

SCRANTON CITY COUNCIL MEETING

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HELD:

Thursday, October 2, 2014

LOCATION:

Council Chambers

Scranton City Hall

340 North Washington Avenue

Scranton, Pennsylvania

CATHENE S. NARDOZZI, RPR - OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER

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CITY OF SCRANTON COUNCIL:

ROBERT MCGOFF, PRESIDENT

PATRICK ROGAN, VICE-PRESIDENT

WAYNE EVANS

JOSEPH WECHSLER

WILLIAM GAUGHAN  
(Not present)

LORI REED, CITY CLERK

KATHY CARRERA, ASSISTANT CITY CLERK

AMIL MINORA, SOLICITOR

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

3 MR. MCGOFF: Roll call, please.

4 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

5 MR. WECHSLER: Here.

6 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

7 MR. ROGAN: Here.

8 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

9 MR. EVANS: Here.

10 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

11 Mr. McGoff.

12 MR. MCGOFF: Here. Let the record  
13 show that Mr. Gaughan had previously told us  
14 that he would not be able to attend this  
15 evening's meeting.

16 MR. ROGAN: I make a motion to  
17 appoint Councilman Wechsler temporary chair  
18 for the Committee on Public Works.

19 MR. WECHSLER: Second.

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

22 MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

23 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

24 MR. EVANS: Aye.

25 MS. MCGOFF: Aye. Opposed? The

1 ayes have it and so moved.

2 Dispense with the reading of the  
3 minutes.

4 MS. REED: THIRD ORDER. 3-A. SINGLE  
5 TAX OFFICE CITY FUNDS DISTRIBUTED REPORT  
6 COMPARISON 2014 - 2013.

7 MR. MCGOFF: Are there any comments?  
8 If not, received and filed.

9 MS. REED: 3-B. MINUTES OF THE  
10 SCRANTON-LACKAWANNA HEALTH AND WELFARE  
11 AUTHORITY REGULAR BOARD MEETING HELD JUNE  
12 12, 2014.

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

15 MS. REED: 3-C. MINUTES OF THE  
16 SCRANTON POLICE PENSION COMMISSION MEETING  
17 HELD AUGUST 27, 2014.

18 MR. MCGOFF: Are there any comments?  
19 If not, received and filed.

20 MS. REED: 3-D. MINUTES OF THE  
21 NON-UNIFORM MUNICIPAL PENSION BOARD MEETING  
22 HELD AUGUST 27, 2014.

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

25 MS. REED: 3-E. MINUTES OF THE

1 SCRANTON FIREFIGHTERS PENSION COMMISSION  
2 MEETING HELD AUGUST 27, 2014.

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

5 MS. REED: 3-F. AUDIT STATUS REPORT  
6 FROM ROBERT ROSSI & COMPANY RECEIVED  
7 SEPTEMBER 25, 2014.

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

10 MS. REED: 3-G. TAX ASSESSOR'S  
11 RESULTS REPORT FOR HEARING HELD SEPTEMBER  
12 10, 2014.

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

15 MS. REED: 3-H. TAX ASSESSOR'S  
16 REPORT FOR HEARING DATE TO BE HELD OCTOBER  
17 29, 2014.

18 MR. MCGOFF: Are there any comments?  
19 If not, received and filed.

20 MS. REED: 3-I. CONTROLLER'S REPORT  
21 FOR MONTH ENDING AUGUST 31, 2014.

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

24 MS. REED: 3-J. THE SEWER AUTHORITY  
25 OF THE CITY OF SCRANTON INDEPENDENT

1 AUDITORS' REPORT FOR YEAR ENDING MARCH  
2 31, 2014.

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

5 MS. REED: 3-K. AGENDA FOR THE  
6 NON-UNIFORM MUNICIPAL PENSION BOARD MEETING  
7 HELD SEPTEMBER 24, 2014.

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

10 MS. REED: 3-L. CORRESPONDENCE  
11 RECEIVED FROM THOMAS J. ANDERSON &  
12 ASSOCIATES, INC. REGARDING THE 2015  
13 FINANCIAL REQUIREMENT AND MINIMUM MUNICIPAL  
14 OBLIGATION (MMO).

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

17 Any clerk's notes?

18 MS. REED: No, Mr. McGoff.

19 MR. MCGOFF: Anything from council?  
20 Any announcements? A couple of things,  
21 first of all, please remember that October  
22 is breast cancer awareness month. Many  
23 people in the our community have been  
24 effected and please keep them in your  
25 prayers and in your thoughts.

1                   Also, a reminder that beginning next  
2 week meetings will be held at the theatre at  
3 Lackawanna College, same time. The caucus  
4 will be at 6:00, the meeting will start at  
5 6:30.

6                   Also, because of the elevator, the  
7 repairs to the elevator, offices to which  
8 the public needs access will be moved so  
9 that there is -- so that they are ADA  
10 compliable. They will be moved within this  
11 building for the period of the elevator is  
12 not working so if anybody does have business  
13 in city hall there will still be handicap  
14 access to those offices.

15                  Also, just a note, Scranton Tomorrow  
16 in partnership with the Penn State extension  
17 master gardeners planted -- over this past  
18 weekend planted over 550 mums in over 100  
19 planters downtown. There were well over 40  
20 volunteers for various organizations and all  
21 to do this, I guess what we are asking, two  
22 things that I would ask of people: First of  
23 all, if there for business owners downtown  
24 if there is a planter in front of your place  
25 of business it would nice to go out and

1 water it, you know, once in awhile just to  
2 keep it fresh and growing. The other thing  
3 is that for people frequenting the downtown  
4 the planters aren't waste receptacles. One  
5 of the -- one of the things that is really  
6 appalling to me is that people spend time  
7 trying to make -- you know, to beautify the  
8 city a little bit and then other people come  
9 along and, you know, throw cigarettes, throw  
10 lunch bags and everything else into these  
11 planters. They are not waste receptacles so  
12 please treat them appropriately, and as I  
13 said, business owners also, you know, take  
14 some pride in what's in front of your  
15 building and help out the city a little bit.  
16 And that's it.

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

19 MR. MCGOFF: Bill Jackowitz.

20 MR. JACKOWITZ: Bill Jackowitz,  
21 South Scranton resident. Good evening,  
22 everybody. First of all, I'd like to start  
23 off by giving my condolences to the Scranton  
24 taxpayers and property owns evaluation of  
25 the City of Scranton because it sounds like



1 they are going to get murdered, hammered,  
2 killed, whatever adjective you want to use  
3 to describe what's going to happen to them  
4 once the taxes start getting raised because  
5 it's just probably what's going to have to  
6 happen.

7 You know, I'd like to take a little  
8 trip down memory lane. You know, we have  
9 had recovery plans in the past that failed  
10 because there was not a lot of thought put  
11 into those plans. We've had unbalanced  
12 budgets passed year after year after year.  
13 We had a Doherty three, the 3 of 2 votes  
14 that happened four consecutive years that  
15 basically killed the city and people knew  
16 that that was going to happen and it  
17 eventually did happen.

18 We have audits that are late every  
19 single year. We have pay raises to the  
20 administrator and to the mayor, which the  
21 city cannot afford. We have unqualified  
22 cabinet members. Proof of that is go back  
23 and read Mayor Doherty's sworn testimony  
24 when this was all discussed and he was under  
25 oath when he answered those questions. We

1 have lucrative retirement plans. We forced  
2 100 city employees to retire then we doubled  
3 their retirement and benefits and then we  
4 had to go out and hire all new people to  
5 replace them. We never had any serious n  
6 negotiations of nonprofits, we never  
7 attempted to collect any money seriously  
8 from the nonprofits even though we kind of  
9 did some doing and money, but we never  
10 seriously tried to do anything. We are  
11 selling properties to nonprofits basically  
12 for pennies and \$99 leases, 99 cent leases,  
13 whatever the heck they were, and these  
14 properties once paid taxes and now they are  
15 not paying taxes.

16 We are hiring consultants and  
17 assistants when they are not needed, and not  
18 only are we hiring consultants and  
19 assistants we are giving the people who we  
20 hired to do these job more money and pay  
21 raises because we are hiring the best  
22 qualified and if you hire the best qualified  
23 you are going to have to pay them more  
24 money.

25 We gave OECD loans to businesses who

1 really didn't need those loans, but tot top  
2 it off they never paid us back. The  
3 attorney told us that two weeks ago, I can't  
4 remember his name, he said the list is  
5 large. We have a large list of people that  
6 didn't pay us back. Most of them probably  
7 didn't even need the money, but we gave it  
8 to them anyway and now they are not paying  
9 us back.

