

SCRANTON CITY COUNCIL MEETING

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HELD:

Thursday, November 12, 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
(Not present)

PATRICK ROGAN, VICE-PRESIDENT

WAYNE EVANS

JOSEPH WECHSLER

WILLIAM GAUGHAN

LORI REED, CITY CLERK

JAMIE MARCIANO, ASSISTANT CITY CLERK

AMIL MINORA, SOLICITOR

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

3 MR. ROGAN: 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. GAUGHAN: I make a motion to
14 appoint Councilman Rogan as temporary
15 Chairperson for the Committee on Rules.

16 MR. WECHSLER: Second.

17 MR. ROGAN: On the question? All
18 those in favor signify by saying aye.

19 MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

20 MR. EVANS: Aye.

21 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

22 MR. ROGAN: Aye. Opposed? The ayes
23 have it and so moved. Please dispense with
24 the reading of the minutes.

25 MS. REED: THIRD ORDER. 3-A. AGENDA

1 FOR THE BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS MEETING TO
2 BE HELD NOVEMBER 18, 2015.

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

5 MS. REED: 3-B. TAX ASSESSOR'S
6 RESULTS REPORTS FOR HEARING DATES HELD
7 OCTOBER 14 AND OCTOBER 16, 2015.

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

10 MS. REED: 3-C. PETITION RECEIVED
11 FOR INSTALLATION OF NEW STREET LIGHT AT 1700
12 BLOCK MCDONOUGH AVENUE.

13 MR. ROGAN: Are there any comments?
14 If not, received and filed. Do any council
15 members have announcements at this time?

16 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, I have one. On
17 November 17 and 18 Pappas Pizza will be
18 having their annual fundraiser "Pizza for
19 Pancreatic Cancer." All you have to do is
20 come in t Pappas on November 17 and 18 and
21 buy pizza. Every pizza you purchase will
22 have 50 percent of the sale's price donated
23 on your behalf to the Pancreatic Cancer
24 Action Network. Thank you.

25 MR. ROGAN: A few announcements.

1 Please note that next Thursday evening,
2 November 9, there will be two public
3 hearing, the first at 5:15 for Item 5-B on
4 tonight's agenda. Permit parking in the 800
5 block of East Gibson Street, and the second
6 at 5:30 for Item 5-C the 2016 city operating
7 budget.

8 Leaf pickup in the City of Scranton
9 will be on November 16 and the week of
10 December 14. Those weeks, again, November
11 16 and the week of December 14 paper
12 recyclables will not be picked up, instead,
13 leaves will be picked up and the next week
14 will resume with the mixed recyclables.

15 Prior to the meeting there was an
16 executive session held to discuss the lease
17 of real estate.

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

20 MS. ROGAN: Joan Hodowanitz.

21 MS. HODOWANITZ: Joan Hodowanitz,
22 taxpayer and resident. I want to point out
23 that the Friends of the Scranton Public
24 Library will have another book sale in the
25 Library Express which is on the second floor

1 of the Steamtown Mall December 1 through the
2 6. They will be selling books, DVD's and
3 CD's for either one or two dollars. Perfect
4 opportunity to start buying your Christmas
5 gifts. You can't beat that as a bargain.

6 I was pleased to see the article in
7 this morning's paper of the 2016 operating
8 budget. Except Jim Bob over there pulled a
9 fast one on me and the edition of the
10 working paper addition of the budget that he
11 has a link for, unfortunately, changed
12 dramatically this morning, so I understand,
13 Jim Bob, you are going to fix that little
14 error?

15 MR. LOCKWOOD: (Unintelligible.)

16 MS. HODOWANITZ: Because I spent a
17 good deal of time working with that copy
18 only to find out that I had the freshman
19 edition of the budget. But speaking of the
20 budget, I noticed that there is no mention
21 in the narrative analysis of revenues and
22 expenditures of the possibilities of a 2015
23 operating deficit, and I think people need
24 to keep that in mind as they assess the
25 figures they are looking at that if there is

1 a deficit that has to come out of those
2 revenues, and I was just wondering what why
3 we might find because, remember, you've got
4 lots of ongoing litigation any of which
5 could go against the city, you have got the
6 end of year MMO for the pension funds. You
7 have got the unknown as to exactly how much
8 money we will be getting in the monetization
9 of the Parking Authority and the Sewer
10 Authority. We are still waiting for the
11 bond for the Court award and on and on and
12 on. We have got rental registration stuck
13 in escrow. We've got the LST tax about \$2
14 million short so it's going to take a lot of
15 studying.

16 I was pleased to see though the
17 reference this year in the narrative to
18 bringing in interns from the local
19 Universities, which I think would be a great
20 advantage to city hall. More on that next
21 week when I've had time to look at the
22 correct numbers.

23 What is the status, if any, of the
24 2014 independent audit?

25 MR. EVANS: We expect Rainey &

1 Rainey to be completed soon and SB & Company
2 should be arriving on November 23 to start
3 their process. They are pretty far along
4 already, but they are getting updates
5 continually and we still expect them to have
6 a draft late by the end of the year.

7 MS. HODOWANITZ: Okay, but that's
8 not a draft that we released yet to the
9 public? A final copy won't be probably out
10 until next year?

11 MR. EVANS: Well, it depends. I
12 mean, I don't know exactly if that will be a
13 draft or will be a final copy so we'll have
14 to see.

15 MS. HODOWANITZ: Any idea who will
16 be the next business administrator?

17 MR. EVANS: None.

18 MR. ROGAN: I asked that question to
19 the mayor when I spoke with him and he said
20 there is a search going on, but nobody has
21 been picked as of yet.

22 MS. HODOWANITZ: Oh, just a
23 reminder, too, everybody, I think the
24 Pension Boards are meeting next Wednesday
25 November 18 rather than the fourth Wednesday

1 of the month because of the Thanksgiving
2 holiday for anybody who wants to watch that
3 or -- well, I don't think it's broadcast on
4 TV, but if anybody wants to attend that I
5 think they moved that up one week.

6 And have we had anything feedback
7 from the administration on the issue of
8 pedestrian safety downtown with the
9 crosswalks and the traffic lights?

10 MR. WECHSLER: There is going to be
11 a meeting, PennDOT is going to do a meeting,
12 I believe it's right on schedule for
13 November 25 at 1 p.m. Details are coming up.
14 I spoke to Chief Graziano this week and they
15 are working on something.

16 MS. HODOWANITZ: I'm glad that you
17 have not let that drop. That's a serious
18 issue.

19 Any idea, any feedback on what ended
20 up in our sewers a couple of weeks ago, the
21 Greenridge goop?

22 MR. WECHSLER: No. All of the
23 information that we have received to date
24 has not changed.

25 MS. HODOWANITZ: But you are still

1 waiting for more information from DEP?

2 MR. WECHSLER: Yes, still waiting
3 for more. I'm not sure when we are going to
4 get it.

5 MS. HODOWANITZ: Also on the budget,
6 before I forget, for the first year,
7 although the narrative says that real estate
8 is the primary revenue driver that's not
9 true. It is now Act 511 local taxes. The
10 difference is real estate will be \$33.5
11 million and Act 511 will be 36.8 million so
12 real estate is no longer the driver of the
13 budget.

14 MR. ROGAN: Thank you. Bob Bolus.

15 MR. BOLUS: Good evening, Council.
16 Bob Bolus, Scranton. Still sad to see Mr.
17 McGoff isn't here, still hope everything is
18 going well with him as best it can be
19 considering the circumstances and we want
20 him to know we haven't forgotten about him.
21 We still need a good battle here once in
22 awhile.

23 Going over the potential of the
24 business plan, we want to liquidate the
25 Sewer Authority. Now, if the Sewer

1 Authority was run like an actual business it
2 would be a profitable place to do business
3 with. If you liquidate that, the money is
4 going, as it always has in Scranton, just
5 like the golf course money went, it goes
6 down in the black hole because we don't know
7 how to manage our assets. This Sewer
8 Authority is liquidated. Keep in mind that
9 the people buying it, if any of you were
10 businessmen, if you were investing your
11 millions of dollars to buy something what
12 are you going to buy it for, to give it
13 away? No, you are buying it to make a
14 profit?

15 So the first thing you are going to
16 do is look at your asset picture, you are
17 going to get rid of the deadbeats, you're
18 going to get rid of all of the overkill
19 that's going on in the place, you are going
20 to get rid of company cars from all of the
21 supervisors that they drive back and forth
22 because they get called out, but they don't
23 do anything so you are going to liquidate a
24 lot of stuff, and what are they going to do?
25 Say, "We need to make more money."

