

SCRANTON CITY COUNCIL MEETING

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HELD:

Thursday, October 5, 2017

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:

JOSEPH WECHSLER, PRESIDENT

PATRICK ROGAN, VICE-PRESIDENT

WAYNE EVANS

WILLIAM GAUGHAN

TIM PERRY

LORI REED, CITY CLERK

KATHY CARRERA, ASSISTANT CITY CLERK

AMIL MINORA, ESQUIRE - SOLICITOR

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

3 MR. WECHSLER: Roll call, please.

4 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Perry.

5 MR. PERRY: 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. GAUGHAN: Here.

12 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

13 MR. WECHSLER: Here.

14 MR. GAUGHAN: I'd like to make a
15 motion to table Item 7-B, the execution of
16 the deed conveying title to the city for the
17 property located at 248-256 Wyoming Avenue.

18 MR. ROGAN: Second.

19 MR. WECHSLER: There is a motion on
20 the floor and second to table Item 7-B, on
21 the question?

22 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, on the question.
23 The Phase I review has been completed. City
24 Council is requesting a copy of that review.
25 The County is apparently undertaking Phase

1 II. We have a sense of remediation costs at
2 this point, but we are awaiting further
3 information from the county in consultation
4 with the Department of Environmental
5 Protection.

6 MR. WECHSLER: All those in favor
7 signify by saying aye.

8 MR. PERRY: Aye.

9 MR. EVANS: Aye.

10 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

11 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

12 MR. WECHSLER: Aye. Opposed? The
13 eyes have it and so moved.

14 Dispense with the reading of the
15 minutes.

16 MS. REED: THIRD ORDER. 3-A. ANNUAL
17 FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE CITY OF SCRANTON
18 YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2015 PREPARED BY THE
19 OFFICE OF THE CITY CONTROLLER.

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

22 MS. REED: 3-B. ANNUAL FINANCIAL
23 REPORT FOR THE CITY OF SCRANTON YEAR ENDED
24 DECEMBER 31, 2016 PREPARED BY THE OFFICE OF
25 THE CITY CONTROLLER.

1 MR. WECHSLER: Are there any
2 comments? If not, received and filed.

3 MS. REED: 3-C. SINGLE TAX OFFICE
4 CITY FUNDS DISTRIBUTED COMPARISON REPORT
5 2017-2016 YEAR TO DATE SEPTEMBER 30, 2017.

6 MR. WECHSLER: Are there any
7 comments? If not, received and filed.

8 MS. REED: 3-D. AGENDA FOR THE
9 BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS MEETING TO BE HELD
10 OCTOBER 11, 2017.

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

13 Do any council members have
14 announcements at this time?

15 MR. PERRY: I have one. Getting
16 close to the Scranton Police Department
17 Fight for a Cure spaghetti dinner is going
18 to be coming up at Fratelli's Restaurant on
19 Providence Road. It's going to October 8
20 through October 22, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily.
21 Tickets you can grab now, they are \$12. It
22 includes spaghetti, meatballs, salad and
23 bread. You can eat in or get it to go.
24 Tickets are available at police headquarters
25 or 348-4139 or 558-8301, and again, all

1 proceeds go to the American Cancer Society.
2 Thank you.

3 MR. GAUGHAN: I have one. There is
4 a benefit for Wayne Novembrino Hubb, who is
5 the daughter of city controller Roseann
6 Novembrino. It will be held at Kilcoyne's
7 on South Main Street in West Scranton
8 October 22 from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. The
9 Donation is \$10. It will benefit Layne and
10 her family. She has undergone a lung
11 transplant with complications and your
12 donation will be greatly appreciated. Thank
13 you.

14 MR. WECHSLER: City Hall will be
15 closed this Monday, October 9, in observance
16 of Columbus Day. DPW will also be off this
17 day so refuse and blue recycling will be one
18 day behind next week.

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

21 MR. WECHSLER: Joan Hodowanitz.

22 MS. HODOWANITZ: Joan Hodowanitz,
23 Scranton. Today is October 5, 33 days to
24 the general election on November 7 which
25 raises the question if you have any

1 information and could share it later in the
2 meeting on the status of the Arcadis study
3 on storm water management costs. I think it
4 would be extremely for the electorate if you
5 could have feedback on that issue as part of
6 the off chute of the Sewer Authority sale,
7 so if you have any information on that
8 perhaps you can share that in motions.

9 And, also, in motions is there such
10 a thing as a Knowel's insurance list? I'm
11 still waiting, it's been six months. I'm
12 getting old and old and old, and soon it
13 won't be that list it will be next year's
14 list so if you can share that, too.

15 Also, on September 27 I was here
16 when he opened the one bid for the
17 independent worker's examination
18 coordinator, the RFP which, as you know, is
19 a key piece of -- it's just the work which
20 has to take place for the proceeds of the
21 Sewer Authority sale to flow to the pension
22 funds, so there was one bid from an
23 organization called Vocational Rehab out of
24 Clarks Summit. If you have any information
25 on whether or not they are going to get that

1 contract that would be helpful, too.

2 I attended the information session
3 on reassessment this afternoon at noon. I
4 was happy to see that two councilmen were
5 able to make it. You, Mr. Wechsler, and
6 Mr. Evans, I don't know which one of you was
7 in the gallery throwing peanuts down but
8 that was not very nice.

9 MR. EVANS: It was Joe.

10 MS. HODOWANITZ: And the people that
11 haven't viewed it on ECTV or were able to
12 get here I understand that PEL is hosting a
13 one-hour reassessment session on Saturday,
14 October 7, at 1 p.m. at the University of
15 the Scranton in Leahey Hall. They are going
16 to look at the reassessment question as well
17 as questions regarding the home study
18 exemptions so if anybody missed today's
19 session can go there.

20 And the last thing I want to address
21 is I went to the County Commissioners'
22 meeting yesterday and Chief Graziano was
23 there and it was a resolution to approve a
24 seminar for the general public on active
25 shooter scenario which coincidentally was

1 not driven by what happened in Las Vegas, it
2 just happened to come up on the agenda, and
3 then you may have seen on the news that
4 yesterday afternoon they apprehended someone
5 on Marywood University's campus. Now, I
6 understand Marywood kind of straddles
7 Scranton and Dunmore, so you may not
8 consider them part of Scranton but I would
9 consider them part of Scranton. Obviously a
10 lot of Scranton residents are students there
11 or employees so I want to commend Chief
12 Graziano and the Police Department for
13 taking the initiative to do a thing like
14 that. I remember sitting there at the
15 County Commissioner's meeting and a couple
16 of people whispering, "Well, you know,
17 something like that would never happen in
18 Scranton."

19 Famous last words, you know, by 4
20 p.m. that thing was on the news, so I think
21 when that seminar comes up I'm going to try
22 to attend and I would strongly encourage
23 everybody else who can get there to get
24 there because these things are happening and
25 it's a darn shame. Thank you.

1 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you.

2 MR. WECHSLER: Les Spindler.

3 MR. SPINDLER: Good evening,
4 Council. Les Spindler, city resident,
5 homeowner and taxpayer. About two weeks ago
6 I received this piece of garbage in the
7 mail, candidate Mulligan accuses Mayor
8 Doherty of -- I'm sorry, Mayor Courtright,
9 of giving himself a \$5,000 raise. That's a
10 lie. The mayor can't give himself a raise.
11 It's got to come before city council and
12 approved by council, so the last thing we
13 need is another person in Greenridge that
14 lies to the people.

15 And last week in the Times-Tribune a
16 lady wrote a letter to the editor saying the
17 mayor, Mayor Courtright put the garbage fee
18 up to \$300. That's another lie. This was
19 done under the Doherty administration. This
20 lady, Phyllis Reinhardt, and she goes on to
21 tell everybody to vote for Mr. Mulligan.
22 Everybody in Greenridge, I don't know if
23 they are all liars are what, but we don't
24 need people like that in city hall.

25 Next thing, I brought this up quite

1 a long time ago about there is a no turning
2 lane on the corner of Main Avenue and
3 Jackson Street going south towards Taylor
4 and they put one in going the other
5 direction but there still isn't one going
6 south and sometimes that holds up people, if
7 somebody there turning people want to go
8 straight and block that other person while
9 they turn.

10 And another thing, I brought this up
11 a while back, in Tripp Park on the last
12 block of Elizabeth Street, there is a storm
13 drain that it's open on top and I think
14 that's a safety hazard and now it's all
15 overgrown by weeds so it's hard to even see
16 it.

