

SCRANTON CITY COUNCIL

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

HELD:

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2014

TIME:

6:30 P.M.

LOCATION:

The Theatre

Lackawanna College

501 Vine Street

Scranton, Pennsylvania

AMELIA NICOL, RPR
COURT REPORTER

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

CITY OF SCRANTON COUNCIL:

ROBERT MCGOFF, PRESIDENT

PATRICK ROGAN, VICE-PRESIDENT

WILLIAM GAUGHAN

JOSEPH WECHSLER

WAYNE EVANS

AMIL MINORA, SOLICITOR

LORI REED, CITY CLERK

JAMIE MARCIANO, ASSISTANT CITY CLERK

1 MR. MCGOFF: Please stand for the
2 Pledge of Allegiance.

3 (Pledge of Allegiance.)

4 MR. MCGOFF: Please remain
5 standing for a moment of silence for
6 our servicemen and women throughout
7 the world and for all those who have
8 passed away in our community this past
9 week.

10 (Moment of Silent Reflection.)

11 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you. Roll
12 call, please.

13 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Wechsler.

14 MR. WECHSLER: Here.

15 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Rogan.

16 MR. ROGAN: Here.

17 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Evans.

18 MR. EVANS: Here.

19 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Gaughan.

20 MR. GAUGHAN: Here.

21 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. McGoff.

22 MR. MCGOFF: Here. Dispense with
23 the reading of the minutes.

24 MS. REED: 3rd ORDER. 3A. TAX
25 ASSESSOR'S RESULTS REPORTS FOR HEARING

1 DATES HELD OCTOBER 1ST, 2ND, 8TH AND
2 15TH, 2014.

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

5 MS. REED: 3B. MINUTES OF THE
6 REGULAR MEETING OF THE MEMBERS
7 OF THE SCRANTON HOUSING AUTHORITY HELD
8 SEPTEMBER 2, 2014.

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

11 MS. REED: 3C. MINUTES OF THE
12 SCRANTON-LACKAWANNA HEALTH &
13 WELFARE AUTHORITY REGULAR BOARD
14 MEETING HELD SEPTEMBER 18, 2014.

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

17 MS. REED: 3D. MINUTES OF THE
18 COMPOSITE PENSION BOARD MEETING
19 HELD SEPTEMBER 24, 2014.

20 MR. MCGOFF: Are there any
21 comments? If not received and filed.

22 MS. REED: 3E. MINUTES OF THE
23 NON-UNIFORM MUNICIPAL PENSION
24 BOARD MEETING HELD SEPTEMBER 24, 2014.

25 MR. MCGOFF: Are there any

1 comments? If not received and filed.

2 MS. REED: 3F. AUDIT STATUS

3 REPORT FROM ROBERT ROSSI & CO.

4 RECEIVED OCTOBER 23, 2014.

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

7 MS. REED: 3G. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

8 EVALUATION REPORT FROM LACKAWANNA

9 COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

10 RECEIVED OCTOBER 17, 2014.

11 MR. MCGOFF: Are there any
12 comments? If not, received and filed.

13 Any announcements from members of
14 council?

15 MR. GAUGHAN: I just have one. I
16 mentioned this last week but I'm just
17 going to mention it again because I
18 think it would be helpful. Received a
19 call from DPW Director Gallagher last
20 week. The DPW has a good amount of
21 grass seed that was given to them. If
22 any organization such as soccer,
23 baseball or football leagues would
24 need or could use it for their fields,
25 please give Tom Lynch a call at

1 348-4165. Thank you.

2 MR. MCGOFF: Anyone else? A
3 couple of announcements for council.
4 First of all, next week's council's
5 meeting is scheduled for back at City
6 Hall. We are hoping that the repairs
7 and the inspection of the elevator are
8 completed by then.

9 Tomorrow, October 30th, 10 a.m.
10 the groundbreaking for Goodwill at the
11 old or former North Scranton Junior
12 High School long awaited by many
13 people and a good project to begin.

14 Also a reminder that this
15 Saturday is daylight saving time, turn
16 clocks back one hour and change
17 batteries and smoke alarms which is
18 recommended by many.

19 Tuesday is Election Day. Please,
20 a reminder to all citizens to go out
21 and exercise your right and as far as
22 I'm concerned your responsibility to
23 vote in this election.

24 And last thing, on next week's
25 agenda or next week there will be a

1 public hearing regarding the SAPA
2 legislation that will be reintroduce
3 in 7th Order and anyone wishing to
4 comment or any support or not for the
5 SAPA plan, please, there will be a
6 public hearing at 5:30 next Thursday.

7 And I believe that was all of the
8 announcements.

9 MS. REED: 4TH ORDER. CITIZENS
10 PARTICIPATION.

11 MR. MCGOFF: I believe Mr. Ellman
12 first on the list.

13 MR. ELLMAN: Friends and ex
14 friends and the people in the middle.
15 You know, in my opinion the past eight
16 years of my young life I've suffered
17 through the worst president this
18 country ever had that I've lived
19 under, the worst governor. Two people
20 put in jail for the county and the
21 worst mayor since the founding of the
22 city. That's a lot for one person
23 now. I talked to so many people
24 failed this administration just go
25 going nowhere, absolutely nowhere.