1 So bingo, we don't pay a tax
2 increase, but we get killed with a sewer
3 increase. Bad, bad business, bad, bad
4 decisions on the part of this city. You can
5 run that as a Sewer Authority just somebody
6 in this administration and these councils
7 would get together and put your heads
8 together and use the God given brains we
9 were given and run it as a business we don't
10 have to liquidate it and we don't have to
11 put the screws to the people in this
12 community anymore than we have been doing.

13 You want to liquidate the parking
14 garages. We have the asset but we are too
15 dumb to run them? Come on. It's bad. It's
16 a bad philosophy. You got Amoroso. Well,
17 let me tell you something he is a liquidator
18 he is not an asset saver. This foresight is
19 let me liquidate everything, the city has no
20 tax base, but without a tax base you don't
21 decrease the tax rate. Keep that in mind.
22 It's simple mathematics. He is a
23 liquidator. He is not the Messiah of
24 business that's going to save the assets of
25 the City of Scranton or save Scranton. When

1 everything is liquidated like any good
2 auctioneer he is going to hop on his horse
3 and ride out of town leaving us with zero,
4 and we have proven that. We have proven we
5 cannot manage our assets so don't jump into
6 a budget blind sided and think you are going
7 to save the city. Hard, hard facts, hard,
8 hard decisions need to be made and they need
9 to be made now. We have about screwing with
10 everybody a long time and it's time to stop
11 what's been going on. You guys are here to
12 do it.

13 Turn around and ask the University
14 to come in and take the place of Bulzoni
15 when he leaves as the business
16 administrator. Go ahead. Tell them. Here
17 you are, guys, you teach people business,
18 you give master's program, PhD's, take over
19 as the business administrator of the City of
20 Scranton in lieu of the taxes. You just
21 saved \$90,000. They don't give us a darn
22 thing back, they have been taken. Take over
23 and teach us how to run it as a business.
24 They will teach you how to run the Sewer
25 Authority, they will teach you how to run

1 the parking garages, they will teach you how
2 to run the city. That's what they do. They
3 are a teaching institute. They are well
4 renowned and we have given them a free ride
5 for a long, long time so let's go get our
6 resources back, guys. Let's get something
7 back instead of something for nothing. So
8 there is a plan for you. Take an
9 opportunity. There is four of you here.
10 Somebody go contact them and ask them if
11 they will take over the business
12 administration duties of this city and maybe
13 you will wake up and see how you save money.

14 Look at how they are building. They
15 are not stupid. They are building multi
16 multi-million dollar buildings. They don't
17 pay a dime in taxes and we give everything
18 back. Let them show you how to think like
19 they think and you will get somewhere for a
20 change, okay?

21 The mall, let's talk about the mall.
22 When everybody can't wait, let's go do this
23 to the mall, let's do this to the mal.
24 Remember, it's a private enterprise now. We
25 bailed enough money into it. Does anybody

1 know what the assessed value of the mall is
2 today that we, the taxpayers, are getting
3 something back out of that facility? Any of
4 you guys have any idea?

5 MR. ROGAN: I know it was reduced
6 drastically.

7 MR. BOLUS: Pardon?

8 MR. ROGAN: I know it was reduced
9 drastically.

10 MR. BOLUS: Well, that's on the
11 stupidity part of reducing it drastically
12 because it's assessed at \$3 million. A
13 facility worth 20 some million plus with a
14 millions the individual is putting in it we
15 want to give breaks. We want to give them
16 \$750,000 and he's going millions of dollars
17 to spend and squander. Why are we sitting
18 here like dummies saying we don't want to
19 assess it a \$3 million when it should be
20 assessed at 20 or 30 million and put that
21 money in the tax base, you'd decrease the
22 tax rate. There is your golden goose. It's
23 not going to save the city. It's could save
24 the city in a good time when everything was
25 hustle and bustle, yet, I got assessed by

1 this county for a church that I bought to
2 save the cultural and I pay \$35,000 when I'm
3 assessed at a half a million dollars that
4 was never assessed in the past. Yet, I let
5 the kids play free in the Holy Cross Hall
6 since the day I bought it. I don't ask
7 anybody for anything back, but you are going
8 to tell me there is not a selective
9 appraisal situation and evaluations in this
10 county? You guys got to wake up, make the
11 assessor's pay the price--

12 MR. ROGAN: Thank you, Mr. Bolus.

13 MR. BOLUS: -- that's necessary for
14 the people in this community and stop giving
15 the farm away, guys, or are you really going
16 to put the screws to the city. It's in your
17 hands and, remember, you could override a
18 veto. That's what it's all about. If you
19 don't though how it operates, you better
20 start paying attention because we have been
21 screwed over enough. It's time to take the
22 bull by the horns. Let's see what you can
23 really do. Thank you.

24 MR. ROGAN: Doug Miller.

25 MR. MILLER: Good evening, Council.

1 Doug Miller, Scranton. Just in regards to
2 the budget, you know, without really having
3 a chance to review the document it's safe to
4 say it's along the lines of the same
5 rhetoric we have been listening to the last
6 two and a half years, if we are going to be
7 following the Amoroso plan or the way I like
8 to refer to it as the Amoroso suicide
9 mission because that's in reality what it
10 is.

11 Mr. Amoroso was brought in, he is
12 not a dummy, he knows what he was brought in
13 to do and that was to liquidate the city,
14 the few remaining assets that we have left,
15 and when we look at this budget we can see
16 it in black and white it's the intention of
17 this administration to liquidate the last
18 two remaining assets that we possess, and
19 that's the parking garages and the Sewer
20 Authority.

21 And, you know, what really just
22 frustrates me is the fact that we are going
23 to have an administration that's going to
24 gloat over the fact that we are only going
25 to see taxes raise by a little over 5.7

1 percent, but what they fail to mention is a
2 lot of that's going to be offset by the fact
3 that we intend on selling assets, and when
4 we talk about liquidating the parking
5 garages, you know, the best thing that ever
6 happened in this city was when Mrs. Evans
7 and her colleagues on the previous counsel
8 allowed the Parking Authority to go into a
9 receivership. Whether you agree or not, it
10 was best decision that was made. Mr. Rogan
11 supported it at the time, but then since he
12 has gone back on it and that's just the
13 politics that we have in this community. We
14 just have a lot of politicians in this
15 community that go back on everything because
16 their interests aren't for us, they are only
17 out there for themselves and the special
18 interests that put them in these seats.

19 And so we are going to sell the
20 parking garages and go back to the same old
21 politics as usual where we had an authority
22 that just ran rough shot over the whole
23 operation and they were handed a blank
24 checkbook and did whatever they wanted. The
25 budget that they presented to past councils

1 were nothing more than just, I believe it
2 was what Mrs. Evans who used to call them
3 Mickey Mouse budgets. I mean, that's the
4 mentality we were dealing with. We were
5 dealing with incompetent people that
6 mismanaged that authority, and so when that
7 decision was made to stop the borrowing that
8 was the best thing they could have done, but
9 this administration went ahead and just
10 reversed that decision.

11 The Sewer Authority, that's nice to
12 say we are going to sell that and make money
13 over 20 some million, but where did we ever
14 come up with that figure? Do we really know
15 what it's worth? But most importantly,
16 what's going to happen when somebody takes
17 over the Sewer Authority? It's going to be
18 a for-profit organization or group, and
19 what's first thing they are going to want to
20 do? Make money. Just like any other
21 business wants to do, it's about making
22 money. And how are they going to get it?
23 By jacking up the rates. So while we want
24 to talk and gloat about a 5 percent tax
25 increase, we fail to mention how sewer rates

1 will skyrocket and people are going to get
2 screwed over in the parking garages when the
3 parking rates go up because it's about
4 making money.

5 So, yet again, we keep going back to
6 the same people who have nothing left to
7 give. They have nothing left to give. You
8 have keep going back to the same people
9 trying to take something from them that they
10 don't possess, and we just keep going back
11 to the same old failed plan, the solution is
12 raising taxes. Now we see it on the state
13 level where the governor and the state
14 legislators want to raise the sales tax. I
15 mean, when is it going to end? It's
16 ridiculous. But most importantly, when are
17 the voters going to wake up? Because they
18 let it happen time after time. I mean, when
19 are they going to wake up and realize that
20 the people we elect are incompetent, they
21 are clueless, they don't live in the real
22 word, they don't care about us because if
23 they did we wouldn't be in the position we
24 are in today. It's about being
25 self-serving, protecting are own interests,

1 how are going to enhance our career.