10 We raised the mercantile tax, we  
11 have driven business out of this city. Now  
12 we are going to drive more businesses out of  
13 the city because taxes are going up again,  
14 not only are we driving business out of the  
15 city we are driving residents out of the  
16 city. There is more for sale signs in the  
17 City of Scranton more than ever before. I  
18 couldn't believe how many have gone up  
19 recently in my neighborhood in South Side.  
20 It's crazy. It really is. I don't have an  
21 explanation for it. We raise the parking to  
22 a dollar and a quarter an hour, yet we are  
23 going to bring more people downtown. We are  
24 going to charge them more money to charge  
25 downtown, but yet we are going to bring more

1 people downtown. We raised the rates in the  
2 parking garages. The parking garages are  
3 falling apart, that's going to bring more  
4 people downtown?

5 I mean, it's about time we smarten  
6 up and the only people that have to smarten  
7 up are seven elected officials, the mayor,  
8 five city councilmen and city controller.  
9 The city controller has been here for 30  
10 years, okay? This is the problem. It's not  
11 the Court cases, it's not the commuters,  
12 it's not the nonprofits, it's the people who  
13 are in charge of the city. That's why  
14 people run and hide when you mention the  
15 word Scranton, Pennsylvania, to someone to  
16 move into this area or to be a family or  
17 whether it be a business. Why? What's the  
18 one reason? Taxes. And now we are talking  
19 raising taxes again. I mean, come on,  
20 people. There has got to be some other  
21 plans.

22 You know, we hire people from  
23 Newark, New Jersey. Newark, New Jersey, is  
24 more corrupt than Scranton, Pennsylvania,  
25 is. Why don't we go out to the midwest?

1           Why don't we go to Ohio? Why don't we go to  
2           Wisconsin, other places where they can --  
3           New Mexico where they have actually turned  
4           things around and they have gone from being  
5           in debt to having money. Why don't we do  
6           that?

7                         And the only people that can do that  
8           are the seven elected officials. I can't do  
9           it and no one in this audience can do it.  
10          The only people that can do it are the seven  
11          elected officials of the City of Scranton  
12          and it's about time they do it. It's as  
13          simple as that. We can make all of the  
14          excuses and all of the alibis in the world,  
15          you know what, it all boils down to the  
16          seven elected officials in the City of  
17          Scranton.

18                        MR. MCGOFF: Joan Hodowanitz.

19                        MS. HODOWANITZ: Joan Hodowanitz,  
20          Scranton resident. With regard to item 3-E,  
21          Rossi's audit status, there was one change  
22          on the audit, we apparently did get the  
23          Scranton Redevelopment Authority's audit  
24          done and that's been received, however, we  
25          still don't have the Parking Authority's

1 audited financial statements.

2 I did go to Mr. Washo's office this  
3 afternoon, he was not there. There was a  
4 gentleman manning the office, only one other  
5 person. I asked him what would be a good  
6 time for me to come back. He said, "Well,  
7 Mr. Washo is usually here between three and  
8 four."

9 It was 3:30, he wasn't coming in  
10 today. I asked him if he knew the status of  
11 the audit? He said, "What audit."

12 So that's very interesting. With  
13 regard to 3-L, the correspondence from  
14 Anderson and Associates on the MMO for 2015.  
15 I don't know if you have a chance to read  
16 the backup on this yourself, but Anderson  
17 attached a letter from the Bayer-Barber  
18 Company that prepares the MMO and they sent  
19 a letter to the Composite Pension Board  
20 explaining that the board has two options,  
21 one is to go with the full MMO, which would  
22 be \$15.8 million, the other one is to go  
23 with Act 44 relief provisions, which would  
24 be \$12.3 million. However, this is what  
25 they say: "Based on the fact that the city

1 is it a severe level of distress and have  
2 one of the lowest funding levels in the  
3 state, we recommend that the city make  
4 contributions to the plan in excess, excess  
5 of the full 2015 MMO which is \$15.8 million  
6 before consideration of Act 44 relief."

7 Would I would like to know is what  
8 does the city intend to do and how does it  
9 intend to find the money? Does anybody have  
10 any ideas whether they are going to with a  
11 12.3 or the 15.8 million or excess?

12 MR. MCGOFF: That is currently being  
13 discussed because going with the lower  
14 amount with the discount may put us where we  
15 are paying out more than we are putting into  
16 the pension.

17 MS. HODOWANITZ: Well, you have not  
18 only look at the --

19 MR. MCGOFF: So it really doesn't  
20 provide necessarily a savings, but at the  
21 same time paying the full MMO or in excess  
22 of the full MMO is also problematic. And,  
23 yes, they are looking at options, a number  
24 of options for it.

25 MS. HODOWANITZ: Well, good luck

1 finding \$12.30 let alone 12 point million or  
2 more.

3 And finally, Item 5-D, which is the  
4 this contract for fire recovery services,  
5 someone explain to me why I pay real estate  
6 and EMS taxes and other taxes, I thought  
7 that provided me with municipal services?  
8 What was I missing? Why this additional  
9 fee?

10 MR. MCGOFF: This would recover  
11 costs incurred by the city and we would  
12 recover if from and the insurance companies  
13 as opposed to paying for those services from  
14 general funds.

15 MS. HODOWANITZ: And for those of us  
16 who don't carry insurance because we are  
17 covered by the VA who would pay the bill?

18 MR. MCGOFF: I'm sorry?

19 MS. HODOWANITZ: Those of us are  
20 covered by the Veteran's Administration, we  
21 retirees who paid our dues to the country,  
22 we don't carry private insurance, who would  
23 pay that bill?

24 MR. WECHSLER: This is car  
25 insurance. This is car insurance.



1 MR. MCGOFF: This is -- for example,  
2 I'll give you as I did in the caucus, if  
3 there were a car accident where a fire  
4 company had to go out and clean up spilled  
5 fuel --

6 MS. HODOWANITZ: That's not what  
7 your documentation says. Let me read you  
8 your documentation: "Fees to be charged.  
9 Scranton Bureau of Fire shall be reimbursed  
10 the fee which in the event of a motor  
11 vehicle accident shall be a per vehicle fee  
12 or per pedestrian or per bicyclist. For  
13 example, basic emergency services assistance  
14 \$250.

15 Prohibited offenses. It shall not  
16 be a defense to any action to collect these  
17 fees that a person was not at fault."

18 In other words, I could be walking  
19 down the street -- I'm going to continue, I  
20 could be walking down the street, hit by a  
21 hit and run driver drunk, okay, fire  
22 department comes out and is going to charge  
23 me \$250 because it doesn't matter whether  
24 I'm at fault or not, okay?

25 It goes on, "It shall not be a

1 defense to any action to collect these fees  
2 if the person has no insurance coverage."

3 Well, I'm sorry, I paid my dues. As  
4 far as I'm concerned, I'm covered by the VA  
5 and I will not pay any fee."

6 It goes on, it gets even worse --

7 MR. MCGOFF: Ms. Hodowanitz, we  
8 understand what the legislation is.

9 MS. HODOWANITZ: Well, I'm just  
10 saying this isn't right. Are you going to  
11 repeal the EMS tax? It seems to me to be  
12 redundant? Or maybe we could charge it to  
13 the commuters, I'm sure they will be happy  
14 to pay it. They will love this when they  
15 see this.

16 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you.

17 MS. HODOWANITZ: Thank you.

18 MR. MCGOFF: Kristen Shemanski.

19 MS. SHEMANSKI: Hi, everyone. I'm  
20 Kristen Shemanski and I'm here on behalf of  
21 Scranton Reads and Scranton Reads is a  
22 community reading event that if organized by  
23 the City of Scranton and the Albright  
24 Memorial Library. Every year during the  
25 month of October citizens of Scranton come

1 together to read a great work of literature.  
2 They participate in book discussions,  
3 special events related to the chosen work of  
4 that year.

5 At Scranton Reads we have two main  
6 goals, the first is to encourage the  
7 community to read, and the second is to  
8 bring the community together through the  
9 shared common experience. So Scranton Reads  
10 we like to enhance the feeling of the  
11 community by bringing people from all  
12 different backgrounds together.

13 This year the book that we have  
14 selected is the works of Edgar Allen Poe,  
15 and Brian has copy of the book for  
16 everybody.

17 MR. MCGOFF: We always appreciate  
18 this.

19 MS. SHEMANSKI: And in the book is  
20 also a list of all events that we have  
21 around the Scranton area for the month of  
22 October, and this is our 13th year doing it  
23 so we really hope to see you at some of our  
24 events that are coming up. Thank you very  
25 much.

1 MR. MCGOFF: I know in the past  
2 council has made attempts to, you know, be  
3 participants in the Scranton Reads and, you  
4 know, it is a very enjoyable activity that  
5 you have and I also talked and made a  
6 suggestion for a book for next year which is  
7 a book written by a Scranton resident about  
8 the City of Scranton.

9 MS. SHEMANSKI: Oh, that would be  
10 great, yeah. Well, thank you very much.

11 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you very much.  
12 We appreciate it. Doug Miller.

13 MR. MILLER: Good evening, did you  
14 go Miller, Scranton. Just to begin here, I  
15 listened to Mr. Jackowitz this evening and I  
16 think the beginning of his presentation  
17 pretty much summed everything up quite  
18 accurately. Get ready for a blood bath,  
19 Scranton. With the result we received a few  
20 days ago by the Court I could say welcome to  
21 paradise and thank you Scranton voters. You  
22 have done a remarkable job election after  
23 election and I can say that we must have had  
24 some pretty darn some beautiful looking yard  
25 signs out there last election so thank you.

1 I mean, you have done a remarkable job.

2 You know, it's just beyond the point  
3 of frustration at this point when we take a  
4 look at where we are at this time, this  
5 stage of the game. Quite frankly, there are  
6 no answers in this government. It's been  
7 that case for decades. When we think we are  
8 going somewhere we continue to kick the can  
9 down the road we and expect a different  
10 result, and I know it sounds quite  
11 repetitive, but that's exactly the case when  
12 you are in a city where you are constantly  
13 banging your head against the same wall and  
14 expecting to move forward, and that's what  
15 we have consistently done, gentlemen. There  
16 is not one creative idea that I have heard  
17 come out of this chamber since January.  
18 We've heard all of the silly little  
19 fictitious plans.

20 We had a transplant from New Jersey  
21 come in who has a record of the  
22 mismanagement himself come in from New  
23 Jersey to tell us things we already knew who  
24 made ridiculous recommendations. Prime  
25 example is the Act 205 tax that was shot

1 down. Last week we heard from a council  
2 member who claimed that their opinion can be  
3 wrong but never be false. I don't know what  
4 the difference is between the two, but  
5 evidently the Court found that opinion to be  
6 false.

7 So where did we go now, gentlemen?  
8 What's our brilliant plan now? Are we going  
9 to bring Mr. Amoroso back to the table, the  
10 drawing board? Are we going to sell off  
11 some parking garages now and sell off the  
12 Sewer Authority, maybe even sell city hall?  
13 Why not at this point?

14 Have we taken a chance to actually  
15 review this document, the 2014 operating  
16 budget? Has anyone taken the time to review  
17 this document? Mr. Rogan and Mr. McGoff  
18 should be familiar with it. Have you  
19 Mr. Wechsler?

20 MR. WECHSLER: Yes, I did.

21 MR. MILLER: And Mr. Evans. And  
22 what do you think of it?

23 MR. WECHSLER: It's what we are  
24 working to.

25 MR. MILLER: Are we willing to make

1           some serious cuts moving forward because if  
2           we are not we are wasting our time. I have  
3           already sat down and reviewed the budget and  
4           I'm working on cuts. All I hear out of this  
5           chamber is more taxation, more sucking the  
6           life out of residents of this city. We  
7           wanted to burn the people outside of the  
8           city and obviously you were held accountable  
9           on that, so now what are you going to do?  
10          Are we going raise taxes 50 percent again  
11          and force more people out of their homes?  
12          Forget about selling your home, we have  
13          people just fleeing this city altogether on  
14          a daily basis and what are we doing, we are  
15          just standing on the sidelines watching it  
16          happen.

17                   I am so sick and tired of hearing  
18                   the excuse "Well, give us a chance, we were  
19                   just elected."

20                   You've had a chance. You have lived  
21                   in this city for the majority of your lives,  
22                   you have lived the every day life, you  
23                   understand the struggles this city face, you  
24                   all campaigned. You all walked around this  
25                   city, I would assume. You went through the

1 neighborhoods, you saw the blight, you saw  
2 the "For Sale" signs, saw the poverty all  
3 throughout this city. You chose to be put  
4 in that seat. The residents elected you.  
5 Did qualifications matter? We could debate  
6 that, but at the end of the day it's over  
7 and you were elected and we have to work  
8 with what we have. Is it scary? You are  
9 sure the heck right it is but this is what  
10 we have, and now you have the keys to the  
11 future and we are in a critical stage here.

12 Do we want to go bankrupt? No, we  
13 don't, but is that where we're at right now?  
14 It most certainly is because I haven't heard  
15 one realistic plan. We are talking about  
16 taxing people in the city once again and  
17 have we taken the time to look at delinquent  
18 taxes and what's currently owed? And so  
19 that before we go outside of the city and  
20 punish people maybe we should clean our own  
21 house out.

22 You know, it's just disturbing and  
23 it's hard to have any optimism for the  
24 future as I look around here because I just  
25 hear one silly plan after another, none of



1           it is realistic. You know, Mr. McGoff  
2           stated in the paper today that we might luck  
3           out the third time trying the commuter tax.  
4           Maybe it's time to get that idea out of our  
5           minds because it's an absurdity. I wish I  
6           was as delusional as Mr. McGoff was with the  
7           statement that bankruptcy is a the end of  
8           the road, I still feel we are on the road.  
9           Well, maybe you're on -- I don't know what  
10          road you are on, Mr. McGoff, because maybe  
11          it's the yellow brick road or the land of  
12          Oz, but I'd like to be on the same road you  
13          are on, but evidently you are not seeing the  
14          same thing we are and unless we are not  
15          willing to step up and get our acts together  
16          and make some tough decisions this city  
17          isn't going anywhere and bankruptcy is the  
18          only solution.

19                   And maybe we don't have a loud  
20                   enough bell. You know, I think it's really  
21                   ignorant when you are speaking and you have  
22                   a loud bell ring over you maybe we should  
23                   come up with a light system or something a  
24                   little will more respectful --

25                   MR. MCGOFF: Maybe you should abide

1 by the five minutes.

2 MR. MILLER: Well, maybe you should  
3 look at something that's more respectful --

4 MR. MCGOFF: Maybe you should abide  
5 by the Rules of Council.

6 MR. MILLER: -- and not allow to ring  
7 over you when you are speaking.

8 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you.

9 MR. MILLER: You are welcome,  
10 Mr. McGoff, you're welcome.

11 MR. MCGOFF: Lee Morgan.

12 MR. MORGAN: Good evening, Council.  
13 You know, I'd like to start off by saying,  
14 you know, I still have respect for anybody  
15 who is elected to public office. I won't  
16 deny that I'm extremely disappointed where  
17 we are and how long we have been on this  
18 road to where we are now. I think it's time  
19 for a new plan. I brought up the 30 percent  
20 tax cuts, cut the budget by 30 percent,  
21 that's why I talked about. You know, I  
22 think we have got to stop showboating, and  
23 I'll illustrate that. We went through the  
24 Hill Section, we put up a condemned sign, I  
25 think Mr. Evans went there. You know,

1 Mr. Evans, I'd like to ask you if you go to  
2 the Hill again knock on doors on private  
3 residences that are in disrepair and leave  
4 them a note and tell them to bring their  
5 property up to some kind of standards  
6 because, you know, maybe the roof is bad,  
7 the porches are falling off, you know,  
8 because to be honest with you we blamed all  
9 of the wrong people for the problems we have  
10 had in our city for a long time.

11 A 30 percent cut in the budget is  
12 only a beginning and we can laugh about it  
13 and we can find everything to be humorous,  
14 but, you know, I know that people make 70 to  
15 80 thousand dollars a year and they're  
16 walking out of their house, they're leaving  
17 it here. They tell anybody that could pay  
18 what they owe the bank and I have talked to  
19 these people.

20 You know, it's nice to dress up and  
21 wear pretty little suits and pretend like  
22 you have some answers, and that's not a  
23 disrespectful remark. You know, I think we  
24 have picked leadership in this country and  
25 we have used the wrong barometer to

1           determine leadership ability and that's why  
2           our country been in decline since I have  
3           been a child, but we can bomb countries into  
4           the stone age, but don't forget we bombed  
5           Vietnam into the stone age and in the war we  
6           pulled out of there and you see what  
7           happened there. We destabilized the whole  
8           middle east and now we are worried about  
9           ISIS cutting people's heads off and fighting  
10          with our equipment.

11                        So, I mean, it's time to be really  
12          realistic and understand where Scranton is.  
13          It's time to move away from Act 47 and sever  
14          that relationship. It hasn't lead us  
15          anywhere. It's been a dead end. We can  
16          make the decisions we have to make here, and  
17          I have said it before, SAPA is the beginning  
18          of a new way back for this city. The other  
19          way back is to move away from Act 47.

20                        Look it, we can blame Mayor Doherty  
21          for all of our problems, he didn't create  
22          them, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania told  
23          him what to do and he did it. The project  
24          money that came in here from the state, the  
25          grant money that's been misspent, everybody

1           knew it was being misspent. That wasn't a  
2           secret to all of the people in the halls of  
3           power here, just the people on the street  
4           have finally figured it out because they  
5           can't live here anymore, they can't pay the  
6           amount of taxes they are paying.

7                     And, you know, I just think that the  
8           residents in this city when this next budget  
9           comes out if there isn't a 30 percent cut in  
10          the budget they have to ask this council and  
11          this mayor to resign. We need to find  
12          leadership. This city has to go into  
13          receivership or bankruptcy if the people we  
14          elect can't make the tough choices, and to  
15          be honest with you ordinary people have no  
16          more money.

17                    That's why -- the questions I asked  
18          that time, the Right-to-Know for, they are  
19          tied up. They don't want to give me the  
20          answers, and that's fine, because I'm going  
21          to sit down with Mrs. Krake probably  
22          tomorrow and try to work through this, but  
23          these are the questions that council members  
24          should have asked because it was so  
25          important for you to know the people you are

1           representing because they are counting on  
2           you. They are not counting on me, they are  
3           not counting on the people sitting there  
4           tonight, they are counting on you. And  
5           after two decades under Act 47, and the city  
6           is more troubled now than it was then, there  
7           is a real problem here.

8                         And, you know, I don't know if you  
9           asked your solicitor about 2 05 when you  
10          decided to go forward in Court because he  
11          should have advised you that it wasn't going  
12          to go anywhere, so I think you received some  
13          very faulty information, and like I said  
14          before -- well, the judge disagrees with  
15          you, Mr. McGoff, respectfully, and he is the  
16          one that has the say here and not you. What  
17          you say doesn't mean a thing to the judge of  
18          the Commonwealth because it's just a moot  
19          point, with all respect to you.

20                        But you know something, the people  
21          in this city they are not going to stay,  
22          they are going to leave. They are tired of  
23          the corruption here, they are tired of the  
24          inside tract to everything that goes on  
25          here. They are tired. How can you give

1 grant money to people and just forget about  
2 the neighborhoods? I think the most  
3 important thing the council could do is go  
4 up to the neighborhood and knock on their  
5 door and tell them bring the properties up  
6 to code, tell them to fix their porches. I  
7 mean, we can play the landlord game now.  
8 Let's play the other game and get people who  
9 come down here and say you are out of your  
10 mind. I mean, it's really time for the  
11 residents of this city to ask the mayor and  
12 the council to resign if they can't find a  
13 solution because taxing people outside of  
14 the city that's not the answer. Thank you.

15 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you, Mr. Morgan.  
16 Ozzie Quinn.

17 MR. QUINN: Ozzie Quinn, president  
18 of the Hill Neighborhood Association. Good  
19 evening. I'm here tonight to ask the city  
20 council to revive the Vacant Property Review  
21 Committee. Last week the Hill Neighborhood  
22 Association had its monthly meeting and we  
23 had 52 people at the meeting and these  
24 people are trying to do something, you know,  
25 to bring back the Hill neighborhood. You

1 know, when you bring 52 people out these  
2 people are still interested in what's going  
3 on in the neighborhood.

4 Now, what does that mean? I know,  
5 and there are a lot of vacant lots in the  
6 Hill neighborhood, okay, the Hill Section  
7 that are not being used because they are  
8 underutilized by the fact that, you know,  
9 these are small, small dimensions, like, 50  
10 by 80, 40 by 85, 27 by 60, and so on and so  
11 on, and all of these lots were up for tax  
12 sale and they went to the judiciary sale,  
13 the upset sale, the judiciary sale, and now  
14 they are in the repository in the Lackawanna  
15 County Tax Claim Bureau.

16 Now, we at the Hill were unanimous  
17 last week that we wanted to do something  
18 about these lots. We want to try to -- or  
19 we have different ideas and maybe some  
20 off-street parking, maybe some gardening,  
21 maybe you get Marywood College School of  
22 Architecture involved, you know, things like  
23 that. We want to bring back the  
24 neighborhood, okay? And these lots will  
25 never be sold because people just don't want



1           them and you can't divide them give on-half,  
2           one-half to the other because people don't  
3           want their taxes raised, you know?

4                        And if you say, "I'm entitled" you  
5           have to get -- you have to do a title and  
6           then you have to pay for the taxes. So what  
7           I'm asking is that you take it seriously and  
8           don't drag your feet and revive the Vacant  
9           Property Review Committee. I say that  
10          respectfully so that we could possibly start  
11          to continue and start to continue to  
12          revitalize the Hill Section and that would  
13          be a big step.

14                       And that and what Mr. Evans is  
15          trying to do in regards to the Quality of  
16          Life Ordinance and hopefully we can bring  
17          back our neighborhood, okay? When those 52  
18          people turn out they turn out because they  
19          are interested in the neighborhood. They  
20          don't turn out, you know, to talk about  
21          taxes or to talk about anything else, they  
22          just talk about what we can do for the  
23          neighborhood.

24                       So I beg you, you know, please  
25          consider this. Talk amongst yourself and

1 try to get that Vacant Property Review  
2 Committee back on its feet and so they can  
3 get these properties back and sell them to  
4 us for a \$1, you won't be sorry, it's better  
5 for them than waiting until the summer comes  
6 and the winter comes and you have to  
7 maintain these properties and nobody  
8 maintains them and all it does is it causes  
9 more blight.

10 You know, we can rectify that  
11 situation, we want to rectify it, so I'd  
12 appreciate if you would consider our  
13 proposal and I offer you tonight and I hope  
14 that you can follow through with it. Thank  
15 you very much.

16 MR. MCGOFF: Mr. Quinn, I just  
17 wanted to say that that's a very good idea  
18 not only for the Hill, but for the rest of  
19 the city as well.

20 MR. QUINN: Yeah.

21 MR. MCGOFF: You know, that other  
22 neighborhoods are in need of that type of  
23 activity so thank you for your suggestion.

24 MR. QUINN: You're welcome.

25 MR. EVANS: My comment on that, and

1 Ozzie knows this very well, I'm an advocate  
2 of the Vacant Blight Committee be  
3 reinstituted for years. It's a very  
4 underutilized tool that the city has. By  
5 doing that they can get these problems --  
6 they can the SRA and then turn them over to  
7 organizations like Hill Neighborhood  
8 Association and then they can do what Ozzie  
9 is talking about. They can put gardens  
10 there, they can sell them to adjoining  
11 neighbors, they can put a garage there,  
12 whatever is the best use for that property  
13 and get them cleaned up and get them back on  
14 the tax rolls, so I applaud you, Oz, for  
15 that idea, you know, my full support, the  
16 rest of council feels the same way and the  
17 Hill could be very much a blueprint for what  
18 could happen in the other neighborhoods that  
19 we can get thing off the ground so thanks.

20 MR. MCGOFF: Ron Ellman.

21 MR. ELLMAN: Hello, my friend,  
22 ex-friends, soon to be ex-friends, whatever.  
23 I only got a couple of things, one of them  
24 it's dead and done, I've heard it from a  
25 couple of people, I just hope we don't go on

1           like Doherty with all of these losing  
2           lawsuits that just make the lawyers rich.

3                     The Amoroso plan is a complete  
4           failure. It's time to go onto Plan B,  
5           whatever that is. An intelligent being  
6           would have done so many things positive to  
7           try to help people in this city. I think he  
8           could have went down personally and talked  
9           to Dean Hesser and tried to keep them from  
10          moving and several other big companies like  
11          the medical people moved to Throop or  
12          Justice or something. It's always easy to  
13          say raise taxes and sell things, it takes  
14          some intelligent being to try to save this  
15          city. He is an outsider that doesn't know  
16          nothing about this city. I bet he doesn't  
17          know where the Tripp House is or anything.  
18          He doesn't know the people. I bet he has  
19          never talked to someone from right across  
20          the street that's lost their home because  
21          they couldn't afford it no more. Just not  
22          taxes, just everything about it. You know,  
23          I think we got a good mayor. He is just  
24          getting very poor advice. Very poor. The  
25          worst advice humanly possible. I don't know

1           where they dug up this guy. He's like a  
2           charlatan around here, and I'm not going to  
3           go on with this it's just, you know, I  
4           talked to people, they just give you on the  
5           city, there is just so much apathy here,  
6           it's just sad. Nobody wants to vote, nobody  
7           cares about who is sitting up there anymore,  
8           they don't care who gets the seats for the  
9           state government, the governor, I never  
10          heard -- nobody seemed to care about  
11          anything. It's like a bunch of beaten  
12          people.

13                         Well, as you know, I live on North  
14          Main, my neighborhood has gone downhill so  
15          bad. I think if somebody would give the  
16          Licensing Bureau some teeth, some  
17          enforcement, they can't enforce codes that  
18          are on the books. They can't go into  
19          people's houses that are rebuilding them  
20          without building permits. This is  
21          senseless. They are supposed to do things  
22          like that. That's what keeps these people  
23          from Brooklyn, New York, from buying ten  
24          houses and let them go to pot. I got one of  
25          these guys across the street from me, he got

1           125 houses he brags about, you know, no one  
2           can take care of 125 pieces of property. He  
3           doesn't care who lives there, he doesn't  
4           care who goes on as long as he gets his  
5           rent.

6                        I got quads running up and down the  
7           sidewalk. They shouldn't be prohibited from  
8           riding down the street to get gasoline.  
9           They are unlicensed and uninsured, they're  
10          un-inspected, I don't have no curbs, you  
11          can't walk on the sidewalks anyway because  
12          cars are parked there because people have --  
13          they rent an apartment with no parking  
14          whatsoever on the 2500 block so they park on  
15          the sidewalk nothing is done about it. In  
16          the morning it's 7:00, the kids are in the  
17          street walking around illegal cars. It's  
18          the same thing for years. Years every  
19          Monday and Tuesday there is signs all over  
20          the street from yard sales that people don't  
21          take down. They ought to be sent a citation  
22          or something for crying out loud because  
23          it's just -- the neighborhoods just don't  
24          look nice no more, you know? What am I  
25          paying taxes for? I can't walk on a

1 sidewalk. I don't have no curbs and the  
2 water goes all over my yard. I keep putting  
3 stones in my driveway they keep washing  
4 away.

5 The block grant money HUD gives it  
6 to developers instead of letting the city  
7 have it to work on projects that of all  
8 things they keep making cuts in the sidewalk  
9 where they got them, you know? If they were  
10 no good they shouldn't have been paid for to  
11 start with. It's just management at every  
12 turn and you people don't think about the  
13 Doug Millers that are going to be here ten  
14 or 20 or 30 years. What kind of city is he  
15 going to get? It's terrible. I think it's  
16 time to start thinking about receivership or  
17 something to try to quit throwing good money  
18 after bad because we have hit a -- you  
19 people we just travel in different circles.

20 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you, Mr. Ellman.

21 MR. ELLMAN: You people just talk to  
22 people in your financial group and social  
23 circles and friends, you don't know what's  
24 going on down on Luzerne Street and --

25 MR. MCGOFF: Mr. Ellman, thank you.

1 MR. ELLMAN: -- Jackson Street and  
2 so forth. You stop me I'm going to poke  
3 pins in your doll tonight.

4 MR. MCGOFF: I'm sure you will.

5 MR. ELLMAN: Thank you for allowing  
6 me to talk, Mr. McGoff. I won't poke no  
7 pins in there. I will wait for the right  
8 time.

9 MR. MCGOFF: Somebody has been  
10 poking them, I don't know who. Anyone else  
11 who?

12 MS. SCHUMACHER: Good evening,  
13 Council. Marie Schumacher. I'm going to  
14 get on the receivership bandwagon in a  
15 minute, but a couple of items first.  
16 Today's paper talked about the SRA audit  
17 being completed. Did anybody -- has anybody  
18 ever gone to the authorities and asked them  
19 to go to a fiscal year accounting system so  
20 that we can get our audit on time? Has  
21 anybody asked them that? I mean, I don't  
22 think you can --

23 MR. MCGOFF: I haven't. I don't  
24 know if anybody else in the past has.

25 MS. SCHUMACHER: Well, I think that



1 should be investigated so if everybody's  
2 fiscal year ended in December we might have  
3 a chance of getting an audit on time.

4 Next, agenda Item 5-D, I just read  
5 the backup and at first I thought it was  
6 just Rescue 1, and I don't know who  
7 dispatches Rescue 1 or under what  
8 circumstances, but if during motions  
9 somebody knows that I would like to know  
10 that, but it also seems to apply just even  
11 to a fire at my home, and I do believe that  
12 is covered by my property taxes.

13 The parking meter, Mr. Evans could  
14 you please give us a report maybe next week  
15 on the parking meter revenue through the end  
16 of September this year compared to last  
17 year.

18 MR. EVANS: I know we talked about  
19 that on Monday and I'll get that for you.

20 MS. SCHUMACHER: Yeah. And then  
21 another thing on the Scranton Parking --  
22 whoops, wait a minute. Does anybody have  
23 any feeling for whether or not the  
24 legislation reforming act 47 will be passed  
25 this legislative session? Nope?

1 MR. MCGOFF: That's not something  
2 that we have any control over.

3 MS. SCHUMACHER: Well, no, I would  
4 think you talked to the legislators and they  
5 would have pretty good idea.

6 MR. MCGOFF: We have, but it's --

7 MS. SCHUMACHER: Okay. The Scranton  
8 Parking Authority had a meeting I believe it  
9 was the 22nd of September and they had one  
10 previously on the 2nd of October -- or  
11 excuse me, the 2nd of September, do you get  
12 reports from them on what they have done?  
13 Joan attended the meeting, that last one,  
14 and said there was some kind of a bond  
15 passed. I would like more information on  
16 that, but there is no Parking Authority  
17 contact so maybe you guys could find out  
18 what they actually did on the 22nd of  
19 September that would be nice. Somebody?

20 MR. MCGOFF: Yes.

21 MS. SCHUMACHER: Thank you. And  
22 then finally I want to hop on the  
23 receivership bandwagon. Every time it's  
24 brought up different people say, you know,  
25 that's terrible, it would be the worst thing

1 for the property owners, well, I went back  
2 and I looked up what has happened to the  
3 property taxes in the City of Harrisburg.  
4 The taxes did not change from 2009, 2010,  
5 2011, they were the same, they filed  
6 receivership in October of -- or bankruptcy  
7 actually and got the receivership on October  
8 12th of 2011, the following year their taxes  
9 went up 7.9 percent for the improvements and  
10 8 percent for the land. They remained the  
11 same as of 2014, so tell will me what a bad  
12 deal that is? What is receivership? I  
13 think that's something that's just been used  
14 as a cover. If somebody can explain during  
15 motions how we taxpayers are going to get  
16 harmed by going into receivership, I know  
17 you have all, at least those I have a  
18 provided, some once, some twice, the article  
19 that David Unkavich, who was the first  
20 receiver for the City of Harrisburg wrote, I  
21 think that you should have either -- you  
22 should consult with him, you should spend  
23 some of your reserve money on meeting with  
24 him or possibly hiring him before he  
25 continue down this path and start selling



1 months, that mayor has been in there for  
2 nine months and last week he decided to meet  
3 with the unions. That doesn't work.

4 MR. MCGOFF: Mr. Bulzoni was  
5 answering on behalf of his himself.

6 MR. SBARAGLIA: Oh.

7 MR. MCGOFF: That was what the  
8 attorney asked him.

9 MR. SBARAGLIA: That's what I know  
10 because his legal team he means I assume. I  
11 assume, but it doesn't pay to assume  
12 anything in this city. This city has been  
13 going down a path to destruction. You  
14 people are not muses. You are not going to  
15 get water from stone and yet you keep  
16 trying. It's going to rain, they call for  
17 it Thursday, I mean, in a couple of days  
18 they expect a good rainstorm, but there's no  
19 pot of gold at the end of that rainbow. You  
20 got to look at -- well, we have been saying  
21 this for how many years now and nothing has  
22 been done. It's obvious that we can't run  
23 the city because you keep giving everything  
24 out to the contractors, but the party exists  
25 for two things, contractors and pay grads

1           and that's the path you people follow.  
2           There is no reason why we couldn't do a lot  
3           of this stuff that you are giving contracts  
4           out in-house. What do we have a treasury  
5           department for, to sit there and collect  
6           fines from somebody at a meter? Is this  
7           what we got? The Treasury Department should  
8           be doing a lot of this work you are giving  
9           contracts out for. This is no reason why  
10          they couldn't -- there is no reason why we  
11          couldn't do our own parking meters. One  
12          joke after another joke after another joke  
13          you people do. Either disband the treasury  
14          or make them do what they are there for.  
15          They are there to collect fines or transfer  
16          it over to the Scranton Tax Office.