1 Yesterday -- let me just get off the
2 subject. Yesterday I went to the
3 Taurus Club about 2 o'clock. They put
4 me out the door at 7:30 so I was there
5 a good while and I probably talked to
6 eight or ten people. You know, every
7 time I went to the bathroom we would
8 talk about it and people, most of them
9 that I talk to don't live in town,
10 some had property here. I'm not
11 talking about the people that I talked
12 to at the grocery store. I'm talking
13 about some professional people, you
14 know, and so forth. They just don't
15 see anything good going on. Everybody
16 thinks you need to restructure these
17 loans instead of worrying about credit
18 and borrowing more. It's just going
19 to fall on children and grandchildren.
20 Last week -- well, a couple weeks ago
21 Marywood took another piece of
22 property on Washington, a \$150,000.
23 How are we going to cover it? Just
24 raise taxes, that's all. That's all
25 that we -- this very host at this

1 building, our very host last month
2 took four million dollars off. You
3 know, what we're going to do? Just
4 raise more taxes? Something's got to
5 be done. Mr. Bilda proposed a little
6 program, nobody had any interest in
7 it. I ask why we can have a zone and
8 Mr. Hughes looked into it and said it
9 might have some possibility. Nobody
10 went ever further. You people just
11 keep falling back on the fact that you
12 can raise taxes and that's obscene.
13 You just can't do it. I don't know if
14 anybody saw it or was interested.
15 Kings College bought a piece of
16 property, \$125,000. Guess what? They
17 agreed to pay taxes for ten years.
18 Here it is right here. Why couldn't
19 your messiah, Amoroso think of
20 something like that for the city
21 instead of just telling everybody to
22 raise taxes and sell everything we
23 have. He is such a -- who is paying
24 him anyway? Why is he still hanging
25 around here wasting everybody's money

1 and time. He hasn't come up with one
2 positive thing since the day he hit
3 this city. You know, he doesn't live
4 here, he doesn't have no property
5 here, he doesn't know the people, the
6 city and that's why people don't want
7 to live here because of things that he
8 thinks we ought to be doing instead of
9 helping people save their homes. I
10 just -- you know, it's just so -- the
11 city is just going downhill and you
12 people don't just acknowledge what is
13 going on under your noses. This man
14 just -- I just don't see where he has
15 any right whatsoever to tell 72,000
16 people what he wants. He's dictating
17 to you and he's just not the kind of
18 person that the caliber of leadership
19 that we need in this time. And before
20 I go, I'd like to say something. I
21 couldn't believe what I heard. Some
22 piece of filth shot out. A momma bear
23 and three cubs needlessly like at the
24 airport and they have a continual
25 history of doing such and our Game

1 Commission is just worthless and
2 they've been worthless for years and
3 years because I keep up with all this
4 real good. They don't make any
5 attempt to do anything but this was an
6 atrocity. If I get up in the morning
7 early enough to do my chores, I'm
8 going to go to the airport meeting
9 they're have at 10 o'clock or 10:30.
10 But this is most objectionable. Thank
11 you.

12 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you, Mr.
13 Ellman. Miss Hodowanitz.

14 MS. HODOWANITZ: Joan Hodowanitz,
15 Scranton. With regard to Item 3F, the
16 audit status report from Robert Rossi
17 dated October 23rd, there's been
18 actual progress. Instead of 24 items
19 outstanding there are now 23 which is
20 progress over the last two months.
21 Keeping in mind that the audit was due
22 on May 31st and at this rate it won't
23 even be done in 2015; or on the other
24 hand, it might see a flood of
25 information come in and we'll get an

1 audit and then I personally would
2 question validity of the information
3 if everything just suddenly pours out.
4 One of the items that's still
5 outstanding, by the way, is the
6 audited financial statements of the
7 Scranton Parking Authority and we
8 approved that four million dollar note
9 last year and you have no idea what
10 the books look like and we still have
11 no idea what the books look like.
12 I'll be interested in seeing those
13 lines in the budget pertaining to the
14 Scranton Parking Authority. By the
15 way, the budget is due in 17 days and
16 I don't think there will be an audit
17 to support that budget. It also would
18 be interesting to see how you all word
19 the request for proposal for the 2014
20 audit when you have no 2013 audit and
21 no clear concept of when it will be
22 coming in. But that's somebody else's
23 headache, not mine.

24 I have a question. If the
25 governor does not sign the Act 47

1 legislation, does it automatically
2 become law after a certain number of
3 days? Does anyone knows?

4 MR. GAUGHAN: I think after --
5 I'm not positive but I think after ten
6 days.

7 MS. HODOWANITZ: Ten days, that
8 would be November 2nd, would it not?

9 MR. GAUGHAN: I'm almost
10 positive.

11 MS. HODOWANITZ: Unless he, of
12 course, vetoes it, correct?

13 MR. GAUGHAN: Correct.

14 MS. HODOWANITZ: Okay. Well, I
15 hoe he doesn't veto it even though
16 it's just before the election because
17 I think the city needs a sense of
18 urgency on its distressed status, I
19 really do. I hope we don't go another
20 eight years in distress status. I
21 hope that it's resolved one way or the
22 other even if resolution means going
23 into receivership. I don't think you
24 can continue down this path
25 indefinitely. Twenty-two years is

1 much too long.