2 You know, we have council members
3 who wanted to put cell phone towers on their
4 lots to enrich themselves. I mean, that's
5 what we are dealing with in this city.
6 People like that. Ignorant people,
7 self-centered people, belligerent people who
8 don't care.

9 We see blight all over the city and
10 who do we blame, we blame landlords, I get a
11 kick out of it. We blame the residents that
12 lives in the homes. When are we going to
13 realize that we are blaming the wrong
14 people. Did you ever think for a moment
15 maybe using some common sense, that maybe
16 because you have taxed the living hell of
17 everybody in this community that they don't
18 have the ability to upkeep their home
19 because they have been overtaxed to death
20 year after year. And we look around and see
21 blight everywhere, "For Sale" signs
22 everywhere. Mr. Evans can attest to it, MR.
23 Rogan can attest to it as relators. It's
24 everywhere, but what are we doing about it?
25 We are actually making the problem worse by

1 doing the things we are doing here. I mean,
2 it's just frustrating. And, you know, when
3 allow incompetent people to make these
4 decisions it's hard to have the optimism to
5 think we are moving forward anywhere.

6 And, you know, I just don't know
7 where we are headed here and, you know, as
8 far as where we are going into heading into
9 the new year, you know, we need to start
10 using common sense and we need to start
11 allowing people to come forward with
12 creative ideas. And forget all of the
13 political nonsense, we have a lot of smart,
14 intelligent people that come up here week
15 after week that participate for decades and
16 we never listened to them, and maybe we
17 should start listening to these people
18 because it's starting to get to a point
19 where these people on this side have a lot
20 more common sense and knowledge than the
21 people on this side, and that's from the
22 administration on down. There are some good
23 people in the government, but we have a lot
24 of incompetent people that have no business
25 taking these seats. And, like I said, it's

1 hard to have any optimism and I'll address
2 more of the issues on the budget at the
3 hearing next week. Thank you.

4 MR. ROGAN: Thank you. Before the
5 next speaker I just want to clear up
6 something that the last two speakers
7 mentioned, there is no plan to sell either
8 the Sewer Authority or the parking garages,
9 and neither is included in this year's
10 budget. That is the end of the sign-ins, is
11 there anyone else who would like to address
12 council?

13 MR. SBARAGALIA: Andy Sbaraglia,
14 citizen of Scranton. Fellow Scrantonians,
15 I, too, know nobody wants to buy the Sewer
16 Authority or the parking garages. They want
17 a nonprofit lease of said assets but you
18 don't realize if you give them a 40-year
19 lease that I heard battered around that's a
20 loss of \$16 million in revenue to the city
21 just on the parking meters. They are
22 bringing about \$9 1/2 in a year. Now you
23 also got the liability of repairing those
24 garages that could run up to 40 million in
25 40 years. We already have six or eight

1 million dollars damage to them now so you
2 are talking about \$100e million of liability
3 you are putting on the citizens of Scranton.
4 Are you looking at that? No. You are
5 looking for an easy fix. There is no easy
6 fix. Anything you're doing is not a good
7 fix.

8 Even leasing the Sewer Authority, is
9 that a good fix? No, because they only want
10 the sewer -- I guess you would call it the
11 facilities, not the storm drains and the
12 people don't realize you want to charge them
13 for God's rain falling from the sky on your
14 roof size. This is what was in their stupid
15 plans and you think we are all idiots.
16 Actually, maybe we are idiots because no one
17 in their right mind would vote the way you
18 vote. You got to be idiots because they
19 always said what's the definition of an
20 idiot doing the same thing over and over
21 again and expecting different results and
22 that's where we are in Scranton.

23 I have never seen somebody bent on
24 suicide like the people of Scranton. They
25 don't have the common sense to realize what

1 was going on. We used to vote our
2 councilmen by district, then we went to on
3 large and the reason we went to on large is
4 you have a block of voters that can vote for
5 five different people and give them a seat
6 on council. If you are voting by district,
7 only the people in that district would be
8 able to vote for that councilmen, so it went
9 down to I guess the yellow brick road. I
10 have never in my life would understand how
11 you can even profess to be Scrantonians
12 because you are not half the Scrantonian
13 mentality.

14 Now, I realize we have to pay our
15 debts, but when you borrow for the police
16 and firemen's court award we are talking
17 about \$60 million in debt, near 60 million
18 by the time you borrow the \$24 million plus
19 all of the associated costs that goes along
20 with it and then the interest payment
21 depending on how many years this goes on.

22 How much debt do you think the
23 people of Scranton can handle? You have no
24 idea. You are there sitting cushioned by
25 your 12,500 which cushions you, but a lot of

1 people don't have that cushion and they are
2 going to suffer by what you do, what the
3 city does, the school board does, and what
4 the state is it because they don't actually
5 care. One will not erase the other. I
6 mean, to give the property owners a tax
7 break you got to take the people who rent
8 and give to them in the back. That's all
9 there is to it. You can't have it both
10 ways. By reducing the property tax, like I
11 explained before when they came before
12 council. The only people benefited is the
13 businesses and some of the people in the
14 defunct cities that will have more money to
15 grab ahold of, and that's all. Will the
16 people actually be doing any better then?
17 No. Because you not going after the root
18 cause is how the school system is set up. I
19 know you have nothing to do with that other
20 than the fact you are hoping that they do it
21 so you can grab that extra money.

22 This is it what's going on in this
23 city and you don't remember -- you never saw
24 the city, you are not old enough to know the
25 city, you had to be here many, many years

1 ago when the city was the city, not a ghost
2 town like it is now. I remember times at
3 Christmas you couldn't even walk down
4 Lackawanna, Wyoming Avenue.

5 And as far as the safety goes, we
6 used to have four-way stops so you can cross
7 the street, but then the federal government
8 gave us money and right away we needed a
9 contract change those four-way stops. You
10 used to be able to walk across all at once all
11 of the directions. This is how it was. Not
12 no more.

13 MR. ROGAN: Is there anyone else who
14 would like to address council?

15 MR. MORGAN: Good evening, Council.
16 I'd like to remind the residents of Scranton
17 that if they go on Facebook they can find
18 Lee Morgan: The Alliance, and I'd like to
19 ask people to come to that site, if they
20 would, please.

21 Mr. Rogan, I'd like to ask the
22 council a question, may I do so?

23 MR. ROGAN: Sure.

24 MR. MORGAN: I'd like to start with
25 Mr. Wechsler and just go down the line and

1 ask. Mr. Wechsler, with all due respect to
2 you, how much a year do you earn with all
3 the total income?

4 MR. WECHSLER: That's reported on
5 the statements --

6 MR. MORGAN: That's not what I
7 asked, I asked --

8 MR. WECHSLER: I don't think it's
9 proper, you know, to divulge that
10 information.

11 MR. MORGAN: Why? It's on the
12 statement, you just said.

13 MR. ROGAN: He doesn't --

14 MR. MORGAN: How about you, Mr.
15 Rogan?

16 MR. ROGAN: What anyone earns on the
17 city counsel is not relevant to --

18 MR. MORGAN: It most certainly is
19 relevant.

20 MR. ROGAN: No, it is not.

21 MR. MORGAN: Well, I would still
22 like to ask that question.

23 MR. ROGAN: There are financial
24 reports --

25 MR. MORGAN: Would you like to

1 answer that question, Mr. Rogan? You don't
2 have to.

3 MR. ROGAN: No.

4 MR. MORGAN: But I'd like to know
5 that.

6 MR. ROGAN: I agree with what
7 Councilman Wechsler said.

8 MR. MORGAN: Would you like to
9 answer that question, Mr. Gaughan?

10 MR. GAUGHAN: What is the question
11 again, I'm sorry?

12 MR. MORGAN: I'd like to know what
13 you earn a year total in salary from council
14 and your employment and any business
15 interests you may have.

16 MR. GAUGHAN: I don't have any
17 business interests, \$90 a day per diem when
18 I get called to sub, substitute teach, and
19 \$12,500 from here. That's about it. I'm
20 not rich by any means.

21 MR. MORGAN: Mr. Evans, would you
22 care to answer that question?

23 MR. EVANS: Well, we all know that
24 we all make \$12,500 a year in this position,
25 but I'd rather not answer, that is private

1 business and I'd rather not answer that.

2 MR. MORGAN: Well, the first thing I
3 have here is that as residents of the City
4 of Scranton look at their elected council,
5 their elected council won't -- even they
6 serve the people here and they move
7 legislation that is hazardous to the
8 residents of this city only one person would
9 state what they earn and it's a very
10 troubling thing. And I think that the
11 council is very seriously out of touch with
12 reality as to the income of average
13 Scrantonians and it just goes to prove one
14 very simple thing, that the people you have
15 elected to represent you won't tell you what
16 they are earning a year, but they will
17 saddle you with taxation that's beyond your
18 ability to pay.