17 MR. PERRY: Yeah, you brought that
18 up it was in the middle of July.

19 MR. SPINDLER: Somebody could easily
20 fall into that.

21 MR. PERRY: Because it was still
22 daylight after one of our meetings and I
23 took a drive up and it's sunken. Like it's
24 this square around, where it's like
25 perfectly square, it's almost up on

1 something, yeah, I know exactly the one you
2 meant. Yes, we'll take another look at that
3 to see where that ends for the property. If
4 it's not that's our responsibility to get
5 that, it needs to be covered up. I know
6 exactly what you are talking about.

7 MR. SPINDLER: Thank you. And,
8 lastly, there is another thing I brought up
9 quite a few months ago people riding bikes
10 and jogging on city streets. I don't know
11 if anyone watched tonight there was a
12 tragedy in Shenandoah. A 13-year-old was
13 hit by a car and killed yesterday in
14 Shenandoah. I don't think they should be
15 riding bikes or jogging on the city streets.
16 I had mentioned this back in August. Coming
17 up East Gibson Street at the corner of
18 Capouse and East Gibson, just about to make
19 a turn onto Capouse I had to right-of-way,
20 the person on the bike came right through
21 the stop sign. If they are riding bikes
22 they still have to obey the stop signs. If
23 I wasn't a responsible driver that person
24 might not be here right now. I think it
25 should be illegal to ride bikes on the

1 street and even jog on the street. People
2 have been killed, I think something should
3 be done. I think that's all I have. Thank
4 you.

5 MR. WECHSLER: Lee Morgan.

6 MR. MORGAN: Good evening, Council.
7 Lee Morgan. Once again, you know, there is
8 debate running through this country at this
9 time after the shooting, but some people
10 have been -- you know, I have been at work
11 listening to talk radio, I'm a truck driver
12 so I have been listening to some of that
13 and, you know, it's nice to see that some
14 people understand not the gun issue, but how
15 our government was actually formed and
16 before there was a president exactly what
17 this country was like after the revolution
18 and it's good to hear people who understand
19 where we came from, and maybe that's why
20 sometimes I wonder how we got to where we
21 are now, which is just mind boggling
22 considering that the Governor of
23 Pennsylvania is getting ready to, as he
24 called it, the news called is monetizing
25 liquor control, Pennsylvania's liquor

1 control system.

2 You know, the residents of this city
3 are going to have -- well, Lackawanna County
4 are going to have a real issue on their
5 hands soon, this reassessment issue. And
6 I'm hoping that the people throughout
7 Lackawanna County vote "no" to that because
8 it's not that the government doesn't have
9 enough money, it's not competent enough to
10 handle the money that it does have, and it's
11 borrowed excessive amounts of money on top
12 of the money that it's received in taxes, so
13 as long as we continue to allow this
14 silliness to continue we are not safe in any
15 of the things we own. Really we need an
16 elected government that understands that we
17 have to abolish all property tax in
18 Pennsylvania to solve the problems that
19 elected governments have caused.

20 You know, we take a look at -- and
21 there has been lot of discussion here about
22 the Scranton Sewer Authority sale, and like
23 I said last week, it's probably illegal all
24 the way around and everything that's been
25 done with all of the money is illegal all of

1 the way around, but the people that are
2 going to have to pay that money back if it
3 ever is ever challenged are the residents of
4 this city, not the people we elected and,
5 you know, it's pretty pathetic.

6 And another thing that needs to go
7 away in this city is the 2.4 percent wage
8 tax. It needs to completely go away. In
9 order for Scranton to become a prosperous
10 and growing and thriving city we have got to
11 stop overtaxing the residents so we need a
12 couple of things here. Les has an opinion
13 about Mr. Mulligan, and he is entitled to
14 that, and some people have opinions about
15 Mr. Courtright, and they are entitled to
16 that, but what this city really needs, which
17 may be either one of those two candidates or
18 neither one of those candidates, is a
19 candidate who gets elected and understands
20 that there is a definite need to cut
21 Scranton's budget by at least 30 percent,
22 and where those cuts will be made well
23 that's up to council and the mayor, but
24 that's what really has to happen and you
25 have to convince people to come into this

1 city and invest.

2 And, you know, the nonprofits buying
3 property after property that's not progress,
4 that's the exact opposite of progress and
5 it's allowed to continue, and then funneling
6 through this money to this council and
7 grants and whatever other instruments are
8 used to fund their projects is also a
9 detriment to the residents of this city.

10 But, you know, we live in the land
11 of make believe here and it's just really is
12 time for somebody to realize that the people
13 that live in the city have been under Act 47
14 for 25 years and it hasn't done one single
15 thing for the residents of this city and our
16 state government hasn't stepped in one
17 single time to try to reorganize this city
18 and force this city to make tough choices
19 and the people we have elected on council
20 haven't done it either, and we find
21 ourselves in worse shape now than when we
22 started.

23 And, you know, I hope that
24 Mr. Sbaraglia would get up again and talk
25 about the Parking Authority because, you

1 know, he has got a great insight into that
2 and I think the residents should realize
3 that the sewer deal wasn't the only problem.
4 The parking deal, believe me, was far from
5 being a deal and it's taken a lot of revenue
6 away from the city, not just assets, but
7 then again we seem to elect people who don't
8 think before they vote and it's a problem
9 and with all of the tools you have at your
10 hands you don't use one of them. And as our
11 population dwindles and ages I don't know
12 what the solution for the city is because
13 the downtown buildings, they have been
14 converted into apartment because you can't
15 do business in the downtown, you can't do
16 business in this city and somebody needs to
17 change that, but I doubt it will be any
18 council or any council in the near future or
19 other elected government. Thank you.

20 MR. WECHSLER: Bob Bolus.

21 MR. BOLUS: Good evening, Council.
22 Tonight's going to be a little lesson in
23 transparency. I've heard a lot of about it,
24 especially from Mr. Gaughan, so we are going
25 to give you a little lesson on it tonight.

1 This is from the Scranton Sewer Authority,
2 payments that were paid to James Mulligan
3 who is running for mayor in the City under
4 the Republican ticket. Between '06 and '012
5 he received \$238,521.21. This does not
6 include the health insurance that was
7 separate that he was paid for. He did not
8 pay sewer bills while solicitor, liens were
9 filed in '07, '08 and '12. He received
10 health benefits for his himself and family
11 while solicitor estimating in excess of
12 34,000.

13 Attached to the following, right
14 here, a summary showing the amounts James
15 Mulligan invoiced the Scranton Sewer
16 Authority for '06, '11 at \$110 and hour or
17 140 an hour an hour. He left Scranton Sewer
18 Authority in '11 to take the OECD solicitor
19 position. It is believed that this is not
20 the full amount he received.

21 Number two, health insurance
22 invoices from the Scranton Sewer Authority
23 showing Mulligan illegally received health
24 insurance benefits for himself and his
25 family at Authority expense money when he

1 was not, and I repeat not an employee. It
2 is believed that these are not all of the
3 payments made for him by the Scranton Sewer
4 Authority and that he received benefits the
5 entire time he was solicitor. The attached
6 payments total \$34,198.12. See City
7 Municipal Authorities Act 53 Pa. C.S. 5607
8 (d) (2) (o) which prohibits the provision of
9 health insurance benefits. Also included
10 are two advices of counsel from the
11 Pennsylvania State Ethics Commission which
12 ruled that the recipient of the benefits is
13 illegal or to receive benefits is illegal.
14 It is also impermissible to receive group
15 health insurance benefits unless you are an
16 employee per Blue Cross/Blue Shield
17 regulations. James Mulligan was the only
18 Sewer Authority solicitor who received
19 health insurance benefits.

20 When this was discovered by Scranton
21 Sewer Authority members there was an
22 objection that eventually lead to the
23 position of solicitor and moved to city hall
24 and OECD director which the solicitor was
25 paid a handsome salary and health insurance

1 benefits. In spite of the substantial
2 compensation received during the time he was
3 serving as solicitor he now had sewer bill
4 liens filed against him in '07, '08 and '12.
5 The Clerk of Judicial has those records.

6 I have penned a letter, and I will
7 read it, "Attorney General Josh Shapiro,
8 Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General,
9 Strawberry Square, Harrisburg, PA. Re:
10 James Mulligan, Esquire, candidate for the
11 City of Scranton mayor.

12 Dear Attorney General, please find
13 enclosed material that details funds taken
14 illegally for health insurance by the
15 Scranton Sewer Authority and was provided to
16 Attorney James Mulligan, who was not on the
17 payroll as an employee for the Scranton
18 Sewer Authority. Therefore, by law,
19 Mr. Mulligan was not entitled to the health
20 insurance provided. Mr. Mulligan is an
21 attorney who knew he was not entitled to
22 this insurance and by accepting such
23 benefits for himself and his family he was
24 breaking the law and committing insurance
25 fraud.