2 Has there be any information on
3 the city's negotiation with the union
4 first on the topic of pension and
5 concessions for pensions. Any
6 information? Was that in progress?

7 MR. MCGOFF: Yes.

8 MS. HODOWANITZ: Negotiations?

9 MR. MCGOFF: Yes. I have
10 received the letter from the Fraternal
11 Order of Police and I'll address it
12 during motions.

13 MS. HODOWANITZ: Okay. I
14 appreciate that. I'm glad to see
15 something is going on and I'm happy to
16 see the groundbreaking tomorrow
17 morning for the Goodwill project. I
18 will there. I hope many other people
19 show up. Does anybody have an idea of
20 once that groundbreaking occurs what
21 the timeline should be before that
22 becomes, you know, a functional
23 entity? Anybody? Is it like
24 distressed status? They're working on
25 it, the audit, we're working on it?

1 MR. ROGAN: I'll ask that
2 question tomorrow morning. I'll ask
3 that question tomorrow morning at the
4 groundbreaking.

5 MS. HODOWANITZ: Okay. I'll be
6 listening there. Thank you.

7 MR. MCGOFF: Anyone else who
8 wishes to address council?

9 MR. DOBZYN: Good evening. Dave
10 Dobzyn, resident of Scranton.

11 MR. MCGOFF: Good evening.

12 MR. DOBZYN: Resident of Scranton
13 taxes and fees paid. Now, last week
14 we got into some rather heated
15 comments about the Parking Authority
16 and the default of Landmark loan and I
17 would like to point out once again
18 that it resembled the Kedoff
19 Commission with Frank Costello and
20 Lucky Luciano and whomever else. You
21 know, I paid my taxes. What did you
22 do for your country? I paid my taxes.
23 So what if I squeezed them out of the
24 working class. But I'd also like to
25 remind that 50 million dollars were

1 spent thanks to the Parking Authority.
2 They acted like a prodigal son and
3 guaranteed and agreed that as long as
4 the litigation with Landmark
5 continued, it will be a negative mark
6 on Scranton. So whether or not we're
7 right or wrong, we kind of -- we might
8 be stuck paying and that's all there
9 is to it. But back when these parking
10 garages were initially in the planning
11 stage, for instance, at the Connell
12 building, a neighborhood activist
13 walked up through the old parking
14 garage and said there wasn't a crack
15 in the concrete or anything. He was
16 told to stay the hell out of there or
17 he would be arrested for trespassing.
18 So, you know, we put up a nice new one
19 and naturally nobody is parking there
20 anyway.

21 On state taxes and the laws and
22 the constitution. There's two dozen
23 cities that are in the same boat, at
24 least two dozen cities. It's probably
25 more like 30. And I'd like to see us

1 form a group, a class action group and
2 go after the state to compensate
3 cities for their required taxes and
4 after a certain threshold it's beyond
5 comprehension that we could ever pay
6 our bills with a third of our property
7 tax missing and then drawing on city
8 services on top of it.

9 And on the Sewer Authority, I'd
10 like to bring that up again.
11 Preparations rarely when they
12 misconduct themselves does anyone ever
13 wind up in prison. The only reason
14 Bernie Madoff wound up in prison was
15 because he kept his family out it who
16 probably didn't know what was going
17 on. And in the nineties -- I'm not
18 sure of the years. I remember the
19 name of the person that went to jail
20 for the lower Lackawanna for
21 cooking -- a Sewer Authority for
22 cooking the books. And he was
23 released on that point that was poorly
24 treated or whatever and caused the
25 problem and he got caught and I think

1 there was a one year jail sentence.
2 So it's something to consider if you
3 ever think that handing over the Sewer
4 Authority to a corporation it's a good
5 idea because they won't wind up in
6 jail, we'll wind up with the fine like
7 we did the last time and it was
8 considerable. It was two million
9 dollars initially and they bought off
10 and extended the compliance for
11 another 15 years. They wanted it in
12 ten years or something like that. We
13 have 25. So it's only a couple
14 million dollars a year and it's not
15 really attached to city taxes.

16 We need to collect our back trash
17 fees and whatever else is owed. It's
18 like I said, I think people are red
19 poor, red flags in the past, don't
20 bother, do not disturb this person and
21 it's not right to keep raising up
22 someone else's fees so that somebody
23 with five times the money can get by
24 cheaply.

25 And it's time to bring back the

1 golden parrot. I'll make it fast.
2 I'm not even out of time. How about
3 that? Al Boscov owns all kinds of
4 money around town. He donated a \$150
5 grand to Governor Corbett there and
6 it's like you can't keep the them all
7 afloat but you can donate 150 grand to
8 politics. I hope he's gets 15 or 20
9 million back and then it will be a
10 good investment for Mr. Al.

11 And Times editorial page, poor
12 Mr. Courtright, every week, every week
13 there's something depicting him as
14 some kind of wacko or fein and they
15 should really be ashamed of
16 themselves. Why don't they pick on
17 all the people from outside the area
18 that donate to the mayor's race.
19 Thank you and have a good night.
20 Maybe they deserve to pay a few
21 commuter taxes.