19 Now, when we look at the budget the
20 mayor can send a budget up, but council has
21 a right to alter that budget and I would
22 like the councilmen to look at Section 501
23 and 505, okay, of the Home Rule Charter
24 because we have got very serious problems
25 here and, you know, that most troubling

1 thing that I have is I'm sorry that I'm 56
2 years old and probably what needs to happen
3 is what Thomas Jefferson talked about with
4 Hamilton and Washington right after this
5 country was founded because when we have in
6 America is something along the lines of what
7 happened with Great Britain. Great Britain
8 at one time was the most powerful nation in
9 the world but what it did was it crushed the
10 citizens of America under taxation and
11 misconduct by the crown and, well, with all
12 due respect to the council and to elected
13 government they served the purpose of being
14 the crown.

15 And when you look at what the new
16 governor wants to do, increase state sales
17 tax and personal tax and the federal
18 government taxing us out of our property and
19 taking our pay and we have nothing to say
20 basically, the government is determined that
21 they are going to do whatever they want to
22 us, they are going to hide in their ivory
23 towers, the Court is going to arm itself by
24 having armed guards there. It's like the
25 whole government is in lock down, and the

1 sad part is that at 56 years old when
2 revolution comes to this country I'll
3 probably be too old to take part, but if it
4 could come tomorrow I would welcome it
5 because I think it's time to clean house in
6 America because the elective process hasn't
7 worked. And to be quite honest with you, I
8 take a lot of the public officials we have
9 now and I would use the laws that we have
10 now and I'd start putting them in jail.

11 Anybody that's going to talk about
12 continually stealing from the tax base over
13 and over and over again and continually
14 funding nonprofits, look it, the Novembrino
15 pool project is just a boondoggle, it just
16 speaks of the corruption this city, okay?
17 And all of the special interests, and I'd
18 like to say that the super voters they have
19 come out and they have supported their
20 candidates like they always have, backing
21 the wrong people for election and reelection
22 and the horse and pony show we call
23 government in the City of Scranton is
24 exactly that.

25 And like Andy said, when I was kid,

1 I'm not as old as Andy, but there were over
2 100,000 people here and you bumped into
3 people and see people. Honestly, I think we
4 are below 70,000, and when you look at what
5 people are getting for their homes pennies
6 on what they are really worth. And the sad
7 part is super voters, because nobody else
8 believes in the system, everybody has walked
9 away from it, they won't vote, but the super
10 voters keep just bringing the same floor
11 flushers into office over and over and over
12 again, and they use the power of government
13 to oppress the people and steal from them,
14 and I just think that the people tonight who
15 wouldn't say what they earn should be
16 ashamed of themselves because you are hiding
17 what you earn from the people who elected.
18 Thank you.

19 MR. ROGAN: Is there anyone else who
20 would like to address council?

21 MS. SCHUMACHER: Good evening.
22 Marie Schumacher. First, I would like to
23 thank Jim Lockwood for putting the budget on
24 the website since the city only puts it on
25 after it is approved so I would encourage

1 everybody to look at it and a public hearing
2 will be in a week, come out and speak your
3 mind.

4 And speaking of that, I do come
5 bearing good news tonight, it has nothing to
6 do with the budget, but it has everything to
7 do with your pocketbook and that is that
8 after years of hard work and dedication by
9 many people the Senate majority leader has
10 tentatively scheduled a vote on Senate Bill
11 76 for next week. That bill would eliminate
12 the school property tax. It would not
13 reduce it so that it could be raised again
14 later, it would eliminate it. So if this is
15 to be accomplished, however, we have to let
16 our senator know. So I want to provide this
17 information. This is Senator Blake, this is
18 his phone number of his office. Call him
19 every day if you desire. Call your friends,
20 family and get them to call and if you have
21 some free time you can go on the website if
22 you have a computer and also call some of
23 the other senators and urge them to vote in
24 favor of Senate Bill 76. Thank you.

25 MR. EVANS: Thank you.

1 MS. SCHUMACHER: Now back to
2 business at hand. I guess I'll hold the DPW
3 questions until Mr. Gaughan returns, but
4 finance, how much would it cost to fund the
5 pension at 50 percent level?

6 MR. EVANS: To fund the pension at a
7 50 percent level --

8 MS. SCHUMACHER: How much would we
9 have to --

10 MR. EVANS: Well, you mean, based on
11 this year for 2016?

12 MS. SCHUMACHER: Yeah.

13 MR. EVANS: Probably \$6 million I
14 would imagine would be the -- I think it's
15 \$20 million next year in 2016.

16 MS. SCHUMACHER: No, I mean the
17 minimum, I don't mean the MM0, I mean to get
18 our funding up to the 50 percent level.

19 MR. EVANS: Oh, okay. I'm not sure.
20 I would imagine \$75 million that they were
21 to provide --

22 MS. SCHUMACHER: The budget -- well,
23 I'll divert, but the budget does talk about
24 it's going to stabilize the pension and the
25 pension is stable now it's just stable in

1 the tanks down in the low 20's, I mean.

2 The parking ordinance, when did we
3 change the parking ordinance to eliminate
4 holidays as a none -- as a time you don't
5 have to pay put money in the meters?

6 MR. GAUGHAN: I'm not sure.

7 MR. EVANS: I'm sure it's mostly due
8 to the fact that there is nobody out
9 enforcing it.

10 MR. SCHUMACHER: Yeah. Are you
11 sure?

12 MR. EVANS: I would imagine.

13 MS. SCHUMACHER: Well, it doesn't
14 say. If you look on those meters it
15 doesn't, you know, it would allow anybody
16 who comes and parks and doesn't know that
17 that was or is and wants to take a \$20 risk
18 they can not put the money in, but I think
19 that's pretty low if you can go for quarters
20 just to make a little money when you don't
21 have to do that or shouldn't have to do that
22 according to the ordinance.

23 And in the interest of accuracy,
24 which I value, I will tell you that I did
25 exaggerate the size of the holes on 307. I

1 went down this week with my yardstick and at
2 the white line at the edge they go from 18
3 inches down to 24 inches. Now, that may not
4 be the feet that I was talking about last
5 week, but I got to tell you if you are right
6 tire goes off that and goes into that you
7 are not going to be a happy camper and your
8 car is going to be in terrible shape, so I
9 do hope that you contacted PennDOT on that
10 issue. It's just between Lynwood and Snook
11 Street and there are many, many places.

12 The DPW, what are we doing with our
13 leaf vacuum equipment?

14 MR. GAUGHAN: Good question
15 actually, that's what I was going to ask
16 Mr. Reed to send correspondence to
17 Mr. Gallagher. I'm not exactly sure to be
18 honest with you. I have heard different
19 accounts that it doesn't work, that they
20 just don't want to use it, I'm not really
21 sure to be honest with you.

22 MS. SCHUMACHER: Well, I would like
23 an answer to that.

24 MR. GAUGHAN: Sure.

25 MS. SCHUMACHER: It's an asset we

1 have, I think we should be using it. There
2 are people -- not everybody watches city
3 council and I think there are a lot of
4 people on East Mountain I know that have had
5 their leaves or raked along the street
6 because that's what's always happened
7 before, the leaf vacuum came by, now if they
8 are not going to use the leaf vacuum that's
9 a lot of packing.

10 MR. GAUGHAN: I think the simple
11 answer is for the administration to put out
12 a press release what they are going to do.
13 I mean, you're right, you can't just rely on
14 city council because not every watches this
15 show -- or this meeting. This show. And
16 not everybody has contacted --

17 MS. SCHUMACHER: It is a show. If I
18 may, is it your intent to vote for the
19 budget on the third of December and then
20 leave for the year?

21 MR. EVANS: It all depends if we
22 have legislation that comes down.

23 MS. SCHUMACHER: You don't care
24 about hearing from the people what some of
25 their concerns are?

1 MR. EVANS: We can talk about, yes.

2 MS. SCHUMACHER: Thank you.

3 MR. DOBRZYN: Good evening. Dave
4 Dobrzyn, resident. Taxes and fees paid.
5 Now, last week we were on the budget, but
6 last week I heard some more about trash
7 issues and so forth. In Massachusetts and
8 New York and several other states, I think
9 Connecticut have five cents per bottle
10 deposit, and the idea is in my mind people
11 don't care about the five cents, which most
12 people probably wouldn't, you could actually
13 have homeless people or people on the skids
14 running around picking these up and making
15 money on and we would have a lot less litter
16 and trash lying around.

