

SCRANTON CITY COUNCIL MEETING

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HELD:

Thursday, February 2, 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, SOLICITOR

1 (Pledge of Allegiance recited and moment of reflection
2 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. Dispense with
14 the reading of the minutes.

15 MS. REED: THIRD ORDER. 3-A. TAX
16 ASSESSOR'S RESULTS REPORT FOR HEARING DATE
17 HELD JANUARY 11, 2017.

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

20 MS. REED: 3-B. MINUTES OF THE
21 SCRANTON LACKAWANNA HEALTH & WELFARE
22 AUTHORITY'S REGULAR BOARD MEETING HELD
23 OCTOBER 20, 2016.

24 MR. WECHSLER: Are there any
25 comments? If not, received and filed.

1 MS. REED: 3-C. AGENDA FOR THE BOARD
2 OF ZONING APPEALS MEETING TO BE HELD
3 FEBRUARY 8, 2017.

4 MR. WECHSLER: Are there any
5 comments? If not, received and filed.

6 Do any council members have
7 announcement at this time? I have two.
8 There will be a public hearing next
9 Thursday, February 9, at 5:45 in council
10 chambers for Item 5-B on tonight's agenda,
11 closing and vacating portions of Irving and
12 Crown Avenue between Saginaw and Connell
13 Street.

14 Also, there will be a fundraiser for
15 the West Scranton Little League this Friday
16 from 7 to 10 at Pixie's Bar at 1420
17 Lafayette Street. As everyone is aware,
18 they had a fire there last week so they are
19 going to need some help replacing their
20 concession stand before the season starts.

21 MS. REED: FOURTH ORDER. CITIZENS'
22 PARTICIPATION.

23 MR. WECHSLER: Joan Hodowanitz.

24 MS. HODOWANITZ: Joan Hodowanitz,
25 Scranton resident and taxpayer. Just so we

1 are all keeping track, there are 278 days
2 left until the general election on November
3 7 and we are all looking forward to the
4 results of the Arcadis study water analysis.
5 Also, there are 148 days until June 30, the
6 deadline for the 2016 audit. I'm really
7 looking forward to that one.

8 With regard to the LST tax, I know
9 there is a hearing scheduled for February
10 13, I still think though that you should not
11 wait for the results of that, you should be
12 mulling over in your minds a Plan B, as
13 should the administration should there be
14 any problem with that LST tax. If that were
15 cut back to \$52 a year instead of the triple
16 tax, that's like a \$3 million loss of
17 revenue that we had predicted, so I would
18 like to see a Plan B at least tossed around
19 in your mind. It would be good news if we
20 get it, but if you don't, it will be a
21 problem.

22 During Fifth Order if you could
23 please update the public on the status of
24 your web page since we have been waiting for
25 that for some time.

1 Also, what is the status of pending
2 legislation or any legislation with regard
3 to pension reforms? I haven't seen anything
4 about that for a long, long time. In
5 addition, I'm still looking for the RFP for
6 the third party administration of the
7 pension plans, I haven't seen that.

8 MR. EVANS: My understanding is that
9 is going to be coming down shortly.

10 MS. HODOWANITZ: Good. It's long
11 overdue. Also, when will the public be made
12 aware of the plan for the distribution of
13 the sewer sale -- the sewer sales proceeds?
14 How far down in the year are we going to get
15 that kind of information? Is that going to
16 be relatively soon or that going to be
17 summertime?

18 MR. EVANS: I would expect that in
19 the first quarter.

20 MS. HODOWANITZ: First quarter?

21 MR. EVANS: Okay. Any change on our
22 rental registration legislation?

23 MR. EVANS: The lawsuit you mean?

24 MS. HODOWANITZ: Not just the
25 lawsuit, but are we just in a holding

1 pattern until that lawsuit is resolved?

2 MR. EVANS: No, I think -- no, they
3 are moving ahead with the new ordinance.

4 MS. HODOWANITZ: Okay, is that going
5 to be maybe first quarter?

6 MR. WECHSLER: The new bills are
7 going to be mailed out soon.

8 MS. HODOWANITZ: Okay. All right.
9 Like many people I was saddened to read by
10 Mr. Boscov's medical condition this morning.
11 However, as you recall several years ago
12 when he had attempted to retire he had to
13 come back into the company because his
14 department store chain got in real trouble,
15 almost had to declare bankruptcy, so my
16 question is if he has to withdraw or
17 something happens to him, and you've got to
18 remember he is the genius behind that chain
19 of department stores. He is the number one
20 reason for their financial success. When he
21 goes, whether it's simply to retire for
22 medical reasons or he passes away, I would
23 be very concerned about the future of that
24 chain as well as our anchor store at the
25 marketplace and what would happen to the

1 marketplace if that store had to close?
2 That's another thing we should be looking at
3 because we put a lot of eggs into that
4 basket and I'm wondering what the ultimate
5 impact would be on the city coffers if
6 Boscov's Department Store ever had to close
7 at least in the near future.

8 And just to make everyone smile
9 today, I got my property tax bill and I was
10 -- as I expected, there was no change in my
11 city tax, there was no change in my county
12 tax, but my school tax went down, so when
13 you get your property tax bills everyone
14 should compare their tax totals to last year
15 and hopefully everyone will get the same
16 pleasant surprise. Thank you.

17 MR. WECHSLER: Jeff Zick.

18 MR. ZICK: How are you doing? This
19 is for council, I'm going to ask for a
20 little help from Mandy, my fiancée, if
21 that's fine? She is going to hold up the
22 pictures depicted if the camera wanted to
23 catch what is going on here.

24 All right, first thing, we have is
25 Scranton's police badge, the narcotics

1 badge, I mean, it is 2017. Hemp is now
2 legal in the State of Pennsylvania, you
3 know, if your town wants to collect taxes
4 off of illegal medical Cannabis business
5 then what message does this narcotics badge
6 send to the public? You know, that hemp is
7 heroin. Medical Cannabis involves needles.
8 Cannabis causes death. You know, why the
9 childish skull? Every other badge on here
10 is pretty professional, and it's a great
11 police department and I'm not badgering the
12 police here they do a great job.

13 . Second page, is a recent WNEP
14 poll talking about Wilkes-Barre's
15 decriminalization. Wilkes-Barre has already
16 decriminalized paraphernalia. Scranton
17 still charges for roach papers as
18 paraphernalia. Philadelphia, Pittsburgh,
19 Harrisburg, and State College have already
20 decriminalized small amounts of Cannabis.
21 Reading, West York, Lancaster, Stroudsburg
22 and Wilkes-Barre are considering ordinances.
23 Scranton, as the progressive city, should
24 probably take the lead and an enact it's own
25 ordinance.

1 On the third page is Scranton
2 Cannibis arrests 2010 to 2016. 94 arrests
3 times \$1,266 per arrest, which is a Ram
4 Corporation estimate, equals \$119,000, up 51
5 percent from 2015. Six years costs the city
6 \$743,880.

7 All right, page four. Page four,
8 black and white arrests in the City of
9 Scranton. This is rather disturbing, I
10 don't know this until I crunched some
11 numbers. All right, whites make up 78.6
12 percent of Scranton's population. They
13 account for 62 percent of 2016's arrests of
14 small possession of can business. Blacks
15 make up 6 percent of this city, but account
16 for 38 percent of possession arrests. I
17 don't find that all right, I'm sure nobody
18 in this room finds it all right, I'm not
19 even going to ask for a show of hands, all
20 right?

21 Page five, opiate and cocaine
22 possession arrests in the city. Cannabis
23 users are 64 percent more likely to be
24 arrested in 2016 than opiate and cocaine
25 users combined. What is Scranton's

1 priorities?

2 All right, page six. The top ten
3 Lackawanna County Cannibis arrests in the
4 City for 2016. Scranton fuels the war on
5 Cannibis at 28 percent of all arrests in
6 Lackawanna County. Scranton is supposed to
7 be the progressive city. This sounds
8 regressive. Scranton accounts for .6
9 percent of the statewide population.
10 Scranton's Cannibis possession arrests
11 account for 3.4 percent of the states
12 possession arrests. This is 550 percent
13 more likely for a person to be arrested here
14 in Scranton than anywhere else in the state
15 for Cannibis possession. Scranton is on
16 record pace this year for arrests of small
17 amounts of Cannibis. January new numbers
18 came out, they arrested 14 adults. You
19 times that times 12 months that's 144
20 arrests this year. 144 arrests times \$1,266
21 is around \$180,000. You spent \$17,724 not
22 writing tickets. Philadelphia, Harrisburg,
23 Pittsburgh, already do this. The sky is not
24 falling on their heads. I'm not saying -- I
25 love Scranton. I'm moving to Scranton in a

1 week. I pay taxes as a worker here, I'm
2 going to pay taxes as a citizen now. This
3 is something that -- I don't want my -- I
4 thought I'd never see my children go through
5 this. This is something we can take care
6 of. I would like a meeting between the
7 mayor, council, and the district attorney
8 and if we can take care of this that would
9 be great. Thank you for your time.

10 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you.

11 MS. FRANUS: Fay Franus, Scranton.
12 First, I'd like to say I think it's -- I
13 hope you approve the legislation for the
14 Lackawanna Heritage Trail about the big
15 flashing lights because that's a very --
16 it's a big safety hazard on Elm Street, and
17 even on Broadway, if they could possibly
18 some day get one there on Broadway. The
19 Lackawanna Heritage Trail is phenomenal. It
20 gives everyone some place to go. Exercise,
21 walking, biking, taking your dog, I mean,
22 they get so much exercise and it's so
23 healthy and it's a beautiful, beautiful
24 trail and Natalie Gelb should be highly
25 commended for the works that she has done on

1 this trail and her workers. It's positively
2 beautiful and I hope that you approve this
3 because it's very much so needed.

4 Mr. Wechsler, last week I heard you
5 mention about the -- you are going to send a
6 letter to Jason Shrive to get som
7 information, you were hoping you would get
8 it and Billy Gaughan mentioned a
9 Right-to-Know and you suggested that that
10 would be good because it would take 30 days
11 and it's like a stall tactic they said,
12 like, they would put it off. Well, then,
13 I'd like to know how come you tell all of us
14 when we have a question to do a
15 Right-to-Know? I know why. Because, first
16 of all, you don't want to get us the answers
17 because you don't want us to know so we have
18 to do a Right-to-Know, and then whoever is
19 in charge of that they don't every reply.

20 Marie Schumacher must have ten
21 Right-to-Knows that never got answered.
22 Then you say go to the state. There's more
23 stall tactics so it's more not letting the
24 people know what's going on in the city.
25 Mr. Evans on purpose, by the way. Mr.

1 Evans, is that -- for the garbage fee is
2 that 10 percent still going to be -- going
3 to be --

4 MR. EVANS: Yes.

5 MS. FRANUS: -- \$30 off if you pay by
6 the first time?

7 MR. EVANS: Yes, it is.

8 MS. FRANUS: Last week you
9 mentioned, a little sting, asked and
10 answered. You said for anybody asking that
11 question I go and I get the answer. Well, I
12 have been asking you for two years, if not
13 longer, and I have all of the minutes of the
14 meetings and all of the tapes to prove it,
15 that I have been asking you time after time,
16 you know this, how much money was coming in
17 for the garbage fee and how much money was
18 being paid out. You never ever gave me an
19 answer. Then you said there was going to be
20 a study because the DPW didn't have their
21 records and you couldn't do a study. Well,
22 the study they got their money in June, they
23 didn't start it until December. Now, you
24 said you didn't have any say as of when we
25 they were going to do it, but you do have a

1 say because you council, you are the ones
2 that wanted that study. You certainly could
3 pick up that phone and say, "Hey, where's
4 the study?"

5 When you told me about this study,
6 way back, way back a year ago, you said you
7 wanted to get this study for this year's
8 budget, this year's budget it would be less
9 than \$300. They didn't even start the study
10 until December so they know they couldn't
11 get the \$300 for this year's budget again.
12 More --

13 MR. EVANS: I can't --

14 MS. FRANUS: Pardon me?

15 MR. EVANS: I can't address the
16 motivation of why the study didn't get done
17 but I will tell you that I requested the
18 study from the time we knew about it until
19 the time it was enacted.

20 MS. FRANUS: Well, it wasn't enacted
21 soon enough to get the money in this year's
22 budget.

23 MR. EVANS: I will agree with you
24 100 percent. It wasn't enacted soon enough.

25 MS. FRANUS: No, it wasn't. Now,

1 when you mentioned about there was an
2 account, that the garbage fee has a special
3 account for all of the money that the people
4 pay to go into that account, could you
5 possibly please get me the disbursements of
6 that account?

7 MR. EVANS: Sure.

8 MS. FRANUS: As soon as possible?

9 MR. EVANS: Well, yeah within a
10 reasonable manner. Over the next few weeks
11 I'll try to get that answer for you.

12 MS. FRANUS: Thank you. As many
13 disbursements as you can. When did you find
14 out Mayor Courtright knew about this \$30
15 million shortfall in the Sewer Authority
16 sale to the water company? Did he ever
17 answer in of you as to when he knew about
18 this?

19 MR. EVANS: We found out when we
20 opened the newspaper.

21 MS. FRANUS: When did he know?

22 MR. EVANS: I don't know. We found
23 out when we read it in the newspaper.

24 MS. FRANUS: Oh, I know that. Did
25 anybody -- you were supposed to ask mayor

1 Courtright, I know you said it a couple of
2 times.

3 MR. WECHSLER: That's one of the
4 questions we have with the --

5 MS. FRANUS: But when you read those
6 questions that you wrote, that whole list of
7 letters, the questions, that was not one of
8 them.

9 MR. GAUGHAN: I sent that to him
10 specifically from myself and I have not
11 received any answers.

12 MS. FRANUS: Well, Bill, don't
13 expect it because he has never answered you
14 yet, but that's outrageous. The fact is he
15 should tell you he knew about it long before
16 you did and he didn't want the people to
17 know. Same thing with the -- I got my tax
18 bill, it was like \$34 less, which is
19 wonderful. Next year we are going to get
20 clobbered because the only reason we don't
21 have a tax increase this year so Billy
22 Courtright can get elected. Don't be
23 fooled, people. Billy Courtright is a
24 shady, shady person. He is doing this on
25 purpose. Next year you will slammed with

1 taxes to makeup for this year. Don't let
2 that fool you.

3 Now, on the corner -- oh, one more
4 thing about the garbage fees, how many liens
5 -- now, you said many, many liens. Do you
6 know how many liens have gone out so far?

7 MR. WECHSLER: No, I do not.

8 MS. FRANUS: Could you please find
9 that out for me? Okay. At the corner of
10 Broadway -- not Broadway, I live there, you
11 think I would know. At the corner of
12 Railroad and Luzerne, you know, where the
13 pizza place is on the corner, when you're
14 coming down Railroad Avenue when you turn
15 left there is a traffic light there, right?
16 Four corners traffic light. Two on
17 Railroad, both sides of Luzerne at the
18 intersection, but right next to the traffic
19 light as you turn the corner left there is
20 another traffic light that faces a building,
21 faces a house. You can't see it from
22 Railroad Avenue, you can't see it from Fifth
23 Street. When you go up Fifth Street,
24 one-way street to go onto Luzerne Street at
25 the stop sign there, the traffic light you

1 can't even see. It's there for nothing. It
2 goes into a house. Marie, you saw it. You
3 can't see it from the corner and you can't
4 see if from Fifth Avenue so nobody can see
5 it unless you are standing in front of that
6 person's house. In other words, the cost of
7 a traffic light I'm sure is very expensive.
8 What is it doing there? There is four
9 traffic lights in that corner you don't need
10 it, and you can't see it from any direction
11 unless you are standing right in front of
12 that house. So is there anyway you could
13 get that out of there so maybe somebody else
14 can use it? I mean, it makes no sense.
15 Could somebody just look at that and you
16 will see what I mean. Go to the corner of
17 Railroad and Luzerne and look at that other
18 traffic light on the pole, on the building
19 or whatever. Thank you.

20 MR. WECHSLER: Bob Bolus.

21 MR. BOLUS: Good evening, Council,
22 Bob Bolus, Scranton. You know, last week we
23 brought up for financial advisory services
24 provided to the City of Scranton in
25 connection with the general obligation

1 notes, \$725,000. Anybody have an
2 explanation? A million five to Conaboy to
3 do an agreement on the garage sale.
4 \$725,000, whatever this is for advisory.
5 That's why you guys are here. Why do we
6 need an advisory committee? You are
7 supposed to be the brains of the city and
8 the guy downstairs. We don't need
9 advisories to know what we are doing, that
10 were in a very serious issue and you are
11 squandering money. Five million whatever,
12 six million dollars to the mall for parking
13 spaces so people can go bark free at the
14 expense of every one of us. Did you need an
15 advisory to tell you how to do that?

16 Could you tell me what the -- oh,
17 boy. Could you tell me what the Sewer
18 Authority costs are, legal fees, because
19 everything we get is all blocked off. There
20 are no records for the public records.
21 Mr. Wechsler, you have an answer with the
22 Sewer Authority legal fees what we are being
23 charged?

24 MR. WECHSLER: For the past three
25 weeks we have been talking about how we are

1 working on getting those answers. I'm not
2 sure if you missed that, but we are having a
3 meeting with Mr. Shrive on the 10th to get
4 the answers.

5 MR. BOLUS: But answer me a
6 question, why didn't you understand what it
7 was before the Sewer Authority was sold?

8 MR. WECHSLER: Because the Sewer
9 Authority conducted negotiations, the Sewer
10 Court and the water company. We did not
11 have anything to do with it.

12 MR. BOLUS: But we are getting the
13 money that we don't have. Somebody has to
14 know the legal fees. There's bring down
15 sheets.

16 MR. WECHSLER: We were not involved.
17 We were not involved in that portion of the
18 deal.

19 MR. BOLUS: What was the hourly rate
20 for Conaboy on the garage sale?

21 MR. WECHSLER: Once again, once
22 again, you are going backwards. We are --

23 MR. BOLUS: I'm going all over the
24 place here because there is millions of
25 dollars being thrown down the toilet here

1 and no matter what direction I go in, I
2 mean, you're the council president, you are
3 the spokesman for the group, and you should
4 have these numbers. I shouldn't have to ask
5 you twice and I shouldn't have to go all
6 over the ballpark.

7 MR. WECHSLER: Mr. Bolus, that's --

8 MR. WECHSLER: You should know
9 what's going on, Mr. Wechsler.

10 MR. WECHSLER: I do. I do.

11 MR. BOLUS: Well, if you do know
12 then what's his hourly fee?

13 MR. WECHSLER: Mr. Bolus, this is
14 your time to comment. This is your time to
15 comment.

16 MR. BOLUS: Don't tell me what by
17 time is, I'm a public --

18 MR. WECHSLER: You are doing it. Go
19 ahead.

20 MR. BOLUS: Wait, I'm in the public
21 and I'm asking you for what his hourly fee
22 was.

23 MR. WECHSLER: Your question -- you
24 can ask all of the questions you'd like, but
25 this is your comment period so continue.

1 MR. BOLUS: We'll get to you in a
2 bit. Mr. Gaughan, you are were in the paper
3 complaining about this, that and the other
4 about the sales and all yet you signed the
5 recovery plan. You knew it was to be sold.
6 You guys agreed to do it, now you are crying
7 about it. Didn't you pay attention to what
8 was going on? Mr. Wechsler can't give a
9 straight answer and nobody else can, yet you
10 are complaining been how much you gotta
11 squander all of this money and you have no
12 accountability.

13 You buy parking garage spaces in a
14 mall, basically you should have owned the
15 mall, yet you won't reassess it. You won't
16 go after the nonprofits. You will do
17 absolutely zero to increase the tax base in
18 this city, yet you guys blow money all day
19 long and you have no idea what you are
20 talking about. That's what's upsetting me,
21 but when it came to my containers on East
22 Mountain, Mr. Wechsler, you knew everything
23 about it, because he was part of the deal to
24 get rid of him and try to move them and cost
25 the city thousands of dollars.

1 MR. WECHSLER: I disagree, Mr.
2 Bolus. I had nothing to do with it.

3 MR. BOLUS: Yeah, you did. You had
4 a lot to do with it, okay, Mr. Wechsler?
5 You had quite a bit to do with it so let's
6 not put that under the rug. I know --

7 MR. WECHSLER: It's definitely not
8 under the rug, no.

9 MR. BOLUS: Well, you knew that was
10 going on and so did your other members.

11 MR. WECHSLER: As a council member,
12 I did know what was going on.

13 MR. BOLUS: That's right, and you
14 cost the city thousands of dollars and had
15 to continue -- -

16 MR. WECHSLER: I was never involved
17 as member of the business association.

18 MR. BOLUS: Well, you guys have cost
19 us millions, not thousands, millions, and
20 yet you are not showing any way you are
21 going to pay the future debt off. Not one
22 single iota can you tell us how are you
23 going to pay the future debt without putting
24 the screws to the people in the city and the
25 businesses. You have no clue. You have no

1 ideas. You got contracts in front of you,
2 are you qualified to understand them to read
3 them? \$175,000 for advisory, didn't they
4 tell you what legal fees would be? Didn't
5 they tell you what the outcome would be?
6 Didn't you ask questions that you could give
7 us answers instead of seeing blank papers,
8 blank sheets? Yet, you want to run the
9 city. You want to run this -- what are you
10 running? What are you leading? That's what
11 bothers me. You are supposed to be leaders.
12 You are supposed to understand what you are
13 doing here. Yet, I don't see a single thing
14 you have done here that you understand, and
15 that's the problem I have here. You know --

16 MR. WECHSLER: Mr. Bolus, if you are
17 going to do this every week, you are allowed
18 to finish your thought, you are not allowed
19 to start a new thought.