22 MS. SCHUMACHER: Good evening,
23 council. Marie Schumacher.

24 MR. MCGOFF: Good evening.

25 MS. SCHUMACHER: I'm going to

1 start off going back to last week
2 because I'm not sure what you voted
3 on. Going back to the prior week, the
4 16th of September there were several
5 exchanges between Mr. McGoff and
6 people who came to the podium
7 regarding that loan approval and, Mr.
8 McGoff, you said in one, "There is no
9 loan agreement as of yet." The
10 citizen said, "You have no idea what
11 kind of percentage?" Mr. McGoff,
12 "There is no loan agreement get so we
13 don't know. What we are voting on is
14 to give approval for them to negotiate
15 that loan." Mr. McGoff -- this is the
16 second one. Mr. McGoff, "There is no
17 loan. All we are doing is setting the
18 parameters in which the loan can be
19 negotiated." Citizen, "I understand
20 that but sooner or later the loan is
21 going to negotiated and there's going
22 to be a loan, correct? Is that what
23 this is all about?" Mr. McGoff, "Yes.
24 That's the purpose but there is no
25 loan agreement at this time." Then

1 there another -- Mr. McGoff said,
2 "Well -- " Well, I'm sorry. The
3 citizen then replied, "Then why are we
4 voting on it? You know, I mean,
5 seriously." Mr. McGoff said, "We are
6 not voting on a loan." And then there
7 was something else said. And Mr.
8 McGoff again said, "Well, ask it when
9 the actual loan agreement negotiations
10 are complete." "Well, then it will be
11 too late," said the citizen. Mr.
12 McGoff said, "No, it's not too late."
13 Mr. Jackowitz happened to be the
14 citizen. He said, "Yes, it is." And
15 Mr. McGoff said, "That's when we vote
16 on it." Now, that implied that there
17 was going to be separate legislation
18 to approve the loan. But if I'm not
19 mistaken, you guys sort of slipped the
20 actual loan in as well but on the
21 other side of that is the terms that
22 were for that loan had a very small
23 window. I believe it was from the end
24 of October to the end of November
25 which means the loan would go into

1 effect on the first of December and
2 that required five months of payments
3 upfront and the Home Rule Charter says
4 the payment of funds -- city funds
5 shall not be made unless specifically
6 provided for in the budget which these
7 funds weren't and specifically
8 authorized by the controller and there
9 was nothing from the controller to
10 state that she had the approval that
11 you had her approval to go ahead with
12 spending five months worth of loan
13 payments in the month of December. So
14 what did you approve last week and
15 should that not have been separate
16 legislation, a whole separate
17 ordinance? Because it was stated and
18 people believe that it was going to be
19 separate that you were only
20 authorizing the investigation and then
21 all of a sudden at the last minute
22 when not everybody who had spoken
23 before even knew that it was being
24 voted on so why was that not separate
25 legislation to the approval of the

1 actual loan and why don't we have the
2 supporting documentations?

3 MR. MCGOFF: We received the term
4 sheet last Thursday. The terms were
5 within the parameters of what we had
6 voted on before and, yes, we voted on
7 that term sheet for that loan. As far
8 as the payments, as far as I remember,
9 I don't have it in front of me, the
10 first payments on that are not due
11 until the first quarter of 2015. I
12 believe March of 2015.

13 MS. SCHUMACHER: Even those first
14 five months. I thought it said you
15 had to do upfront. This is the
16 upfront, the five months payment?

17 MR. MCGOFF: I said I don't have
18 it in front of me. It was my
19 understanding that the amortization --
20 I can never say that word for some
21 reason --

22 MS. SCHUMACHER: I know. It's a
23 toughie. It's a tongue twister.

24 MR. MCGOFF: That is was that the
25 first payment was March of 215 after

1 the first collection of the meter
2 revenues.

3 MS. SCHUMACHER: Okay. I'll
4 check that out and be back next week
5 but I -- it just seems to me that
6 should have been two separate pieces
7 of legislation.

8 But onto something else which is
9 e it's been a month now, almost a
10 month since the deadline for paying
11 the trash bill was negotiated. Do we
12 have -- it was Mr. Wechsler's idea to
13 bill those who had only made one
14 payment or had made no payment follow
15 through. I did a Right to Know and I
16 know there are thousands of people who
17 have not paid so I'm wondering and I'm
18 wondering if Mr. Evans has the exact
19 numbers of how many paid and how many
20 didn't pay.

21 MR. EVANS: Not at that point but
22 I'll try to get them for next week.

23 MR. WECHSLER: I know right now
24 that Treasurer Beck is in the process
25 of determining homes that may have had

1 multiple billings but don't have those
2 apartments rented so right now those
3 people are coming and proving with
4 their electrical bills that they did
5 not have apartments rented so they do
6 not have to pay the additional fee so
7 if someone had -- didn't rent the
8 apartment for a year, they don't have
9 to pay the extra tax. So I know right
10 now that that process is still going
11 on and that's why there was some
12 reluctance into mailing out those
13 deficient bills again.

14 MS. SCHUMACHER: Okay. But you
15 don't have the breakdown on how many
16 are questioned and --

17 MR. WECHSLER: No. Because it
18 won't be -- that information, they
19 have to supply it to the end of
20 October.

21 MS. SCHUMACHER: Okay. As usual
22 I have other things but good Lord
23 willing, I'll be back next week.
24 Thank you.

25 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you. Anyone

1 else who wishes to address council?