1 Please keep in mind, the Scranton
2 Sewer Authority has not been disbanded and
3 Scranton City Council has failed to bring
4 this unlawful action to your attention. I
5 am a resident of Scranton, PA and requesting
6 that your office investigate the sweeping
7 under the rug of this potential act of
8 insurance fraud against the citizens of
9 Scranton by Scranton City Council and
10 Attorney James P. Mulligan. A similar case
11 was brought by Michael Dennehey, Esquire, of
12 Danville, PA.

13 Respectfully, Bob Bolus, Scranton."

14 What's going on here, and I have
15 listened to you, Mr. Gaughan, in your paper
16 here you won't be a bully, won't do
17 bullying. Well, let me tell you something,
18 I sat there when you bullied Mayor
19 Courtright, when he stood on the stage
20 openly before everybody to take questions.
21 You not only came once, you tried to bully
22 him the second time because you ran in front
23 of me and yet you talk about transparency
24 and being the bully. Take a look in the
25 picture of what bullying really means. You

1 act in the position that you are supposed to
2 be in, but now you put your transparency
3 where your mouth is and do something about
4 it.

5 Additionally, the Scranton Parking
6 Authority, the mall garage, we have 500
7 parking spaces yet not one of you
8 transparency went over and said why is he
9 charging \$10 for St. Patrick's Day and where
10 are our 500 parking spaces for the City of
11 Scranton that we paid almost \$5 million for?
12 Transparency. Not done. Keeping in mind,
13 you all signed the Scranton to sell -- the
14 recovery plan to the Sewer Authority, to
15 sell it in the recovery plan. You are all
16 accountable. Transparency.

17 So you wasn't to keep throwing that
18 word out and you want transparency let's see
19 what you do at this juncture and I will give
20 unquestionable credible to the Mayor Bill
21 Courtright and the City of Scranton and,
22 Mr. Evans, you were there and I applaud you
23 for showing up when the Scranton -- it came
24 to Scranton, it was the American's home and
25 the Spirit Ride and what the Spirit Ride is

1 it represents all of the first responders
2 that have been killed across the country and
3 signifies the Move Over Law. Mayor
4 Courtright presented a key to the City to
5 the American tow men and the spirit ride --

6 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you, Mr. Bolus.

7 MR. BOLUS: Hang on, Mr. Wechsler,
8 this is about something that's credibility--

9 MR. WECHSLER: Mr. Bolus, your
10 time--

11 MR. BOLUS: -- and maybe once in
12 awhile you can keep your mouth closed.

13 MR. WECHSLER: You have five
14 minutes.

15 MR. BOLUS: No, I'm not paying
16 attention to you. The spirit ride --

17 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you, Mr. Bolus.
18 Thank you, Mr. Bolus.

19 MR. BOLUS: -- represents the city
20 and Mayor Courtright -- don't shut off the
21 mic and act like a coward.

22 MR. WECHSLER: I'm not a coward.

23 MR. BOLUS: You've never shown up --

24 MR. WECHSLER: You're out of order,
25 you had your six --

1 MR. BOLUS: Be quiet. You're out of
2 order because you never know nothing, just
3 shut up and listen.

4 MR. WECHSLER: You are over your
5 time. You are over your time.

6 MR. BOLUS: Let me tell you, you
7 don't know -- this is about our city.

8 MR. WECHSLER: You are over your
9 time.

10 MR. BOLUS: No, you shut the mic off
11 acting like a coward.

12 MR. WECHSLER: I'm not a coward, Mr.
13 Bolus, you're over your time.

14 MR. BOLUS: Mayor Courtright gave a
15 key to the city --

16 MR. WECHSLER: Mr. Bolus, you are
17 over your time.

18 MR. BOLUS: Awe, shut up. It's the
19 first time in the country that a mayor gave
20 this award out and should be given credit
21 not only to the mayor but this city.

22 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you, Mr. Bolus.

23 MR. BOLUS: If you weren't such an
24 ignorant clown, but maybe you would
25 understand better.

1 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you, Mr. Bolus.

2 MR. BOLUS: And you can take that as
3 a compliment.

4 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you, Mr. Bolus.

5 MR. BOLUS: Don't ever thank me
6 again, Wechsler.

7 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you.

8 MR. BOLUS: Because is nothing from
9 you, you can thank me for --

10 MR. WECHSLER: Mr. Bolus --

11 MR. BOLUS: And I'm glad --

12 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you.

13 MR. BOLUS: -- you're a lame duck and
14 you're the hell out of here.

15 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you, Mr. Bolus.

16 MR. BOLUS: Just remember, thank all
17 of the people in this city that you put the
18 screws to and show us your transparency, big
19 mouth.

20 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you, Mr. Bolus.

21 MR. BOLUS: See where you are, both
22 of yous. Go ahead. Do it.

23 MR. WECHSLER: Lenny Srebro.

24 MR. SREBRO: Lenny Srebro, Scranton
25 resident. Good evening, Council. We are

1 pretty close to two years now I have been
2 coming here to address the problem with the
3 flooding in Keyser Valley. I keep getting
4 the same answers, you know, you are looking
5 into it and you're not getting answers back
6 or calls back so I'm wondering last time I
7 was here, I don't know, I just feel like
8 nobody is listening to me except they did
9 flush half of the drain about maybe nine
10 months ago so we got that done but it's all
11 plugged up again.

12 I'm wondering if anybody can tell me
13 the two questions I asked last time I was
14 here. Can you tell me like if you are all
15 listening? It's the same thing over and
16 over again pretty much.

17 MR. PERRY: Yeah, Len, I mean, when
18 you are here last time I think it was two
19 weeks ago, maybe three weeks ago, the report
20 I got back was that the city planner and DPW
21 was researching the actual owner and who
22 installed it. I haven't seen it come back
23 to me. Lori, did we get anything back yet
24 from the city planner?

25 MS. REED: No.

1 MR. PERRY: Can we send something
2 out again to the city manager to see if
3 there is any progress on that? Len, that
4 was the last I heard on it. I haven't heard
5 anything new, but I know these aren't the
6 answers you are looking for, but we'll
7 follow-up with them and see what they are
8 doing with it.

9 MR. SREBRO: Okay, same thing. Last
10 time I brought up the question now of the
11 big PPL power plant on the other side of
12 Keyser Avenue there, where is that water
13 going to go? Anybody check into it? That's
14 going to be a major thing, you know, the
15 water has to run down a mountain and all of
16 the neighbors agree with me it's going to
17 make it's way to Keyser Creek and Keyser
18 Creek is the biggest part of the problem
19 with the flooding and, see, nobody even
20 bothered to try it find out.

21 MR. WECHSLER: Mr. Srebro, I did
22 fine out. I spoke about it last week about
23 the amount of trees that were cut down there
24 and I don't know if you heard the answer to
25 that last week of why so many trees had to

1 be cut down? It's a federal guideline for
2 spacing amongst power lines so storms don't
3 damage it and one of your question were the
4 trees going be replaced and the answer to
5 that is no. There has to be a fire line
6 alongside of the power lines by federal law.

7 MR. SREBRO: Okay, could we look
8 into that question about where the water is
9 going to go?

10 MR. WECHSLER: I spoke city planner
11 King and since that's the utility they had
12 to go through special EDS, earth disturbance
13 permits, and that's all on file with the
14 state not the city. They went through the
15 state, not the city.

16 MR. SREBRO: So PPL won't answer my
17 question.

18 MR. WECHSLER: No DEP is responsible
19 for maintaining that project.

20 MR. SREBRO: And I guess I got to
21 get that question then you are saying? You
22 won't contact them?

23 MR. WECHSLER: We will, but you are
24 asking who is responsible for that and I'm
25 telling you the Department of Environmental

1 Protection is responsible for it.

2 MR. SREBRO: Okay, so will someone
3 contact DEP to find out --

4 MR. WECHSLER: We will.

5 MR. SREBRO: -- where that water
6 runoff is going to go.

7 MR. WECHSLER: Here's the thing, we
8 get you these answers and you are not
9 satisfied with them. When we get you the
10 answers -- we are trying to. We are trying
11 to get you the right answers that we can,
12 but the issue that you have right now
13 Mr. Perry has been working on them and the
14 responses that we are waiting for are coming
15 from the DPW and the mayor's office. We are
16 trying to get those answers for you here, we
17 are.