17 And I have a question, if we went to
18 a per bag fee or per can fee, I would say
19 per can is better, I can't see bags in
20 courtways, I see that too much it and it's
21 usually all over the place before DPW gets
22 there but what do you do when it gets thrown
23 -- a bag gets thrown on your lawn by -- you
24 could find an envelope in there possibly,
25 but more often than not you can probably

1 just be asked by the police, hey, did you
2 see that particular person throwing it
3 there? You know, so you are kind of stuck
4 with it. I have lived in many different
5 towns and I think at least the last two I
6 lived in I had several severe problems with
7 neighbors that weren't able to even pay for
8 the bag fee, so maybe we could get say,
9 like, a single person is living in a
10 household maybe we could give them a cut or
11 something only if a single person is living
12 in the house.

13 And on these tax challenges with the
14 county, I'd like to note that they can go
15 up, also, and if you are not lawyered up
16 they may. It's a serious problem because
17 you could wind up actually opening up a can
18 of worms for yourself and because you are
19 not properly represented you could wind up
20 paying more than less.

21 On these pensions, also, I'd like to
22 remind council and everybody Wall Street,
23 the debacle we lost \$26 million out of the
24 police and firemen's pensions was my
25 upstanding and would we possibly sell the

1 sewer plant or something like that or
2 interest in the sewer plant and have that
3 money go south again? I don't trust the
4 stock market right now, it's like 18, 17, 17
5 something and the lost 250 points today,
6 somewhere around there, give or take a few.
7 Nobody went to prison over that.

8 Due diligence people were fired when
9 they asked about these crazy mortgages that
10 people that never had the money to pay off
11 that house. There is an ad on television
12 now stating that the Consumer Protection
13 Bureau in the federal government is
14 preventing people from getting loans, well,
15 if they don't have the money to pay for the
16 mortgage then why should they get a loan?
17 Out in the Poconos we had all kinds of
18 growth and taxes went awol and more or less
19 if they had settled for a half decent place
20 in South Scranton or Dunmore or something
21 like that they probably would still be
22 there.

23 My sister was offered \$420,000 for a
24 home they put up for \$175 and, well, now the
25 realtors coming in the door, oh, the place

1 up the street went for 89. They didn't sell
2 at that time and they should have because
3 now they are never going to get their money
4 is my point and to hand people more money
5 and have people using that attack ad is
6 crazy.

7 And, once again, I'd like to remind
8 you with social security we are getting no
9 raise this year for the elderly and so
10 hopefully some day we can turn you people
11 into lobbyists and you can start firing back
12 to these congressmen and senators. We
13 really need it because they are not facing
14 what's happening on the bottom end and after
15 awhile people are just going to be out of
16 their house and have an empty house. Thank
17 you and have a good night in addition to a
18 landlord picking them up at 15 grand.

19 MR. ELLMAN: Hello, Council. I'm
20 still in such good rapport with you I'd like
21 to comment on a couple of things. I spoke
22 to a lady in the grocery store today, she
23 told me she has had her house for sale for
24 two years in South Side, said she got it
25 about 30 years ago as I remember from the

1 family, the in-laws, and she said she's
2 probably spent about \$100,000 in remodeling
3 it and repairs. Two years. I said, "Why
4 can't you sell it?"

5 You know when she said? You all
6 know. Taxes. Your lousy taxes that you
7 don't want to do nothing about have killed
8 it. She said the most she has been offered
9 is \$35,000 because everybody when they hear
10 the taxes it just kills the sale. Maybe if
11 some of those houses around Marywood had
12 more reasonable taxes your signs wouldn't be
13 up all over the place. Isn't that the
14 truth?

15 MR. EVANS: Yeah, I agree. I agree.

16 MR. ELLMAN: Well, people like
17 Amoroso and Bulzoni and Cross that's the
18 caliber of people you get with no ability to
19 govern the city or anything else. You know,
20 we got an administration, and that includes
21 you guys, you are more interested in giving
22 the \$750,000 to the mall than fixing that
23 bridge on Rockwell that's been out a year or
24 two. You are more interested in getting
25 Lackawanna College money after all of the

1 property they have stolen off the taxpayers,
2 giving them money for front on that building
3 than you are doing something about the
4 bridge on Parker Street. I think it's been
5 out of commission for ten years. You
6 haven't done nothing about these antiquated
7 city codes, not a thing. That allows some
8 jackass in the neighborhood ruin people's --
9 it just diminished a dozen houses home
10 values because of one person because you
11 don't do nothing. You know, I could go on
12 and on.

13 Tuesday morning I saw a tractor
14 trailer that belonged to the Pepsi Cola
15 plant coming down Main Avenue pulling a
16 trailer. I don't know the legalities of it
17 in the city, but that's why we don't have no
18 streets and --85,000 pounds towing 40 or 45
19 thousand pounds on a brand new street.
20 Which reminds me, when are they are going to
21 put the manholes covers on? You get killed.
22 They got cones there. Well, I'm through
23 yelling about that.

24 It just upsetting to me to run into
25 somebody that can't sell a house and she

1 says it's really a nice house, you know,
2 because of taxes. You ought to go over
3 South Side complex and look for someone to
4 replace Bulzoni and you will probably get
5 somebody to do a better job.

6 And I'd like to know why the mayor,
7 he can't be overworked, why he is getting
8 another raise? This just doesn't make sense
9 to people out here. And Bulzoni's job you
10 have -- why can't you all bite the bullet
11 once in awhile? Why just it keep going to
12 the people out here that can't afford it.
13 People that are hanging on to their houses
14 by their fingertips for crying out loud.
15 You guys haven't learned, when you mess with
16 someone's pocketbook it makes them
17 irritable.

18 You know, I have heard it several
19 times the only reason you people, the mayor,
20 and a bunch of these other people are in
21 office is solely because no one votes.
22 Three-quarters of the city doesn't vote and
23 that's what you rely on. I don't know how
24 to say it without belittling someone, but
25 you just rely on all of these people not

1 voting that are losing their houses anyway.
2 I have talked to them, probably some of you
3 have talked to them or at least on the
4 phone.

5 If you don't do something soon
6 instead of letting everything these people
7 out here say go over your heads, there is
8 some intelligent conversations out here,
9 there has got to be some good ideas and
10 something to do to save the city and save
11 people. No one wants to live here. Every
12 time I go someplace somebody says they sure
13 would like to go or sell their house or
14 leave. I don't want to hear that. I don't
15 want to hear the mall go broke. Well,
16 please try to save this city. And I'm not
17 giving up on you guys. You are the only
18 communication that we out here have to the
19 rest of the city. Thank you.

20 MR. ROGAN: Thank you.

21 MS. HANLCARA: Hi. My name is Maude
22 Hanclara, I live in South Side. I'm here it
23 protest this raise that they want in our
24 taxes, and I'm hoping that you gentlemen
25 will think about it and try to at least get

1 it down more, do something about it, and we
2 are way overtaxed and I'm hanging onto my
3 property by a thread and I don't want to
4 lose it. I love Scranton. I love the
5 people here, and I'd like to stay here.

6 And I think you people can do
7 something about it because you are different
8 than the type of people we have had behind
9 this wall here before. You think about
10 people and their property a little bit more
11 than the average politician and I hope you
12 would think more about stopping the raise in
13 the property taxes. This is not only
14 citywide it's nationwide but we just cannot
15 afford it here, and I'm hoping you will do
16 that for all of the elderly here, all of the
17 working people that are struggling, because
18 there are people struggling here and we need
19 somebody to help us out and you are the guys
20 that can do it, you have the vote, so please
21 do something for the people. Thank you.

22 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you.

23 MR. ROGAN: Is there anyone else who
24 would like to address council?

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

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MOTIONS.

MR. ROGAN: Mr. Wechsler, any motions or comment?

MR. WECHSLER: Just a few this evening, Mr. Rogan. Last week we did receive the budget to start our analysis of which we are doing, but it is a very fluid document and please be assured that we are looking at ways to minimize the impact of the tax increase but the budget that we received is in flux, in fact, today we had a few pages changed already so it is in flux.

Part of the problem we have with the budget though is whatever we pass is going to have be approved by the Pennsylvania Economy League. The Pennsylvania Economy League is going to evaluate the budget in terms of the recovery plan so we do have to stay within the parameters of the recovery plan, but I also looked at the budget as a plan for what we are going to do next year and I think that's where we have to concentrate our efforts. The budget is what we plan to do and what we have to look at is doing what we say we are going to do.

1 We make a lot of commitments to
2 collect certain fees and sometimes that's
3 not done. We make a lot of commitments to
4 do certain inspections and that doesn't get
5 done. We make a lot of commitments to
6 provide different services. I think what we
7 have to make sure is the money that we bring
8 in is we deliver on the services that were
9 promised, and I think that's just as
10 important as controlling the tax increase.

11 This is the last budget that
12 Mr. Bulzoni is going to prepare for the
13 city. I myself am going to miss
14 Mr. Bulzoni. I think Mr. Bulzoni has raised
15 the bar within our city. Different people
16 that I have spoken to outside of the city in
17 the financial communities truly respect the
18 work that Mr. Bulzoni has done. He has
19 bought credibility and respectability back
20 to city government.

21 One of the ideas that I may have,
22 and I don't if anybody that shares this, I
23 think we penalize ourselves when we hire an
24 administrative person or a cabinet who is
25 not permanent employee of the city. I think

1 we penalize them when we restrict the amount
2 of time that they can serve the city.

3 Mr. Bulzoni as granted an extension, he
4 agreed to pay the wage tax, which I commend
5 him for, and I would make that a requirement
6 of anybody else in that position, but I
7 think actually that the original period that
8 a person should be allowed to work in the
9 cabinet should be two years. That allows
10 them to get their work started and completed
11 it, and I also would think that perhaps
12 another two-year waiver would also be
13 permissible for a person of Mr. Bulzoni's
14 stature. That would allow this person to
15 work for the mayor for a full term because
16 these are permanent employees. They are
17 cabinet employees. They are people that
18 serve at the pleasure of the mayor, and I
19 think if they make concessions to pay the
20 city wage tax I think for someone of high
21 stature I think we penalize ourselves for
22 having that be a restriction.

23 In terms of Mr. Gaughan and I and
24 Mr. Rogan, also, now we have been trying to
25 communicate with the DPW about the leaf pick

1 up. Mr. Gaughan and I spoke about it. The
2 people that are calling for leaf pick up are
3 the people that made a commitment to protect
4 their neighborhood. These are the people
5 that are raking their leaves, these are
6 people that are keeping their properties
7 neat and clean. These are the people that
8 are paying the taxes. These are the people
9 that deserve the service, and I believe the
10 city should step up and make sure that we do
11 go out and collect those leaves and make the
12 plan known to everybody so that happens.

13 A lot of times we get told that we
14 don't listen to the people at the podium.
15 Well, tonight I heard an excellent idea,
16 Mr. Bolus' ideas of having some lend us as
17 executive would an awesome idea. If someone
18 could lend us a financial person that could
19 come in and assist the business
20 administrator I would be all for that,
21 perhaps a retired executive or someone from
22 the University or from Marywood, we have so
23 many good schools in the area I think
24 lending us an executive would be an
25 excellent idea. And that's all I have right

1 now.

2 MR. ROGAN: Thank you. Mr. Evans,
3 do you have any motions or comments?

4 MR. EVANS: Yes, thank you. First
5 of all, it's very good to hear that SB-76 is
6 going to be coming up for a vote next week.
7 I also urge everyone that's paying attention
8 to that to contact Senator Blake and urge
9 him to support SB-76. This is a bill that
10 would have a major impact on the citizens of
11 Scranton. Our largest portion of our
12 property tax bill is the school property
13 tax, so please pay attention to what's going
14 on in Harrisburg, call Senator Blake's
15 Office and urge him to vote for SB-76.

16 Last, this week I went on a tour of
17 North Scranton Junior High School on Tuesday
18 along with City Clerk Lori Reed and Mayor
19 Courtright. Jerry Langan from Goodwill was
20 our tour guide and I have to say the
21 transformation of the old school is
22 absolutely incredible. The apartments are
23 spacious and beautiful and the attention to
24 detail and the sensitivity to the history of
25 the school is amazing. The auditorium,

1 which will be very much a public space, is
2 going to be a positive force in the
3 neighborhood and in the city. It's not only
4 a great historic space, but it will be state
5 of the art venue for all of the future
6 performances that will be held there.
7 Completion of the project is expected to be
8 completed by the end of the year and a grand
9 opening celebration will be held sometime in
10 February.

11 I want to personally thank Jerry
12 Langan for his 20 years of persistence and
13 dedication in getting this project completed
14 and for delaying a much deserved retirement
15 to see this through.

16 This building over 20 years ago was
17 within two weeks from the wrecking ball with
18 plans to replace it with another nondescript
19 strip mall and now to see this iconic
20 Scranton landmark come to life once again is
21 something that we should all take a great
22 deal of pride in. So the next time
23 developers, government officials and
24 so-called experts tell you that that
25 building is beyond repair and must be

1 demolished only to replaced by a shiny new
2 concrete box in the name of progress tell
3 them to take a drive past North Scranton
4 Junior High School and say, hey, thanks but
5 no thanks. We'll keep the old building.

6 Also, I'd like to talk briefly about
7 the budget. The mayor's budget comes with a
8 5.7 percent real estate property tax. I had
9 several questions that will hopefully get
10 answered next week in the public hearing,
11 but I'd also like to get up some more
12 background information on a couple of items
13 of items. The mayor's proposed several new
14 positions in the budget, some are
15 interdepartmental transfers, others may
16 partially funded through grants and some are
17 new hires. Ahead of the public hearing I
18 would like each department head that is
19 getting a new position in that department to
20 give us a job description of that new
21 position as well as the synopsis of what the
22 value added is for that job to their
23 department and to the city as a whole. Mrs.
24 Reed, if you can e-mail each department head
25 in lieu of sending a letter to expedite the

1 process so the information can be received
2 prior to next week's public hearing. Thank
3 you. That's all I have tonight.

4 MR. ROGAN: Thank you. Mr. Gaughan,
5 do you have any motions or comments?

6 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, I do. Thank you.
7 First, I would just like to have Mrs. Reed
8 if she could send correspondence to the DPW.
9 We are getting complaints about potholes on
10 Mill Street off Albright Avenue.

11 I did this week request a list of
12 the all of the lawsuits that the city is
13 currently engaged in.

14 And I would just like to say that I
15 disagree with Councilmen Wechsler on the
16 waiver of two years so that someone in the
17 administration can live outside of the city.
18 No matter how valuable someone is I believe
19 that if you work for the city you should
20 live in the city and you should pay the same
21 taxes and the same fees as everyone else.

22 And the rest of my comments I'll
23 hold until agenda items for tonight. Thank
24 you.

25 MR. ROGAN: Thank you. A number of

1 items I'd like to touch upon. First on the
2 budget, I'd like to echo what my colleagues
3 mentioned, I did receive a budget last week
4 and there is a lot of reading and a lot of
5 analysis to do on our end. I know we all
6 have multiple questions on different aspects
7 of the budget and we will be doing our due
8 diligence within the next few weeks.

9 And as Councilmen Evans and a couple
10 of the speakers mentioned, Senate Bill 76
11 will be coming up for a vote. As was
12 mentioned, it is critical to call our State
13 Senator, Senator John Blake, who in the past
14 has not been supportive of Senate Bill 76 to
15 get on board. This bill will eliminate the
16 largest portion of your property taxes,
17 which is the school property taxes, and the
18 most frustrating thing about school property
19 taxes the majority of them are paid by
20 senior citizens who either do not have
21 children in the schools or their children
22 have long been out of schools.

23 Switching from a property tax base
24 system to a more fair income sales tax base
25 system will help the City of Scranton help

1 the state as a whole and most importantly it
2 will help homeowners keep their homes, and
3 in particularly senior citizens that need
4 the help the most.

5 If my colleagues would be in
6 agreement, I would like council to send a
7 letter to Senator John Blake asking that he
8 support Senate Bill 76.

9 MR. EVANS: I concur.

10 MR. ROGAN: Thank you. Next,
11 tonight we will be voting on legislation for
12 foreclosure registration and although this
13 is a minor piece of legislation it's
14 something that I'm very happy that came
15 together. The way this started was actually
16 I received a phone call from our
17 representative Marty Flynn, who was with a
18 representative from Community Champions, the
19 company that won the bid for this process
20 and currently there are around 350
21 bank-owned properties within the City of
22 Scranton and often times they are a nuisance
23 because the banks aren't there to maintain
24 the properties.

25 What this registration will do is it

1 will have the banks pay a small fee to had
2 company. They have to register the property
3 with a contact person so if a window gets
4 broken or if the grass is high or if the
5 snow needs to be shoveled they have somebody
6 that they can contact to get out and do
7 those repairs.