20 MR. BOLUS: Mr. Wechsler, let me
21 tell you something, I'm going to see that
22 both you and Mr. Gaughan have a trailer
23 because the city and the people in this
24 community have to know what a dictator is
25 about and what you have done to this city

1 whether you like it or not.

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

3 MR. BOLUS: And I'll show what you
4 free speech really is --

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

6 MR. BOLUS: -- because you are the
7 last person that should sit in that seat
8 because you don't respect the people --

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

10 MR. BOLUS: -- you only respect who
11 you think you are.

12 MR. WECHSLER: Mr. Bolus, thank you
13 very much.

14 MR. BOLUS: Don't thank me because
15 you're going to regret ever thanking me for
16 anything.

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

18 MR. BOLUS: But you will understand
19 the power of the people.

20 MR. WECHSLER: Mr. Bolus --

21 MR. BOLUS: And I hope I never see
22 in that seat --

23 MR. WECHSLER: -- I do believe --

24 MR. BOLUS: Have a good night,
25 Wechsler.

1 MR. WECHSLER: I do believe in the
2 power of the people.

3 MR. BOLUS: Then you just watch what
4 happens.

5 MR. WECHSLER: I look forward to it.

6 MR. BOLUS: And I hope you --

7 MR. WECHSLER: It's a campaign.
8 That's why we have elections. No.

9 MR. BOLUS: No, if you think the
10 people on these cameras are stupid to know
11 that you don't know what's going on in the
12 city --

13 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you, Mr. Bolus
14 --

15 MR. BOLUS: -- you got another
16 thought coming.

17 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you very much,
18 sir. Gary Donato?

19 MR. DONATO: Greg.

20 MR. WECHSLER: Greg Donato, I'm
21 sorry.

22 MR. DONATO: Hi. My name is Greg
23 Donato, I live in West Pittston. I just
24 wanted to ask permission or how to go
25 forward on we have an advertising business,

1 my aunt, my grandfather and
2 great-grandfather since 1915. We do bench
3 advertising and it adds to commerce and
4 functionality around the city. Everything
5 is geared towards business and commerce and
6 being fair and reputable to businesses and I
7 was wondering if we -- you know, how we
8 could go about starting that up in the
9 Scranton area? We do it in Wilkes-Barre and
10 surrounding areas and Luzerne County, and we
11 have been doing it for a long, long time and
12 I would just like to ask permission if we
13 can start up in Scranton.

14 MR. WECHSLER: Do you have a catalog
15 or do you have a customer testimony or
16 anything?

17 MR. DONATO: Yes.

18 MR. WECHSLER: Because we are kind
19 of a starting point for that and we take a
20 look at what you have and then we can start
21 either working it into the parks or wherever
22 that could go so whatever you might have
23 Mr. Reed is our city clerk.

24 MR. DONATO: Okay.

25 MR. WECHSLER: So for any

1 information she would be your starting point
2 and we are all anxious to see any
3 improvements that we can bring to the city.

4 MR. DONATO: Wonderful, I will talk
5 to her.

6 MR. WECHSLER: Okay.

7 MR. DONATO: Thank you for your
8 time.

9 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you very much.
10 Ron Ellman.

11 MR. ELLMAN: Yes. Hello, Council.
12 No fighting tonight with you.

13 MR. WECHSLER: Promise?

14 MR. ELLMAN: Last night I was having
15 a couple of cocktails at the club, when I
16 went to the bathroom -- people talk to me in
17 the bathroom all of the time for some
18 reason. A fellow was talking about
19 acquiring a new property and all of the work
20 it needed and all, and he told me, I don't
21 know where he lived, but it was in that
22 area, he said he didn't want to look and see
23 a bunch of fire trucks and automobiles and
24 all he said they never had that problem when
25 the Army Reserve was there. I have no idea

1 what's going on, but to me it's acquiring
2 another money pit when we can't fix fire
3 stations. You know, there was a big article
4 in the paper about all of the work the fire
5 stations needed. Well, this was just a
6 brief encounter about that. I know I have
7 mentioned a couple of times those 6,000
8 foreclosures, I'm not talking about the
9 house foreclosures, there is -- if you go
10 through that list there is hundreds upon
11 hundreds of properties owned by realtors and
12 developers. This one guy, Talerico, he got
13 dozens of properties here in the city, he
14 owes five, six, seven thousand dollars on
15 each one. His name is all over that sheet.
16 I think I mentioned just once before, just
17 four people I got here, four people now owe
18 \$900,000. These are companies. Scranton
19 investors on Boulevard \$484,000. This is --
20 whoever heard of getting away with this?
21 They come up to my house when I paid the
22 taxes twice and I can't get, I think it's
23 \$1,800 or something. I never seen nothing
24 like it. Here's a man \$484,000 and nobody
25 bothers him. Under him I got this

1 Wintermantle Reality \$141,000. Thomas Hill
2 \$161,000 and Ed Langer \$100,000. Why can't
3 you condemn their properties? They are
4 rented out. They are making income, why
5 can't these real estate licenses just be
6 taken away from them?

7 You know, besides that, these same
8 people are buying more property. They hide
9 it under this LLC. The same people that
10 aren't paying for what they got are allowed
11 to get more property. This is senseless
12 when the city is so broke. You know, we
13 hear every week we can't pay this, we can't
14 pay that, and here is tens of millions of
15 dollars sitting there that no one is
16 collecting. Amoroso is not very busy
17 anymore, he sold the last thing we got. Why
18 can't he do something. I understand his
19 standing with the city, too, but he can do
20 something.

21 What about Bulzoni, \$100,000. He
22 doesn't have to pay any house taxes or
23 school taxes, why can't he do something
24 about this? This is what's wrong with this
25 city? It's just hundreds of thousands of

1 dollars from each one of these people and
2 not nothing being done to collect it.
3 Nothing. The reason you just didn't fall
4 back on Amoroso's plan and just raise taxes
5 when we need something. We don't have to do
6 any work and hard work and go after people,
7 we'll just raise taxes on the rest of you.
8 It's gotten where there is just nowhere else
9 to go for a lot of people and you know it
10 but you don't do nothing. Has one of you
11 done anything about those 60,000
12 foreclosures? No. I brought it up a couple
13 of months ago. Millions of dollars sitting
14 there uncollected taxes. Like I said, take
15 away their licenses and their real estate
16 licenses and condemn their houses and see
17 how fast they pay. That Pennwood Manor owes
18 \$55,000, they are loaded to the gill with
19 people.

20 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you,
21 Mr. Ellman.

22 MR. ELLMAN: Why, thank you for
23 letting me let out steam. See, I didn't get
24 off on you tonight. I'll save it.

25 MR. WECHSLER: Lee Morgan.

1 MR. MORGAN: Good evening, Council.
2 Tonight, you know, I just would like to ask
3 people to remember the exchange between
4 Mr. Bolus and Mr. Wechsler tonight when
5 Mr. Wechsler said that you could -- this is
6 your five minutes and you can ask questions
7 and I think people have to understand why
8 this council sits here. When elected
9 officials move an agenda through a city it
10 has to be done legally and lawfully. It
11 doesn't matter whether the people who sit on
12 the council are competent or incompetent, as
13 long as they legally hold the votes they can
14 make all of the mistakes they want and it's
15 legal and they don't have to answer any
16 questions at all. They can just ignore you
17 like they have done to the residents of this
18 city for quite a few decades.

19 And, you know, the real problem is
20 you need to take a look into this much
21 further. You know, a remarkable article was
22 in the Scranton Times newspaper, and I'm
23 just going to touch it in generalities, but
24 there is three council members here sitting
25 for reelection and one of them is married to

1 a former Democratic Committee woman, and
2 there were some questions about what was
3 taking place at the school board and I guess
4 the question was, you know, with
5 Mr. Sheridan sitting there why didn't
6 somebody do something with him and this
7 woman said she couldn't take a chance on her
8 husband's reelection chances here in the
9 city and, you know, that says a lot about
10 this city.

11 MR. WECHSLER: I think it says a lot
12 about my wife.

13 MR. MORGAN: Well, I mean, that's up
14 to you to take credit for that, but I think
15 it just goes to show how corrupt and twisted
16 this city is.

17 MR. WECHSLER: Mr. Morgan, I will
18 not let you call my wife corrupt.

19 MR. MORGAN: I didn't call your wife
20 anything. I'm talking about a --

21 MR. WECHSLER: A wife of a
22 councilman --

23 MR. MORGAN: You know, Mr. Wechsler,
24 please sit there and be quite, you are the
25 council president --

1 MR. WECHSLER: I'm not going to
2 sit--

3 MR. MORGAN: And I didn't say one
4 word about your wife being corrupt, you did.

5 MR. WECHSLER: No, you stated about
6 my wife and you then you said corrupt.

7 MR. MORGAN: Do me a favor, stop my
8 time and then you carry on on your own.

9 MR. WECHSLER: You are carrying on,
10 sir, not me.

11 MR. MORGAN: No, I didn't say she
12 was corrupt, you did, but you know it just
13 goes to show how twisted this system really
14 is. All of these residents they are here,
15 they're hunkered down, they're losing
16 everything they own. You know, it's just
17 ashamed that a city has been distressed for
18 25 years and we go further and further in.
19 When Mr. McGoff was president of council I
20 asked him to cut taxes by 30 percent, cut
21 expenses by 30 percent. Nothing. Over all
22 the course of this time I want the residents
23 to look around their neighborhoods and look
24 at the streets signs and see how they are
25 faded and can't be read anymore. They were

1 restoring your pride, and the millions and
2 millions and millions of dollars pumped into
3 city parks they were restoring your pride.

4 And the Scranton Sewer Authority,
5 you know, I think the people need to take a
6 good look and ask who paid to pump all of
7 the water in the houses and all of the sewer
8 lines into houses. The people did. But who
9 controls it now? Corporations. Because
10 they couldn't afford to do it so now you
11 elect people and their only agenda is they
12 do exactly what they are told. Somebody
13 tells them and they do exactly what they are
14 told or they just don't know anything.

15 Now, Mr. Wechsler, you said that you
16 were against the sewer deal when you
17 introduced it, you know, so somebody has to
18 ask, sir, how can introduce an ordinance or
19 anything else for that matter that you're
20 opposed to because if you don't introduce
21 it, it can't be voted on.

22 And my problem is that, you know,
23 you read all of these articles and all of
24 this silliness and it all comes from here
25 and this council and previous councils have

1 destroyed this city and they have done the
2 same thing across this country because we
3 elect one political hack after another who
4 has no allegiance to the people at all, not
5 one drop, not little spec of respect for the
6 people who elect them, and like you said to
7 Mr. Bolus here tonight, you have got five
8 minutes to talk, but I'm not going to answer
9 you, and nobody has come here and received
10 an answer on just about anything because the
11 people we elect you don't have the answers.
12 That's the problem.

13 And every time after something
14 happens you turn around and say, "Well, I
15 didn't know that." And the Home Rule
16 Charter gives you a way to figure out
17 everything that takes place in this city,
18 but, like I said once before, you know, they
19 put a spacesuit on a monkey and he went
20 around the world, okay, but he wasn't an
21 astronaut.

22 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you,
23 Mr. Morgan.

24 MR. MORGAN: And I didn't call your
25 wife corrupt, sir, you did.

1 MR. WECHSLER: Anyone else?

2 MS. SCHUMACHER: Marie Schumacher.

3 I haven't done a property transfer or
4 transaction report in awhile so I thought
5 I'd start with that tonight. Since I
6 stopped doing the detailed one roughly in
7 mid-March of last year of the properties
8 that were sold only 23 percent of them were
9 in Scranton and of the properties that did
10 sell 49 percent were sold at a price below
11 the common level ratio.

12 Unfortunately, sales are up just a
13 little bit the first month from the 31st of
14 December until today, 29 percent of the
15 properties that have been sold in the county
16 or in Scranton but of those 62 percent of
17 those were below the common level ratio.
18 It's really, really sad and I think
19 taxpayers are stressed and you need to be
20 aware of that.

21 And with respect to 6-B, I guess I
22 want to go there next, I think it's
23 disturbing, first of all, the \$250,000 that
24 you are voting on was that in response to
25 the request that was made last year for the

1 state grant from the gaming funds which was
2 a request for \$600,000? If so, we have
3 really gotten a little bit of it.

4 Also, last year, there was a
5 preliminary review received on the first of
6 February, almost a year ago. It did not
7 specify estimates of renovations. When did
8 the final report come? If that was a
9 preliminary review, when did we receive the
10 final review that includes that information?

11 MR. EVANS: I'm not sure, probably
12 about four or five months ago.

13 MS. SCHUMACHER: Funny nobody ever
14 spoke about that. Didn't answer these --
15 let me just take a different attack then,
16 did it answer these question? Did it
17 include the specific needs that this city
18 has for that building?

19 MR. EVANS: Not that I'm aware of.

20 MS. SCHUMACHER: Did it have a
21 comprehensive environmental assessment?
22 Yes, no? Just yes or no. Do we have one on
23 the grounds?

24 MR. GAUGHAN: I have asked for it
25 and apparently it's in the Law Department,

1 some sort of paperwork so I did ask for
2 that, but I don't have it on me.

3 MS. SCHUMACHER: But a comprehensive
4 environmental assessment has occurred and we
5 know what the conclusion is but you can't
6 share it with us right now? Is that --

7 MR. GAUGHAN: I don't know if one
8 has occurred, I've asked that question and
9 the chief said it's something in the Law
10 Department. What means I don't know, that's
11 why I asked.

12 MS. SCHUMACHER: Well, okay. The
13 third one do we have a funding development
14 plan and a detailed operational plan? As I
15 recall, that first one said it needed a new
16 roof and there were just lots of things. I
17 would certainly suggest that you put this on
18 the back burner and until we have the
19 answers to all of these questions. I really
20 think the last thing we need is to spend --
21 it's really easy to spend, even I can do
22 that, but making the cutbacks not so much.

23 And did we receive a response on the
24 Scranton Sewer authority?

25 MR. WECHSLER: No. I'm not sure if

1 you didn't hear we are having a meeting with
2 Director Shrive on the 10th.

3 MS. SCHUMACHER: I mean, a hearing
4 -- I mean, here?

5 MR. WECHSLER: Councilman Evans and
6 I are going to have a meeting. We sent the
7 questions to Director Shrive last week, we
8 requested he give us an answer today. I
9 spoke with him today, we are going to meet
10 with him on Friday next week.

11 MS. SCHUMACHER: Are you going to
12 get the answers to the questions?

13 MR. WECHSLER: That's why we are
14 having the meeting.

15 MS. SCHUMACHER: I don't recall what
16 all of these questions were but the one I
17 would like to know the answer, one of the
18 many, did Jason Shrive receive any
19 compensation over and above his city
20 solicitor salary for the work that he did on
21 that transaction?

22 MR. EVANS: I'll ask him that.

23 MS. SCHUMACHER: Thank you. And
24 backup, speaking of -- if I may, the Air
25 bNb, did you -- you said you are going to

1 investigate to see if we have only pursued
2 one of the many in the city.

3 MR. EVANS: Yeah, I talked to
4 Director Hinton and he has responded to the
5 complaints that have been received from
6 other Air bNb situations, but they are not
7 actively pursuing going online and searching
8 them out.

9 MS. SCHUMACHER: What other
10 ordinance do we have on the books where you
11 have to get complaint from somebody before
12 you send somebody out?

13 MR. EVANS: I agree.

14 MS. SCHUMACHER: You know, that's
15 troubled me this whole week. I just cannot
16 believe because this is what happens when
17 you get big government.

18 MR. EVANS: Yeah, I agree.

19 MS. SCHUMACHER: Big government at
20 the small level they just pass any kind of
21 law you want and then don't enforce it for
22 your friends and go after, but make sure you
23 have got it there so if you want to go after
24 one individual you can zero in on them and
25 ruin them.

1 MR. EVANS: That was the answer he
2 gave.

3 MS. SCHUMACHER: And this is awful.
4 I think that is a terrible way we are going
5 and I --

6 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you.

7 MS. SCHUMACHER: Thank you.

8 MR. DOBRZYN: Good evening, Council.
9 Dave Dobrzyn, resident and taxpayer. Give
10 me that bell. Give me that bell, young
11 lady. Just kidding, but at any rate, it
12 rang last week and I kind of reviewed the
13 meeting at home on Sunday night or whatever,
14 one of the issues with insurance that I have
15 is when indigent care is taking care of it's
16 not done in the past at government expense,
17 it's done at policy premium expense, and a
18 number of years back Ed Rendell and George
19 Bush were in the newspaper together and they
20 were providing CHIP insurance with the
21 excesses that were paid into Blue Cross, and
22 I'm certainly not against CHIP insurance,
23 but the point is that you have this person
24 appropriating -- a politician is
25 appropriating money that somebody is paying

1 out of the pocket. It might even be a sick
2 person that's paying out the wazoo for this
3 insurance and then they are playing the hero
4 for it, you know, like a robin hood or
5 something so that's what I wanted to say.

6 Once again, the storm water, I
7 talked to somebody on the storm water and at
8 this time, and I hope it's followed through,
9 there won't be any storm water rate for
10 undeveloped land. I hope that stays the way
11 it is because once again I got my taxes
12 today for my spare lot and they went from
13 \$333 when I first bought the lot, they are
14 up to over \$600 a year and every five years
15 I'm paying once over again to the City of
16 Scranton and the county and the school
17 district for that land. Before I lose it
18 and, you know, maybe I'll donate it to
19 Hell's Angels motorcycle club for a party
20 center if they don't behave themselves.

21 The Serrenty Center, Ma Schumacher
22 brought this up, there was a pollution issue
23 with the school. We are supposed to tear
24 down or get rid of Audubon School and it
25 turned out that that piece of land because

1 of the US military and all of the masses
2 that they deal with in defense wasn't
3 suitable, so that's my major concern. I'm
4 not against acquiring it and we already have
5 our vehicles, I seen in the newspaper and
6 everything it's -- but therein again, please
7 don't stick us with a superfund site and
8 find out beforehand because it could be if
9 you buy something and the land is polluted a
10 lot of times the owners, new owners get
11 stuck with all of the problems from it over
12 the years.

13 And there was an editorial in the
14 paper, I brought in the Times, last week it
15 was mentioned that University is applying
16 for a \$5 million grant to improve a baseball
17 field. Well, here is some nice statistics,
18 I believe we are about \$60 millionish less
19 than what it was before the great recession
20 for public universities, and adjusted for
21 inflation it's less than 14 years ago, and
22 when the system was founded in 1982 the
23 state contributed 67 percent of the system's
24 budget and that had shrunk to 25 percent, so
25 the point is that we have a sectarian

1 institution here and I'm basically not a
2 sectarian person, but it's a concern of
3 mine. For instance, I mentioned on
4 501-C-3's and C-4's and how they are getting
5 away with a lot of improprieties and in 1958
6 the Congress wrote the IRS law currently on
7 the books that they had to be strictly for
8 public welfare and the treasury secretary or
9 somebody changed it to primarily, so some of
10 these organizations are a little less than
11 -- or quite a bit less than primarily.

12 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you, Mr.
13 Dobrzyn.

14 MR. DOBRZYN: Thank you and have a
15 good night. Don't forget, we got DINKS,
16 too, income and no kids, and HINKS, high
17 income and no income. So, Wayne, up in the
18 Hill Section, up in South Side, maybe they
19 are all over, you know? Paying their taxes
20 and not taking anything. Thank you.

21 MR. WECHSLER: Anyone else?

22 MR. SBARAGLIA: Andy Sbaraglia,
23 citizen of Scranton. Fellow Scrantonians, I
24 got the little ad here saying, "The parking
25 plan wizard who council unanimously adopts

1 deal for the Parking Authority." Now, when
2 you go to the neighborhood association do
3 you ever tell them that that deal costs us
4 over \$150 to \$200 million either in lost
5 revenue or liability? Do you tell the
6 taxpayers of Scranton that you gave away
7 that much money? No, I don't think you
8 would because then they would know exactly
9 what was done. I'll give you a little
10 breakdown. The fees and the parking revenue
11 amounted to about \$3 million a year. You
12 gave them away for 40 years. That's \$120
13 million down the drain. You are borrowed
14 another 30 to \$33 million for what you call
15 stranded debt. You gave, I think it's NDC,
16 I think that's what it's called, a gift of
17 \$28 million in the form of a lease. You
18 gave a lease that we are responsible, the
19 citizens of Scranton are responsible for the
20 lease and that's adds to the debt. So when
21 you go and explain to something don't pat
22 them on the back and pick their pockets at
23 the same time, tell them the actual cost of
24 some of these deals that were done.

25 MR. PERRY: Mr. Sbaraglia, I don't

1 want to interrupt you, but we're having a
2 hard time hearing you with the mic if you
3 just want to adjust the mic and move it down
4 a little bit. There you go. Thank you.

5 MR. SBARAGLIA: Yeah, for some
6 reason it does come over, but that's some of
7 the costs, not even the lawyer's cost, and
8 the worst part about it yous keep bringing
9 up the default, we paid two lawyers to
10 arrange that default. That didn't just
11 happen, that was created and then you find
12 fault. What happened? Why did we come out
13 on the back end of that stick after paying
14 two lawyers to arrange it? Nobody knows, or
15 it was the other default that they keep
16 bringing up that you don't mention, the
17 default that you paid off, that \$4 million
18 to the bank that the Scranton Parking
19 Authority did default on. Our default was
20 arranged, I think it was what two days or
21 three later, three dates later that got the
22 money.

23 Something is bad in the city.
24 Something actually stinks in the city, but
25 this deal stinks worse than any of them.

1 They should have an investigation into this
2 whole deal. I'm talking about the gifts to
3 Mr. Basalyga, 300 and some thousand dollars
4 a year for 40 years, I'm not bringing that
5 up. I'm not bringing in the gift of \$2 1/2
6 million to the garage that was built at the
7 same time at the mall, but you considered it
8 only a dollar. I'm not going to bring that
9 up, but somebody should bring it up in the
10 state government, and how PEL can sit there
11 and let that happen is beyond me. \$200
12 million I estimated the cost of that deal,
13 and I know it's a lot more. I don't know
14 how you can do it, but you all did it and
15 they reference this here. Thank you.

16 MR. WECHSLER: Anyone else?

17 MR. ST. FLEUR: How you doing? My
18 name is Gary St. Fleur, Scranton resident.
19 I just have a couple of questions I'd like
20 to ask you gentlemen. Are you aware that
21 there was a response filed to the Court's
22 regarding the Act 511 taxes last week?

23 MR. EVANS: Yes, we are.

24 MR. ST. FLEUR: Pardon?

25 MR. EVANS: You asked me if we are

1 aware there is a lawsuit filed?

2 MR. ST. FLEUR: Yes.

3 MR. EVANS: Yes, we are.

4 MR. ST. FLEUR: Were you aware of
5 the ordinance that states that there is cap
6 on the amount of local taxes?

7 MR. EVANS: Yes, I am.

8 MR. ST. FLEUR: Were you aware Mr.
9 Amoroso came up with a plan to use taxes and
10 sell public assets to recover Scranton's
11 fiscal distress?

12 MR. EVANS: You will have to ask
13 Mr. Amoroso that?

14 MR. ST. FLEUR: When he came up with
15 this plan, I'm asking you, were you as a
16 city council who voted for this plan aware
17 of this?

18 MR. EVANS: I wasn't on council at
19 the time when the plan first came, but go
20 ahead.

21 MR. ST. FLEUR: Were there any other
22 persons who were --

23 MR. WECHSLER: Mr. St. Fleur, as I
24 told Mr. Bolus this is your comment period.
25 If you have questions, submit them in

1 writing. Otherwise, this is your comment
2 period.

3 MR. ST. FLEUR: Oh, so this is not
4 for ask questions --

5 MR. WECHSLER: It's not a question
6 and answer period. No, it's not. It's
7 public comment.

8 MR. ST. FLEUR: So my comment is
9 that if the plan for recovery concerning
10 Scranton' financial distress included the
11 increasing of taxes and the selling of
12 public assets, but there is a cap on the
13 amount of taxes you can increase and it
14 would seem the person who is responsible for
15 coming up with this plan was not in a
16 position to actually advise the City of
17 Scranton on how to recover, and if the city
18 council signed off on this plan it would
19 also show there is incompetence on their
20 part that they know of this, so currently we
21 are wasting for a response from the city
22 government about these taxes. The current
23 budget states that local taxes has an
24 overage of \$10 million based on this local
25 statute. Once we prevail in Court, then you

1 will have to find that \$7 million from
2 somewhere.

3 I would state that it's obvious that
4 the City of Scranton and government does not
5 have any money and this is just further
6 evidence that they need to make some serious
7 changes at the government level. Thank you.

8 MR. WECHSLER: Anyone else?

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

10 MOTIONS.

11 MR. WECHSLER: Mr. Perry?

12 MR. PERRY: Yes. Thank you, Mr.
13 Wechsler. I have a couple of things,
14 something that's been held over for the last
15 week and a half, we are still trying to get
16 our onsite meeting with the water company,
17 our city engineer and our DPW to the
18 Merrifield Avenue drainage pipe. We are
19 just waiting on the American Water Company
20 right now. Council, we're committed to be
21 there, as well as the city engineer and DPW
22 as soon as it's good for the American Water
23 Company to get their people out there we
24 will have that and I'll let everybody know
25 when we set that date.

1 The Serrenti building. We, myself,
2 Councilman Rogan and Councilman Evans, Mr.
3 Lockwood was there as well from the Scranton
4 Times, Chief Graziano and some members of
5 the police department took us on a tour of
6 that building. We saw a lot that day. I
7 think, you know, we'll all probably speak on
8 it. That building, as I can tell you right
9 now, is housing some serious, serious
10 equipment, some valuable equipment, and I
11 just want to give you a rundown of how we
12 got to where we are right now today because
13 this has been going on for awhile now, well
14 over a year.

15 The federal government has been
16 letting us use that building to house some
17 of our sensitive equipment, our climate
18 controlled equipment that just can't be out
19 in the elements. We have been using that
20 from them, now they want to sell the
21 building, they couldn't sell it, they want
22 to give it to us. We had the Highland Group
23 go through and they had some costly needs of
24 the building and some costly recommendations
25 for the building. We applied for a grant,

1 the grant wasn't actually received by us
2 yet, so there really wasn't anything you can
3 do, the city doesn't have the on-hand cash
4 to go ahead and accept that building and put
5 money from the general funds into it, so the
6 city went and we tried to go a different
7 route.

8 We looked at a pole barn structure
9 which we were going to place behind the
10 police department. The estimates for that
11 came back at close to \$1 million and the
12 building was going to nowhere near the
13 structure that the Serrenti building is
14 going to be. It was actually only going to
15 have a 20-year shelf life for that building
16 at \$900,000, so now we get the grant. We
17 have the grant funds in front of us right
18 now for \$250,000. What that grant would
19 cover as of right now it would fix the roof
20 and replace the HVAC and get the water back
21 into that building. Those are the basic
22 needs.

23 It would completely keep all of our
24 equipment in there safe. There is really no
25 other place to put this equipment, and the

1 other question that I know all five of us
2 had was the ongoing costs. I believe it was
3 Councilman Evans who had the idea of the
4 firehouse on Ash Street, if we sold that,
5 put that into escrow, because the training
6 department would leave Ash Street and join
7 the armory. We could sell that, set up an
8 escrow account, we could use that to offset
9 any ongoing utility costs for that building.

10 We'd put in LED lights, we put in a
11 way better efficient heating system. We are
12 talking we are going to get a lot more money
13 for the Ash. I'm not well, I'm very sick,
14 I'm sorry, I'm trying to get through this,
15 the Ash Street firehouse.

16 Now, with that said, the issue of
17 the pollutants is still out there. That's
18 something that we definitely have to find
19 out what the situation is. I mean, I can't
20 honestly see myself going forward with
21 something if we are going to inherent
22 something that was just not safe. So, you
23 know, I will do my research into this this
24 week, but overall let me just say that
25 building it's a sound structure, it does

1 need a roof. It does need heating,
2 ventilation and the air conditioning, but
3 that's all going to be covered by this
4 initial grant with more grants to follow for
5 other projects.

6 Something else I wanted to touch on
7 was the prearrest drug treatment program
8 right now that we are going to get moving
9 with the Scranton Police Department. It was
10 Carl Graziano's, Chief Carl Graziano's brain
11 child, and I think it's a very good program
12 and there is going to be more coming out of
13 that within the next couple of weeks. I
14 think the Scranton Times already has an
15 article out about it encapsulating
16 everything, but it's to steer people out of
17 jail and into treatment. Too many times,
18 and I'm sure it's such a problem right now
19 that I'll use that the word epidemic, that
20 it's almost touched everybody's life and
21 they are not necessarily criminals, they are
22 people that need help, and this is a way
23 that we can get the people that need help
24 instead of getting them to stare at a jail
25 cell, which really isn't going to help them.

1 First, I just want to say some of the
2 comments made by one of the speakers
3 attacking a councilman's wife tonight were
4 completely out of line. You can come here
5 and attack the five of us all you want, but
6 our wives and our families should not part
7 of the public discussion, and I think you
8 handled it appropriately, Mr. Wechsler.

9 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you.

10 MR. ROGAN: I think he was
11 completely out of line and it's certainly
12 not appropriate for our meetings. I would
13 also agree with what Mr. Perry said about
14 Mr. Boscov. I would like to wish him well
15 as well. Nobody would -- a cancer diagnosis
16 is something you wouldn't wish on your worse
17 enemy. I also have had my differences with
18 Mr. Boscov regarding city issues, but again,
19 our hearts go out to him and his family as
20 well.

21 The Serrenti building, as Mr. Perry
22 mentioned, a number of us did tour the
23 building this week and I know Mr. Wechsler
24 did the previous week. I thought it was a
25 very eye opening tour. First of all, just

1 to see some of the equipment that the police
2 department has that I think most of us
3 didn't even realize we had, and hopefully we
4 will never need to use it, you know, this is
5 equipment to disable bombs. Gear for riots
6 and active shooter situations which, again,
7 hopefully will never be used but we need to
8 have it.

9 The tour was very eye opening,
10 especially regarding the condition of the
11 building. I expected the building to be in
12 much worse shape than it actually was. Now,
13 it's not pretty cosmetically going through
14 it, it certainly needs a coat of paint and
15 some touching up here and there, but it's a
16 very solid building, and as Mr. Perry
17 mentioned the cost of just building a new
18 building to store our equipment would cost
19 more than the ongoing with this property.

20 And, additionally, I agree we do
21 need to get the documentation on the
22 environmental issue. I do know Chief
23 Graziano did mention it in one of our
24 caucuses that there are no -- there aren't
25 any major environmental issues at that

1 property. I believe it was a neighboring
2 property where there were environmental
3 issues. I think that was reported on, also,
4 but we'll get to -- before final vote next
5 week that's something we certainly should
6 get.

7 And, finally, on that project, we
8 did receive an e-mail from the president of
9 the Hill Neighborhood Association and their
10 members seem to in support of the project
11 mainly because they don't want a vacant
12 building in their neighborhood, and the
13 increased police presence by having a police
14 substation is something that will only help
15 the residents of the Hill Section.

16 Finally, this is a little bit off
17 topic of items that I would formally talk
18 about, but WNEP had a piece on last night it
19 was reported again today regarding the
20 Harrison Avenue bridge, that State
21 Representative Kevin Haggerty is proposing a
22 bill to name it after Vice President Biden.
23 I love Vice President Biden as much as
24 almost every other Scrantonian, but this
25 bridge was actually already named, and it's

1 named after a veteran.

2 Going back, I believe it was three
3 or four years ago, we had a caucus right
4 here in these chambers with representatives
5 from PennDOT regarding this project and we
6 asked if it could be named after veterans or
7 a veteran. Senator Blake and his staff took
8 that request and ran with it. I knew a bill
9 was proposed, I didn't realize it actually
10 became law. Obviously, State Representative
11 Haggerty didn't either. Earlier today I did
12 speak with representatives from PennDOT and
13 representatives from Senator Blake's office,
14 and they did provide me with a copy of what
15 was a Senate Bill which is actually now a
16 law because it was signed in. This is
17 Senate Bill 890 from the 2015/2016 session
18 and it was actually a standalone bill so it
19 wasn't added onto some larger package. This
20 was done all on it's own. And it reads,
21 "Colonel Frank Duffy Memorial Bridge
22 Designation Active October 30, 2015." I'm
23 not going to read the entire Act, but some
24 of the highlights are Section 1, Colonel
25 Frank Duffy Memorial Bridge, findings and

1 declarations. The General Assembly finds
2 and declares as follows:

3 Prior to serving his country in
4 World War I, Colonel Frank Duffy, known as
5 the fighting Colonel, was well respected in
6 Scranton. He served as the president of the
7 Scranton Engineers Club and head of the
8 Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad.
9 After the United States entered World War I,
10 Colonel Duffy formed Company F of the 103rd
11 Engineers. On August 18, 1918, Colonel
12 Duffy was tragically killed from an
13 explosion of an enemy shell and was buried
14 in a small French village. Colonel Duffy
15 was the highest ranking soldier from
16 Lackawanna County killed in World War I.

17 Designation. The bridge carrying
18 State Route 611, Harrison Avenue, over
19 Roaring Brook in the City of Scranton and
20 Lackawanna County to be constructed on or
21 after the effective date of this section is
22 hereby designated the Colonel Frank Duffy
23 Memorial Bridge. The Department of
24 Transportation shall erect and maintain
25 appropriate signs to indicate the

1 designation under Section 2.

2 And it says this Act will take
3 effect in 60 days. So if my colleagues
4 agree with me, I think we need to reach out
5 to Representative Haggerty and I would like
6 to see a form rescinds his bill to name the
7 Frank Duffy Memorial bridge the Joe Biden
8 bridge and look for another way to honor
9 Vice President Biden, which I do agree needs
10 to be done and he should be honored for his
11 achievements, but those achievements
12 wouldn't be possible if it wasn't for heros
13 like Frank Duffy.

14 So if my colleagues agree, if we
15 could send that letter to Representative
16 Haggerty's Office, and that is all I have
17 for tonight. Thank you.

18 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you.

19 Mr. Evans?

20 MR. EVANS: Thank you. Briefly on
21 the topic to decriminalize marijuana
22 possession, while I have a fully formed
23 opinion to shed I think that is definitely
24 something that needs full discussion and a
25 full conversation so I think we will

1 continue to talk about that.

2 I would like to offer some brief
3 comments on what the role of city council
4 might be. City council, of course, is a
5 legislative branch. We are not the
6 executive branch and we are certainly not an
7 extension of the administration. All of us
8 on city council have full-time jobs outside
9 of this position so a 80 to 90-hour workweek
10 is not abnormal to me or my colleagues.
11 That's not a complaint that's just a fact,
12 but it does offer some perspective. As my
13 colleagues and past councils have noted many
14 times before, council is far more than the
15 two to three meetings every Thursday. In
16 fact, most of what we do is beyond this
17 meeting, beyond these walls, and beyond this
18 building.

19 Councilmen President Wechsler last
20 week touched on a few success stories of
21 city council and I would like to expand a
22 little bit on what's been happening over the
23 last two plus years. For example, we took a
24 proposed two-year tax abatement program for
25 new homes only and expanded it to three

1 years and included condo, townhouses and
2 apartment to condominium conversions.
3 Conversations are ongoing with several
4 developers about condo conversions and new
5 condos and I would expect within the year
6 that will be some news along that front
7 because of this ordinance resulting in a
8 dramatic increase in our tax base and more
9 homeownership downtown.

10 We created a program for first time
11 homebuyers with the proceeds of the
12 foreclosure registration fee paid by the
13 banks and returned to the community at no
14 cost to the taxpayers and it's early success
15 is very encouraging. We stepped up and
16 finally passed legislation to move SAPA
17 forward after it was left languishing for
18 several years with no hope that it would
19 ever happen.

20 We created quality of life tickets,
21 a great idea that is an effective tool in
22 fighting blight. We also recognize that it
23 still needs some improvement and tweaking
24 and something we will be looking at more.
25 We wrote the new rental registration

1 ordinance that focuses on registration and
2 will save property owners money and while
3 creating revenue for LIPS for the cost of
4 the program and increasing refuse bill
5 collection at the same time. We continue to
6 endorse the idea of using a third party
7 vendor to gather data to increase the level
8 of landlords registered working alongside
9 city employees.

10 We created a 10 percent discount for
11 the refuse bill which will help property
12 owners and increase cash flow to the city.
13 We have been at the forefront of pension
14 reform. In fact, those words were mentioned
15 in these chambers by this councilman
16 hundreds and hundreds of times. Because of
17 our prodding and insistence, there has been
18 actual reform or reform to come and
19 additional pension reforms soon to be
20 determined.

21 We have amended and we broke a
22 stalemate on the contractor's legislation
23 with new legislation on the arisen for the
24 electrical contractors that have been
25 brought forth by council.

1 We are soon to be online with a
2 program called Granicus, a paperless agenda
3 tool that will bring additional transparency
4 and efficiency to city council, and tonight
5 we will vote "yes" on the final reading of
6 legislation reducing the real estate
7 transfer tax. To my knowledge, it's the
8 first tax reduction of any kind in the City
9 of Scranton in decades, and there are many
10 other issues that we deal with on a daily
11 basis, but more needs to be done absolutely.

12 We will continue to lead on the
13 following issues: A countywide
14 reassessment. The proper appropriation of
15 the Sewer Authority sale proceeds. A new
16 zoning code, a new condemnation policy, a
17 new vendor's ordinance, a full review of
18 every fee the city currently charges while
19 looking to reduce and eliminate many more.
20 The completion of the refuse study, the
21 completion of the storm water study,
22 renewing the idea sessions, and addressing
23 the nonprofits per this council's
24 recommendations in the revised recovery plan
25 and I'm sure there will be many more things

1 we haven't even thought of yet.

2 So that's all I have for this
3 evening, but every once in awhile we need to
4 tell our story. That's all I have for now.

5 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you, Mr. Evans.
6 Mr. Gaughan?

7 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, thank you. Just
8 on the updating the zoning ordinance, we
9 received an e-mail from Denise Prowell, who
10 kind of lead the charge on implementing SAPA
11 two or three years ago, and apparently the
12 County's regional planning division is now
13 taking steps to work with SAPA communities.
14 They are assuming administration of the SAPA
15 plan. They hired two additional people in
16 their office and they are going to
17 coordinate seeking funding through DCED to
18 update these zoning ordinances in
19 conformance with the SAPA plan so it was
20 good news there.

21 Just an update on the street
22 lighting project, within the last few days a
23 totally of 40 fixtures were retro fitted,
24 Mulberry, Davis, Linden Street and the work
25 continues in the south and east sections of

1 the city, and as we travel to the different
2 neighborhood meetings it seems like the
3 street lighting project is being received
4 very favorably.

5 We did receive a request last week
6 that I mentioned about a resident who wanted
7 a "No Parking" sign on Silex Street so we
8 did send that to Mr. Pocius, our city
9 engineer, and we are waiting to hear from
10 him on that.

11 I did attend the Oakmont
12 Neighborhood Association meeting on Monday
13 along with Councilman Wechsler, and we
14 listened to a number of different concerns
15 from residents. The main concern was in
16 regards to cars being broken into, a rash of
17 crimes in that area, and Chief Graziano was
18 there and he addressed many of these
19 concerns. Some additional things that were
20 discussed were putting up neighborhood watch
21 signs, and reflectors on the stop signs in
22 this section of the city.

23 I'd also like to send, if we could,
24 correspondence asking the city to make sure
25 to include Oakmont in their lighting

1 assessment. As I was driving up there, the
2 street lighting is very sporadic and very
3 dangerous driving at night. Also, there are
4 several streets that we are going to need to
5 submit to the DPW for pothole patching and
6 to be included on the future paving list.

7 Again, several complaints this week
8 regarding faded street signs or a lack of
9 street signs throughout the city, I again
10 would like to propose that the city develop
11 some sort of street sign replacement
12 program, a concerted effort, a strategic
13 effort to replace these street signs
14 throughout the city, whether it's on the
15 website where people can submit a faded
16 street sign or one that has been taken down
17 or badly damaged or even a hotline where
18 residents can call in and report these
19 damaged, faded street signs, and this is
20 definitely a public safety issue and it's
21 one of the number one things I hear about
22 each week, so I'll be getting in touch with
23 our DPW director to see if we can work
24 something out there.

25 We got more good news on the street

1 lighting project, the city is going to
2 receive a rebate from PPL for the energy
3 efficient lighting project. Right now the
4 amount is estimated at \$141,000.

5 I also received a complaint about a
6 pile of debris at Yesu Lane and East
7 Mountain Road, a really large pile.
8 Residents are concerned about that so if you
9 could send correspondence to the DPW to
10 possibly clean that up.

11 In regards to the issues and the
12 letters and the questions that we sent about
13 the sale of the Sewer Authority, the \$12
14 million. Apparently Councilman Wechsler had
15 mentioned in caucus and earlier tonight that
16 him and Mr. Evans are going to meet next
17 Friday with Mr. Shrive to discuss these
18 questions. I am disappointed by this. I
19 think that this meeting should be held in a
20 public caucus. We all have questions for
21 Mr. Shrive, we submitted those questions,
22 but I don't think that a meeting should be
23 held behind closed doors. This issue is too
24 important, there are too many questions, too
25 many concerns, and I do feel like it should

1 be a public caucus and that should be held,
2 so I would hope that this meeting could be
3 held in caucus out in the public. And that
4 is all I have this week. Thank you.

5 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you, Mr.
6 Gaughan. Just to give my response, and I
7 shouldn't say response, in my opinion this
8 meeting is the best way to get the answers.
9 The questions have been floating around
10 really since the beginning of January. We
11 have not gotten any responses yet. In my
12 opinion, as council president, I feel this
13 is the best way to get the answers. The
14 answers that we get we will share them with
15 everyone, but, like I said, in my concern
16 I'm not so concerned with the questions I'm
17 concerned with the answers that we get and
18 this is my first attempt to get the answers
19 that we need, and we discussed in caucus if
20 we are not satisfied with the responses that
21 we received after that meeting we will have
22 to change our tactics to get the answers
23 that we'd like.

24 As Mr. Gaughan said, we attended the
25 Oakmont Neighborhood meeting and we go to a

1 lot of these meetings and it was an amazing
2 turnout there, there were over 50 residents
3 at the meeting and they actually found
4 someone to become the new president and I'd
5 like to congratulate Jessie Rosell who
6 stepped up to become president of the
7 Oakmont Neighborhood Association. I
8 formerly was the neighborhood president,
9 it's a difficult job, people expect a lot of
10 you. When you help them out it's very
11 rewarding, and as I told Jessie if you look
12 at it more of a social thing than a work
13 thing it will be very successful, as I think
14 he will did a great job.

15 I spent a lot of time with Chief
16 Graziano this weekend. I attended the
17 neighborhood summit meeting. It was very
18 well attended. Also, there was
19 representatives from North Scranton, the
20 Hill Neighborhood Association, South
21 Scranton, West Scranton, the Plot,
22 Greenridge, Oakmont and also East Mountain.

23 As Councilman Rogan mentioned, I did
24 reach out to the Hill Neighborhood president
25 there to get us her feedback that she had

1 received concerning the Serrenti Center. As
2 tonight we are sitting here talking about
3 the Serrenti Center, and I think my other
4 councilmen mentioned it, there was a site at
5 Serrenti that was used as the motor center
6 where oil changes were done, transmissions
7 were changed. That site is not a part of
8 what we are talking about here. That site
9 was separated from the current Serrenti
10 Center, sold off at a separate auction years
11 ago. So there is a study in terms of the
12 environmental impact at the Serrenti Center,
13 but it's more or less what we would be in a
14 garage or something like that. The
15 brownfield, per se, and I'm not sure whether
16 it is a brownfield, that is it not part of
17 this piece of property.

18 Getting back to the neighborhood
19 summit, Chief Graziano reported on a couple
20 of different items that he is working on
21 they have installed some speed-timing
22 devices and they're planning on buying two
23 more in the area, and what the speed-timing
24 devices do is they collect data on traffic,
25 and in West Side during a three-month period

1 9 percent of the vehicles were traveling
2 within the speed limit, so we get a lot of
3 complaints and concerns about speeding and
4 justifiably so, so these areas where we get
5 this complaints we'll be able to put these
6 monitoring devices in there and collect real
7 data and then put some real emphasis on
8 battling speeding there.

9 The chief is also working with the
10 county. They are developing what they are
11 calling an active shooter program, and that
12 program would inform departments and
13 citizens what to do in case of a shooting in
14 a public place. Unfortunately, this is
15 where we are at in society now that we have
16 to be concerned about shootings in public
17 places. Although we can't combat these
18 random acts of violence, we can try to be as
19 prepared to them as possible and I
20 congratulate the chief on getting this
21 program going.

22 He is also planning on establishing
23 a junior police academy for sixth, seventh
24 and eight graders. This would be a
25 seven-week program with one hour a week

1 trying to reach out to kids, and they are
2 also going to conduct their normal citizens
3 police academy.

4 At the meeting the other night our
5 chaplain was there. Right now the chaplain
6 they are adding four more chaplains to our
7 program. The chaplain program in Scranton
8 is becoming a model for these programs
9 across the country. The last class that
10 they gave the chief said a chaplain from
11 Nebraska came here to take advantage of the
12 training. The chief sat down with the Chief
13 of Police of Baltimore at the Martin Luther
14 King event and compared notes and our
15 program actually is ahead of what Baltimore
16 is doing right now. Very progressive,
17 active plan for our Scranton Police
18 Department to participate in this, and the
19 chief is also working on using a record
20 management system once again to control
21 trends and analyze trends in terms of crime
22 fighting.

23 Also at the meeting, besides Chief
24 Graziano, was District Attorney Shane
25 Scranton and I did approach them, this is,

1 Mr. Zick, you and I have had some Facebook
2 conversations about this, and I did approach
3 them about what their opinion was on the
4 decriminalization of marijuana. Both of
5 them felt that it's something that should be
6 discussed and they will follow along with
7 what legislators say, but they personally
8 both were against it, both men stressed that
9 they have a fear that it's a gateway drug
10 and that they -- that's the opinions that
11 they have, so I think they are open to
12 discussion and we'll have to, you know, go
13 from there, but DA Scanlon had some very
14 disturbing data about opioid deaths in
15 Scranton, Lackawanna County over the past
16 couple of years. In 2014, there was less
17 than 40 opioid deaths. In 2015, there were
18 69. In 2016, there were 99 opioid deaths and
19 there is 17 autopsies pending. The opioid
20 crises, as we can see, is becoming -- it's
21 always been a serious problem, but it's
22 becoming worse. I'm not saying it's linked
23 to anything else, but I think it's just a
24 problem we have address.

25 In speaking with the chief, he is

1 open to discussion and some of the
2 statistics that you presented we'll take a
3 look at that and see what they mean --

4 MR. ZICK: Would a town hall be
5 appropriate?

6 MR. WECHSLER: We'll see what we can
7 do. We'll see what we can do, but the chief
8 is very good at stressing the use of
9 statistics and analyzing them, and he is
10 open to discussion, so we will see where
11 that gets us from there.

12 I just like to touch on, and various
13 councilmen mentioned Mr. Boscov, and we
14 heard tonight there is fear if Mr. Boscov
15 passes what would happen. I think
16 Mr. Boscov has left a legacy, especially in
17 this city, if you go over to Boscov's it's
18 always busy over there. There is people
19 constantly there, and I would hope that his
20 survivors would be able to carry out his
21 legacy. Mr. Boscov took a chance on
22 Scranton when nobody else was interested in
23 doing it, and we owe him a debt of
24 gratitude. He owes us a little bit of
25 money, but that's two different things and

1 we are working on that as well, but our
2 hearts and prayers do go out to Mr. Boscov
3 at this time for his family, and that's all
4 I have.

5 MS. REED: 5-B. FOR INTRODUCTION -
6 AN ORDINANCE - CLOSING AND VACATING PORTIONS
7 OF S. IRVING AVENUE AND CROWN AVENUE,
8 BETWEEN SAGINAW STREET AND CONNELL STREET.

9 MR. WECHSLER: At this time, I'll
10 entertain a motion that Item 5-B be
11 introduced into its proper committee.

12 MR. ROGAN: So moved.

13 MR. EVANS: Second.

14 MR. WECHSLER: On the question? All
15 those in favor of introduction signify by
16 saying aye.

17 MR. PERRY: Aye.

18 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

19 MR. EVANS: Aye.

20 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

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

23 MS. REED: 5-C. FOR INTRODUCTION - A
24 RESOLUTION - APPOINTMENT OF JESSICA L.
25 BOYLES, ESQUIRE, 801 PRESCOTT AVENUE,

1 SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA, 18510 AS CITY
2 SOLICITOR AND ACTING DIRECTOR OF HUMAN
3 RESOURCES/ASSISTANT BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR
4 EFFECTIVE JANUARY 23, 2017. MS. BOYLES WILL
5 BE REPLACING JASON A. SHRIVE, ESQUIRE WHO
6 RESIGNED AS CITY SOLICITOR.

7 MR. WECHSLER: At this time, I'll
8 entertain a motion that Item 5-B be
9 introduced into its proper committee.

10 MR. ROGAN: So moved.

11 MR. EVANS: Second.

12 MR. WECHSLER: On the question? I
13 would just like to say that I think this is
14 an excellent appointment. I have worked
15 with Jessica on a couple of different
16 projects over the last few months. I find
17 her to be very capable and very professional
18 and I know she will be working closely with
19 our department, and I'm very anxious for her
20 to get started and hit the ground running
21 and I congratulate her. All those in favor
22 of introduction signify by saying aye.

23 MR. PERRY: Aye.

24 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

25 MR. EVANS: Aye.

1 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

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

4 MS. REED: SIXTH ORDER. 6-A.
5 READING BY TITLE - FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO.
6 85, 2017 - AN ORDINANCE - AUTHORIZING THE
7 MAYOR AND OTHER APPROPRIATE CITY OFFICIALS
8 TO ACCEPT THE LOCAL SHARE ACCOUNT GRANT
9 FUNDING THROUGH THE PENNSYLVANIA GAMING
10 LOCAL SHARE ACCOUNT IN THE AMOUNT OF
11 \$250,000.00 AWARDED THROUGH THE PENNSYLVANIA
12 DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC
13 DEVELOPMENT ("DCED") AND TO EXECUTE THE
14 LOCAL SHARE ACCOUNT GRANT CONTRACT AND
15 DISBURSE THE FUNDS FOR THE CONVERSION OF THE
16 SERRENTI MEMORIAL ARMY RESERVE CENTER,
17 A/K/A/ CSM SAMUEL P. SERRENTI U.S. ARMY
18 RESERVE CENTER (USARC) LOCATED AT 1801 PINE
19 STREET, INTO AN EMERGENCY SERVICES CENTER TO
20 BE USED BY THE SCRANTON POLICE DEPARTMENT
21 AND FOR STORAGE OF LARGE/EXPENSIVE VEHICLES
22 AND EQUIPMENT THAT CANNOT BE SAFELY STORED
23 IN ANY OTHER FACILITY CURRENTLY OWNED OR
24 OPERATED BY THE CITY.

25 MR. WECHSLER: You've heard reading

1 by title of Item 6-A, what is your pleasure?

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

4 MR. EVANS: Second.

5 MR. WECHSLER: On the question?

6 MR. EVANS: On the question, I think
7 all I wanted to say was discussed earlier,
8 but I will say that our site visit last
9 Monday was very eye opening for me and I
10 still have some concerns about the recurring
11 costs, the utilities and the future
12 maintenance and bills and what, but I
13 definitely feel that this could be minimized
14 by the sale of Engine 15 on Ash Street and
15 creating a utilities and maintenance account
16 dedicated to this building with the
17 proceeds.

18 It's anticipated that this \$250,000
19 grant will cover the roof, the plumbing, and
20 new heating systems. With new high
21 efficiency heating systems and a plan to
22 convert it to LED lighting throughout the
23 building, I feel the utility costs could be
24 covered by the sale of Engine 15 for at
25 least ten years or more and would not be a

1 major expense after that. The building
2 really is in good condition. Once the major
3 and most important issues are corrected, the
4 grant I think for the main renovations are
5 very doable and it could be done over time
6 and in a cost-effective manner as grant
7 money becomes available with little or no
8 impact to the taxpayers.

9 I had previously asked that the idea
10 of a pole barn behind the police station be
11 reviewed and am comfortable with idea or the
12 fact that it was fully vetted and found to
13 be cost prohibitive. With that said, this
14 building gives the police department far
15 more in terms of space and potential than
16 pole barn concept would have.

17 I would like to thank Chief Graziano
18 and Captain Dennis Lukasewicz and Detective
19 Sergeant Robert Mark for the tour, their
20 knowledge and their vision for the space.
21 It was really quite impressive, so I will be
22 voting "yes" for this tonight.

23 MR. WECHSLER: All those in favor
24 signify by saying aye.

25 MR. PERRY: Aye.

1 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

2 MR. EVANS: Aye.

3 MR. WECHSLER: Aye. Opposed?

4 MR. GAUGHAN: No.

5 MR. WECHSLER: The ayes have it and
6 so moved.

7 MS. REED: SEVENTH ORDER. 7-A. FOR
8 CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE -
9 FOR ADOPTION - FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO. 82,
10 2017 - AMENDING FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO. 6,
11 1976 ENTITLED "AN ORDINANCE (AS AMENDED)
12 IMPOSING A TAX FOR GENERAL REVENUE PURPOSES
13 ON THE TRANSFER OF REAL PROPERTY SITUATE
14 WITHIN THE CITY OF SCRANTON; PRESCRIBING AND
15 REGULATING THE METHOD OF EVIDENCING THE
16 PAYMENT OF SUCH TAX; CONFERRING POWERS AND
17 IMPOSING DUTIES UPON CERTAIN PERSONS, AND
18 PROVIDING PENALTIES", BY IMPOSING THE RATE
19 OF THE REALTY TRANSFER TAX AT TWO AND FOUR
20 TENTHS PERCENT (2.4%) FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2017
21 AND THE SAME SHALL REMAIN IN FULL FORCE AND
22 EFFECT ANNUALLY THEREAFTER.

23 MR. WECHSLER: What is the
24 recommendation of the Chairperson for the
25 Committee on Finance?

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

4 MR. ROGAN: Second.

5 MR. WECHSLER: On the question?

6 MR. PERRY: Yes, on question.

7 Councilman Evans made a mention of this,
8 although this isn't a great deal of tax cut,
9 it is still a tax cut in the City of
10 Scranton. A tax cut in the City of
11 Scranton, and this is a symbol of more
12 things to come in the future.

13 MR. ROGAN: I would agree
14 wholeheartedly and I think next year we can
15 look at finally bringing down the major real
16 estate taxes if things continue on the track
17 we are currently on and that would certainly
18 be my hope.

19 MR. WECHSLER: I don't share what
20 was said earlier this evening at the podium
21 about being a massive tax increase next
22 year. Right now our preliminary figures are
23 what we look at and where we're at in terms
24 of our plan and I just don't see that in the
25 cards. I don't see that happening. Roll

1 call, please?

2 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Perry.

3 MR. PERRY: Yes.

4 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

5 MR. ROGAN: Yes.

6 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

7 MR. EVANS: Yes.

8 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

9 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

10 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

11 MR. WECHSLER: Yes. I hereby
12 declare Item 7-A legally and lawfully
13 adopted.

14 MS. REED: 7-B. FOR CONSIDERATION
15 BY THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY - FOR
16 ADOPTION - RESOLUTION NO. 108, 2017 -
17 AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND OTHER APPROPRIATE
18 CITY OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE AND ENTER INTO THE
19 DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY LICENSE NO.
20 DACA31-3-17-185 GRANTING THE CITY OF
21 SCRANTON USE OF THE GOVERNMENT'S PREMISES
22 LOCATED AT THE FORMER CSM SAMUEL P. SERRENTI
23 U.S. ARMY RESERVE CENTER (USARC), 1801 PINE
24 STREET, SCRANTON, PA 18510.

25 MR. WECHSLER: What is the

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

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

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: No.

17 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

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

21 MS. REED: 7-C. FOR CONSIDERATION BY
22 THE COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT - FOR
23 ADOPTION - RESOLUTION NO. 109, 2017 -
24 AUTHORIZING THE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT
25 OF PUBLIC WORKS OF THE CITY OF SCRANTON TO

1 SIGN AND SUBMIT THE PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT
2 OF TRANSPORTATION ("PENNDOT") APPLICATION
3 FOR TRAFFIC SIGNAL APPROVAL FOR THE
4 INSTALLATION OF THE SOLAR POWERED TWO SIDED
5 RECTANGULAR RAPID FLASHING BEACON SYSTEM,
6 NEW CROSSWALK AND SIGNING. THE LACKAWANNA
7 HERITAGE VALLEY AUTHORITY (LHVA) PLANS TO
8 HAVE THESE INSTALLED AS PART OF THEIR SAFETY
9 IMPROVEMENT PROJECT AT ELM STREET AND
10 LACKAWANNA RIVER HERITAGE TRAIL
11 INTERSECTION.

12 MR. WECHSLER: What is the
13 recommendation of the Chairperson for the
14 Committee on Community Development?

15 MR. ROGAN: As Chair for the
16 Committee on Community Development, I
17 recommend final passage of Item 7-C.

18 MR. EVANS: Second.

19 MR. WECHSLER: On the question?

20 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, on the question.
21 First of all, I think it's important that we
22 continue to institute safety measures in the
23 areas of the trail throughout the city and I
24 just want to note what was already reported
25 in the paper, but maybe some people didn't

1 see. There was a report that was just
2 issued that the use of the trail by people
3 in Lackawanna County and outside of the
4 Lackawanna County has risen from 128,000 in
5 2009 to 315,000 in 2016. That's a 146
6 percent increase.

7 Researchers from a consultant, Urban
8 Partners, also found that direct economic
9 activity ranging from people buying water,
10 sandwiches, shoes, bicycles, grew from 28.3
11 million in 2009 to 64.6 million dollars in
12 2016, so a 126 percent increase. So I think
13 it's important that the city continue to
14 work with the Lackawanna Heritage Valley
15 Authority, continue to make it safe and
16 accessible to people and continue to add to
17 the trail, spur economic development, and
18 possibly develop more of our riverfront.
19 Thank you.

20 MR. EVANS: On the question, it's
21 very important that we continue to support
22 this type of enterprise. It tells you what
23 kind of city we are and what kind of city we
24 want to be and also lends to our quality of
25 life. So I congratulate Natalie Gelb and

1 all of her hard work and all she has
2 accomplished and this really is a very, very
3 positive situation for our city and I look
4 forward to getting lights down there and
5 being even safer for all of the people to
6 use it.

7 MR. WECHSLER: And also would tie in
8 very well with the proposed new development
9 along the Lackawanna River. We talked about
10 the trail before and it is making Scranton a
11 walking and biking city bringing
12 opportunities that really weren't here a few
13 years ago, and as we have just heard it is
14 well used, it's free, which is always good,
15 and the thing I'm impressed about is people
16 take care of it. For the most part, it's
17 trash free, it's graffiti free and people
18 are taking pride in it.

19 MR. ROGAN: Most importantly, this
20 will enhance the public safety of those who
21 use it.

22 MR. WECHSLER: Roll call, please.

23 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Perry.

24 MR. PERRY: Yes.

25 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

1 MR. ROGAN: Yes.

2 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

3 MR. EVANS: Yes.

4 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

5 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

6 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

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

10 MS. REED: 7-D. FOR CONSIDERATION BY
11 THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS - FOR ADOPTION
12 - RESOLUTION NO. 110, 2017 - AUTHORIZING THE
13 MAYOR AND OTHER APPROPRIATE CITY OFFICIALS
14 TO EXECUTE AND ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT BY
15 AND BETWEEN THE LACKAWANNA HERITAGE VALLEY
16 AUTHORITY AND THE CITY OF SCRANTON
17 PERTAINING TO THE MAINTENANCE OF THE SOLAR
18 POWERED TWO SIDED RECTANGULAR RAPID FLASHING
19 BEACON SYSTEM AT THE INTERSECTION OF ELM
20 STREET AND THE LACKAWANNA RIVER HERITAGE
21 TRAIL.

22 MR. WECHSLER: What is the
23 recommendation of the Chairperson for the
24 Committee on Public Works?

25 MR. GAUGHAN: As Chairperson for the

1 Committee on Public Works, I recommend final
2 passage of Item 7-D.

3 MR. ROGAN: Second.

4 MR. WECHSLER: On the question?

5 Roll call, please?

6 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Perry.

7 MR. PERRY: Yes.

8 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

9 MR. ROGAN: Yes.

10 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

11 MR. EVANS: Yes.

12 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

13 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

14 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

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

18 MS. REED: 7-E. FOR CONSIDERATION
19 BY THE COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT -
20 FOR ADOPTION - RESOLUTION NO. 111, 2017 - A
21 RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF SCRANTON
22 SUPPORTING THE PROPOSAL TO DESIGNATE A
23 PORTION OF PENNSYLVANIA ROUTE 6 AS A
24 PENNSYLVANIA BYWAY.

25 MR. WECHSLER: What is the

1 recommendation of the Chairperson for the
2 Committee on Community Development?

3 MR. ROGAN: As Chair for the
4 Committee on Community Development, I
5 recommend final passage of Item 7-E.

6 MR. EVANS: 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 If there is no further business,
22 I'll entertain a motion to adjourn.

23 MR. ROGAN: Motion to adjourn.

24 MR. WECHSLER: Meeting adjourned.
25

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