18 And just as an example, the last
19 time you were here you spoke about nothing
20 was happening with Mr. Young's problem on
21 his street, it took us almost two years to
22 get that finally to a point where it's going
23 to be fixed so we try to do our best here as
24 city council and sometimes we are successful
25 and sometimes it takes us a long time to be

1 successful and we are trying to get you your
2 answers.

3 MR. SREBRO: Okay. All right.
4 That's all I have. Thank you.

5 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you. Ron
6 Ellman.

7 MR. ELLMAN: Good evening, Council.
8 I just can't comprehend how come this army
9 of tax cheats nothing is being done about it
10 with council, the mayor, nobody care. Mr.
11 Cross brags how good the city is, hundreds
12 and hundreds of LLCs have put this city to
13 sleep. It's seems like you say you're an
14 LLC and that's the end of someone having to
15 pay taxes. This is a disgrace to now the
16 city wants to buy this white elephant to
17 help out another LLC that's in trouble, what
18 is it RSM or whatever? This is a useless,
19 worthless piece of property no one in their
20 right mind has wanted it all of these years
21 so sell it to the city and let our mayor
22 have another no tax zone on Wyoming because
23 the 600 block you got that Scranton
24 properties, they owe 40 or 50 thousand
25 dollars.

1 Like I said last week, how come I
2 have to pay taxes, these people have to pay
3 taxes and all of these other in the paper
4 owe thousands upon thousands and not one
5 move out anybody to help the taxpayers
6 collect? Senseless. Well, that's because
7 we got a bleeding heart council I guess, I
8 don't know. I'm not mad at you, Joe, if
9 you're looking at me like that.

10 MR. WECHSLER: I look at everybody
11 the same, Mr. Ellman.

12 MR. ELLMAN: I had three people
13 saying you were rude to me. I'm forgiving.
14 About this multi-colored architectural
15 disgrace of a high school, when it was built
16 I don't think that people understood every
17 time you have a curve and a point and an
18 angle it adds money to the project. I never
19 knew there wasn't no air conditioning in
20 that place. I think -- I think council and
21 the mayor immediately have their fleet of
22 lawyers, Abrahamsen and his fee of lawyers
23 negotiate one of these multi-million dollar
24 contracts and air condition the place so
25 these whiney teachers will finally have some

1 peace and maybe we could move from third
2 from the bottom on up if that's the reason
3 why our school kids are so bad. It's seems
4 to me there is 850 teachers for 10,000
5 children it looks like they would be better
6 than they are, you know, the results.

7 Last week, believe it or not, I'm a
8 veteran. I have three years in the Air
9 National Guard and five years in the standby
10 Reserves, so I certainly don't oppose those
11 gentlemen last week, but that is a long-term
12 project that to me it should take years and
13 years to accomplish what they brought up
14 here, and the lady that needed the bathroom
15 for the school, I don't know if any of you
16 all are familiar with it there is a book of
17 federal grants at the second floor of the
18 library and it is invaluable, like, for that
19 woman. You look up a home for runaways and
20 it says this money is already there, this
21 money was put there last year, that's what
22 it's called federal grants. Then under it
23 would say how to get an automobile or how to
24 get beds and so forth. These people instead
25 of coming here wanting our block money they

1 need to go look at that book of federal
2 grants. Have any of you ever seen it? It's
3 a Godsend instead of coming here begging for
4 money. Like I said -- okay. You don't have
5 to tell me to sit down and shut up tonight,
6 I'm happy to.

7 MR. WECHSLER: I never said shut up,
8 I just said thank you.

9 MR. ELLMAN: What's that?

10 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you,
11 Mr. Ellman. And thank you for your service
12 as well.

13 Marie Schumacher.

14 MS. SCHUMACHER: Good evening. I'm
15 here tonight to speak on the motion 7-B that
16 you tabled because I believe what I want to
17 say is still pertinent. There are four main
18 issues to that agenda item. They are,
19 number one, as described by Brenda Sacco,
20 the Deputy Director of Operations and
21 Finance for the Lackawanna County Department
22 of Planning and Economic Development, this
23 is a prime location. Taking this property
24 off the tax rolls would be a travesty and
25 add to the burden of the taxpaying property

1 owners that we are forced to bear. At a
2 minimum, I believe the concurrence for the
3 liability for conveying this property from
4 taxpaying to debt to tax exempt should first
5 be obtained from both the Scranton School
6 Board and the County as they also stand to
7 lose property tax revenue.

8 The land portion of the assessment
9 is already established at \$60,000 and using
10 an average of several downtown corner
11 commercial properties that are six floors, I
12 calculated the 2017 property tax probably
13 would have been with \$50,000. That's a half
14 a million dollars over a decade that you
15 would be flushing down the tubes, and I
16 actually think it would be more, but I
17 didn't want to go overboard.

18 And then, number two, per the
19 Pennsylvania Department of Environment
20 Protection as of eight days ago, I have a
21 copy of the message here, previous
22 reports -- this is what was responded to me.
23 Previous reports submitted to DEP evaluated
24 the conditions based on nonresidential
25 future use for the property and specifically

1 placing cap over the area where contaminated
2 soil was identified. The definition for a
3 nonresidential property as defined in the
4 Land Recycling Act II shall not include
5 schools, nursing homes, or other
6 residential-style facilities or recreational
7 areas. Site conditions would need to be
8 reevaluated for how you are defining a green
9 space. Under the site specific standard, it
10 is possible to meet a residential use
11 scenario as long as it can be demonstrated
12 that all potential routes of exposure are
13 evaluated for that specific use. An
14 environmental covenant would also be
15 recorded on the property that would spell
16 out what activities would not be allowed
17 such as tree planting, gardens, use of
18 ground water, etcetera. Taking on this
19 potential liability of additional
20 environment remediation might be considered
21 if -- if we knew the cost. The only
22 estimate that we have is contained in the
23 lawsuit itself as several hundred thousands.
24 It is unlikely that any EPA funding received
25 by the county for clean up would be

1 available as the purpose of those funds is
2 economic development.

3 Number three, the lack of
4 transparency regarding 7-B. The capital
5 budget said the green space project noted in
6 the budget is contemplated and based on the
7 distinct need. Sadly, no one saw fit to
8 mention what seems obvious that the distinct
9 need is to settle the lawsuit against the
10 city. So it boils down to which potential
11 liability is greater, proceeding with the
12 lawsuit or buying the property, converting
13 it to a green space and maintaining the
14 property on which no taxes will accrue.

15 What is known about each? The
16 lawsuit is based on breach of contract which
17 really is not a contract at all as it was
18 never approved by city council and is,
19 therefore, not a valid contract so I say
20 shame on RSM's lawyer for basing a case on
21 an invalid piece of paper signed by one
22 individual. Approving 7-B would make a
23 reference settlement document which has also
24 not been approved by council a legal
25 document.

1 So I believe consideration should be
2 given to coming down on the side of trusting
3 the mayor select lawyers to win the lawsuit
4 and then supporting the county's bid for EPA
5 funding to remediate the property and get it
6 back on the tax rolls, and I hope you will
7 do that. And just as side, Mr. Gaughan, may
8 I ask a questions?

9 MR. WECHSLER: You have one
10 additional minute to finish your thought.

11 MS. SCHUMACHER: You asked for three
12 things two weeks ago, a copy of the
13 settlement agreement between the city and
14 RMS, a copy of the grant application in
15 order to rehab the property to a green space
16 and a copy of the grant application the
17 County has for remediating brown fields and
18 an estimate of the cost that it is going to
19 take to remediate the piece of the property
20 in order for the city to be able to make it
21 green space. How many of those have you
22 received to date?

23 MR. GAUGHAN: The first three, the
24 last one I have not received yet because I
25 don't think there is an actual official

1 estimate of how much it's going to cost to
2 remediate it. I think that's one of the
3 reasons that we tabled it so we could --

4 MS. SCHUMACHER: You have the first
5 three?

6 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, I do.

7 MS. SCHUMACHER: Are going to share
8 those?

9 MR. GAUGHAN: Yeah, sure. I can
10 give you a copy of those.

11 MS. SCHUMACHER: Thank you.

12 MR. WECHSLER: Anyone else?

13 MR. DOBRZYN: Good evening, council.
14 Dave Dobrzyn, resident, taxes and fees paid.
15 Well, to start, I wish you people would get
16 a motion that when you accept royalties from
17 Comcast it be paid in 30 lots of -- 30
18 pieces of silver bars or whatever, that's
19 great. That would be on the stick.

20 Reassessment with \$13 million being
21 stated as the cost I have one question on
22 that can the conductors be trusted? Two
23 weeks ago I made a comment on -- a comment
24 that we were a rat hole and they would like
25 to see their money being taken for and used

1 for what they see fit, which was a local
2 school and PEL and the Chamber of the
3 Commerce were complicit and they brought in
4 Mr. Amoroso and I would like to point out at
5 this time not one idea that came out of
6 anyone else's pocket other than the citizens
7 of Scranton has not wound up in court or
8 been overturned, so they are right, maybe we
9 are a rat hole. If I thought that, I
10 wouldn't have bought a house in town.

11 Parties, we have an election coming
12 up and if you are really dissatisfied at the
13 bottom of the column you can put down "none
14 of the above" and if you are really
15 interested in some change you can count on
16 don't forget Dubcheck for Dictator. People,
17 tyranny for all.

18 And the street signs project, I
19 think it would be feasible to design and
20 produce decals and stick them over the
21 viable street signs, some of them have to be
22 replaced and some of them do not, they are
23 just faded, so if you just stuck it over
24 there and you would know what street you
25 were on and it could be a reflective

1 material. I mean, we do it cheaply enough
2 when we want to elect Joe the plumber and
3 put it on our bumper, so I think we could
4 save lot of money there and get the job done
5 on a timely basis so that we won't be
6 waiting three years for street signs.

7 Once again on the trash, please, no
8 surprises after the election. It's as
9 important as police and fire and having
10 people throwing it all over town is not a
11 viable option. You know, I bought a bag, I
12 used to buy bags up in Susquehanna County
13 and the bag broke, but it left the garbage
14 and threw the bag on the truck. I couldn't
15 take the bag to another bag and pick up the
16 garbage and put it there next week because I
17 didn't have a bag, I had come up with a
18 second bag, you know, so privatized trash,
19 not to mention the neighbors were awfully
20 proud to deposit it in front of our house.

21 And please pay special attention to
22 Ma Schumachers comments tonight. It's
23 really -- that was -- that property was torn
24 down because of the medical school and
25 exposed to be apartments and everything and

1 it didn't work out, but why should we take
2 the hit for it and.

3 Also, the electric company up on
4 west mountain there, PPL we really need to
5 pay attention to that because these people
6 are ready to start building boats instead of
7 houses over there in West Side so I probably
8 won't be here next week so thank you and
9 have good night.

10 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you. Anyone
11 else?

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

13 MOTIONS.

14 MR. WECHSLER: Mr. Perry?

15 MR. PERRY: Yes, thank you, Mr.
16 Wechsler. First I just want to make a quick
17 announcement about my absence last week. As
18 many of you know, we had a death in the
19 family, we lost our mother-in-law and it was
20 very sad but I just want to say thank you
21 for all of the condolences and e-mails and
22 texts that I got from everybody, it really
23 meant a lot to my family and to my wife.
24 You know, she will be missed truly and she
25 was a great lady, single mom, raised a great

1 girl that, you know, I'm proud that I'll be
2 with for the rest of my life and she will be
3 sorely missed, but we do miss her.

4 On some city business, 7-B is tabled
5 so I won't be discussing that tonight, but I
6 do have strong opinions on that which I have
7 no problem sharing and once we bring that
8 back on the docket for a final vote over the
9 next couple of weeks.

10 Some housecleaning that came up,
11 Mrs. Reed, can we get -- I know we talked
12 about it earlier, but can we make sure we
13 get something out to DPW about that end of
14 the Elizabeth Street, easy for me to say,
15 that drainage drain. I do remember being on
16 site there and it's not like a regular drain
17 basin and it's really close the to railroad
18 tracks, so I don't know maybe it's something
19 with the railroad property or not, but it's
20 right at the end of the street and it's
21 right by the railroad tracks and it is kind
22 of off in a weeded area. It doesn't look
23 like something for drainage, so I'm not
24 really sure what it is, but it's definitely
25 a hazard, there is no two ways about it so

1 it's got to be covered by something.

2 Also, can we just do another
3 follow-up, I know Len's -- he's just pulling
4 his hair out and I do understand that, but
5 the last I have heard was that Mr. King and
6 Mr. Gallagher were doing some research into
7 the pipe, can we just see where they are
8 with that research. They were trying to
9 find the installer and where the property it
10 actually lies on it and it's gone on for
11 awhile and I know we have been working on
12 it, but, you know, as someone who lives
13 there that gets flooded periodically it's
14 just not fast enough, so I do appreciate
15 their work they are doing, but any news that
16 they can get that we can get over to Len I'm
17 sure he would appreciate it.

18 I have some firehouse updates. We
19 got some information from Mr. Bulzoni this
20 week, the rooftop work is going to start the
21 next couple of the days, I actually think it
22 started on Tuesday and the order of progress
23 is going to be Engine 7 will be first,
24 Engine 4 and then Rescue. The temporary
25 roof they put on Engine 10 is actually doing

1 really well, it's holding up, and that's
2 actually going to allow them to get to those
3 other roofs first before they go back and
4 get around to Engine 10. And on a side
5 note, we also have some legislation in
6 Seventh Order tonight once and if that's
7 passed that will trigger into effect the
8 plumbing, the electrical, the HVAC and all
9 the other work that has to be done, and if
10 we pass this legislation that will go into
11 effect and we'll get a time table for that,
12 too, and when I get that I will, you know,
13 more than happily pass that on and that is
14 all I have for you tonight. Thank you very
15 much.

16 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you, Mr. Perry.
17 Mr. Rogan.

18 MR. ROGAN: Yes, just a few brief
19 comments. I'd like to send my condolences
20 to Mr. Perry and his family as well at this
21 rough time you are going through and we are
22 with you.

23 MR. PERRY: Thank you very much.

24 MR. ROGAN: A couple of comments,
25 not going to talk too much tonight I'm

1 feeling a little under the weather, but I
2 have a couple of things I want to mention, I
3 want to give a shout out to our police
4 department for a great job in the situation
5 and Marywood over this week. As one of our
6 speakers mentioned, you know, the tragedy
7 that we saw in Las Vegas is something we
8 never want to see happen in our community
9 and I know I'm very thankful to have a
10 police department that is trained and ready
11 for these type of situations and it's
12 critical that that type of training takes
13 place so I do want to, you know, commend
14 them for a job well done along with the
15 Dunmore Police Department who, you know,
16 they worked hand-in-hand to stop this
17 situation before it came something terrible
18 like we just saw. It's very scary the
19 amount of guns and ammunition this
20 individual had.

21 Mr. Srebro brought up, you know, a
22 number of issues with the flooding,
23 obviously the ongoing situation on his block
24 is very frustrating and I have been saying
25 all along that, you know, although there is

1 specific issues on your block the whole
2 Keyser Valley and West Mountain has a large
3 issue of water runoff from the mountain. I
4 know that the PPL project, unfortunately, is
5 something the city didn't have any control
6 over and couldn't stop, it was approved by
7 the PUC which there is federal guidelines in
8 there as well, but if we can, if my
9 colleagues agree, if we could send
10 correspondence to PPL asking if there is any
11 assistance they could offer regarding the
12 mitigation of the runoff from this project.
13 It doesn't take a genius to realize that
14 when you take down trees and you take out
15 the brush there is going to be more water
16 runoff off the mountain. I don't know if
17 PPL will be willing to do anything, but it's
18 certainly something we can ask. You know,
19 the situation has gotten worse over the
20 years especially as development has occurred
21 further up on the mountain and outside of
22 the city and that's the water really that's
23 running down hill and eventually winding up
24 in Keyser Valley.

25 Finally, again, I am happy that this

1 item is tabled tonight regarding the corner
2 or Wyoming Avenue. As I mentioned, this is
3 something I am extremely conflicted with
4 because I do see the need to settle the
5 lawsuit that fighting it out in court may be
6 expensive than settling the lawsuit in this
7 manner, but I don't want to see this
8 property off the tax rolls. I think it's a
9 prime piece of commercial real estate in
10 downtown Scranton. Over the last week, I
11 have had discussions with business owners
12 and property owners in that area. Over the
13 course of the next week, I am going to speak
14 with my colleagues and work with our
15 solicitor to see if it's possible to offer
16 an amendment to this legislation asking that
17 after obtaining the property the city puts
18 it on the market for a certain period of
19 time to see if there is interest for a prime
20 developer to develop that land.

21 Again, in a worst case scenario a
22 park certainly is much nicer than what's
23 currently there and if settles a lawsuit at
24 a lower cost, you know, there is certainly a
25 benefit there, but I would much prefer to

1 see that land being used in a commercial
2 way. You know, again, it's a very prime
3 piece of downtown real estate and if the
4 city cannot put that on the market and work
5 through our Economic Development Office with
6 the Chamber to try and find somebody willing
7 to invest, I think that would be a preferred
8 course of action versus putting a park, but
9 I'm glad for the week, another week to look
10 further and by reading the legislation, the
11 legislation we are voting on is strictly on
12 acquiring the property. It doesn't have
13 anything to do with a grantor, any of this
14 other work that has been talked about that
15 is in the works.

16 So by looking at it, I think
17 amending it to require a period where
18 investors or any developers in the downtown
19 can look to -- look at the property
20 shouldn't be too difficult, but it's
21 something I'll work on over the course of
22 the next week and discuss with my colleagues
23 to see if there is any support for that
24 idea. So that is all for tonight. Thank
25 you.

1 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you, Mr. Rogan.
2 Mr. Evans?

3 MR. EVANS: Thank you. As prior,
4 I'll be discussing reassessment again this
5 evening. At a Lackawanna County
6 Commissioners' meeting and prior to a
7 commissioners' final vote on the ballot
8 question, I asked them to postpone putting
9 the question on the ballot until a
10 comprehensive property assessment study
11 could be completed by an independent third
12 party. Tonight I'm going to discuss one
13 such study completed by Blair County by
14 Weis, Burkardt and Kramer, LLC, prior to
15 their decision to do a reassessment as well
16 as offering some comments on the
17 informational sessions being held by the
18 county as we speak. On the first page of
19 the study the overview section states the
20 following: "Many are not aware that the
21 primary goal of property assessments is to
22 ensure that fair and equitable assessments
23 of property are set so the tax burden is
24 equally spread among all property owners."
25 It goes onto say, "If assessment

1 systems are not periodically adjusted, they
2 become regressive so that properties
3 depreciating at a higher rate are tax at
4 less than their fair share and property
5 appreciating at a lesser rate or those that
6 have depreciated in value pay more than
7 their fair share."

8 So based on those statements does
9 anyone think a county that hasn't had a
10 reassessment in nearly 50 years has an
11 assessment system that is fair and
12 equitable? The first of the two-day
13 reassessment informational sessions started
14 yesterday. I did attend the session today
15 at city council chambers.

16 According to today's edition of the
17 Times-Tribune, what has become increasingly
18 clear is that many residents are confused
19 and have misconceptions about both the
20 question and the process. Also, based on
21 newspaper reports it appears that the
22 commissioner that is firmly against the
23 reassessment and voted to put the question
24 on the ballot but did not second a motion to
25 postpone the question until next year's

1 primary, which by the way, would have
2 allowed for an educational period that would
3 measure in months instead of weeks, has now
4 decided to rail against the process itself.
5 You just can't make this stuff up.

6 So while I found the informational
7 session that I attended to be fair and
8 without prejudice, it is still a case of too
9 little too late, but I will cite some
10 examples of what I thought was fairness
11 within the presentation. Attorney Joan
12 Price, the County's reassessment expert,
13 stated about tax fairness, "That's the goal.
14 To make certain that property owners are
15 paying no more or no less than their fair
16 share of the real estate taxes. That is it
17 the purpose behind it."

18 Yes, Attorney Price, that is exactly
19 the reason we do a reassessment so thank you
20 very much for that statement.

21 Another speaker brought up a tried
22 and true scare tactic, this was last
23 evening, of the senior citizen being hurt by
24 a reassessment. Attorney Price responded,
25 "Well, not necessarily."

1 Yes, Attorney Price, that is it also
2 right. I'll take it a step further, in my
3 opinion the opposite of what the speaker
4 proposed may happen. Many seniors will fall
5 into the category that I mentioned earlier
6 where properties appreciating at a lesser
7 rate or those who have depreciated in value
8 pay more than their fair share in taxes, so
9 a countywide reassessment is the only
10 adjustment that truly addresses uniformity.
11 It is also important to note that
12 reassessment cannot be conducted to increase
13 tax revenue. So for those that like to fan
14 that flame they are incorrect. Strict
15 anti-windfall laws are in place restricting
16 jurisdictions from reaping the windfall due
17 to reassessment. In fact, following the
18 reassessment, county and municipalities are
19 prohibited from collecting more than an
20 additional 10 percent of the aggregate real
21 estate mortgage taxes collected the year
22 prior to the reassessment unless that taxing
23 jurisdiction has voted to enact tax
24 increase.

25 So finally I want to conclude by

1 making one more comment which is a quote
2 from the Blair County study that says,
3 "While every tax is a burden, it is more
4 chiefly born when the citizen feels that he
5 is only required to pay his proportionate
6 share of that burden measured by the value
7 of his property to that of his neighbor."

8 This is not an idle thought in the
9 mind of the taxpayer nor a mere speculative
10 theory advocated by one of the writers on
11 the subject, but it is a fundamental
12 principle written into the constitutions and
13 statutes of almost every state in this
14 country. Those words were written and
15 developed from the Pennsylvania Supreme
16 Court in the year 1990. That's all I have
17 tonight. Thank you.

18 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you, Mr. Evans.
19 Mr. Gaughan?

20 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you. First of
21 all, I send my condolences and my prayers to
22 Mr. Perry and his family with their recent
23 loss, and I also want to send my prayers and
24 condolences to all of those who were
25 affected by the shooting and devastation out

1 in Las Vegas. As you know, I bring this up
2 because of the issue that we had the other
3 day with the gunman at Marywood and
4 thankfully that situation was averted, but I
5 have to say that every time I turn on the
6 news, I'm actually afraid to turn on the
7 news, there is so much senseless violence
8 and blood shed in this country and it's at
9 an all time high and I have to ask for what,
10 for what reason besides ruining people's
11 lives. What does it accomplish? It
12 accomplishes absolutely nothing.

13 I think that we, as Americans
14 citizens, have to start listening to one
15 another and we have to start having a little
16 bit more compassion for one another and we
17 need to stop glorifying violence because as
18 far as I can see we are losing a whole
19 generation to it.

20 This Sunday, October 8, is the 22nd
21 annual Steamtown Marathon. I want to wish
22 all of the runners in this race the best of
23 luck. I also want to caution motorists to
24 be mindful of the runners and I want to
25 thank -- specifically thank the DPW for

1 taking care of the race route. They have
2 done a good job and continue to do that
3 until the race starts on Sunday.

4 I want to briefly update everyone on
5 the meeting that was held last week in city
6 hall, which I wasn't able to attend due to
7 my work schedule and the meeting was
8 regarding Scranton's levy systems, and I
9 want thank Mrs. Reed for getting together
10 with our city planner and providing us with
11 an update. The meeting was held last week
12 with our city planner, our city engineer,
13 FEMA and PEMA and they're dubbed as a local
14 levy partnership team and the purpose of the
15 meeting was to discuss the status of our
16 levy project and flood mapping, and
17 throughout my tenure on council I have
18 received several questions from those
19 residents who live in Greenridge, lower
20 Greenridge, the Plot, and that's one of the
21 reasons that I'd like to update everyone on
22 this.

23 So some of the points that came up
24 in the meeting, the city is trying to get
25 levy certified according to FEMA regulations

1 which go back to before 2011, and FEMA has
2 asked the Army Corp of engineers to do a new
3 study on the Lackawanna river. The flow of
4 the Lackawanna river is actually 20 percent
5 higher due to bad storms, some of the bad
6 storms that we have had in the past which
7 actually skewed the numbers. After
8 Hurricane Katrina a number of the years ago,
9 FEMA became extremely precise all over the
10 United States with regard to levies. So in
11 the City of Scranton we have three separate
12 levies, the Plot, Greenridge and Albright
13 Avenue and the Greenridge levy is considered
14 from the Plot to Greenridge Street. All of
15 these levies were considered flood zones,
16 however, there is a notation that they are
17 protected by a levy under construction.
18 Engineer has been completed on those levies,
19 however, they need to be designated to meet
20 the 100-year flood, including a freeboard
21 which equates to three feet higher on top of
22 the levy. The city has met the 100-year
23 flood plan but is short on the freeboard in
24 some areas, so they are little short on the
25 three extra feet that's needed.

1 In the new analysis that was
2 provided, the Plot with some additional
3 documentation can actually meet FEMA's
4 requirement to be certified, so the Plot
5 will not be in the flood zone.

6 Greenridge is little short, however,
7 because they don't have an extra three feet
8 in some areas on the levy, so it has been
9 designated Flood Zone D, which means that
10 it's not required to carry flood insurance,
11 and the "D" part of that removes the
12 requirement to carry flood insurance.