17                        We lost a lot when they took away  
18                        the wage tax, now they are going to do real  
19                        estate. Why are we are going outside of the  
20                        area when we could be using them and yet  
21                        hire so many people back they laid off?  
22                        In-house is best way to do anything because  
23                        then you got your finger on it. You can't  
24                        do what you are doing. You are giving  
25                        everything to someone else to do and then



1 tickets, we got someone else giving out  
2 tickets. We got someone else doing this,  
3 someone else doing that, but we don't have  
4 Scrantonians doing it, we got outside  
5 companies doing it. And believe me, we  
6 haven't come out very good with these deals,  
7 it's ashame to say, but we have been saying  
8 it for ten years and it fell on deaf ears,  
9 now they are talking about where we are.  
10 It's true that blame belongs with the  
11 administration of the city, there is no  
12 question about that. If you want to blame  
13 somebody for where we are you got to blame  
14 them, but they are not truly looking at  
15 things so you can't blame everything on it.  
16 The federal government did a lot of damage  
17 to the City of Scranton. Anybody that  
18 remembers the garment industry knows that  
19 and that was one of the stones that we came  
20 across in our contract. Well, you got the  
21 problem.

22 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you,  
23 Mr. Sbaraglia.

24 MR. DOBRZYN: Good evening. Dave  
25 Dobrzyn, resident of Scranton, taxes and



1 fees paid. First of all, about two years  
2 ago it was mentioned that a fire truck was  
3 on loan to Throop and personally I think if  
4 these people want to be so chincy with us we  
5 should have that fire truck back and auction  
6 it off if we need money that bad. It's  
7 getting ridiculous. They only don't even  
8 pay taxes up there thanks to the landfill  
9 that Ms. Schumacher smell five miles away up  
10 on East Mountain.

11 Now, on the Sewer Authority once  
12 again, in Detroit they have a water  
13 authority, Detroit Water Authority. Now,  
14 they ran a lot of pipelines out through more  
15 posh communities and so forth and it's in  
16 all kinds of debt and if you owe about \$150  
17 or \$200 to the water authority your water  
18 gets shut off making your house condemnable  
19 be immediately. Well, the golf course out  
20 there owes \$500,000 but their water isn't  
21 shut off and the sports arena owes -- some  
22 sports arena owes close to 100 grand, their  
23 water isn't shut off so it's something to  
24 think about when you start thinking about  
25 handing it out to a private corporation.

1                   Now, last week I mentioned on taxes  
2                   I give you some sheets and that very  
3                   possibly \$900 million plus was being  
4                   pilfered from sales taxes from restaurants  
5                   alone.

6                   Now, I'd like to go over the tax.  
7                   Now, I added in let's say things really got  
8                   bad and we had to have that commuter tax and  
9                   we had to tax the residents, so we got .75  
10                  for that, and 3.40 Scranton School, 3.15  
11                  state, 1.35 state under Act 76 and 47 is  
12                  revised and you are near minimum wage,  
13                  that's another 1 percent, so before you walk  
14                  out your paycheck compliments of being a  
15                  resident of this area and in Pennsylvania  
16                  you will pay about 9.65 percent taxes out of  
17                  your check before you he ever see it. And,  
18                  oh, by the way, I also pointed out last week  
19                  that certain employers are being allowed to  
20                  -- and even foreign companies to pocket the  
21                  taxes, the state taxes income tax that are  
22                  deducted out of the paychecks of their  
23                  employees with no obligation to disclose  
24                  that to them, so nice deal if you can get  
25                  it.

1                   As far as the Chamber is concerned,  
2                   I didn't vote for any of them, probably  
3                   never would, I didn't vote for Mr. Amoroso  
4                   and if we are going to adopt his plan let's  
5                   take a vote on that, too. That's a Recovery  
6                   Plan, we voted on the last one, let's vote  
7                   on this one, and the terrible result of this  
8                   Court ruling is that we have 33 percent and  
9                   it's not being gotten out there, 33 percent  
10                  tax exempt. Some of them are courthouses,  
11                  prisons, some of them are just churches or  
12                  schools or whatever, but the point being we  
13                  have a land grab here for tax exempt  
14                  properties. Everybody just seems to be  
15                  piling on looking for more tax exempts.  
16                  Luzerne Community College is looking for  
17                  land up here. It just goes on and on.

18                   And also if anybody knows you could  
19                   state right now what would be the total  
20                   collectable property tax for the Year 2014,  
21                   assuming that everybody paid every dime they  
22                   were assessed, does anybody know?

23                   MR. MCGOFF: Not offhand.

24                   MR. DOBRZYN: Because I suspect it  
25                   would be -- wasn't it like over \$20 million

1 last year and then we raised this property  
2 tax so we might be losing light eight, ten  
3 million dollars a year on this exempt deal  
4 and that would definitely go a long way to  
5 solve our problems; and also, we have to  
6 collect the trash fees and back trash fees,  
7 it's gone far enough, there is too many  
8 wealthy people that aren't paying their  
9 fees, and if somebody is broke put a lien  
10 against their house.

11 And people of Scranton, you got  
12 perisinuitis (phonetic). 65 percent  
13 African-Americans and they have an all white  
14 council, an all white mayor, an all white  
15 police force, and they are complaining and  
16 it's very sad when that kid was shot, but we  
17 are not voting either, and it's certainly  
18 not voting reform so get off your ditty box  
19 and vote. Thank you.

20 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you. Anyone else  
21 who wishes to address council?

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

23 MOTIONS.

24 MR. MCGOFF: Mr. Wechsler.

25 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you,

1 Mr. McGoff. This week's decision by Judge  
2 Braxton was a surprise to us. The way that  
3 the opinion was written his findings that  
4 the law was silent on whether the tax had to  
5 be put on residents as well as non-residents  
6 was not as clear to me as it was to him.  
7 The judge could have decided this case  
8 either way but in reality he did not do  
9 that, so now we have to look and wait for  
10 the state legislature to come up with their  
11 plan on how this tax will be handled.

12 Hopefully, now we are waiting for  
13 them to pass it so we know if the LST is  
14 going to be raised and what changes may be  
15 made to the Act 205. There are several  
16 different options that are under  
17 consideration and we are in communication  
18 with the administration and we are working  
19 and evaluating what those steps could be.  
20 We have to go forward with this, and I'm  
21 happy with the fact that I voted for the Act  
22 205 and it was a tool that was presented to  
23 us for the city. We have to take advantage  
24 of everything that is available for us to  
25 help balance our budget and get us out of

1           this financial crises.

2                         This week I attended a meeting with  
3           the members of Veteran's Post 341 in regard  
4           to the Duffy statue and light pole in Duffy  
5           Park in South Scranton. The meeting with  
6           the gentleman from that association I found  
7           that they are dedicated citizens, very proud  
8           of their American heritage, very proud of  
9           their service to the country, they proud to  
10          be South Siders. Based on some  
11          conversations we had with Solicitor Shrive  
12          it appears right now that the Duffy statute  
13          will remain in South Side and will be part  
14          of the new park so we are working on the  
15          arrangements to make that happen.

16                        The posts that have their memorial  
17          day celebration at that park since 1939 and  
18          they have been committed and their  
19          association is strong, their association is  
20          growing and I look forward to working with  
21          them in the future and continuing their  
22          service.

23                        In regards to Item 5-D, the  
24          insurance recoupment, this is something that  
25          has been kicked around in the City of

1           Scranton for as many years as I have been  
2           moved in politics. There is an expense to  
3           the city when our cruisers are sent out to  
4           different type of accidents. For an example  
5           last week when the truck went over the  
6           barrier on the Scranton Expressway. Our  
7           trucks were forced to go out there and were  
8           there with three hours with clean up and all  
9           of type of stuff. These are the types of  
10          things that are other cities do across the  
11          country and it's time for us to get on board  
12          and take use of these programs.

13                   The goal is to have these things  
14                   paid by insurance companies. The fee that  
15                   the company will charge will be 15 percent  
16                   of what they collect, and I think it's a win  
17                   for our city to help us offset some of the  
18                   costs. And that's all I have tonight,  
19                   Mr. McGoff.

20                   MR. MCGOFF: Mr. Rogan.

21                   MR. ROGAN: Yes, thank you. I will  
22                   also talk about the 205 commuter tax a  
23                   little bit first and I think Councilman  
24                   McGoff spelled out what the city's options  
25                   are very well in the newspaper today.





1 government, and that's part of the problem  
2 that the city -- so much of the city's land  
3 is taken by nonprofit and government we  
4 aren't receiving tax revenue.

5 Some of the options that were  
6 brought up is an appeal of the ruling if the  
7 state chooses not to enact that equal  
8 protection provision. Another option I,  
9 which I believe is a very strong one at this  
10 point, is to revisit the Act 47 commuter  
11 tax. If you recall two years ago, I mean,  
12 actually at this point in time I opposed a  
13 commuter tax. Between now and then because  
14 of the changes in the city's financial  
15 situation, you know, it caused me to change  
16 my mind on this issue. But two years ago  
17 when the previous administration went to  
18 Court there were two main reasons why we are  
19 shot down.

20 Number one was the previous  
21 administration didn't have their facts and  
22 figures correct when they were in front of  
23 Judge Nealon; and number two was in that  
24 decision the judge stated that because the  
25 city has the power to raise taxes and raise

1 fees that should be the first option. That  
2 has happened. Property taxes in the City of  
3 Scranton have gone up over 80 percent. The  
4 garbage fee is almost doubled. Rental  
5 registration fees have tripled. Fees for  
6 dog licenses have increased. Everything  
7 that could have been increased on the city  
8 taxpayers unfortunately has been and now  
9 it's time that we have to look for those who  
10 work in the city to pay their fair share as  
11 well.

12 A third option that I also believe  
13 should be explored that was mentioned by the  
14 previous council was a change in the city's  
15 classification due to the fact the stays  
16 population has decreased. I think that  
17 needs to be looked into as well.

18 I am looking forward to continuing  
19 to work with my colleagues on this board and  
20 the mayor as well to do anything we can to  
21 try to get that commuter tax enacted because  
22 it a very important planning in the mayor's  
23 recovery plan and the burden cannot be  
24 shouldered only by the property owner.  
25 That's been the unfortunate answer to the

1 city's ills for decades and the homeowner  
2 can't continue to pay increased real estate  
3 taxes not only from the city but at the same  
4 time while the school district and the  
5 county are having dramatic increases at the  
6 same time.

7 Two other items, regarding the  
8 legislation for the fire department, this  
9 is, and I know that it was explained, but  
10 this is only for motor vehicle accidents.

11 MS. HODOWANITZ: No, it's not.

12 MR. ROGAN: It is only for motor  
13 vehicles accidents as I read it. If there  
14 is something I'm missing, you know, I'll be  
15 happy to look through it again, and as  
16 Councilman Wechsler mentioned, it's to  
17 offset some of the costs from the insurance  
18 companies and in the state of the  
19 Pennsylvania it's mandatory if you are  
20 driving to have vehicle insurance, so that  
21 is something that I did speak to Chief  
22 DeSarno about it a little bit today, he  
23 reached out to other chiefs in similar sized  
24 cities and said that some cities are  
25 bringing in 60, 70,000 dollars a year

1 through this and that money is earmarked in  
2 the city's case will be specifically  
3 earmarked for the fire department only. The  
4 same way that the police department has  
5 money through their revenue streams  
6 earmarked specifically for that department.  
7 So we will continue to look into it. As of  
8 now I do support this legislation, but I  
9 will continue to look at it further.

10 And finally, it was brought to my  
11 attention and I noticed it on my way to  
12 work, somebody cleaned all of the weeds and  
13 overgrowth off the Lackawanna Avenue bridge.  
14 It looks great and a big thank you to  
15 whoever took time out of their day to hand  
16 pull all of those weeds. And that is all I  
17 have for tonight. Thank you.

18 MR. MCGOFF: Mr. Evans.

19 MR. EVANS: Thank you. First of  
20 all, I would like to update the status on  
21 the Quality of Life Ordinance. Scheduling  
22 issues have not allowed myself and Pat  
23 Hinton to meet with Hazelton officials this  
24 week, however, we are now meeting with the  
25 mayor of the Hazelton Monday, October 6.

1 Councilman Rogan also indicate he may  
2 available and will attend the meeting, so we  
3 are looking forward to their input on this  
4 very important piece of legislation and  
5 based on our findings after that meeting we  
6 hope to fast track this through the law  
7 department and then to city council.

8 I did discuss meeting with  
9 nonprofits with Business Administrator,  
10 David Bulzoni. He was happy to have someone  
11 from city council engaged in his important  
12 task. He will contact me when these  
13 meetings are scheduled. Of course, I will  
14 certainly report to council any progress  
15 along that front.

16 Act 205. It was stated, of course,  
17 in the Amoroso plan that we needed to move  
18 forward this and we did, but if the ruling  
19 is not appealed and it stands as is then Act  
20 205 becomes a nonstarter for me. To think  
21 for a minute that Scranton residents can  
22 afford more in a wage tax increase or more  
23 of a wage tax increase would be insane. We  
24 are well beyond the point of the diminishing  
25 returns when it comes to many of our taxes.

1 History has shown that increase in  
2 any taxes on the city residents while  
3 creating additional revenue in the  
4 short-term actually creates less revenue in  
5 the long-term as more and more of other our  
6 middle class leaves the city because of  
7 these tax policies.

8 So now what are our options? Well,  
9 I haven't formed an opinion on the following  
10 items, but these are some of the things that  
11 need to be debated. The Act 47 revisions  
12 that are currently at the state level will  
13 allow for a tripling of the LST tax. It is  
14 estimated that this would generate  
15 approximately 2.3 million dollars annually.  
16 It could bring increased flexibility because  
17 the revenue from this tax could go into the  
18 general fund and not necessarily be  
19 dedicated to the pensions while Scranton is  
20 still under Act 47.

21 The Act 47 revisions also include  
22 provisions for a payroll tax which initially  
23 would be revenue neutral because it's based  
24 on the current revenues received through the  
25 business privilege tax and the mercantile

1 tax. However, if enacted those two nuisance  
2 taxes are then eliminated. Also, as wages  
3 and employees grow this revenue stream can  
4 also grow. It can also capture additional  
5 employers including nonprofits.

6 Finally, a commuter tax per Act 47  
7 ironically if this was instituted the rate  
8 on commuters can be as high as 1 percent  
9 versus a .75 over the enactment of Act 205.  
10 At this point, I'm not in favor of the  
11 commuter tax, but simply putting it on the  
12 table as we all have in discussion.

13 And finally, my favorite subject,  
14 pension reform. It is no longer just an  
15 option. Pension reform is now mandatory.  
16 If the current pension plan, and for that  
17 matter if the city is to survive  
18 financially, and enforce the 401-K-type plan  
19 for all new hires must be part of that  
20 reform. Again, we have to look long-term  
21 and no longer short-term.

22 On a positive note, Councilman Rogan  
23 reminded me of this, I go on a daily walk at  
24 Nay Aug Park and there is two gentlemen that  
25 go to the park everyday, almost everyday I

1 see them, and one has a bag and one has one  
2 of those long tools that you can grab trash  
3 and everyday they walk around the park and  
4 pick up trash, put it in the bag and go  
5 home, so they are getting their exercise and  
6 cleaning the park at the same time so they  
7 are a great example. You know, I don't know  
8 who they are or what their names are and one  
9 of these days I'm going to stop and ask  
10 them, but that's the kind of Scranton that  
11 we are all proud of. Thanks.

12 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you. For the  
13 past couple of weeks we have been arguing  
14 over opinions and, you know, the little --  
15 when I taught school I used to use with the  
16 students I used to tell them that opinions  
17 are like noses, everybody has one and they  
18 all smell. Opinions have validity or no  
19 validity. It's not a right and wrong idea.  
20 In my opinion, the Philadelphia Philly's are  
21 the best team in baseball.

22 MR. WECHSLER: Wrong.

23 MR. MCGOFF: Well, you know, is it  
24 an opinion? Yes. Is there validity to it?  
25 Well, not much, but it's an opinion that I



1           may have, so it's not right or wrong but it  
2           certainly doesn't have much validity and so  
3           when we start talking about opinions just  
4           because you have one it doesn't make it  
5           valid and, you know, if you can offer some  
6           validity to opinions then maybe people will  
7           listen.

8                         As we sit here this is not a time  
9           for assessing blame for things. I think we  
10          are beyond blame. This is a time when we  
11          need to seek answers and the problem that we  
12          face in seeking the answers to our problems  
13          is that there are numerous stakeholders in  
14          the welfare of this city. Residents,  
15          non-residents, unionized employees, property  
16          owners, business owners, elderly, you know,  
17          retirees, whatever it is, we are all  
18          involved in the welfare of the City of  
19          Scranton, and it seems as though whatever  
20          steps we take there is going to be sacrifice  
21          on someone's part. I think that we all  
22          become very personally when this happens.  
23          You know, it's kind of like, well, you know,  
24          fix the problem but don't touch anything  
25          that's fine. You know, take care of your

1 issues, just don't affect me, and it just  
2 doesn't happen that way.

3 And the city is working toward some  
4 resolution to the problem and to all of our  
5 problems. I have been involved in numerous  
6 meetings over the past months some of the  
7 things that, you know, that are ongoing.  
8 The SPA debt and parking monetization.  
9 Pennsylvania fund, the super funding of the  
10 pension. You know, pension reform, trying  
11 to get 2015 TAN. A comprehensive street  
12 paving program. Capital expense for fire  
13 trucks, pack masters. A streetlight  
14 assessment. Health care containment. Grant  
15 opportunities for passion and other things.  
16 And yes, even PILOT negotiations and there  
17 have been talks. These are just some of the  
18 things that are being worked on, because  
19 they haven't been completed it doesn't mean  
20 that they are not addressing the problem.

21 And as we move towards the budget  
22 it's hopeful to some of these things can be  
23 resolved. It's a difficult process. It's  
24 not something that we are sitting back and  
25 just waiting to, you know, for somebody to

1           come up with a miracle cure. There is daily  
2           work toward resolution of these problems and  
3           I do take some offense at what was in the  
4           newspaper in editorials and in one  
5           particular column that kind of indicated  
6           that the city wasn't doing anything to  
7           address its problems. We are.

8                         Was the Act 205 decision a setback?  
9           Yes. As I said in the paper, I think it's a  
10          mild setback, but we do have options. You  
11          know, we are moving forward and we are going  
12          to address the problems that we have, that  
13          is what we were elected to do address the  
14          problems and to help in the operation of the  
15          city.

16                        We will continue to do that and we  
17          welcome any ideas that people have for  
18          helping us resolve these problems, even if  
19          it is from outside of the city. We don't  
20          have all of the answers, we sometimes need  
21          help and we will continue to seek that help  
22          wherever it comes from. And that's all.

23                        MS. REED: 5-B. FOR INTRODUCTION -  
24          AN ORDINANCE - CREATING AND ESTABLISHING  
25          SPECIAL CITY ACCOUNT NO. 02.229613 ENTITLED

1 "LIQUID FUELS" FOR THE RECEIPT AND  
2 DISBURSEMENT OF THOSE FUNDS RECEIVED FOR  
3 THIS PURPOSE.

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

7 MR. ROGAN: So moved.

8 MR. WECHSLER: Second.

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

12 MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

13 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

14 MR. EVANS: Aye.

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

17 MS. REED: 5-C. FOR INTRODUCTION - A  
18 RESOLUTION - ACCEPTING A DONATION OF FIVE  
19 THOUSAND (\$5,000.00) DOLLARS FROM GEISINGER  
20 HEALTH SYSTEM PRESENTED TO THE CITY OF  
21 SCRANTON TO COVER THE COST OF FIREWORKS AT  
22 NAY AUG PARK.

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

1 MR. ROGAN: So moved.

2 MR. WECHSLER: Second.

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

6 MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

7 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

8 MR. EVANS: Aye.

9 MS. MCGOFF: Aye. Opposed? The  
10 ayes have it and so moved.

11 MS. REED: 5-D. FOR INTRODUCTION – A  
12 RESOLUTION – AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND OTHER  
13 APPROPRIATE CITY OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE AND  
14 ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH PA FIRE RECOVERY  
15 SERVICES, LLC TO PROVIDE A FIRE DEPARTMENT  
16 SERVICES COLLECTION REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM  
17 FOR THE CITY OF SCRANTON FOR THE PERIOD FROM  
18 SEPTEMBER 1, 2014 THROUGH AUGUST 31, 2018.

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

22 MR. ROGAN: So moved.

23 MR. WECHSLER: Second.

24 MR. MCGOFF: On the question? As I  
25 read through the backup to this, there may

1 be a little bit of confusion as it does say  
2 motor vehicle accidents, but then it also  
3 uses the word pedestrian and bicyclist, so  
4 we will seek some clarification on that. If  
5 needs to be reworded we will amend it.

6 All those in favor of introduction  
7 signify by saying aye.

8 MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

9 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

10 MR. EVANS: Aye.

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

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

14 READING BY TITLE - FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO.  
15 48, 2014 - AN ORDINANCE - PROVIDING FOR THE  
16 ACCEPTANCE OF UTILITY AND ACCESS EASEMENTS  
17 IN THE LAUREL WOODS SUBDIVISION LOCATED IN  
18 THE CITY OF SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA. ALSO  
19 AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND OTHER APPROPRIATE  
20 CITY OFFICIALS TO ACCEPT FOR THE SUM OF ONE  
21 DOLLAR (\$1.00) AND RECORD IN THE LACKAWANNA  
22 COUNTY RECORDER OF DEEDS OFFICIAL RECORDS A  
23 DEED FOR THE ABOVE MENTIONED EASEMENTS.

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

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

3 MR. WECHSLER: Second.

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

6 MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

7 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

8 MR. EVANS: Aye.

9 MR. MCGOFF: Aye. Opposed? The  
10 ayes have it and so moved.

11 MS. REED: 6-B. READING BY TITLE -  
12 FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO. 49, 2014 - AN  
13 ORDINANCE - PROVIDING FOR THE ACCEPTANCE OF  
14 ASPEN DRIVE, SYCAMORE LANE AND AZALEA WAY IN  
15 THE LAUREL WOODS SUBDIVISION LOCATED IN THE  
16 CITY OF SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA. ALSO  
17 AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND OTHER APPROPRIATE  
18 CITY OFFICIALS TO ACCEPT FOR THE SUM OF ONE  
19 DOLLAR (\$1.00) AND RECORD IN THE LACKAWANNA  
20 COUNTY RECORDER OF DEEDS OFFICIAL RECORDS A  
21 DEED FOR THE ABOVE MENTIONED RIGHTS OF WAY.

22 MR. MCGOFF: You've heard reading by  
23 title of Item 6-B, what is your pleasure?

24 MR. ROGAN: I move that Item 6-B  
25 pass reading by title.

1 MR. WECHSLER: Second.

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

4 MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

5 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

6 MR. EVANS: Aye.

7 MR. MCGOFF: Aye. Opposed? The  
8 ayes have it and so moved.

9 MS. REED: SEVENTH ORDER. 7-A. FOR  
10 CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE -  
11 FOR ADOPTION - FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO. 47,  
12 2014 - APPROVING AND ACCEPTING THE UPDATED  
13 CITY OF SCRANTON CAPITAL BUDGET FOR THE YEAR  
14 2015 THE SECOND-YEAR REVISION AND EXTENSION  
15 OF THE 2013 FIVE-YEAR PLAN.

16 MR. MCGOFF: What is the  
17 recommendation of the Chair for the  
18 Committee on Finance?

19 MR. EVANS: As Chairperson for the  
20 Committee on Finance, I recommend final  
21 passage of Item 7-A.

22 MR. ROGAN: Second.

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

25 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.



1 MR. WECHSLER: Yes.

2 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

3 MR. ROGAN: Yes.

4 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

5 MR. EVANS: Yes.

6 MS. CARRERA: Mr. McGoff.

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

9 MS. REED: 7-B. FOR CONSIDERATION  
10 BY THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS - FOR  
11 ADOPTION - RESOLUTION NO. 84, 2014 -  
12 RATIFYING AND APPROVING THE MAYOR AND OTHER  
13 APPROPRIATE CITY OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE AND  
14 ENTER INTO AN EASEMENT OF CORRECTION TO  
15 INCLUDE ADDITIONAL SIGNATURES ON THE  
16 EASEMENT AGREEMENT WHICH WAS RECORDED ON  
17 DECEMBER 24, 2012 TO INSTRUMENT NUMBER  
18 201224763 BETWEEN THE CITY OF SCRANTON AND  
19 COLTS REGARDING THE PLANNED ACCESS ROAD OFF  
20 BRIDGE STREET INTO THE NEW INTERMODAL  
21 CENTER.

22 MR. MCGOFF: What is the  
23 recommendation of the temporary Chair for  
24 the Committee on Public works?

25 MR. WECHSLER: As temporary

1                   Chairperson for the Committee on Public  
2                   Works, I recommend final passage of Item  
3                   7-B.

4                   MR. ROGAN:    Second.

5                   MR. MCGOFF:   On the question?  Roll  
6                   call, please?

7                   MS. CARRERA:  Mr. Wechsler.

8                   MR. WECHSLER:  Yes.

9                   MS. CARRERA:  Mr. Rogan.

10                  MR. ROGAN:    Yes.

11                  MS. CARRERA:  Mr. Evans.

12                  MR. EVANS:    Yes.

13                  MS. CARRERA:  Mr. McGoff.

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

16                  If there is no further business,  
17                  I'll entertain a motion to adjourn.

18                  MR. ROGAN:    Motion to adjourn.

19                  MR. MCGOFF:   Meeting adjourned.

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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

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CATHENE S. NARDOZZI, RPR  
OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER