that is all I have for this  
4           week. Thank you.

5                       MR. MCGOFF: Thank you. A number of  
6           things. First of all, Ms. Hodowanitz gave  
7           me a notice of the Eighth Annual Historical  
8           Hill House Tour which will be conducted June  
9           28 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tickets purchased  
10          in advance are \$25, day of tour \$30. To  
11          purchase tickets call 570-344-2841, or you  
12          can stop by the Kaplin House at 232 Monroe  
13          Avenue for tickets. It's, obviously, a tour  
14          of many of the architectural and historic  
15          sites in the Hill Section. It's a free  
16          trolley ride to all of the sites, so if you  
17          are interested please take advantage of the  
18          situation.

19                      Secondly, last week I mentioned the  
20          McCarthy family, tonight I again would like  
21          to congratulate Joe McCarthy on being a  
22          member of the college world series  
23          champions. The University of Virginia last  
24          night they defeated Vanderfield and Joe  
25          McCarthy was a significant member of that

1 team and that championship so  
2 congratulations to Joe and the McCarthy  
3 family.

4 Just a couple of things also, on the  
5 PEL meeting of this week we mentioned a  
6 caucus, during the PEL meeting there was a  
7 discussion of payroll tax which is part of  
8 the recovery plan, the imposition of the  
9 payroll tax. Payroll tax would a neutral,  
10 revenue neutral tax, and the eliminate the  
11 mercantile taxes I believe, is that --

12 MR. EVANS: Yeah.

13 MR. MCGOFF: And it is being looked  
14 into. It's a much more equitable type of  
15 tax and hopefully we can get that in place  
16 in time for at least 2016.

17 We also talked about the citywide  
18 light program for an LED switchover. It is  
19 hoped that the savings from putting in the  
20 LED bulbs would actually pay for, you know,  
21 the switch over so that hopefully will be  
22 taken place throughout the city. It was  
23 initially intended just for the downtown,  
24 but it may take place, you know, on a  
25 further basis throughout the city.

1                   We did meet with Rainey & Rainey who  
2                   are the budget prep company that was hired.  
3                   They will begin their work on July 1 in  
4                   preparing the budget preparation. They said  
5                   that they would provide updates to city  
6                   council on their work. There is a meeting  
7                   next week with SB & Company and we will  
8                   inquire as to whether they will be willing  
9                   to provide updates once the budget moves  
10                  to -- moves forward and to actual --I'm  
11                  saying the budget, actual preparation of the  
12                  audit, excuse me.

13                  The question was asked last week  
14                  about PFM & Company and how they would be  
15                  paid, as we had mentioned in the past PFM  
16                  the reason that there were no invoices for  
17                  PFM for 2014 or 2015 they will be paid out  
18                  of the proceeds of the work that they do,  
19                  and at this time the primary work is the  
20                  parking monetization so their payment will  
21                  be part of that and will not come out of the  
22                  general fund so will be no invoices to see  
23                  until that monetization is completed.

24                  As far as the Auditor General and  
25                  his report as was I think Mr. Gaughan said,

1           it seemingly was nothing that we did not  
2           already know. It seemed a bit repetitive of  
3           the investigation that was done by the  
4           Scranton Times and so the report as far as  
5           the monies were concerned was actually, you  
6           know, nothing new to the city. What I found  
7           interesting was there was -- there were no  
8           criminal actions included in this report.  
9           They didn't really -- all they did was  
10          assign some culpability to city councils in  
11          the past for not approving the double  
12          pensions. I don't know, you know, what  
13          happened at those meetings or whether they  
14          ignored it or whether it was never  
15          presented, we have no culpability in it, but  
16          I found it strange that it seemingly just  
17          glossed over, you know, who should have  
18          noticed this, including their own office  
19          which I found interesting.

20                    I think there were something like  
21                    five or seven audits done by the Auditor  
22                    General in that period and they did not pick  
23                    up on the double pension so when you ask why  
24                    was this not noticed, it was missed by an  
25                    awful lot of people and people who should

1           have possibly noticed this in their work.

2                       The pension plan is something that  
3           is the albatross around the City's head  
4           right now and when you say, you know, why  
5           didn't people know that this was happening,  
6           well, PEL did warn the city that it was  
7           happening, but there were things that we  
8           could not avoid. The biggest problem was  
9           disability pensions. We are paying more in  
10          disability pensions than we are in  
11          retirement pensions and that is something  
12          that's draining the pension fund.

13                      Hopefully, some of the things that  
14          were done in the new contract with the  
15          police and fire will hopefully take care of,  
16          you know, some of those issues, but we are  
17          looking at, you know, a very serious problem  
18          and we have been warned of it, we knew of  
19          it, it's a problem as to how to fix it.

20                      Where do you get the money to fix  
21          the problem, and certainly we are not  
22          ignoring it. It is the every day problem,  
23          it is something that is being addressed on a  
24          daily basis by the administration and  
25          overseen by council to a some extent and

1            hopefully we can, you know, resolve that  
2            problem in the near future.

3                        I'm wondering if perhaps a letter of  
4            support from city council for the mayor's  
5            request to have the pension plan moved to  
6            the Pennsylvania Municipal Retirement System  
7            whether that would be worthwhile, I don't  
8            know if other members of council would agree  
9            --

10                      MR. GAUGHAN: I would agree with  
11            that. I also think maybe we should add or  
12            in a separate letter ask for an update on  
13            what we are doing regarding this disability  
14            pensions and the pension ordinances. I feel  
15            know that's something that we have discussed  
16            with our their solicitor and I know they are  
17            talking about it, but, look, I think this --  
18            you just made a great point. That's so  
19            important. It is draining the funds from  
20            our pensions, so before we try to dump any  
21            money into the pension or give it to the  
22            state let's make sure that we on our own end  
23            that we do things to firm up and tighten up  
24            these ordinances so maybe we conclude that  
25            in another letter, but I agree with you.

1 MR. MCGOFF: Do we all agree with  
2 that?

3 MR. EVANS: Absolutely. Yeah,  
4 because I think this is something that's  
5 long overdue and I think we should done  
6 something quite awhile ago, so I'm perfectly  
7 fine with sending a letter basically saying  
8 everything you said.

9 MR. MCGOFF: And, Mr. Wechsler?

10 MR. WECHSLER: I agree. I think  
11 it's a step that has to be taken just to  
12 remove the city employees out of pension  
13 fund.

14 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you. And, Mrs.  
15 Reed, we will possibly send letters to the  
16 Auditor General.

17 MR. EVANS: Well, the mayor's letter  
18 was to the Pension Board, so I think we can  
19 send our letter to the Pennsylvania Board as  
20 well.

21 MR. MCGOFF: Yeah, there were a  
22 bunch of people that were cc'd on this,  
23 maybe we best do the same.

24 MR. EVANS: Yeah.

25 MR. MCGOFF: But, yes, I think that



1           it is necessary for council to support this  
2           idea, and you are right it is long overdue.

3                     And as far as getting council  
4           members to meet with different stakeholders  
5           in the community, I think that's a great  
6           idea. I was at a meeting today which a  
7           business that is looking to possibly locate  
8           into the City of Scranton and what it came  
9           down to at the end the talk was that what we  
10          need, what we need is a plan. I think that  
11          we need a very distinct business plan for  
12          the City of Scranton rather than just  
13          piecemealing and hoping that we will get new  
14          businesses and, you know, we need to do  
15          something ourselves to go out and encourage  
16          people to come to the City of Scranton.

17                     We need -- we need all of the  
18          stakeholders to get together somehow and  
19          develop a sound business plan for the City  
20          of Scranton that we can use moving forward.  
21          I think that there is progress being made, I  
22          know I'm the optimist many times, I think  
23          that there is a lot of work being done in  
24          many ways to help the City of Scranton, and  
25          I hope that by the time we are finished that

1           there is a discernable process made in  
2           dealing with the problems that the City of  
3           Scranton has.

4                       MS. REED: 5-B. FOR INTRODUCTION -  
5           AN ORDINANCE - AMENDING FILE OF THE COUNCIL  
6           NO. 35, 2013, AN ORDINANCE, AS AMENDED  
7           ENTITLED "AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND OTHER  
8           APPROPRIATE CITY OFFICIALS TO DISBURSE  
9           THIRTY THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$30,000.00) FROM  
10          THE ACCOUNT INTO WHICH REPAYMENT OF URBAN  
11          DEVELOPMENT ACTION GRANTS (UDAG) ARE  
12          DEPOSITED (UDAG REPAYMENT ACCOUNT) FOR THE  
13          CONNELL PARK AND NOVEMBRINO SWIMMING POOLS  
14          TO BE OPENED IN TIME FOR THE 2013 SWIM  
15          SEASON" TO ALLOW THE REMAINING FUNDS IN THE  
16          ACCOUNT TO BE USED FOR REPAIRS DONE TO THE  
17          CONNELL PARK SWIMMING POOL IN 2014 AND THE  
18          REPAIRS CURRENTLY BEING DONE FOR THE 2015  
19          SWIM SEASON OR UNTIL ALL FUNDS ARE  
20          EXHAUSTED.

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

24                      MR. WECHSLER: So moved.

25                      MR. EVANS: Second.

1 MR. MCGOFF: On the question? One  
2 of the things that was brought up by -- that  
3 Ms. Schumacher brought up was if we are  
4 transferring funds from the Novembrino  
5 Complex to Connell Park which is a necessary  
6 thing to do in order to get that pool ready  
7 for the swim season, which we are already  
8 into, but I think we should also get into  
9 what the plans are, if are there any plans,  
10 for the Novembrino Complex.

11 I know, as I said, when Mrs.  
12 Schumacher was speaking there were some  
13 plans for a splash park and a very nice  
14 outdoor, you know, complex there, but the  
15 funding fell through. I would like to know  
16 if that plan is still viable, and if they  
17 are still pursuing something to do with the  
18 Novembrino Complex.

19 All those in favor of introduction  
20 signify by saying aye.

21 MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

22 MR. EVANS: Aye.

23 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

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

1 MS. REED: 5-C. FOR INTRODUCTION - A  
2 RESOLUTION APPOINTMENT OF DONALD JOSEPH  
3 WALSH, 1006 DERBY AVENUE, SCRANTON,  
4 PENNSYLVANIA 18505, AS A MEMBER OF THE  
5 HOUSING APPEALS REVIEW BOARD EFFECTIVE JUNE  
6 16, 2015. MR. WALSH WILL BE REPLACING MARIO  
7 BEVILACQUA WHO RESIGNED EFFECTIVE IN  
8 NOVEMBER OF 2014. MR. WALSH WILL FULFILL  
9 THE UNEXPIRED TERM OF MR. BEVILACQUA WHOSE  
10 TERM IS SCHEDULED TO EXPIRE ON NOVEMBER 24,  
11 2018.

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

15 MR. WECHSLER: So moved.

16 MR. EVANS: Second.

17 MR. MCGOFF: On the question? All  
18 those in favor of introduction signify by  
19 saying aye.

20 MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

21 MR. EVANS: Aye.

22 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

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

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

1 A RESOLUTION APPOINTMENT OF KATHLEEN  
2 GALLAGHER, 946 NORTH GARFIELD AVENUE,  
3 SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA, 18504, AS A MEMBER  
4 OF THE SCRANTON MUNICIPAL RECREATION  
5 AUTHORITY. MS. GALLAGHER WILL BE REPLACING  
6 ANTHONY MARINUCCI WHO RESIGNED EFFECTIVE  
7 APRIL 7, 2015 AND WHOSE TERM WAS SCHEDULED  
8 TO EXPIRE ON JUNE 17, 2015. MS. GALLAGHER'S  
9 TERM WILL BE EFFECTIVE JUNE 18, 2015 AND  
10 WILL EXPIRE ON JUNE 18, 2020.

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

14 MR. WECHSLER: So moved.

15 MR. EVANS: Second.

16 MR. MCGOFF: On the question? I  
17 should have asked that in the prior one,  
18 have we received resumes?

19 MS. REED: Yes, Mr. McGoff, for both  
20 of these.

21 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you very much.

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

24 MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

25 MR. EVANS: Aye.

1 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

2 MR. MCGOFF: Aye. Opposed? The  
3 ayes have it and so moved.

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

5 READING BY TITLE - FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO.  
6 104 2015 - AN ORDINANCE - ESTABLISHING A  
7 LOADING/UNLOADING ZONE ALONG THE WESTERLY  
8 CURBLINE OF THE 300 BLOCK OAKFORD COURT  
9 BETWEEN LINDEN STREET AND MULBERRY STREET  
10 FOR A LENGTH OF THIRTY (30) FEET FROM THE  
11 NORTHERLY EDGE OF THE EXISTING CONCRETE  
12 SIDEWALK AT THE REAR ENTRANCE OF THE LINDEN  
13 STREET APARTMENTS NORTH TOWARDS MULBERRY  
14 STREET.

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

17 MR. EVANS: Mr. Chairman, I move  
18 that Item 6-A pass reading by title.

19 MR. WECHSLER: Second.

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

22 MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

23 MR. EVANS: Aye.

24 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

25 MR. MCGOFF: Aye. Opposed? The

1 ayes have it and so moved.

2 MS. REED: SEVENTH ORDER. 7-A. FOR  
3 CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC  
4 WORKS - FOR ADOPTION - RESOLUTION NO. 156,  
5 2015 - RATIFYING AND APPROVING THE  
6 SUBMISSION OF THE GRANT APPLICATION BY THE  
7 GRANT MANAGER AND OTHER CITY OFFICIALS OF  
8 THE CITY OF SCRANTON, LACKAWANNA COUNTY, FOR  
9 A PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
10 GREEN LIGHT GO PROGRAM (ROUND 1) GRANT IN  
11 THE AMOUNT OF \$6,150.00 TO BE USED FOR ASSET  
12 MANAGEMENT OF TRAFFIC SIGNALS LOCATED IN  
13 "CRITICAL CORRIDORS" TO TRACK EQUIPMENT  
14 FAILURES AND EVALUATE SYSTEM RELIABILITY TO  
15 IMPROVE SAFETY AND MOBILITY BY REDUCING  
16 CONGESTION AND IMPROVING EFFICIENCY OF  
17 EXISTING TRAFFIC LIGHTS IN THE CITY OF  
18 SCRANTON AND IF THE GRANT APPLICATION IS  
19 SUCCESSFUL, AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND OTHER  
20 APPROPRIATE CITY OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE ANY  
21 AND ALL DOCUMENTS NECESSARY TO ACCEPT AND  
22 DISBURSE THE GRANT FUNDS.

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

1 MR. GAUGHAN: As Chairperson for the  
2 Committee on Public Works, I recommend final  
3 passage of Item 7-A.

4 MR. WECHSLER: Second.

5 MR. MCGOFF: On the question?

6 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, on the question,  
7 this legislation and this grant I hope we  
8 get it. One of the concerns that I think  
9 you brought it up, Mr. McGoff, months ago,  
10 and we have all heard concerns from  
11 residents, is the problems with the lights  
12 and how you might sit at a light for five or  
13 so minutes and it's very frustrating for  
14 many citizens, so this grant if we get it  
15 will help towards fixing that problem and  
16 fixing some congestion problems throughout  
17 the city.

18 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you. Roll call,  
19 please.

20 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Wechsler.

21 MR. WECHSLER: Yes.

22 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Evans.

23 MR. EVANS: Yes.

24 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Gaughan.

25 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.



1 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. McGoff.

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

4 MS. REED: 7-B. FOR CONSIDERATION BY  
5 THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS - FOR ADOPTION  
6 - RESOLUTION NO. 157, 2015 - RATIFYING AND  
7 APPROVING THE SUBMISSION OF THE GRANT  
8 APPLICATION BY THE GRANT MANAGER AND OTHER  
9 CITY OFFICIALS OF THE CITY OF SCRANTON,  
10 LACKAWANNA COUNTY, FOR A PENNSYLVANIA  
11 DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION GREEN LIGHT GO  
12 PROGRAM (ROUND 1) GRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF  
13 \$1,825.00 TO BE USED FOR ASSET MANAGEMENT OF  
14 TRAFFIC SIGNALS LOCATED IN "DESIGNATED  
15 CORRIDORS" TO TRACK EQUIPMENT FAILURES AND  
16 EVALUATE SYSTEM RELIABILITY TO IMPROVE  
17 SAFETY AND MOBILITY BY REDUCING CONGESTION  
18 AND IMPROVING EFFICIENCY OF EXISTING TRAFFIC  
19 LIGHTS IN THE CITY OF SCRANTON AND IF THE  
20 GRANT APPLICATION IS SUCCESSFUL, AUTHORIZING  
21 THE MAYOR AND OTHER APPROPRIATE CITY  
22 OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL DOCUMENTS  
23 NECESSARY TO ACCEPT AND DISBURSE THE GRANT  
24 FUNDS.

25 MR. MCGOFF: What is the

1 recommendation of the Chair for the  
2 Committee on Public Works?

3 MR. GAUGHAN: As Chairperson for the  
4 Committee on Public Works, I recommend final  
5 passage of Item 7-B.

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. Evans.

12 MR. EVANS: Yes.

13 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Gaughan.

14 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

15 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. McGoff.

16 MR. MCGOFF: Yes. I hereby declare  
17 Item 7-B legally and lawfully adopted.  
18 Prior to adjournment, I would like to thank  
19 Attorney Colbassani for his presence this  
20 evening, and if there is no further  
21 business, I'll entertain a motion to  
22 adjourn.

23 MR. WECHSLER: Motion to adjourn.

24 MR. MCGOFF: This meeting is  
25 adjourned.

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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

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CATHENE S. NARDOZZI, RPR  
OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER

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