13 The Albright levy is a different
14 story. At the meeting, it was discussed
15 that a flood can over top the levy in
16 certain areas if we had one of these
17 100-years storms so this area will more than
18 likely remain a flood zone. Senator Casey
19 and Congressmen Cartright are going to
20 petition to have the Army Corp do more work
21 in the Albright area where the levy is so we
22 are very close to meeting the freeboard
23 requirement, we have little bit more to do.

24 There is mention there is going to
25 be a report issue on all of the things that

1 I just mentioned. The officials made this
2 information available to the city at a
3 meeting that was held and I will share the
4 report when it's actually issued.

5 A letter was sent on behalf of city
6 council, as I mentioned last week when I
7 made a motion, it was sent October 2 to
8 Amazon asking for their consideration to
9 place their second corporate headquarters in
10 Scranton and Lackawanna County. I have
11 gotten some really great feedback from
12 people all over the City of Scranton about
13 this possibility. We are looking at 50,000
14 jobs and an average salary of over \$100,000
15 and I think people are hungry, from what I
16 can see, for positive news and for some
17 employment opportunities in the city and in
18 Lackawanna County.

19 We did notify DPW this week that our
20 office has received several complaints about
21 the lot next to the swimming pool at Connell
22 Park on Gibbons Street. Recently an opening
23 was made in the fence and material was being
24 dumped at the site. The lot needed to be
25 secured to prevent further dumping. I'd

1 like to thank the DPW because that was taken
2 care of immediately.

3 There are also several neighbors who
4 contacted me about 618 East Elm Street, this
5 is a property that the city owns and it's
6 vacant. The property is severely overgrown
7 so we have reached out to the DPW and
8 Licensing and Inspections Department to see
9 if we can get something taken care of there.

10 I'd also like to ask Director Shrive
11 for a response to my letter asking for
12 additional information about the mandated
13 work that was performed by the Scranton
14 Sewer Authority. Also, received several
15 complaints about the 1800 block of Shimf
16 Court in South Scranton that needs to be
17 paved and there is some other issues that
18 would be sending to DPW about that.

19 Also, there is a major issue in the
20 300 block of Pattson Avenue. We sent two
21 letters down to the DPW and our city
22 engineer with no response. The gentlemen
23 that lived in this block is getting severe
24 water runoff in his garage and his house
25 every time it rains. He has tried to

1 contact the city as well so if we could send
2 another letter on his behalf I would
3 appreciate it.

4 As far Mr. Srebro's issue, I sent a
5 letter on that months ago, still have
6 received no response, so for whatever it's
7 worth at this point I would like to send
8 another letter just so we can at least get
9 an idea of a plan and what action has to
10 take place to take care of his issue because
11 I hate to see him come here week after week
12 and get no where. So that's all I have.
13 Thank you.

14 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you,
15 Mr. Gaughan. Just a follow-up on
16 Mr. Gaughan's comments regarding our flood
17 levy system. It's been quite a long time,
18 people have kind of forgotten how we got to
19 the point to have that sophisticated levy
20 system in the city. We have to go back, and
21 I have been around long enough to remember
22 this, those levies were there as result of
23 the hard work of the neighborhood
24 associations that surround each levy. These
25 groups pushed hard to get those done and if

1 you remember back in the early 80's we had a
2 few floods down in that area and it's an
3 example of community commitment and
4 community spirit and those groups were able
5 to get a combination of the city, state and
6 federal officials involved in this project
7 to see it to fruition. Mr. Gaughan read
8 some of the significance of this and the
9 major significance is those two areas, which
10 are the Plot and Greenridge, that means that
11 you are no longer going to be required to
12 have to have flood insurance, which is a
13 huge expense for someone trying to buy a
14 home, especially in the area of the Plot. I
15 see the Plot expanding tremendously with the
16 fact that you don't have to carry flood
17 insurance which I think sometimes ranges in
18 the neighborhood of \$6,000 to \$9,000 a year
19 for flood insurance.

20 There is some great homes in the
21 Plot. There is great homes in Greenridge
22 and great homes down in the Albright Avenue
23 section of the city and I think once these
24 are freed up of the burden of the flood
25 insurance I think you will see a boom in

1 sales down there and I'd just like to
2 congratulate and remember those people that
3 did that hard work all those years ago.

4 The thing that was not mentioned
5 though is we have two older systems in the
6 city as well based on the flood that
7 happened back in the 50's. There is flood
8 control projects in East Scranton and in
9 South Scranton that also have to require
10 attention for the city to do the
11 maintenance, keeping the weeds out of them,
12 keeping the rocks out of them, so the City
13 of Scranton right now is almost fully
14 protected if we keep up the maintenance on
15 the flood control within the city. Storm
16 water management is a different story, but
17 actually the control of the rivers and
18 creeks in the city is well under control and
19 something that's because of hard work and
20 combination of everybody.

21 And although it's not Amazon, I did
22 attend a seminar on Tuesday concerning a
23 company called Pennsylvania Medical
24 Solutions. The Pennsylvania Medical
25 Solutions is going to be a manufacturer of

1 medicinal marijuana products. It has
2 nothing to do with smoking marijuana or
3 anything like that, but they are going to
4 make topical and they're going to make
5 pills. This is a cutting edge technology
6 within the country right now. There is
7 going to be 12 of these production plants
8 within the city -- or in the state, I'm
9 sorry, and one of them will be in Scranton,
10 so we are going to be on the cutting edge of
11 this. I was there, attended one of the
12 employment seminars also and there was so
13 many young people there at this seminar,
14 people were chemistry degrees, biology
15 degrees, horticultural degrees that are
16 currently very limited in the positions that
17 they could find in our hometown. The
18 University produces many chemistry students,
19 so this is an opportunity for some of our
20 graduates to stay home and contribute and
21 work in this new industry and I congratulate
22 the investment that Pennsylvania Medical
23 Solutions is making in our area.

24 I have one more shout out to the
25 Scranton Police Department, for the past few

1 weeks the Oakmont area and the East Mountain
2 area have been subject to several car
3 break-ins. Neighbors have been vigilant and
4 their vigilance finally paid off the other
5 morning and the suspect was identified. A
6 huge police presence came to East Mountain
7 in the morning between 6 and 7 a.m., did a
8 search of the whole area and eventually
9 found the supposed person down at Gerrity's,
10 and uniquely this fellow was wrapping change
11 from the change that he was gathering from
12 the cars and was taking it down and turning
13 it into cash at Gerrity's in the change
14 machine and that's where he was apprehended.

15 So congratulations to the neighbors
16 of Oakmont and also to my friends and
17 neighbors on East Mountain for their
18 diligence and also for the quick response
19 that the Scranton Police Department supplied
20 us and relieved us of this problem. That's
21 it.

22 MS. REED: 5-B. FOR INTRODUCTION -
23 A RESOLUTION - AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND
24 OTHER APPROPRIATE CITY OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE
25 AND ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH MCCARTHY TIRE

1 SERVICE TO PROVIDE NEW TIRES FOR CITY OWNED
2 VEHICLES FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2018
3 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2018.

4 MR. WECHSLER: 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. EVANS: Second.

9 MR. WECHSLER: On the question?

10 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, on the question.

11 I did have a question about this. Within
12 the legislation it says that McCarthy Tires
13 was the most responsibility bidder.
14 However, it doesn't say that they were the
15 lowest bidder. I did request copies and a
16 received them today of the other bids. I
17 did not get a chance to go through them yet,
18 so I'm not sure if McCarthy tires was
19 actually the lowest bidder, but if they
20 weren't I would like to ask Mr. Gallagher,
21 the DPW director, what that means when it
22 says that they are the most responsible
23 bidder. So if you are not going to chose
24 the lowest one then there should be more of
25 an explanation of why. Thank you.

1 MR. WECHSLER: All those in favor of
2 introduction signify by saying aye.

3 MR. PERRY: Aye.

4 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

5 MR. EVANS: Aye.

6 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

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

9 MS. REED: 5-C. FOR INTRODUCTION – A
10 RESOLUTION – AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND OTHER
11 APPROPRIATE CITY OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE AND
12 ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH DENAPLES TOWING,
13 INC. TO PROVIDE TOWING SERVICES FOR CITY
14 OWNED VEHICLES FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1,
15 2018 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2018.

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

19 MR. ROGAN: So moved.

20 MR. EVANS: Second.

21 MR. WECHSLER: On the question? All
22 those in favor of introduction signify by
23 saying aye.

24 MR. PERRY: Aye.

25 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

1 MR. EVANS: Aye.

2 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

3 MR. WECHSLER: Aye. Opposed? The
4 ayes have it and so moved.

5 MS. REED: 5-D. FOR INTRODUCTION -
6 A RESOLUTION - AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND
7 OTHER APPROPRIATE CITY OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE
8 AND ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH THE GOODYEAR
9 TIRE AND RUBBER COMPANY TO PROVIDE RETREAD
10 TIRES FOR CITY OWNED VEHICLES FOR THE PERIOD
11 JANUARY 1, 2018 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2018.