8 In addition, the city will receive
9 50 percent of those fees that are collected
10 from the bank. Nobody who has a mortgage or
11 is facing foreclosure will pay a single cent
12 because of this program, so that will bring
13 around -- we are estimating around 30, 35
14 thousand dollars a year.

15 Now, Councilman Evans and myself
16 have been working on trying to get a program
17 of small grants for individuals who would
18 like to purchase foreclosed properties in
19 the City of Scranton to kind of make the
20 money come around full circle where the
21 banks are paying to register the properties,
22 they gave the contact information so we can
23 keep control of the blight, and then in the
24 end give that money back to people who want
25 to invest in the City of Scranton.

1 So that's something that we are
2 looking at and we are looking to do whether
3 it's through amending this legislation
4 particularly or by putting line items in the
5 budget just the apparatus of how we are
6 going to do it we haven't figured it out
7 yet, but the plans have come together quite
8 well and I think it would be a great program
9 for the City of Scranton.

10 Next, some comments that were made
11 by multiple speakers over multiple weeks
12 regarding the selling of assets. There is,
13 as I mentioned before, there is no plan to
14 sell the parking garages, the parking meters
15 or the Sewer Authority. I have long
16 advocated for selling some other assets that
17 are under performing. That is not the route
18 that the administration has chosen to
19 pursue. The discussions regarding the
20 parking is regarding leases, it is not
21 regarding a sale, so I just want that to be
22 very clear. And from those same people who
23 are misinforming everyone by saying we are
24 selling assets and they are speaking out
25 against it, there is not even a proposal in

1 place yet so how people could be against a
2 proposal that hasn't even been finalized
3 really astonishes me. I know for all of us
4 up here when a proposal is finalized we will
5 look at it, we will analyze it and we will
6 come up with a decision, and in that process
7 it will be our goal to inform the public the
8 best we could. We have at every step in the
9 process regarding any parking transaction
10 have asked repeatedly that there is a public
11 hearing televised in council chambers to
12 inform the public of any changes with the
13 parking in the City of Scranton, and the
14 mayor and the administration have agreed all
15 along that that is the first thing that will
16 happen prior to a vote. So I just wanted to
17 clear up those couple of items, and that is
18 all.

19 MS. REED: 5-B. FOR INTRODUCTION -
20 AN ORDINANCE - ESTABLISHING PERMIT PARKING
21 ON THE NORTHERN (ODD) SIDE OF THE 800 BLOCK
22 OF EAST GIBSON STREET FROM 811 TO 819 EAST
23 GIBSON STREET.

24 MR. ROGAN: At this time I'll
25 entertain a motion that Item 5-B be

1 introduced into its proper committee.

2 MR. WECHSLER: So moved.

3 MR. EVANS: Second.

4 MR. ROGAN: On the question? All
5 those in favor of introduction signify by
6 saying aye.

7 MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

8 MR. EVANS: Aye.

9 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

10 MR. ROGAN: Aye. Opposed? The ayes
11 have it and so moved.

12 MS. REED: 5-C. FOR INTRODUCTION -
13 AN ORDINANCE - APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR THE
14 EXPENSES OF THE CITY GOVERNMENT FOR THE
15 PERIOD COMMENCING ON THE FIRST DAY OF
16 JANUARY, 2016 TO AND INCLUDING DECEMBER 31,
17 2016 BY THE ADOPTION OF THE GENERAL CITY
18 OPERATING BUDGET FOR THE YEAR 2016.

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

22 MR. WECHSLER: So moved.

23 MR. EVANS: Second.

24 MR. ROGAN: On the question?

25 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, on the question.

1 I would be voting to introduce the 2016
2 budget tonight so that we can continue to
3 have discussions on it over the next three
4 weeks. I'm currently in the process of
5 reviewing it, as are my colleagues, but at
6 first glance I am disappointed and baffled
7 that Mayor Courtright continues to add more
8 unnecessary debt, additional positions and
9 raises all while increasing the taxes almost
10 6percent.

11 And as a speaker said tonight, the
12 city cannot keep increasing expenditures and
13 raising taxes on back of the elderly in this
14 city who won't even receive a cost of living
15 adjustment in their social security, so
16 people are suffering.

17 As I review the budget over the next
18 week, I would like to ask Mrs. Reed to
19 request the following information from the
20 administration before they come to our
21 public caucus next week:

22 First, I'd like an expenditure
23 summary by each account. This was included
24 last year but was not included in this
25 year's budget.

1 I'd like a breakdown of how much we
2 have saved to date from the renegotiated
3 police and fire contracts. It's not exactly
4 clear where the savings are reflected in the
5 budget. Last January, Mayor Courtright said
6 you would see an immediate savings of almost
7 \$1 million from the renegotiated police
8 contract and hundreds of thousands of
9 dollars from the renegotiated fire contract.
10 So my question, as it has been for the last
11 few months, show me exactly where the
12 savings are. Have we hit almost a million
13 dollars as the mayor projected and touted.

14 As of September 30 of this year we
15 have collected \$105,528.98 in civilian
16 parking ticket fines. The civilian parking
17 enforcement program was renegotiated in the
18 police contract this past January. The
19 mayor had projected that we would see
20 \$375,000 in new revenue in 2015 from the
21 this program. My first question is why are
22 we not on track to hit the projected savings
23 of \$375,000, and in 2016 the mayor has
24 projected a savings of only \$217,500. What
25 is the plan to hit that figure and why are

1 we not able to make the original projection
2 of \$375,000?

3 The mayor and his budget also plans
4 to borrow approximately \$1.5 million for
5 repairs at the fire facilities throughout
6 the city and the Army Reserve Center that
7 the mayor would like to acquire which as I
8 previously stated think is mistake. Tonight
9 we are voting on a contract that will allow
10 a firm to complete it's fire facilities
11 assessment. My first question is how does
12 the mayor know that we need an exactly \$1.5
13 million when the study has not been
14 completed yet, and what is the breakdown of
15 how the \$1.5 million will be spent?

16 It's been well documented that the
17 City of Scranton has the highest rate of
18 disability pensions in the State of
19 Pennsylvania, which costs the taxpayers
20 approximately \$5 million. The mayor vowed
21 last year in February to take steps to
22 reduce disability pensions so my first
23 question is what has been done to fix this
24 problem and are we going to expect reforms
25 in 2016 which we know are sorely needed?

1 I would also agree with my
2 colleague, Mr. Evans, in requesting job
3 descriptions for every new position created
4 in this budget. I would like to information
5 before next Thursday before we have
6 Mr. Bulzoni and hopefully Mayor Courtright
7 here to discuss and present the 2016 budget.

8 And I will be reviewing this over
9 the next week or two so, I'm sure I will
10 have additional questions, but I look
11 forward to discussing and debating these
12 issues with my colleagues and the
13 administration. And that is all I have this
14 week. Thank you.

15 MR. ROGAN: Anyone else on the
16 question? All those in favor of
17 introduction signify by saying aye.

18 MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

19 MR. EVANS: Aye.

20 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

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

23 MS. REED: 5-D. FOR INTRODUCTION -
24 A RESOLUTION - AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND
25 OTHER APPROPRIATE CITY OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE

1 AND ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH HIGHLAND
2 ASSOCIATES LTD. TO PERFORM A FIRE DEPARTMENT
3 FACILITIES CONDITION ASSESSMENT.

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

7 MR. WECHSLER: So moved.

8 MR. EVANS: Second.

9 MR. ROGAN: On the question? I
10 would just like to mention that this is
11 sorely needed. From talking to members of
12 the Fire Department and the chief our fire
13 facilities are in dire need of repair, most
14 specifically, and it's been talked about a
15 lot, is the East Mountain Fire House where
16 at one point in time there was actually a
17 tree growing out of the roof, that is how
18 bad of shape it was in.

19 I firmly believe that government's
20 core job is to keep people safe and we have
21 to invest in our public safety so I hope
22 that this assessment will show where our
23 weaknesses are that we need to address
24 within the Fire Department. Anyone else?

25 All those in favor of introduction

1 signify by saying aye.

2 MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

3 MR. EVANS: Aye.

4 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

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

7 MS. REED: 5-E. FOR INTRODUCTION - A
8 RESOLUTION - AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND OTHER
9 APPROPRIATE CITY OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE AND
10 ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH COMMUNITY
11 CHAMPIONS CORPORATION AS PROPERTY MANAGEMENT
12 COMPANY FOR CITY OF SCRANTON'S FORECLOSURE
13 REGISTRATION PROGRAM FOR A THREE (3) YEAR
14 PERIOD FROM THE DATE OF EXECUTION OF THE
15 CONTRACT.

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

19 MR. WECHSLER: So moved.

20 MR. EVANS: Second.

21 MR. ROGAN: On the question?

22 MR. WECHSLER: Yes, Mr. Rogan, on
23 the question. First of all, I'd like to
24 thank Councilman Rogan and Representative
25 Flynn for bringing this program to our

1 attention. As we go through the city we
2 find there are so many properties that are
3 neglected and are causing blight problems in
4 the neighborhood are properties that are
5 owned by banks. It's very difficult to
6 track the banks down and even if they are
7 tracked down they aren't receptive to fixing
8 the problems, so I think this program when
9 it's implemented will go a long way to
10 correcting at least 400 properties that are
11 problems in the city.

12 MR. ROGAN: Anyone else on the
13 question?

14 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes. I'll also be
15 voting in favor of this legislation. I
16 think it is going to be a great program.
17 Since I have been on council for the last
18 two years I have gotten numerous calls and
19 complaints about people who have homes that
20 are foreclosed in their neighborhood, the
21 grass is too high, there is snow on the
22 sidewalks that's never shoveled, the bank
23 owns the property, nobody cleans it up. So
24 I think this program is going to help take
25 care of that and I think it's going to be

1 great for the city and especially for those
2 people who live in the neighborhoods.

3 MR. EVANS: Yes, on the question.
4 Also, it's going to give License and
5 Inspections Department, LIPS, another tool
6 in their tool belt to go after blight by
7 identifying who the owners are and contact
8 information. And again, you know, what
9 Councilman Rogan and I have been talking
10 about taking it one step further to create a
11 program to get homeowners back into the
12 house that were foreclosed by giving grant
13 money to them to do just that so a lot of
14 potential here and I'll say it's a win-win
15 all around so I will also be voting for
16 this.

17 MR. ROGAN: All those in favor of
18 introduction signify by saying aye.

19 MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

20 MR. EVANS: Aye.

21 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

22 MR. ROGAN: Aye. Opposed? The ayes
23 have it and so moved.

24 MS. REED: SIXTH ORDER. 6-A. NO
25 BUSINESS AT THIS TIME.

1 SEVENTH ORDER. 7-A. FOR
2 CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMITTEE ON RULES -
3 FOR ADOPTION - RESOLUTION NO. 214, 2015 -
4 APPOINTMENT OF ANTHONY SANTOLI, 1041
5 PRESCOTT AVENUE, SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA,
6 18510 AS A MEMBER OF THE SHADE TREE
7 COMMISSION, EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 29, 2015. MR.
8 SANTOLI IS BEING APPOINTED TO A FIVE (5)
9 YEAR TERM WHICH WILL EXPIRE ON OCTOBER 29,
10 2020.

11 MR. ROGAN: As temporary Chair for
12 the Committee on Rules, I recommend final
13 passage of Item 7-A.

14 MR. WECHSLER: Second.

15 MR. ROGAN: On the question? Roll
16 call, please?

17 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Wechsler.

18 MR. WECHSLER: Yes.

19 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Evans.

20 MR. EVANS: Yes.

21 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Gaughan.

22 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

23 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Rogan.

24 MR. ROGAN: Yes. I hereby declare
25 Item 7-A legally and lawfully adopted.

1 MS. REED: 7-B. FOR CONSIDERATION BY
2 THE COMMITTEE ON RULES FOR ADOPTION -
3 RESOLUTION NO. 215, 2015 - APPOINTMENT OF
4 THOMAS J. MCLANE, 601 STAFFORD AVENUE,
5 SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA, 18505 AS A MEMBER OF
6 THE SHADE TREE COMMISSION, EFFECTIVE OCTOBER
7 29, 2015. MR. MCLANE IS BEING APPOINTED TO
8 A FOUR (4) YEAR TERM WHICH WILL EXPIRE ON
9 OCTOBER 29, 2019.

10 MR. ROGAN: As temporary Chair for
11 the Committee on Rules, I recommend final
12 passage of Item 7-B.

13 MR. WECHSLER: Second.

14 MR. ROGAN: On the question? Roll
15 call, please?

16 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Wechsler.

17 MR. WECHSLER: Yes.

18 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Evans.

19 MR. EVANS: Yes.

20 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Gaughan.

21 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

22 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Rogan.

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

25 MS. REED: 7-C. FOR CONSIDERATION

1 BY THE COMMITTEE ON RULES FOR ADOPTION -
2 RESOLUTION NO. 216, 2015 - APPOINTMENT OF
3 DAVID J. WENZEL, 7 PHILLIPS DRIVE, SCRANTON,
4 PENNSYLVANIA, 18505 AS A MEMBER OF THE SHADE
5 TREE COMMISSION, EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 29, 2015.
6 MR. WENZEL IS BEING APPOINTED TO A THREE (3)
7 YEAR TERM WHICH WILL EXPIRE ON OCTOBER 29,
8 2018.

9 MR. ROGAN: As temporary Chair for
10 the Committee on Rules, I recommend final
11 passage of Item 7-C.

12 MR. WECHSLER: Second.

13 MR. ROGAN: On the question? Roll
14 call, please?

15 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Wechsler.

16 MR. WECHSLER: Yes.

17 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Evans.

18 MR. EVANS: Yes.

19 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Gaughan.

20 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

21 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Rogan.

22 MR. ROGAN: Yes. I hereby declare
23 Item 7-C legally and lawfully adopted.

24 MS. REED: 7-D. FOR CONSIDERATION BY
25 THE COMMITTEE ON RULES FOR ADOPTION -

1 RESOLUTION NO. 217, 2015 - APPOINTMENT OF
2 ANNE MCNALLY, 1132 SAINT ANN STREET,
3 SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA, 18504 AS A MEMBER OF
4 THE SHADE TREE COMMISSION, EFFECTIVE OCTOBER
5 29, 2015. MS. MCNALLY IS BEING APPOINTED TO
6 A TWO (2) YEAR TERM WHICH WILL EXPIRE ON
7 OCTOBER 29, 2017.

8 MR. ROGAN: As temporary Chair for
9 the Committee on Rules, I recommend final
10 passage of Item 7-D.

11 MR. WECHSLER: Second.

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

14 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Wechsler.

15 MR. WECHSLER: Yes.

16 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Evans.

17 MR. EVANS: Yes.

18 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Gaughan.

19 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

20 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Rogan.

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

23 MS. REED: 7-E. FOR CONSIDERATION BY
24 THE COMMITTEE ON RULES FOR ADOPTION
25 RESOLUTION NO. 218, 2015 - APPOINTMENT OF

1 JOSEPH A. RICCARDO, JR., 944 MONROE AVENUE,
2 APARTMENT #1, SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA, 18509
3 AS A MEMBER OF THE SHADE TREE COMMISSION,
4 EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 29, 2015. MR. RICCARDO IS
5 BEING APPOINTED TO A ONE (1) YEAR TERM WHICH
6 WILL EXPIRE ON OCTOBER 29, 2016.

7 MR. ROGAN: As temporary Chair for
8 the Committee on Finance, I recommend final
9 passage of Item 7-E.

10 MR. WECHSLER: Second.

11 MR. ROGAN: On the question? Roll
12 call, please?

13 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Wechsler.

14 MR. WECHSLER: Yes.

15 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Evans.

16 MR. EVANS: Yes.

17 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Gaughan.

18 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

19 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Rogan.

20 MR. ROGAN: Yes. I hereby declare
21 Item 7-E legally and lawfully adopted.

22 I forgot to mention under motions
23 that last Friday myself and Councilman Evans
24 and Councilman Wechsler participated in a
25 Scranton trivia game against the Media,

1 bankers and nonprofits and our team did win,
2 and I have to give Councilman Evans and
3 Councilman Wechsler for the doing the heavy
4 lifting with those questions, but city
5 council did come out on top and it was a
6 good -- we all had a good time.

7 MR. EVANS: Well, you did a better
8 job rolling the dice than I did so that
9 helped.

10 MR. ROGAN: If there is no further
11 business, I'll entertain a motion to
12 adjourn.

13 MR. WECHSLER: Motion to adjourn.

14 MR. ROGAN: This meeting is
15 adjourned.

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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2
3 I hereby certify that the proceedings and
4 evidence are contained fully and accurately in the
5 notes of testimony taken by me at the hearing of the
6 above-captioned matter and that the foregoing is a true
7 and correct transcript of the same to the best of my
8 ability.
9
10
11

12 _____
13 CATHENE S. NARDOZZI, RPR
14 OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER
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