2 MS. REED: 5TH ORDER. 5A.

3 MOTIONS.

4 MR. MCGOFF: Mr. Wechsler.

5 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you, Mr.

6 McGoff. Just a few things this

7 evening. Kind of been a quiet week.

8 In terms to the legislation about the

9 fees for the showmobile. During the

10 summer I spoke to a couple of

11 different people who were interested

12 in renting the showmobile for some

13 activities and unfortunately our

14 showmobile was in for repair. So I'm

15 very happy to see that this

16 legislation is coming through to

17 increase the fees because this

18 showmobile is an item that the city

19 can make some money off of. It is a

20 fine thing to have. I think it also

21 provides an opportunity for some

22 sponsorships and when it's used around

23 the city or even outside the city, I

24 think it would be good for our

25 publicity and good for our reputation

1 that someone could see that we are
2 able to make some money off of this.

3 The other item that I have is
4 that the city will be opening bids on
5 November 19th for repair of the roof
6 and roof deck replacement on Engine 10
7 fire station up on East Mountain. I
8 applaud the administration for their
9 commitment to keep in building in a
10 state of repair. It is a valuable
11 asset to our neighborhood and we're
12 happy to have it open. That's all I
13 have at this time. Thank you.

14 MR. MCGOFF: Mr. Rogan.

15 MR. ROGAN: Yes. Just one very
16 brief item. Some residents from the
17 Sandy Banks Community contacted me.
18 This is going back about a month or
19 two ago regarding a possible zoning
20 change in their area of town. There
21 were some -- there was some industry
22 in the area that has since moved out
23 and they are seeking to have a change
24 from light industrial to residential
25 in their area and they did drop off a

1 petition for all of city council. So
2 I will like to make a motion to ask
3 the City Planning Commission to review
4 the request of the residents of the
5 Sandy Bank area regarding the zoning
6 change.

7 MR. MCGOFF: Is there a second?

8 MR. GAUGHAN: Second.

9 MR. MCGOFF: On the question?

10 (No response.)

11 MR. MCGOFF: All in favor of the
12 motion signify by saying aye?

13 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

14 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

15 MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

16 MR. EVANS: Aye.

17 MR. MCGOFF: Aye. Opposed?

18 (No response.)

19 MR. MCGOFF: Ayes have it and so
20 moved.

21 MR. ROGAN: Thank you. That is
22 all.

23 MR. MCGOFF: Mr. Evans.

24 MR. EVANS: First of all, I think
25 this may be our last meeting at

1 Lackawanna College so I would like to
2 personally thank the multi talented
3 Jim Cullen and his crew for they've
4 done for us here. They've done a
5 great job. It's been very, very
6 comfortable here and it's worked out
7 well and props to them and thank you
8 very, very much.

9 On pension reform, recent
10 historical review of the City of
11 Scranton pension funds as prepared for
12 the Pension Funds Deposit Board and
13 completed by the Beyer-Barber Company
14 disclosed the following findings. And
15 this is from their summary of issues.
16 It states -- and these are three of
17 the six summary of issue statements.
18 "The court settlements on the fire and
19 police pay issues led to increased
20 pension benefit payouts that already
21 exceeded contributonal levels. A
22 significant number of disability
23 retirements has seriously eroded
24 funding and finally plans are not
25 actuarially sound and may be headed

1 toward insolvency as recently noted by
2 the auditor general." So as you can
3 see, it's simply more confirmation of
4 the seriousness of this issue. I had
5 spoken to many active members of the
6 police and fire union as well as
7 retirees currently receiving benefits
8 and justifiably they are concerned and
9 want to see action taken to create a
10 path to solvency for the pension.
11 Kicking this can down the road is no
12 longer an option. There is no magic
13 bullet. There's no one going to ride
14 in on a white horse to save the day.
15 We are left with only real and
16 comprehensive pension reform. That's
17 the hard part and we need to get to
18 work on it ASAP. That's all I have
19 for now.

20 MR. MCGOFF: Mr. Gaughan.

21 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you. Keyser
22 Avenue is undergoing repaving from
23 Ferdinand Street to North South Road.
24 The project began October 19th and is
25 expected to be completed by Friday,

1 this Friday according to PennDOT
2 representatives.

3 Last week I mentioned that
4 residents in the Bull's Head section
5 requested Crime Watch signs be put up
6 in their neighborhood. Chief Graziano
7 responded that there are a few signs
8 left and they will be put up in that
9 area.

10 I am extremely concerned with
11 blight in our neighborhoods as our --
12 all of my colleagues on council. It's
13 been the number one complaint that I
14 received since being elected to this
15 office. I feel it's crucial that we
16 address the urgent need to reverse
17 blight and rebuild our neighborhoods.
18 One of the ways the city can address
19 this need is to seriously explore the
20 possibility of creating a land bank
21 and I'd like to take a moment to
22 explain what a land bank is. Land
23 banks are governmental or nonprofit
24 entities that acquire, hold and manage
25 foreclosed or abandoned properties.

1 The concept of a land bank is to
2 acquire and purchase vacant and under
3 utilized property with a future goal
4 of productive reuse of the land. Land
5 banks acquire properties through tax
6 foreclosure, intergovernmental
7 transfers, nonprofit transfers and
8 open market purchases. Land banks are
9 typically governed by a Board of
10 Directors that adhere to bylaws and
11 Articles of Incorporation specifically
12 tailored to meet the need of
13 individual communities. Land banks
14 have proven to be an effective tool
15 for stabilizing communities burdened
16 by at a large number of vacant,
17 abandoned or foreclosed properties as
18 is in the case here in the City of
19 Scranton. Most local governments find
20 as in the case of Scranton that they
21 have limited capacity and resources to
22 deal with the intricacies of these
23 mounting challenges on their own.
24 They simply cannot deal with
25 adequately maintaining and securing

1 properties until new owners can be
2 found delivering clear title, erasing
3 unpaid property taxes or navigating
4 the often cumbersome processes from
5 transferring government land to
6 private owners who will return them to
7 productive use. Across the county
8 land banks have become an effective
9 tool to address these challenges
10 reversing the cycle of decline and
11 decay, facilitating the transfer of
12 vacant property and promoting economic
13 development in neighborhood
14 stabilization. More than 80 local
15 governments an 23 states have created
16 land banks or other entities with
17 similar powers to turn the liability
18 of vacant properties into community
19 assets. In January of 2013 the
20 Pennsylvania state legislature passed
21 land bank enabling legislation giving
22 municipalities like Scranton a new
23 tool to fight blight. As we are aware
24 in the city vacant, abandoned and tax
25 delinquent properties impose

1 significant costs on neighborhoods by
2 lowering property values, decreasing
3 tax revenues and undermining community
4 cohesion which is very important.
5 Land banks allow local government to
6 overcome barriers that inhibit the
7 redevelopment of these properties. It
8 make it easier to developers,
9 nonprofits and individuals to acquire
10 vacant publicly owned land. For
11 example, the disposition of tax
12 delinquent properties can be
13 challenging when delinquent taxes
14 exceed the property's market value or
15 when there is no clear title to that
16 property. The affordable housing
17 stock also benefits from land banks.
18 In the event that vacant lots cannot
19 be developed due to a lot's irregular
20 shape or small size, land banks can
21 assembled adjoining parcels to create
22 a larger, more marketable property.
23 This would be particularly helpful for
24 many properties throughout our
25 neighborhoods in the city. The land

1 bank can also operate side lot
2 programs which I think is very
3 important. Ownership of vacant lots
4 is transferred to adjacent property
5 owners for a nominal fee. This
6 ensures abandoned properties are back
7 on the tax rolls, it increases revenue
8 and reduces maintenance costs. The
9 side lot program also allows for
10 community gardens that will beautiful
11 neighborhoods throughout the city.
12 This past month I have met with
13 members of the city administration,
14 county official and state officials
15 about the possibility of creating a
16 Land Bank Authority in Scranton or a
17 regional Land Bank Authority in
18 conjunction with Lackawanna County.
19 These conversations have been held
20 previously and I am making an
21 aggressive effort to continue them so
22 we can bring all the key stakeholders
23 in the area together and begin to use
24 this tool to address vacancy, blight
25 and property tax delinquency. I will

1 update my colleagues on council as I
2 progress and I have Mr. Evans,
3 Councilman Evans who has a great
4 background in real estate to help me
5 in this cause and hopefully we have
6 something concrete by the new year.

7 And that is all I have for this
8 meeting. Thank you.

9 MR. EVANS: This year?

10 MR. GAUGHAN: This year, no.

11 MR. MCGOFF: He's taking a
12 vacation here.

13 MR. EVANS: There you go. Let me
14 make a quick comment on that. I
15 absolutely am in full support of this.
16 As the President of the Greater
17 Scranton Board of Realtors and also as
18 a Board of Directors for the
19 Pennsylvania Association of Realtors
20 we have been instrumental in pushing
21 this through the state legislature.
22 We have been in support of land banks
23 for many, many years and finally saw
24 this come to fruition. So I think
25 it's a valuable, valuable tool in

1 fight again blight and this along with
2 our new Quality of Life Ordinance
3 which we hope to get on-line soon will
4 go a long way but this is a long term
5 play and a very, very important
6 initiative. So thank you very much
7 for taking that up.

8 MR. GAUGHAN: Yeah. And just one
9 more comment. I would like to say --
10 thank Councilman Evans for helping me
11 out with this and this is going to be
12 our mission to get this off the ground
13 and I know the Courtright
14 administration supports this, the
15 County supports it. It's just going
16 to be about getting all the key
17 stakeholders together, making sure the
18 conversation does not die out in
19 getting this process started. Thank
20 you.

21 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you. And with
22 that said I would like to just point
23 out that as you've heard from council
24 members this evening, we are working
25 on a number of projects individually

1 and collectively that we hope will
2 address some of the issues of the City
3 of Scranton. As a council and as five
4 members there are limited things that
5 we can do simply by numbers but be
6 assured that we are aware of the
7 problems that exist in the city and
8 are doing our best to address those
9 problems. And I thank all of my
10 members of council for the individual
11 efforts that they have made to address
12 some of these issues.

13 Just a couple of quick
14 announcements. First of all, I forgot
15 earlier to mention that because of
16 Election Day there will be no garbage
17 pickup on Tuesday, November 4th which
18 means that the collections for
19 Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday
20 will be delayed. Just so that you
21 don't put things out early and it
22 becomes problematic.

23 I did receive a letter from a
24 resident concerning some animal
25 control issues, and I just want to

1 make the resident know or make it
2 known that these issues will be
3 brought up with the Animal Control
4 Officer and hopefully we can arrive of
5 some resolution for the problem that
6 exists.

7 As far as one of the questions
8 that was asked earlier, we have
9 received a correspondence from the
10 Fraternal Order of Police, President
11 Paul Helring, a letter addressed to
12 the Council President. It says "It
13 has come to attention that City
14 Council is looking for an update on
15 contract negotiations between the City
16 and the FOP. Over the several past
17 several weeks the FOP has met with the
18 City several time and has future
19 meetings scheduled. The meetings are
20 positive and both sides have presented
21 cost saving measures for the
22 betterment of the City and its
23 taxpayers. I ask that the Council be
24 patient and realize that this is
25 lengthy process to be done

1 efficiently. The membership of the
2 FOP realize the City is facing tough
3 financial times and being stakeholders
4 as employees and taxpayers of this
5 community, we only have good
6 intentions towards the City and it's
7 residents. Currently we have a
8 contract set to expire December 31st,
9 2017. Our willingness to even talk at
10 this time should show City Council our
11 sincerity towards negotiations. If
12 you or any of your colleagues have
13 questions or concerns, please contact
14 me." I should -- and that is again
15 from the president of the FOP, Paul
16 Helring. And I should also mention
17 that in talking with the Mayor, they
18 have also been conducting discussions
19 with the fire union as well. Because
20 they are basically contract
21 negotiations, sort of by law the
22 nature of those negotiations are
23 private and not divulged. Hopefully
24 we will see some resolution to at
25 least some of the issues that we need

1 prior to the budget and hopefully
2 prior to the end of the fiscal year.
3 But negotiations and discussions are
4 ongoing and hopefully, as I said, a
5 resolution to some of the issues.

6 We also received -- on 3G this
7 evening was a recommendation from the
8 Lackawanna County Regional Planning
9 Commission and we also received a
10 letter from the City Planning
11 Commission both recommending the
12 adoption of the SAPA comprehensive
13 plan which will be, as I stated
14 before, which will be on the agenda
15 next week and a public hearing at 5:30
16 next week concerning SAPA. So the --
17 basically the go ahead by from both
18 Planning Commissions for the adoption
19 of the SAPA plan but that will be
20 discussed next week.

21 Also the last thing, end of the
22 year schedule for council. We expect
23 that we will receive the budget in a
24 timely manner. It is due November
25 15th. Council needs to vote on that

1 by December 15th. With those dates in
2 mind, it is at this point in time plan
3 to have the last meeting of council on
4 December 18th and a letter was sent to
5 the administration that all
6 legislation -- pertinent legislation
7 should be sent to council in a timely
8 manner so that it can be addressed by
9 that final meeting date. It should
10 also be noted that both Christmas and
11 New Years are on Thursday evenings so
12 it is likely that the last meeting
13 would be December 18th and then the
14 next meeting of council would not be
15 until January 8th. But we will
16 discuss that and determine if that's
17 the way in which we wish to proceed.
18 And that's all.

19 MS. REED: 5B. FOR INTRODUCTION
20 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING FILE OF THE
21 COUNCIL NO. 188, 1994, AN ORDINANCE
22 ENTITLED "ESTABLISHING THE RATE TO BE
23 CHARGED FOR THE USE OF SWIMMING POOLS,
24 RECREATION CENTERS, BASEBALL FIELDS,
25 AND THE SHOWMOBILE BY PROVIDING FOR AN

1 INCREASE IN FEES" BY INCREASING THE
2 FEE FOR USE OF THE SHOWMOBILE.

3 MR. MCGOFF: At this time I'll
4 entertain a motion that Item 5B be
5 introduced into its proper committee.

6 MR. ROGAN: So moved.

7 MR. WECHSLER: Second.

8 MR. MCGOFF: On the question? On
9 the question I do like the idea that
10 Councilman Wechsler brought forward of
11 using the showmobile for advertising.
12 The question that comes to mind is
13 that I believe back in 2014 we
14 contracted with a company to
15 investigate market based revenue
16 opportunities. To this date I don't
17 know that any of us have knowledge of
18 anything that they have done to bring
19 that about. I think about the only
20 thing that I can think of is that
21 there is some banners or flags
22 downtown. But certainly this might be
23 something to bring to that group, to
24 that enterprise to see if they can act
25 on it as far as the showmobile is

1 concerned.

2 All those in favor of
3 introduction signify by saying aye.

4 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

5 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

6 MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

7 MR. EVANS: Aye.

8 MR. MCGOFF: Aye. Opposed?

9 (No response.)

10 MR. MCGOFF: The ayes have it and
11 so moved.

12 MS. REED: 6TH ORDER, 6A.

13 NO BUSINESS AT THIS TIME.

14 7TH ORDER, 7A. FOR CONSIDERATION
15 BY THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE- FOR
16 ADOPTION FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO. 54,
17 2014 - SALE OF TAX DELINQUENT PROPERTY
18 MORE COMMONLY KNOWN AS CORNER OF PARK
19 AND TERRACE, SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA,
20 TAX MAP NO. 16806-010-031 TO THOMAS J.
21 KANE AND MARY M. KANE, 95 LINWOOD
22 AVENUE, SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA, 18505,
23 FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF \$1,000.00.

24 MR. MCGOFF: What is the
25 recommendation of the Chair for the

1 Committee on Finance?

2 MR. EVANS: As Chairperson for
3 the Committee on Finance, I recommend
4 final passage of Item 7A.

5 MR. ROGAN: Second.

6 MR. MCGOFF: On the question?

7 (No response.)

8 MR. MCGOFF: Roll call, please.

9 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Wechsler.

10 MR. WECHSLER: Yes.

11 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Rogan.

12 MR. ROGAN: Yes.

13 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Evans.

14 MR. EVANS: Yes.

15 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Gaughan.

16 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

17 MR. MARCIANO: Mr. McGoff.

18 MR. MCGOFF: Yes. I Hereby
19 declare Item 7A legally and lawfully
20 adopted.

21 MS. REED: 7B. FOR CONSIDERATION
22 BY THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS - FOR
23 ADOPTION RESOLUTION NO. 96, 2014 -
24 AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND OTHER
25 APPROPRIATE CITY OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE

1 AND ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH ARRIS
2 ENGINEERING GROUP LTD. TO PROVIDE
3 ARCHITECT/ENGINEER (A/E) SERVICES FOR
4 PHASE 1 OF A STREET LIGHTING PROJECT
5 WITHIN THE DOWNTOWN AREA OF THE CITY
6 OF SCRANTON TO COMMENCE WITHIN SEVEN
7 (7) DAYS AFTER THE FINAL EXECUTION OF
8 THE CONTRACT AND BE COMPLETED WITHIN
9 THIRTY (30) DAYS AFTER COMMENCEMENT.

10 MR. MCGOFF: What is the
11 Recommendation of the Chair for the
12 Committee on Public Works?

13 MR. GAUGHAN: As Chairperson for
14 the Committee on Public Works, I
15 recommend final passage of Item 7B.

16 MR. ROGAN: Second.

17 MR. MCGOFF: On the question?

18 (No response.)

19 (MR. MCGOFF: Roll call, please.)

20 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Wechsler.

21 MR. WECHSLER: Yes.

22 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Rogan.

23 MR. ROGAN: Yes.

24 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Evans.

25 MR. EVANS: Yes.

1 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Gaughan.

2 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

3 MR. MARCIANO: Mr. McGoff.

4 MR. MCGOFF: Yes. I hereby
5 declare Item 7B legally and lawfully
6 adopted.

7 MS. REED: 7C. FOR CONSIDERATION
8 BY THE COMMITTEE ON RULES - FOR
9 ADOPTION RESOLUTION NO. 97, 2014 -
10 APPOINTMENT OF JACK LOSCOMBE, 3115
11 PARALLEL DRIVE, SCRANTON,
12 PENNSYLVANIA, 18504, TO THE CIVIL
13 SERVICE COMMISSION. MR. LOSCOMBE'S
14 EFFECTIVE DATE WILL BE OCTOBER 9,
15 2014. MR LOSCOMBE WILL BE REPLACING
16 DOMINICK GEORGETTI, WHO RESIGNED
17 EFFECTIVE AUGUST 28, 2014. MR.
18 LOSCOMBE'S TERM WILL EXPIRE WITH THE
19 TERM OF MAYOR WILLIAM L. COURTRIGHT.

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

23 MR. ROGAN: Second.

24 MR. MCGOFF: On the questions?

25 MR. GAUGHAN: On the question.

1 Last week I had voted. I will be
2 voting no tonight for the reason that
3 Mr. Loscombe is involved in litigation
4 with the city and I don't think it's
5 proper to appoint him to the
6 commission although I think he will do
7 a great job and I wish him the best of
8 luck.

9 MR. MCGOFF: Roll call, please.

10 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Wechsler.

11 MR. WECHSLER: Yes.

12 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Rogan.

13 MR. ROGAN: Yes.

14 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Evans.

15 MR. EVANS: Yes.

16 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Gaughan.

17 MR. GAUGHAN: No.

18 MR. MARCIANO: Mr. McGoff.

19 MR. MCGOFF: Yes. I hereby
20 declare Item 7C legally and lawfully
21 adopted.

22 That's the end of the legislation
23 and once again I, too, would like to
24 thank President Mark Volk of
25 Lackawanna College for extending us

1 the courtesy of holding meetings here.
2 The four weeks have been very pleasant
3 and accommodations have been terrific
4 and also Theatre Manager Jim Cullen
5 has been more than gracious in
6 preparing the theatre for us so that
7 these meetings could be held and held
8 in an orderly and effective manner.
9 So thank you to both.

10 If there's no further questions,
11 I'll entertain a motion to adjourn.

12 MR. ROGAN: Motion to adjourn.

13 MR. MCGOFF: This meeting is
14 adjourned.

15 (Proceedings concluded at 7:19
16 p.m.)

17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

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 taken by me at the hearing of the above-captioned matter and that the foregoing is a true and correct transcript to the best of my ability.

Amelia Nicol, RPR
Court Reporter