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

15 MR. ROGAN: So moved.

16 MR. EVANS: Second.

17 MR. WECHSLER: On the question?

18 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, on the question.
19 I had the same question with 5-D as I did
20 with 5-B it says Goodyear Tire was the most
21 responsible bidder but it doesn't say they
22 were the lowest. I requested a copy of
23 those bids, received them today and didn't
24 get a chance to go through them so I would
25 pose the same question as I did with 5-B on

1 this one. Thank you.

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

4 MR. PERRY: Aye.

5 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

6 MR. EVANS: Aye.

7 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

8 MR. WECHSLER: Aye. Opposed? The
9 ayes have it and so moved.

10 MS. REED: SIXTH ORDER. 6-A. NO
11 BUSINESS AT THIS TIME.

12 SEVENTH ORDER. 7-A. FOR
13 CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC
14 SAFETY - FOR ADOPTION - FILE OF THE COUNCIL
15 NO. 119, 2017 - AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND
16 OTHER APPROPRIATE CITY OFFICIALS TO APPLY
17 FOR AND EXECUTE A GRANT APPLICATION BY THE
18 CITY OF SCRANTON POLICE DEPARTMENT AND, IF
19 SUCCESSFUL, A GRANT AGREEMENT, AND ACCEPT
20 THE FUNDS RELATED THERETO THROUGH THE BJA FY
21 17 EDWARD BYRNE JUSTICE ASSISTANCE GRANT
22 ("JAG") PROGRAM-LOCAL SOLICITATION IN THE
23 AMOUNT OF \$19,133.00.

24 MR. WECHSLER: What is the
25 recommendation of the Chairperson for the

1 Committee on Public Safety?

2 MR. PERRY: As Chairperson for the
3 Committee on Public Safety, I recommend
4 final passage of Item 7-A.

5 MR. ROGAN: Second.

6 MR. WECHSLER: On the question?

7 MR. PERRY: Yes, just on the
8 question. I know I spoke about this two
9 weeks ago but just to reiterate, this is an
10 awesome piece of equipment, laser technology
11 that scans accident scenes and crime scenes
12 in a fraction of the time to the millimeter
13 and then it saves the data and it's just a
14 great tool in the toolbox for the Scranton
15 Police Department and to get a grant is
16 fantastic so good work. Thank you.

17 MR. WECHSLER: Roll call, please?

18 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Perry.

19 MR. PERRY: Yes.

20 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

21 MR. ROGAN: Yes.

22 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

23 MR. EVANS: Yes.

24 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

25 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

1 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

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

5 MS. REED: 7-B. Previously tabled.

6 7-C. FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE
7 COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY - FOR ADOPTION -
8 RESOLUTION NO. 192, 2017 - AUTHORIZING THE
9 MAYOR AND OTHER APPROPRIATE CITY OFFICIALS
10 TO EXECUTE AND ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH
11 SCRANTON ELECTRIC HEATING AND COOLING
12 SERVICE, INC. FOR PLUMBING SERVICES FOR THE
13 CITY OF SCRANTON FIRE DEPARTMENT FACILITY
14 IMPROVEMENT PROJECT.

15 MR. WECHSLER: What is the
16 recommendation of the Chairperson for the
17 Committee on Public Safety?

18 MR. PERRY: As Chairperson for the
19 Committee on Public Safety, I recommend
20 final passage of Item 7-C.

21 MR. ROGAN: Second.

22 MR. WECHSLER: On the question?
23 Roll call, please?

24 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Perry.

25 MR. PERRY: Yes.

1 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

2 MR. ROGAN: Yes.

3 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

4 MR. EVANS: Yes.

5 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

6 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

7 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

8 MR. WECHSLER: Yes. I hereby
9 declare Item 7-C legally and lawfully
10 adopted.

11 MS. REED: 7-D. FOR CONSIDERATION
12 BY THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY - FOR
13 ADOPTION - RESOLUTION NO. 193, 2017-
14 AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND OTHER APPROPRIATE
15 CITY OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE AND ENTER INTO A
16 CONTRACT WITH SCRANTON ELECTRIC HEATING AND
17 COOLING SERVICE, INC. FOR HVAC SERVICES FOR
18 THE CITY OF SCRANTON FIRE DEPARTMENT
19 FACILITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT.

20 MR. WECHSLER: What is the
21 recommendation of the Chairperson for the
22 Committee on Public Safety?

23 MR. PERRY: As Chairperson for the
24 Committee on Public Safety, I recommend
25 final passage of Item 7-D.

1 MR. ROGAN: Second.

2 MR. WECHSLER: On the question?

3 Roll call, please?

4 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Perry.

5 MR. PERRY: Yes.

6 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

7 MR. ROGAN: Yes.

8 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

9 MR. EVANS: Yes.

10 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

11 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

12 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

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

16 MS. REED: 7-E. FOR CONSIDERATION
17 BY THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY - FOR
18 ADOPTION - RESOLUTION NO. 194, 2017 -
19 AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND OTHER APPROPRIATE
20 CITY OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE AND ENTER INTO A
21 CONTRACT WITH MIKE WALSH ELECTRICAL, INC.
22 FOR ELECTRICAL SERVICES FOR THE CITY OF
23 SCRANTON FIRE DEPARTMENT FACILITY
24 IMPROVEMENT PROJECT.

25 MR. WECHSLER: What is the

1 recommendation of the Chairperson for the
2 Committee on Public Safety?

3 MR. PERRY: As Chair for the
4 Committee on Public Safety, I recommend
5 final passage of Item 7-E.

6 MR. ROGAN: Second.

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

9 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Perry.

10 MR. PERRY: Yes.

11 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

12 MR. ROGAN: Yes.

13 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

14 MR. EVANS: Yes.

15 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

16 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

17 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

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

21 MS. REED: 7-F. FOR CONSIDERATION
22 BY THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS - FOR
23 ADOPTION - RESOLUTION NO. 195, 2017 -
24 AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND OTHER APPROPRIATE
25 CITY OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE AND ENTER INTO

1 A CONTRACT WITH KEYSTONE QUARRY, INC. TO
2 PROVIDE THE CITY 2000 TON (MORE OR LESS)
3 ANTI-SKID SAND FOR THE PERIOD OCTOBER 25,
4 2017 THROUGH APRIL 30, 2018.

5 MR. WECHSLER: What is the
6 recommendation of the Chairperson for the
7 Committee on Public Works?

8 MR. GAUGHAN: As Chairperson for the
9 Committee on Public Works, I recommend final
10 passage of Item 7-F.

11 MR. ROGAN: Second.

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

14 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Perry.

15 MR. PERRY: Yes.

16 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

17 MR. ROGAN: Yes.

18 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

19 MR. EVANS: Yes.

20 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

21 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

22 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

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

1 MS. REED: 7-G. FOR CONSIDERATION
2 BY THE COMMITTEE ON RULES - FOR ADOPTION -
3 RESOLUTION NO. 196, 2017 - APPOINTMENT OF
4 JESSICA ROTHCHILD, 244 PUTNAM STREET,
5 SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA, 18508 AS A MEMBER OF
6 THE HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION, EFFECTIVE
7 SEPTEMBER 12, 2017. MS. ROTHCHILD WILL BE
8 REPLACING REVEREND KATHRYN SIMMONS WHO
9 RESIGNED ON AUGUST 7, 2017. MS. ROTHCHILD
10 WILL FILL THE UNEXPIRED TERM OF REVEREND
11 KATHRYN SIMMONS WHICH IS SCHEDULED TO EXPIRE
12 ON OCTOBER 18, 2018.

13 MR. WECHSLER: As Chairperson for
14 the Committee on Rules, I recommend final
15 passage of Item 7-G.

16 MR. ROGAN: Second.

17 MR. WECHSLER: On the question?
18 Roll call, please?

19 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Perry.

20 MR. PERRY: Yes.

21 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

22 MR. ROGAN: Yes.

23 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

24 MR. EVANS: Yes.

25 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

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MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

MR. WECHSLER: Yes. I hereby
declare Item 7-G legally and lawfully
adopted.

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

MR. ROGAN: Motion to adjourn.

MR. WECHSLER: Meeting adjourned.

C E R T I F I C A T E

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

CATHENE S. NARDOZZI, RPR
OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER