

SCRANTON CITY COUNCIL MEETING

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HELD:

Thursday, July 27, 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. There will be  
14 a motion to move Item 5-B to Seventh Order  
15 for final vote based on the attached  
16 emergency certificate. There will be a  
17 second opportunity to speak in Seventh Order  
18 prior to the final passage of this piece of  
19 legislation. Dispense with the reading of  
20 the minutes.

21 MS. REED: THIRD ORDER. 3-A. TAX  
22 ASSESSOR'S REPORT FOR HEARING DATE TO BE  
23 HELD AUGUST 2, 2017.

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

1 any council members have announcements at  
2 this time?

3 MR. ROGAN: I have two  
4 announcements. The first one, this is a  
5 press release that was sent out from OECD  
6 and I'm going to summarize it, but in  
7 Scranton's 2016 Action Plan there was  
8 \$50,000 earmarked for a new program, which  
9 is a housing program for rental  
10 rehabilitation. Scranton's rental  
11 rehabilitation program is designed to  
12 increase this supply of long-term  
13 availability of affordable standard rentals  
14 for low income families as well as to  
15 revitalize Scranton's neighborhoods by  
16 addressing substandard rental housing  
17 conditions within the community.

18 The program will be provide half of  
19 the costs necessary to correct code  
20 violations. The maximum deferred payment  
21 loan is \$10,000 per unit. An additional  
22 \$2,500 per unit will be provided for lead  
23 base paint abatement that does not require a  
24 match. The deferred payment loan is an  
25 interest free forgivable loan that has no

1 monthly payment as long as all program  
2 requirements are met. In order to protect  
3 the city, a mortgage will be made upon the  
4 property for the length of the affordability  
5 period. The affordability period will be  
6 between 10 to 20 years depending on the  
7 dollar amount the subcity received. Anyone  
8 who is interested in this program can  
9 contact Scranton's OECD Office at  
10 570-348-4216.

11 And the second one, this was given  
12 to us by Mr. Bolus, and I see he is here  
13 tonight, but I do want to mention it as  
14 well. Two Iwo Jima flag presentations will  
15 be held on Saturday, August 5, at the Marine  
16 Corp Attachment on Alder Street on East  
17 Mountain, and the ceremony is at 2 p.m. and  
18 a dinner will follow for a \$10 donation.  
19 I'm sure Mr. Bolus will be talking about it  
20 more when he speaks tonight. Thank you.

21 MR. EVANS: I have a couple of  
22 announcements. First, this Saturday, July  
23 29, from noon until 8 p.m. the fifth annual  
24 Scranton Made Arts on the Square festival  
25 will be held downtown on the courthouse.

1           The festival features local artists, craft,  
2           vendors, music and food. Also, going on  
3           this weekend in downtown on July 28 to 30 is  
4           the Lackawanna County Three-on-Three  
5           basketball tournament in the 100 block and  
6           200 blocks of Wyoming Avenue. Please be  
7           aware of possible road closures due to these  
8           events.

9                         Also, it is a little ways off, but  
10           on Saturday, September 23, at one 11 a.m. in  
11           honor of Councilman Bob McGoff there will be  
12           a gazebo dedication taking place at Connors  
13           Park. That's all I have.

14                        MR. WECHSLER: Yes. On Tuesday,  
15           August 1, is National Night Out. It will be  
16           held at Scranton High School and it will  
17           begin at 6:00 p.m.

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

20                        MS. WECHSLER: Sherry Scramstad.

21                        MS. SCRAMSTAD: Good evening,  
22           gentlemen. My name is Sherry Scramstad. I  
23           live at the Morgan Manor in Scranton. Some  
24           of you may remember me as I have come before  
25           you several times with no resolution as yet

1 to the concerns I have brought before you.  
2 Most citizens who appear here to address you  
3 are concerned about financial matters. I'm  
4 not saying that those concerns are  
5 unimportant, but I come before you to detail  
6 the elder abuse that continues to go on in  
7 this city with your assention. I'm talking  
8 about exploitation, control, and financial  
9 rape of the elderly.

10 In 2012 when Clover Management  
11 testified in public hearings before this  
12 body they fraudulently told council that  
13 they sought a building and operating permit  
14 and a ten-year tax abatement for a senior  
15 apartment complex that would offer  
16 "affordable housing" to those 55 and over of  
17 between seven to eight hundred a month.  
18 This body granted them all their requests.

19 From the time the doors opened to  
20 the Greenridge senior apartment complex on  
21 September 1, 2014, the one-bedroom apartment  
22 went for \$865 and the two-bedroom for \$985.  
23 At the expiration of each year's lease since  
24 then each rent was raised \$50 a year and  
25 those who were never informed before they

1 moved in were charged an extra \$15 for the  
2 convenience of living on the first floor.  
3 Just this month a new manager at the complex  
4 told residents there would be a 3 percent  
5 raise in rents every year when almost all  
6 original residents have been told that there  
7 would not be an automatic increase at the  
8 expiration of the annual lease and when  
9 there was an increase it would be only the  
10 cost of living adjustment.

11 Additionally, this management  
12 corporation has sought to control the very  
13 lives of the residents that live there.  
14 They cannot hang communally produced jigsaw  
15 shellacked and framed in the hallways. They  
16 cannot feed the birds nor can they hang wind  
17 chimes or hang wreaths on their inside  
18 doors. They had to surrender monies that  
19 the residents themselves had raised for  
20 community events and outings from a weekly  
21 bingo game which each attendee paid \$5 for  
22 and ran the game completely on their own.

23 The community room kitchen, which  
24 was staffed by donations from residents and  
25 used by them in the mornings for coffee and



1           conversations, was recently locked by the  
2           management, but the two worst offenses were  
3           ordering elderly and handicapped residents,  
4           some in wheelchairs, others with walkers,  
5           some with cerebral palsy and asthma, others  
6           with diabetes, heart conditions and on  
7           dialysis to shovel out their own cars in the  
8           more than two-foot snow fall we had this  
9           winter, all while still receiving a ten-year  
10          tax abatement from this body. You may  
11          remember Representative Haggerty's interview  
12          on WNEP regarding this matter.

13                   The other egregious behavior by  
14          Clover Management was to call three Scranton  
15          police officers to escort a former elderly  
16          resident off the property while she was  
17          visiting her best friend or face being  
18          arrested for trespassing because this former  
19          resident had the audacity to contact our  
20          elected officials when management  
21          demonstrated they had no intention of  
22          keeping their word to the city and the  
23          residents and so she was refused a renewal  
24          of her lease.

25                   After checking with an attorney who

1 is currently running for district attorney,  
2 this former resident was told that unless  
3 the lease specifically stated that  
4 management must approve all visitors to  
5 resident's apartments there is no basis for  
6 arrest or trespassing to any visitor of a  
7 bona fide resident.

8 When all of this was revealed to the  
9 Better Business Bureau in Scranton there  
10 opinion was that this was not just a case of  
11 fraud but an abuse of the elderly. They  
12 revealed that this management corporation  
13 already had seven complaints against them  
14 and now there are eight.

15 Despite all of this, when I appeared  
16 before this council to relate all of this in  
17 the past I was ignored, not even a word was  
18 spoken to me nor even a nod of the head by  
19 any council member during the meeting. Let  
20 me warn those of you who are so arrogant as  
21 to treat those who elected you as though  
22 they are invisible and don't exist or that  
23 the concerns are so insignificant that they  
24 don't even deserve comment, that you will  
25 not last here and you will not go further in

1 public service, which brings me to this  
2 council's solicitor. After meeting a member  
3 of this council in another setting and  
4 discussing the plight of the elderly at the  
5 apartment complex who are being financially  
6 -- the residents of whom are being  
7 financially raped by this fraudulent  
8 corporation, the member asked solicitor to  
9 review the public testimony by Clover  
10 Management and what they had promised this  
11 city. The council member e-mailed me that  
12 Mr. Minora would e-mail me directly after  
13 his review. Mr. Minora did not review the  
14 public testimony by Clover, but instead he  
15 sent me a copy of the LERTA law under which  
16 the council granted the tax abatements and  
17 permits. Either Mr. Minora is too dense to  
18 do what was asked of him or he purposely  
19 refused to do so for what reason I can only  
20 speculate.

21 After being reminded by me to review  
22 the public testimony at Clover --

23 MR. WECHSLER: Excuse me, we do have  
24 a time limit here and I --

25 MS. SCRAMSTAD: Yes, I understand,

1 but I have to been before you three times  
2 and you have ignored me.

3 MR. WECHSLER: Yes, but we have  
4 discussed this several times --

5 MS. SCRAMSTAD: Well, if you --

6 MR. WECHSLER: It's not an issue  
7 that we can --

8 MS. SCRAMSTAD: Sir, I suggest you  
9 do what Clover Management did and call the  
10 Scranton Police to have me removed.  
11 Otherwise, I'm going to finish my statement.

12 MR. WECHSLER: You cannot.

13 MS. SCRAMSTAD: I'm sorry. You do  
14 what you need to do and I'll do what I need  
15 to do.

16 MR. WECHSLER: I'm going to take a  
17 recess.

18 MS. SCRAMSTAD: After being reminded  
19 by me --

20 MR. WECHSLER: Do we have a motion?

21 MR. ROGAN: I make a motion for a  
22 recess.

23 MR. WECHSLER: On the motion? All  
24 those in favor?

25 MR. PERRY: Aye.

1 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

2 MR. EVANS: Aye.

3 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

4 MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

5 (Meeting in recess.)

6 MR. WECHSLER: Call the meeting back  
7 to order. Just a comment, city council does  
8 have rules. There is a time limit for  
9 speakers. We allowed some extra time. The  
10 speaker continued to carry on and disrespect  
11 the council and our rules and I had no other  
12 option but to ask that the police to come.  
13 I hate doing it. It's an insult to the  
14 citizenship here. It's an insult to this  
15 council. During every meeting that we have,  
16 citizens are allowed to speak, they are  
17 allowed to insult us, they are allowed to  
18 make comments, we listen to all of it, but  
19 each one of them respects the Rules of  
20 Councils and each one of them leaves as  
21 their time limit is completed. That's all  
22 we ask of speakers. We don't put any  
23 restrictions on what they say, we just ask  
24 them to follow the rules. So in this case  
25 we had to call a recess and I did have to

1 ask the police officers to come. I had no  
2 alternative, so the meeting is resumed.  
3 Next speaker is Rosie Davitt.

4 MS. DAVITT: Hello, gentlemen and  
5 ladies. I have a couple of questions  
6 tonight, one of them has been answered by  
7 Mr. Gaughan already and I appreciate that.  
8 The second one is have we heard anything yet  
9 about the questions that I had raised a  
10 number of the weeks ago when the Rockwell  
11 Avenue playground was opened about the fact  
12 that we need to make sure that the kids are  
13 save? Have we heard anything on what the --  
14 investigation proceeded?

15 MR. GAUGHAN: We have not received  
16 anything; correct, Mrs. Reed?

17 MS. REED: No.

18 MR. GAUGHAN: No, not at this time.  
19 We haven't received anything.

20 MS. DAVITT: Is there any way we can  
21 bring that back to their attention?

22 MR. GAUGHAN: Sure. We can send a  
23 second request.

24 MR. PERRY: I'll ask Chief Graziano  
25 for a follow up --

1 MS. DAVITT: Thank you very much.

2 MR. PERRY: -- on what the study  
3 produced and I think I remember that was on  
4 the signage and just to put original in on  
5 the park right there.

6 MS. DAVITT: And we were hoping for  
7 a lowering of the speed limit around all the  
8 playgrounds in the area so that all of the  
9 kids and adults that go with them are safe.

10 MR. PERRY: I'll definitely  
11 follow-up on that for you.

12 MS. DAVITT: Thank you. This is  
13 going to be one of -- there is a couple of  
14 questions that will go into this, and they  
15 are going to think that I'm really against  
16 the DPW but I'm not, I worry about the  
17 monies that are spent by not having an  
18 accurate and an effective manner for picking  
19 up garbage and recycling. Is there someone  
20 who goes out and checks on these guys every  
21 once in awhile to see that they are  
22 following a specific route? Also, where  
23 does that -- how is that route decided on?  
24 Is there a computer program that's used to  
25 make that route up or is it a person that

1 goes ahead says, well, this is the best way  
2 to go? Is it the most effective?

3 MR. ROGAN: I can answer that for  
4 you because this is something that drives me  
5 as well --

6 MS. DAVITT: Thank you.

7 MR. ROGAN: -- because there are  
8 routes in the city where literally one crew  
9 does half the street and the other crew does  
10 another half and they haven't been done by a  
11 computer. I have been calling for an  
12 efficiency study of the DPW for as long as I  
13 have been on city council to track the  
14 routes to make sure they are being done more  
15 efficiently. We have much better technology  
16 now than we did when these routes were set  
17 up.

18 MS. DAVITT: I was just going to  
19 say, when were they set up?

20 MR. ROGAN: An exact date, I  
21 couldn't even tell you, but it seems they do  
22 modify if there is a truck down, they will  
23 modify, you know, the routes a little bit,  
24 but I have been calling for an efficiency  
25 study. Now, we do have a study out to



1 determine the true costs of garbage  
2 collection in the city, which is a big  
3 component, but we need to get those routes  
4 hammered down so it's saving man hours, so  
5 it's saving gas, and it's much more  
6 efficient for the residents.

7 MS. DAVITT: Yes. Now, also, are  
8 they allowed overtime?

9 MR. ROGAN: Oh, absolutely.

10 MS. DAVITT: So who approves that  
11 overtime and for what reasons?

12 MR. ROGAN: Well, it would be the  
13 director of the department and sometimes  
14 there is overtime -- when there is a  
15 holiday, for instance, if Monday is a  
16 holiday and they work on a Saturday the  
17 Saturday is overtime, but as needed. If we  
18 get a big storm, there is trees down and  
19 guys get called in for overtime.

20 MS. DAVITT: Which is  
21 understandable.

22 MR. WECHSLER: There is also a  
23 supervisor out during the day. Aside from  
24 the director, there is a supervisor out  
25 during the day.

1 MS. DAVITT: So how often does the  
2 supervisors travel with the guys themselves  
3 or do they go out in their own cars and  
4 check to make sure things are being done?

5 MR. WECHSLER: They kind of assign  
6 them the duties sometimes as well, so it's  
7 just like a supervisor in any place I'm sure  
8 they tag along as the day goes on.

9 MS. DAVITT: The reasons I'm asking  
10 these questions is in our North Scranton  
11 area, Bill will probably be able to testify  
12 to this as well, they go down Rockwell  
13 Avenue and they don't pick anything up and  
14 then they come back up and they go down  
15 Gilbert to the bottom end of Gilbert and  
16 they pick up Gilbert down lower part and  
17 then go up and make a right-hand turn and  
18 then back down on the upper end of Gilbert  
19 and half the time they don't pick anything  
20 up. It's -- I just -- I sat there and  
21 watched them the other the day I was off and  
22 I sat there and watched and why are they  
23 doing it like this? It just didn't make  
24 sense to me. So any information you can  
25 get. If I could get a copy of the route

1 even that would be fantastic so I could at  
2 least look at and see if they are even  
3 following the route they are supposed to  
4 follow. That would be fantastic. I thank  
5 you guys.

6 MR. WECHSLER: Joan Hodowanitz.

7 MS. HODOWANITZ: Joan Hodowanitz,  
8 city resident and taxpayer. With regard to  
9 Item 5-B, the emergency certificate attached  
10 for the contract of the Mar-Paul, I  
11 understand from the caucuses this evening  
12 the rationale for this emergency certificate  
13 in that you have six of seven firehouses  
14 that need immediate maintenance attention,  
15 particularly the roofs, and there is the  
16 weather issue of getting the roofs done  
17 before the bad weather sits in. That's not  
18 my concern. My concern is I listened to  
19 Mr. Bulzoni point out the horrible state of  
20 maintenance of these firehouses and how they  
21 have been neglected for years and years and  
22 I would recommend, I'm surprised that we are  
23 not doing this, if we are I'm not aware of  
24 it, we should have a five, a ten and a  
25 15-year capital budget plan that looks into

1 ongoing maintenance issues such as this.  
2 I'm not talking about change the washers on  
3 the sinks type deal, I'm talking about roofs  
4 are only good for so many years, and if we  
5 negligent our infra structure, not just the  
6 firehouses but this building and the  
7 Serrenti center and all of the other  
8 buildings that we have in the city all we  
9 are doing is buying into a larger bill down  
10 the road because if you don't maintain these  
11 buildings you are going to pay through the  
12 nose when you eventually get around to  
13 fixing them. And keep in mind, also, that  
14 there is a direct relationship between the  
15 caliber of services that our public service  
16 workers provide to us and the infrastructure  
17 which we give to them to provide those  
18 services, so I'm just suggesting that since  
19 I'm persona non-grata on the first and  
20 fourth floors perhaps you can work with the  
21 administration so that as go to the next  
22 budget process that we look very hard at our  
23 long-term capital budget to make sure that  
24 we don't allow our infrastructure to degrade  
25 this extent again in the future.

1                   The 2016 audit is still not on the  
2 website as of 4:30. Don't forget you have  
3 to put your summary in the newspaper, and  
4 I'm still waiting on an answer, are we going  
5 to continue to retain Rainey & Rainey for  
6 audit preparation?

7                   MR. EVANS: I would expect that to  
8 be true.

9                   MS. HODOWANITZ: Okay. With regard  
10 to your request to the Attorney General, any  
11 feedback on that yet?

12                   MR. WECHSLER: No, I have not heard  
13 back.

14                   MS. HODOWANITZ: How about the  
15 Knowel's insurance list?

16                   MR. EVANS: Nothing yet.

17                   MS. HODOWANITZ: Okey-dokey. How  
18 about the third party administrator RFP?

19                   MR. WECHSLER: Same as last week.

20                   MS. HODOWANITZ: Okey-dokey. With  
21 regard to rental registration, I gave you  
22 some information from my building, Forum  
23 Towers, but I don't see any way to contact  
24 Mr. Moran yet, maybe I've just missed it,  
25 but I recommend that he contact all of the

1 local colleges, University of Scranton,  
2 Marywood, the medical college, they do  
3 maintain a list of rental properties for  
4 their students and that probably would be a  
5 good place to start. I think the University  
6 of Scranton is half the Hill Section by now.

7 And mirabile dictu. There is a sign  
8 in front of the Linden Street parking garage  
9 the elevator works so yes, yes, Virginia,  
10 there is a Santa Clause and you enjoy your  
11 recess next month.

12 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you.

13 MR. WECHSLER: Bob Bolus.

14 MR. BOLUS: Good evening, Council.  
15 Bob Bolus, Scranton. Just briefly,  
16 Mr. Rogan brought up about what's going on  
17 on August 5. This was the presentation that  
18 we submitted. It's in honor of Sergeant  
19 William Genaust. He is the marine sergeant  
20 that filmed the flag raising over Mt.  
21 Suribachi and shortly thereafter he was  
22 killed going into a cave. Sergeant Genaust  
23 is sill in the cave. I have been there  
24 three times on Iwo Jima, I hope my fourth  
25 mission there is to bring his body and two

1 marines home and we have been given  
2 permission by the Emperor of Japan and the  
3 Prime Minister and now we have the  
4 cooperation of our president and vice  
5 president. Couldn't ask for anybody better  
6 to bring our people home and it's basically  
7 called a Hero Remembered.

8 This article here was done by the  
9 Japanese, which I was a participant in and  
10 it came from Japan and to me with the family  
11 and I was invited to participate and I felt  
12 very proud to be a participant in it, and I  
13 bought the 70th anniversary flag that was on  
14 Iwo Jima, we were there when the flag was  
15 raised during the reunion tour. It went up  
16 for auction and I purchased it and it's  
17 being donated by me to the Marine Corp  
18 League and all members of the service on  
19 August 5.

20 So there will be a ceremony,  
21 everybody in the public, anybody that wants  
22 to be there can be there and there will be  
23 will dinner after that, it's a \$10 donation,  
24 and the dinner is being sponsored by  
25 Tressa's Angels.

1                   Getting into some of the other stuff  
2                   here, and we saw here, but like to see the  
3                   police officers go back out on the street  
4                   because I'm going to give you just a little  
5                   insight of what happens, only the police  
6                   chief or the mayor can order someone from  
7                   the podium. Council does not have that  
8                   power or authority. That's been tried and  
9                   tested, and I think we should just sent the  
10                  police officer back out on the street to  
11                  take care of the citizens of the city. I  
12                  don't think that's an issue we need to do  
13                  here but, unfortunately, he could be here,  
14                  but, council, you cannot have him do  
15                  anything else to any citizen here unless the  
16                  mayor or the chief of police do it, and you  
17                  can check with your solicitor. Okay? And  
18                  that's fact, not fiction. I know, I was  
19                  part of it when it happened a long time ago.

20                  You know, the public evaluates the  
21                  performance of it's elected officials to a  
22                  great extent what happens at meeting. Many  
23                  citizens form their total opinions of city  
24                  government on the basis of having attended  
25                  just one council meeting. This is the time



1 to impress citizens favorably and show them  
2 that the council is capable of the doing  
3 it's job. The citizens' participation  
4 period is a time slot that is set aside on  
5 the agenda for citizens to address council  
6 on any subject that is not to be confused  
7 with a public hearing, which is formal  
8 proceedings conducted with the purpose of  
9 discussing a topic. Most city councils do  
10 have a portion of the meeting set aside for  
11 citizen discussion and comment.

12 The purpose of the council meeting  
13 is conduct city business. Council members  
14 are expected to be polite to citizens  
15 appearing before them. The governing body  
16 should listen actively to it's critics.  
17 Listen, to learn, and to understand, not  
18 argue, dispute or to silence their critics.  
19 It's helpful to state that you and  
20 understand how the person or a group feels.  
21 Keep in mind that anger is directed at your  
22 role not at you as an individual. Last, but  
23 not least, while remaining respectful keep a  
24 sense of humor because after the meeting is  
25 over everything else is over.

1 I'm going to go on a couple of  
2 issues here, Mr. Gaughan, with all due  
3 respect, I was at the meeting with the  
4 mayor. You were there, you came to the  
5 podium, you had your five minutes. You sat  
6 down, I came up to speak, you jumped up in  
7 front of me and tried to demand more  
8 speaking time. You tried to bully the  
9 mayor. I ready in the paper your comments  
10 you won't be bullied, you won't be doing  
11 this. You got to understand something,  
12 Attorney Abrahamsen was hired by the Sewer  
13 Authority, not the mayor, but everybody here  
14 participated in that hiring when you signed  
15 the recovery plan and while you sit back now  
16 and let this go on knowing full well that an  
17 illegal activity may have taken place with  
18 the sewer Authority that has not been  
19 disbanded and cannot disperse money you have  
20 remained silent. At that meeting with the  
21 mayor there were five of you, you came up  
22 and spoke but if you used some common sense  
23 between all of us you would have each taken  
24 five minutes, that way you'd have 25 minutes  
25 to discuss the issues with the mayor and you

1 ignored that, yet you come here and talk.

2 You have legislative powers. One of  
3 the things you should have done or could have  
4 done was file a subpoena, and then  
5 Abrahamsen would have had to sit right here  
6 and answer your questions under the oath.  
7 You didn't take that advantage. And what  
8 I'm trying to do is enlighten you, you  
9 didn't -- Mr. Abrahamsen didn't bully you,  
10 you bullied him and now he is taking the  
11 offensive when you had another alternative  
12 that had the power, not of a lawsuit, that  
13 had the power to discuss, and that's what  
14 you gain from maturity and using some common  
15 sense in here and that hasn't been exposed  
16 or expressed here.

17 So my suggestion to you get off the  
18 bullying, the grandstanding, it's not  
19 getting you anywhere, in fact, it's making  
20 you really look ridiculous and that's not  
21 who you should be as a councilman.

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

23 MR. BOLUS: Use the power of the  
24 subpoena and do the job, and one more  
25 important thing in here, discussions do

1           happen. That's the purpose of councils  
2           through the centuries have been created is  
3           to have a dialogue and debate between  
4           citizens and officials and that's something  
5           we don't do here, and if we did more of that  
6           maybe we would have got along further and  
7           there wouldn't be the hostilities here that  
8           people are being argued. Like last week --

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

10                   MR. BOLUS: -- you don't have the  
11           discussion, you don't do this and do that,  
12           questions and answers are what's important.

13                   MR. WECHSLER: Thank you.

14                   MR. BOLUS: Keep that in mind, Mr.  
15           Wechsler, in your next position you may not  
16           get it.

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

18                   MR. BOLUS: But that's what I tried  
19           telling you, with all due respect, respect  
20           the people --

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

22                   MR. BOLUS: -- that come here, and  
23           please don't thank me. I said in the past,  
24           I don't come here to be thanked, I come here  
25           to be respected and --

1 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you.

2 MR. BOLUS: -- as a citizen and  
3 taxpayer and you just don't respect when  
4 people talk to you.

5 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you.

6 MR. BOLUS: So, please, change the  
7 thank you to respect and you'll go a lot  
8 further. Ignorance is bliss, please end it.

9 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you, Mr. Bolus.  
10 Lee Morgan

11 MR. MORGAN: Well, good evening,  
12 Council, another stellar meeting. You know,  
13 I think that if you really would have paid  
14 attention to what that lady was saying  
15 instead of ending the meeting you might have  
16 learned something and you probably could  
17 have did something for not only her but for  
18 the residents of this city and give them  
19 some idea you are working for them instead  
20 of what they really think, and I think the  
21 people at home would have really benefited  
22 from seeing the kind of politics that takes  
23 place in this city over, you know, people's  
24 lives and the way the city is degraded and  
25 citizens over an extended period of time.

1                   And, Mr. Rogan, I don't know why you  
2                   were so troubled to hear what that woman had  
3                   to say. I mean, I just don't understand it  
4                   at all and you are running for retention,  
5                   but I think that 7-A should be tabled, okay,  
6                   because if we are talking about an exit plan  
7                   for Act 47 it's almost comical because I  
8                   don't know how you can put the money back from  
9                   the sewer deal, and I don't know how you are  
10                  going to give all the refuge fees or all of  
11                  this other money because are you in court of  
12                  in couple of different directions.

13                  And, you know, I see where Judge  
14                  Moyle has stepped out of in case with the  
15                  Scranton Sewer Authority and Judge Minora  
16                  stepped in and I think Judge Moyle should  
17                  have stayed in, and in my own opinion I  
18                  think Judge Minora needs to step out because  
19                  he has Mr. Minora here and there is Minora  
20                  on the school board. There is just too  
21                  much. There is just too much there. I  
22                  think this case needs to be moved outside of  
23                  Lackawanna County where it can get a real,  
24                  fair hearing based on the merits of the case  
25                  and based on law and I'm not so sure it's

1 going to happen here.

2 I think it's also pretty important  
3 to realize that there seems to be a buzz in  
4 the community over House Bill 76. It's just  
5 a terrible bill. It isn't even worthy of  
6 the course. Now, from what I understand  
7 there is a meeting on Wednesday at 6:00 p.m.  
8 at Lackawanna College, but that bill is just  
9 completely useless, has no merit at all  
10 because all property tax has to end and  
11 there is just with over 500 school districts  
12 in Pennsylvania there is just a mountain of  
13 debt sitting there. It's just not going to  
14 answer any of the real problems that  
15 confront all of voters and all of the  
16 residents across the Commonwealth, because  
17 the real problem is all the pension money  
18 that all of these school districts owe. The  
19 police officers here, I mean, when you sold  
20 the Sewer authority you just threw them  
21 right out of the boat. I don't know what  
22 they are going to do with their retirement  
23 because I'm not sure they are going to  
24 collect most of it.

25 I mean, you know, it's time for

1 reality to set in, and it's nice that all of  
2 the politicians dress pretty, because you  
3 guys do have nice suits on, I got to give  
4 you that. I mean, you couldn't answer one  
5 question that was put to you today and just  
6 shook your head no, but as far as dressing  
7 you got it down. I just think though it's  
8 really time to consider what's taking place  
9 here. The country has reached a point where  
10 it's in debt so far with so many pension  
11 plans just spewing across the Commonwealth,  
12 not just this Commonwealth, but across the  
13 nation because you can dress any politician  
14 in a cheap suit and they can pass a lot of  
15 legislation to the detriment of the people  
16 that are supposed to be helping, and I would  
17 like to see that, you know, Mr. Wechsler,  
18 you proved that tonight by ending the  
19 meeting when somebody had a problem. I  
20 mean, it just going to prove that you know  
21 what, you as president have the right to  
22 extend the amount of time you can give to a  
23 speaker and for this whole council not one  
24 person objected and wanted to hear what that  
25 woman had to say. It's troubling. And you



1 are going to represent who? That's the real  
2 troubling thing, yourself and people we  
3 can't see. The Scranton Times was asking a  
4 lot of troubling questions.

5 And, Mr. Gaughan, I wouldn't worry  
6 about being sued because you have a certain  
7 amount of immunity, and I'm not even sure  
8 what you are being sued for. But, you know,  
9 the troubling thing is if you worked for us  
10 and all of the bureaucrats across the  
11 Commonwealth worked for us, we are in big  
12 trouble. They just pass the budget \$2  
13 billion short. Doesn't anybody anywhere in  
14 this Commonwealth think that we have the  
15 government we deserve? That's a great  
16 question to ask people, and you know what it  
17 doesn't matter whether one person elected  
18 you and everybody else stayed home, you had  
19 an obligation to move in the best interest  
20 of the people who reside in this state and  
21 it's just not happening. Good luck.

22 MR. WECHSLER: Bev Devaros.

23 MR. DEVAROS: Bev Devaros, Quincy  
24 Avenue in Scranton. This is just for your  
25 information about our county prison which is

1 right on North Washington, same as this, you  
2 know, up the line here and with getting  
3 books in there and getting a library, and I  
4 bring this tonight for information because  
5 even though it's a county jail it's in our  
6 city and these are our neighbors.

7 It came to my attention that there  
8 is no library in our county prison up here,  
9 and that was pretty astounding to me because  
10 I think almost all of the prisons in  
11 Pennsylvania have a library system inside,  
12 so I went to the prison board meeting and  
13 Judge Geroulo and the board said -- I said,  
14 "How about if we get donated books and put  
15 in the prison?"

16 And he said, "Yeah, that would be  
17 good."

18 So that's when we are been doing and  
19 thanks to the Times, Kyle Wynn, wrote an  
20 article about that very thing and oh, my  
21 goodness, the donations just poured in from  
22 churches and the Century Club, individuals,  
23 you name it. We have hundreds of really  
24 good books. They have to be paperback books  
25 to go in, so we are gathering all of these

1 books and now we are working on a system to  
2 distribute them in there and the prison  
3 bought some book cards and so we'll load  
4 them up with these books and volunteers will  
5 take them around, so I just think that's a  
6 good thing, and I think that it's on that.

7 But while I'm here, for the winter,  
8 for the snow removal, the snow on the  
9 streets, the city streets, I wish there was  
10 another way other than that grit that is put  
11 down which solves the problem immediately, I  
12 mean, you know, it makes it easy, you know,  
13 safe to drive on, but then the aftermath is  
14 more months you are sweeping up this grit  
15 off the street, and if you don't sweep it up  
16 it gets washed down into the sewer system,  
17 which is not good.

18 So I just wish there was another  
19 alternative and another product that could  
20 be effective but not have the side effect so  
21 I don't know what that would be, but I'm  
22 sure you could.

23 MR. ROGAN: I actually spoke to  
24 PennDOT regarding that, but PennDOT doesn't  
25 have the same issue, and the problem is

1 PennDOT uses 100 percent salt on their  
2 roads, the city uses a salt aggregate mix  
3 and that's why you have those pebbles, that  
4 grit, which gives cars traction. This was  
5 years ago I spoke to a former DPW director  
6 why we do things differently than PennDOT  
7 and the answer I was given was cost because  
8 the aggregate is much less expensive than  
9 the salt, but I think in the long run it  
10 probably would be safer and cheaper for not  
11 having to deal with all of that mess if we  
12 explored going to the mixture that PennDOT  
13 uses with the 100 percent salt.

14 MS. DEVAROS: Thank you, because  
15 even though we do have a street sweepers,  
16 machines, we all know that they don't make  
17 it around, and even if they did that's just  
18 tons of stuff that has to be taken up and  
19 then we get charged, I guess, to dump it as  
20 far as I know so thanks for looking into  
21 that.

22 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you. Les  
23 Johns.

24 MR. JOHNS: Hello, everyone. I just  
25 wanted to start off by saying this is my

1 first city council.

2 MR. WECHSLER: You picked a good  
3 one.

4 MS. JOHNS: I sure did. I think  
5 it's incredibly interesting to see the  
6 dynamics of this room and the lack of  
7 compassion that I see between the council  
8 members and the community citizens. The  
9 fact there is only 13 people here shows that  
10 not that many people want to get involved,  
11 so for me as a young millinreal to come here  
12 and see this sort of friction between the  
13 city council and our residents it's  
14 disheartening and I did have some other  
15 questions about the city but I'm going to  
16 skip over them for right now.

17 My main reason for coming here today  
18 is because I'm doing a lot of research on  
19 the City of Scranton, particularly the  
20 history when it comes to African Americans  
21 here in this town and I feel like we have a  
22 lack of representation and right now my  
23 motive and my drive is to promote that and  
24 the amount of facts and representation that  
25 we have had in this city from like the 1880

1 to the present day and all of the men and  
2 women that actually sat in this council, sat  
3 in the very room in the 1800's and now,  
4 like, we are not really represented.

5 So I want to do a lot more working  
6 with the city, working with the school  
7 districts and letting students of color know  
8 that you can be an educated person, school  
9 is valuable and that we deserve out  
10 representation in this city. As you can  
11 see, there is only three African-American  
12 people in this entire room and we are the  
13 minority here and, like I said, I feel like  
14 we get the representation of being negative  
15 here and when there is lot of positivity and  
16 a lot of excellence that is here that is  
17 just unrepresented.

18 So, anyway, I would like to talk  
19 about you guys have been -- I looked at your  
20 agenda for today and you guys are working on  
21 something with the downtown plan. I didn't  
22 really find what that plan was exactly, but  
23 I do see that you guys have plans to make  
24 that city better, but I don't really see how  
25 renovating these apartments that are above

1 the cost of living here is going to make the  
2 city better and what you are really doing is  
3 to bring -- to revitalize downtown because I  
4 know you guys are bringing in businesses,  
5 but businesses don't actually build a  
6 community, and when you are looking for  
7 community to me it doesn't really seem to be  
8 something that is working.

9 You also said that you are looking  
10 for someone that can be a staff  
11 representative of that. I have a master's  
12 degree, I have a little bit of background on  
13 businesses and I know people who would be  
14 interested in opening up businesses and  
15 things like that, so if I knew the business  
16 plan I would love to participate in that  
17 way. I would have recommendations of doing  
18 more community activities, specifically  
19 located downtown I know there is something  
20 happening on Saturday so I'm not saying it  
21 doesn't happen, but, I mean, as far as  
22 making this a community down there I don't  
23 think it actually is happening. I think  
24 there is people that are living down there,  
25 but I don't really think it's a community.

1                   So I would like to know more about  
2                   the downtown plan because I work downtown  
3                   and I spend a lot of my time down there so,  
4                   like I said, this plan doesn't actually do  
5                   the things I have seen and even though there  
6                   has been small progress since 2015 I don't  
7                   think the amount of time and money you guys  
8                   are spending into it is, like, showing up  
9                   yet.

10                   I think those are like the few  
11                   things that I wanted to say. Yeah, I just  
12                   noticed, too, this is to go back on my  
13                   discussion between council and the city, it  
14                   seeks like there is a lack of discussion or  
15                   debate like one of the gentlemen said that's  
16                   no longer in the room, and I was wondering  
17                   where that aspect actually comes into play  
18                   and how that actually works out, and if you  
19                   guys have any suggestions for the  
20                   quote/unquote millennials, the community of  
21                   my age group, what would you like to see  
22                   from us and what we can do because I'm  
23                   really interested in making this community  
24                   better not only for me but also students,  
25                   kids, because I feel like the things that we



1 are doing here I don't think we value  
2 education. I think that the high schools  
3 are terrible. I think the middle schools  
4 aren't that great, and I know you don't have  
5 that much money to spend on education but I  
6 really think that we can work with the  
7 colleges and get them into the school and  
8 vice versa because education is only the way  
9 that the city is going to be better in my  
10 opinion, and everything that I have learned  
11 and I have learned after I have gone away to  
12 college to do that. Unfortunately, the city  
13 hasn't done much for me, which is  
14 devastating, especially doing more research  
15 on the history and knowing about what  
16 African-Americans to make a community, and  
17 even for me to be standing here it's sad  
18 that it's not as common.

19 But, like I said, I really do want  
20 to participate in more in the city and get  
21 involved with the council and get involved  
22 with the mess of the community here because  
23 as you can see youth isn't even here and  
24 there is going to be a time when you guys  
25 aren't going to be here and then what? What

1 are the plans for us to make the city better  
2 because it just looks like it's crumbling  
3 even further.

4 MR. WECHSLER: Miss, if you don't  
5 mind, that's me, over here. If you don't,  
6 could you leave your contact information  
7 with Kathy.

8 MS. JOHNS: Absolutely, and the last  
9 thing I want to say I completed a graduate  
10 level thesis here about the history of  
11 Scranton, black history specifically in  
12 Scranton, Pennsylvania, and I really do want  
13 to give it to the city because I think that  
14 there is a lot of gentlemen particularly,  
15 but also women that contributed to this city  
16 who have been completely lost and forgotten,  
17 so I will leave my information and my  
18 research available to everybody, so thank  
19 you so much.

20 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you. Is there  
21 anyone else?

22 MR. CATENZARO: Gentlemen, please  
23 forgive me, I didn't realize I had to sign  
24 in to speak. If it's okay could I --

25 MR. WECHSLER: You just have to

1 state your name and --

2 MR. CATENZARO: Is it okay to give  
3 the recording secretary my -- what I am  
4 going to say and my business card?

5 MR. WECHSLER: Sure. Over here?

6 MR. CATENZARO: Council members,  
7 ladies and gentlemen, thank you for giving  
8 me the time to speak, I'll try to and brief.  
9 I have come here tonight --

10 MR. WECHSLER: Excuse me, you have  
11 to state your name.

12 MR. CATENZARO: Oh, I'm sorry.  
13 Michael Catenzaro from Childs, Lackawanna  
14 County. I have come here tonight because I  
15 have been reading that the city council  
16 wants to the whole county reassessed. Since  
17 I cannot vote for against any of the council  
18 members, I would like to relay to you a few  
19 facts with a reassessment coupled with my  
20 personal thoughts. I have been coming to  
21 this city, worked in the city and walked in  
22 the city since the 1970's. Scranton  
23 currently is less than one-third of the  
24 county population which does make it a  
25 minority within the county.

1                   What is the purpose of a full county  
2                   reassessment? The law states that any  
3                   reassessment must be revenue neutral so that  
4                   in theory it odd his any additional  
5                   revenues. Any reassessment would also be  
6                   subject to something called the fairness  
7                   principle where as no property can be  
8                   assessed any higher than any property of  
9                   similar type in the same area. Any increase  
10                  in the assessments will also increase the  
11                  amount of school taxes a property owner  
12                  pays. Since school taxes are based on the  
13                  same assessed value, it thereby creates a  
14                  double whammy for that property owner.

15                  The county government itself does  
16                  not need any new tax revenues and is fine  
17                  with the assessment as they are as evidenced  
18                  by the vote against a reassessment taken at  
19                  the public hearing held up in Greenfield  
20                  Township this past spring.

21                  Lackawanna County, unless anybody  
22                  forgets, raised property taxes 90 percent  
23                  between the Years 2003 and 2013. If you  
24                  build a new house, you're probably assessed  
25                  at two to four times any other property in

1           that neighborhood, so how does that make  
2           property taxes unfair?

3                         Also, if you purchase an existing  
4           property you probably have a higher  
5           assessment than the previous owner. I know  
6           the couple who built a house in Scranton and  
7           between the city, school district and the  
8           county they are paying \$12,000 a year in  
9           property taxes. That's a lot of money for  
10          the privilege of living in the city. I know  
11          I couldn't afford to pay these. The county  
12          currently has renege 1,100 -- a little over  
13          1,100 properties on it's repository for  
14          nonpayment of taxes. Over 700 are in the  
15          City of Scranton. As I said, Scranton is  
16          one-third of the county population yet it  
17          has two-thirds of the properties on this  
18          repository.

19                        I also do not believe that a lack of  
20          current assessment curtails economic  
21          activities since any large businesses that  
22          locate in the city or the county would get  
23          all sort of tax abatements. Property values  
24          in the City of Scranton in particular are  
25          depressed precisely because of the high

1 property taxes, school taxes, wages taxes  
2 and mercantile taxes within the city.

3 Property values are also affected by  
4 whether a municipal or school district is  
5 run in an fiscally responsible manner. Have  
6 high taxes ever promoted economic activity?  
7 This city or any municipality or school  
8 district has every right to show up at an  
9 assessment hearing and argue against the  
10 reduction of the assessed property value.

11 The cost of a full county  
12 reassessment is around \$15 million according  
13 to the county estimates. This is  
14 approximately 10 percent of the entire  
15 county budget and 20 percent of the property  
16 taxes the county collects. Where is this  
17 money coming from? This will only result in  
18 the county raising taxes or borrow money in  
19 order to pay for a reassessment that must be  
20 revenue neutral by law. I believe this \$15  
21 million number is accurate because the  
22 gentlemen that ran the Assessor's Office  
23 back in the 70's, when this was last  
24 seriously discussed put the cost at that  
25 time at \$5 million, so five to 15.



1 less than 10,000 and have spent money --  
2 their own money to maintain and improve  
3 these properties and probably have paid more  
4 in property taxes than they pay for the  
5 property. This would also eliminate the \$15  
6 million cost of the reassessment.

7 Finally, is there anyone on council  
8 or anyone in this county that thinks they  
9 are not paying enough in taxes? There is  
10 nothing stopping them from sending extra  
11 money to the city or county treasuries. I  
12 seen an interview a few years ago with  
13 Warren Buffet, one of the most successful  
14 financial men and investors in this country,  
15 Mr. Buffet was touting increasing income of  
16 corporate taxes because he thought people in  
17 corporations could be paying for.

18 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you, sir.  
19 Thank you.

20 MR. CATENZARO: Thank you,  
21 gentlemen. I got another paragraph if you  
22 would let me finish.

23 MR. WECHSLER: I'm sorry.

24 MR. CATENZARO: Okay. Fair enough.

25 MR. WECHSLER: We have been through



1           it --

2                   MR. CATENZARO: Understood.

3                   MR. WECHSLER: Five minute rule and  
4 then we grant you another minute.

5                   MR. CATENZARO: Understood,  
6 gentlemen. Thank you for your time.

7                   MR. WECHSLER: And you have reached  
8 the point. Thank you.

9                   MR. UNGVARSKY: Good evening, city  
10 council. A quick look back at history,  
11 several years ago a company came to this  
12 city council looking to develop the Darian  
13 block. They also looked to have a LERTA  
14 before they would do anything here in the  
15 city. Person after person came to this  
16 lectern advising you against it, but council  
17 in it's wisdom give them the LERTA. Part of  
18 the deal was that they would not raise the  
19 rent for the ten years that they were on  
20 LERTA. City council was approached by  
21 several people a year or two after they had  
22 built it and moved in and they told city  
23 council what was going on and city council  
24 in it's authority told us, "We are sorry,  
25 there is nothing we can do, we don't have

1           any power and you will just have to put up  
2           with."

3                       I don't know what city council can  
4           do now, they have already had the tax break  
5           for the three or four years that they have  
6           been there plus they have probably got a  
7           grant but once again city council in it's  
8           wisdom says there is nothing we can do and  
9           you just chase a woman away from this  
10          lectern. Nice going.

11                      MR. DOBRZYN: Good evening, Council.  
12          Dave Dobrzyn, resident. Try to be lenient  
13          with that lady, she just lost her temper a  
14          little bit, I could see her frustration.  
15          The bar and sidewalk outside of the Connell  
16          property, a few weeks ago we had a  
17          discussion on street tables or sidewalk  
18          tables, and if you drive by there and look  
19          at that if there were a lot of people seated  
20          there you would have to step into the gutter  
21          or walk out in the middle of the street, I  
22          mean, their tables are all sprawled out. We  
23          need our sidewalks. That's all about  
24          smoking.

25                      MR. EVANS: Dave, you are talking

1 about Bar Pazzo at the Connell?

2 MR. DOBRZYN: Yeah.

3 MR. EVANS: That's according to our  
4 regulations and I know that I go by there  
5 all of the time there is at least four feet  
6 between that and the curb, but maybe that  
7 night there wasn't.

8 MR. DOBRZYN: I'll have to take  
9 another look at it, but before the bell  
10 rings I'll try to get through stuff. The  
11 Act 76 was mentioned and I have a little  
12 reading here. What began as an effort by  
13 the company, a company in Appalachia raised  
14 capital by keeping state income taxes  
15 withheld from worker's paychecks had grown  
16 to more than 27 companies in 19 states,  
17 Pennsylvania included, when this book was  
18 first published. The big banks, car makers,  
19 insurers and a host of Canadian, Chinese,  
20 European and Japanese companies all get the  
21 profit by pocketing taxes withheld from  
22 American worker's paychecks.

23 Now, we have a budget in the state  
24 that's not filled. About two or three years  
25 ago Joanie brought in an article from Boston

1 University, a study where possibly a billion  
2 dollars every year is being shortchanged to  
3 the state from sales taxes from restaurants,  
4 alone, so Act 76, maybe they are salivating  
5 how much extra they can keep in their  
6 pockets and, by the way, a Court ruling  
7 allowing industry and just about everybody  
8 else instead of this small homeowner to  
9 profit from this makes it obsolete so we  
10 need a change in theory there.

11 And, you know, one of the things  
12 about self-righteousness and a lot of  
13 theories on taxes, landlords pay property  
14 taxes and tenants pay income taxes towards  
15 the school. Now, I'm not saying that that's  
16 insufficient, but it's always been pointed  
17 out like somebody is getting a free ride and  
18 it's not necessarily the case as much as  
19 what you have to pay for the birds  
20 sometimes, but it hurts.

21 A lot of times people say, well, I  
22 shouldn't pay taxes anymore because I don't  
23 have kids in school, well, if that were the  
24 case it would be tuition and it would be  
25 considerably more expensive because there is

1           hardly a school district in this part of the  
2           state that doesn't put in excess of \$10,000  
3           into each and every child's education, so we  
4           have to control the costs of the school  
5           district more so than the -- and the raise  
6           every year in the white shirt and tie and  
7           retirement at 55. I mean, for some of those  
8           jobs it's got to fall by the wayside and  
9           that's all there is to it. How you are  
10          going to do that, gee, I don't know. And  
11          there is a lot of -- once again, on  
12          unwarranted self-righteousness we all hear  
13          all kinds of theories on health insurance,  
14          well, by the way, 49 percent of all  
15          maternity leaves are paid for by Medicaid so  
16          why should young people get a great big cut  
17          on their insurance because they are more on  
18          to the health care. Excuse me, but  
19          insurance is covering everybody for the same  
20          price and we all take care of each other.  
21          That's what insurance is about not  
22          determining who, you know -- drunken driving  
23          is a choice you make. Buying a big fancy  
24          jewelry store on wheels is a choice you  
25          make, and still you wind up paying anyway.

1 I pay \$900, I have a clean driving record,  
2 and I'll finish it quick, and all I have is  
3 liability, so if some joker with his jewelry  
4 tore on wheels manages to finagle the  
5 accident my way and it usually is their way.  
6 I'm still paying the 900 bucks and nothing  
7 to show for it. Thank you and have a good  
8 night.

9 MS. SCHUMACHER: Marie Schumacher.  
10 I'd like to start with the agenda Items 5-B,  
11 I don't know how you could get anybody to  
12 sign an emergency certificate because this  
13 is not an emergency. These are conditions  
14 that have been existing for years and years.  
15 I can tell you about how long the Engine 10  
16 has had light through the roof. They have  
17 made some -- the only emergency I see is  
18 that you people are going on five week's  
19 vacation and you want it done before  
20 September. I don't really call that an  
21 emergency, I call that poor planning.

22 And 7-A, I really do not think you  
23 should be voting on this exit plan until you  
24 have informed us of your opinions on the  
25 initiatives that have been recommended by

1 the PEL because if they are not met, and  
2 again, Mr. Evans is against at least one of  
3 them because he wants to change the revenues  
4 by cutting out the nuisance fees which, you  
5 know, I don't oppose that, but I'm sure  
6 there are many other items in there that  
7 aren't going to happen, and I think each and  
8 every one of you on this council needs to  
9 tell us by each of -- I think I counted  
10 there are 56 or 57 initiatives whether you  
11 will support them or whether you will ignore  
12 them. There are some still missing from the  
13 last revised recovery plan that would have  
14 benefited the taxpayers but now they  
15 disappeared, but I'm against both of those  
16 being voted in tonight.

17 With respect to your, again, for  
18 your five-week vacation, how would we find  
19 out what is happening -- are you setting  
20 anything up so that -- or will you reconvene  
21 in any of these court cases that are being  
22 kicked around either by visiting judges or  
23 just mechanisms to push it down -- push the  
24 decisions downstream, but say the triple LST  
25 tax goes against the city, will you

1 reconvene?

2 MR. WECHSLER: You are calling it a  
3 vacation. The only thing is we are not  
4 going to meet for five weeks. We are not  
5 quitting being councilmen. I'm still going  
6 to be around. I still take calls. Our  
7 office is still open. To me, it's a --

8 MS. SCHUMACHER: You are taking my  
9 time.

10 MR. WECHSLER: No, if you ask me a  
11 question, you want to give me an answer. We  
12 are taking five meetings off. It's not  
13 vacation. We're not all going to  
14 Switzerland or anything else, we all will be  
15 available.

16 MS. SCHUMACHER: So I still ask how  
17 will we be informed, we have --

18 MR. WECHSLER: The same way you do  
19 every meeting.

20 MS. SCHUMACHER: We are waiting --

21 MR. WECHSLER: We'll put a legal  
22 notice in the paper and we'll have a meeting  
23 if we have to have one. It's the standard  
24 procedure.

25 MS. SCHUMACHER: Will you have a



1 meeting, yes or no, if it comes down that we  
2 get the Court order on the double pension?

3 MR. WECHSLER: If there is  
4 legislation required yes, we will have a  
5 meeting. We will not have a meeting if  
6 there is no legislation.

7 MS. SCHUMACHER: So, otherwise, we  
8 have to depend on the Times-Tribune. Okay,  
9 thank you.

10 MR. WECHSLER: If there is  
11 legislation submitted to council --

12 MS. SCHUMACHER: I heard you.

13 MR. WECHSLER: -- we'll have the  
14 meeting. I don't know --

15 MS. SCHUMACHER: I heard you.

16 MR. WECHSLER: -- why you think  
17 that's not the right answer. That's the  
18 procedure.

19 MS. SCHUMACHER: Now, back on May  
20 19th of 2016 you authorized the mayor and  
21 other appropriate city officials to execute  
22 and enter into a memorandum of understanding  
23 between the City of Scranton and the  
24 National Resource Network to assist in the  
25 city's economic recovery and to expend the

1           sum of \$18,375 pursuant to the terms and  
2           conditions of the memorandum of  
3           understanding. What is has happened on  
4           this, and it's over a year? Is there any  
5           study? Has a study been completed with  
6           recommendations?

7           MR. EVANS: Yeah, we are in the  
8           second phase of that -- we are in the second  
9           phase of that right now and recommendations  
10          coming in --

11          MS. SCHUMACHER: What happened with  
12          the first phase?

13          MR. EVANS: Well, you didn't see  
14          anything from the first phase? There was a  
15          completed study in the first phase.

16          MS. SCHUMACHER: Where is -- is  
17          there a copy of this in council office?

18          MR. EVANS: I'll see if I can put my  
19          hands on that because I think I have  
20          something related to that.

21          MS. SCHUMACHER: And what does the  
22          second phase consist of then?

23          MR. EVANS: Well, you know, a lot of  
24          going on --

25          MS. SCHUMACHER: No, I don't, I

1                   wouldn't be asking.

2                   MR. EVANS: I'll talk more about  
3                   that because I don't want to take your at  
4                   the podium.

5                   MS. SCHUMACHER: Well, I think there  
6                   are other people that would probably be  
7                   interested, including the young lady who  
8                   came to us tonight and it's nice to see  
9                   somebody under 30 here.

10                  And, again, on the Sandone Tire was  
11                  that -- did they ever pay for the  
12                  replacement of any of the fire equipment  
13                  that was lost?

14                  MR. WECHSLER: No, I don't think the  
15                  city ever billed them. The city didn't bill  
16                  them so they didn't pay.

17                  MS. SCHUMACHER: Should we not? Do  
18                  we have a policy on whether or not or --

19                  MR. WECHSLER: I don't think the  
20                  fire department invoices anybody. It's a  
21                  policy that they haven't implemented.

22                  MS. SCHUMACHER: What about the  
23                  street sweeping schedule? Are they off  
24                  schedule?

25                  MR. GAUGHAN: Are they off schedule?

1 As far as I know, they are on schedule.

2 MS. SCHUMACHER: Couldn't tell it's  
3 -- well, the only thing you can tell in my  
4 neighborhood is maybe if they were approved.  
5 The pile that I had swept there has been --  
6 I guess that's how it got redistributed, ut,  
7 I'm not doing it the second time. Thank  
8 you.

9 MR. WECHSLER: Anyone else?

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

11 MOTIONS.

12 MR. WECHSLER: Mr. Perry?

13 MR. PERRY: Yes, just a few. First,  
14 I'd just want to start off with our first  
15 speaker today. You know, I was on the fence  
16 on how to address this. You know, that's  
17 something that we never want to do. We have  
18 Rules of Council and, trust me, the Rules of  
19 Council are not for us, they are for our  
20 citizens, they are for every speaker. A  
21 meeting that's run more orderly and more  
22 organized is a better exchange of  
23 information for everybody involved. I'm  
24 sure we all feel for this lady's plight. We  
25 have discussed this and there has been

1 e-mails back and forth, I'm not going to  
2 speak for Mr. Minora, but I know Mr. Minora  
3 has exchanged e-mails several times. The  
4 allegations that this lady was stating are  
5 criminal, they are awful, but that's what  
6 they are, they are criminal and that's the  
7 enforcement agency that would have to handle  
8 that.

9 You know, I don't envy what  
10 Mr. Wechsler has to do on a week-by-week  
11 basis. It's a fine line of making sure  
12 everybody gets their point across because  
13 everybody here is engaged, anybody who is at  
14 this meeting is engaged, everybody that is  
15 watching this meeting is engaged and  
16 everybody has something important to them  
17 that they want to discuss and it's  
18 Mr. Wechsler's job to make sure that  
19 everybody gets their point across and at the  
20 same time making sure that everybody gets  
21 their point across and has a fair voice.  
22 And, again, you know, Mr. Wechsler has a  
23 very difficult job and I think he does it to  
24 the absolute best of his ability.

25 Getting on with some business, in

1 regard to the memo we sent to Chief Graziano  
2 about the speed detector on Pittston Avenue  
3 we got a response back from him, and I thank  
4 him for that. The plan is still in place to  
5 have that moved to the Birney avenue  
6 location in the upcoming weeks so I'm happy  
7 to hear that.

8 Also, the police have been made  
9 aware and will be doing a study on the 1500  
10 block of Muncy Avenue, if you remember we  
11 brought this up, this petition was sent to  
12 sent to our office last week about some  
13 through traffic that they were hoping to  
14 stop so the police had to have a hand and  
15 they will let us know what their findings  
16 are when they have it.

17 There is also the issue of in West  
18 Side some flooding issues, there has been --  
19 Director Gallagher has been in our office  
20 and he just wanted to make us aware that he  
21 was in contact with the mayor and the water  
22 company to team up and work with a more  
23 permanent solution to that drainage issue  
24 that just keeps getting blocked, which is  
25 behind Mr. Srebro's house. I don't have any

1 other information on that, he just wanted to  
2 stop by our office and let us know that is  
3 something that is still going through and he  
4 is joining with I believe it's Mr. Hall from  
5 American Water Company.

6 We have some other business to  
7 finish up. Ms. Schumacher, you brought up  
8 the 400 block of Clay last week, the answer  
9 to that is restitution will be sought by the  
10 city for any clean up if somebody is  
11 directly convicted with that clean up. So  
12 if they were convicted of actually trashing  
13 the place and just littering than yes, that  
14 would be recouped. Anybody who was arrested  
15 up in that -- for anybody who isn't aware,  
16 the 400 block of Clay I guess they called it  
17 the midseason party or midsummer party that  
18 got out control. DPW had to clean up and  
19 there were some things that were going on.

20 So anybody who was convicted of  
21 other crimes in that area, whether it's  
22 public drunkenness or anything else we are  
23 going to ask the Court to as part of the  
24 sentencing program to include community  
25 service to clean up some of the

1 neighborhoods from that as well, and it  
2 would be my opinion that that community  
3 service would be in and around the Hill  
4 Sections areas since that's where the crimes  
5 took place.

6 And, Ms. Reed, as we discussed if we  
7 can send a follow-up to the police  
8 department on the Rockwell Avenue bridge  
9 opening and the traffic patterns that  
10 changed and just making everybody aware of  
11 the parks in that neighborhood and maybe we  
12 do need to do a slight speed reduction in  
13 that area, but I'm not sure that's what that  
14 study will find.

15 Ms. Hodowanitz, you brought up about  
16 the fire houses and, you know, is there an  
17 ongoing maintenance program. Well, anybody  
18 who has any kind of large assets, I know  
19 even in my business, in the restaurant  
20 business, we have preventative maintenance  
21 programs that go on and that's contracted  
22 out, they go out twice a year, they check  
23 off all their boxes, they make  
24 recommendations on what needs to be fixed,  
25 what's the priority, what can be held off



1 three months, what can wait until next year,  
2 but at least if we get a plan in place that  
3 we can budget or money accordingly.

4 Now, I don't know if we have  
5 something in place like that, but it should  
6 be if it's not, so that's something I am  
7 going to want to follow up with Mr. Bulzoni  
8 in the next week to see do we have a plan in  
9 place for some of our larger assets like the  
10 city building. It would definitely be  
11 beneficial, you know, a penny saved is a  
12 penny earned.

13 What else do we have? My paper got  
14 filled up quick tonight, guys, I'm sorry.  
15 We had a speaker, I just want to address  
16 you, you brought up some things about the  
17 downtown and some of things that we are  
18 doing here, well, the first thing, you know,  
19 one of the ideas of the economic development  
20 was the growth of businesses so we want to  
21 become a business friendly city for two  
22 reasons, businesses drive traffic to our  
23 city, which then feed off our businesses and  
24 that creates growth, or at least that's our  
25 plan; and secondly, businesses create jobs.

1           If you ask me one of the single biggest  
2           issues facing the City of Scranton is that  
3           aren't enough good paying jobs to keep  
4           people grounded. Now, there are jobs here,  
5           but me personally in my field of restaurants  
6           I've had many different jobs I have been in  
7           for decades and not one of them was ever in  
8           the City of Scranton. I worked in Dickson  
9           City, I worked in Wilkes-Barre a lot, right  
10          now I'm out of Hazelton, but there just  
11          wasn't any time that I was there and it's,  
12          unfortunate, I would love to work in the  
13          city that I live in, but it just hasn't  
14          happened for me so I can see, you know, how  
15          that could evolve into other areas and there  
16          is not just enough good paying jobs, so  
17          that's the biggest issue we have.

18                    To get to your point about the  
19                    millennials, what I would recommend, and I  
20                    highly recommend it for all millennials, and  
21                    this goes for Generation X'ers or Y'ers, all  
22                    baby boomers now looking to retire to get  
23                    into a new field is get into school and stay  
24                    in school. Schooling isn't a 12-year-program  
25                    that ends. You should go on and not only do

1           you take your education seriously, but value  
2           it. Always keep learning, always take that  
3           next step because you never know what door  
4           is going to close on you and what door of  
5           education is open for you in the future.

6                     And the next request and piece of  
7           advice I would have for the generation  
8           coming up is get involved with whatever you  
9           are passionate about, whether it's coaching  
10          or umpiring a little league, whether it's  
11          joining a neighborhood group, helping out  
12          with your church, there is many ways and  
13          that builds community. I know you used that  
14          word a couple of times from the podium is  
15          community and that's how you build a  
16          community by all getting involved in our own  
17          little piece, you know, whatever it is, even  
18          it's just umpiring bases for one summer in a  
19          little league game. Just get out and there  
20          and be a part of your community and build  
21          that community.

22                     Are we where we want to be?  
23          Absolutely not. Do we have a plan in place  
24          to get to where we want to be? We hope so,  
25          but in any government it's always a fluid

1 environment. Plans change, we have to adapt  
2 and, you know, we are doing the best we  
3 could, but it was great seeing you here  
4 today and, you know, I hope you come back to  
5 see us again and, you know, that's all I  
6 have for tonight. Thank you.

7 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you, Mr. Perry.  
8 Mr. Rogan?

9 MR. ROGAN: Yes, a couple of  
10 comments primarily on items that were  
11 brought up from the podium tonight.  
12 Mrs. Reed, could we please send a request  
13 to DPW Director Gallagher asking for copies  
14 of the DPW garbage and recycling routes, as  
15 well as ask how those routes were formulated  
16 and when they were formed. Definitely think  
17 it's -- and I'm glad it was brought up as a  
18 reminder, it's something that definitely  
19 needs to be overhauled and over time as the  
20 city changes and the population shifts it's  
21 something that needs to be looked at a few  
22 times and, you know, I'm sure we are not as  
23 efficient as many private businesses, but I  
24 know companies such as UPS and FedEx while  
25 they're in a completely different business

1 from collecting garbage, they have a large  
2 fleet of trucks driving through  
3 neighborhoods on routes that are planned out  
4 very meticulously and it's all done by  
5 computers so there is no reason why we can't  
6 do something similar in the city.

7 Next, a comment was made about  
8 reassessment tonight from a speaker, and  
9 although I disagree with some of what was  
10 brought up I actually do agree with the  
11 solution. I do wish in the State of  
12 Pennsylvania we had assessments done at the  
13 point of sale, we do not, and one item that  
14 was mentioned that was incorrect was if you  
15 purchase a home your assessment does not  
16 change. The only way your assessment can  
17 change currently is if you put a physical  
18 addition on your home or if you appeal your  
19 assessment, they are the only two ways.  
20 Transferring of the property does not change  
21 the tax assessment under the current system  
22 so I just wanted to correct that item as  
23 well.

24 Next, regarding the fire houses, we  
25 did have a caucus with Dave Bulzoni and we

1 spoke a little bit about the condition of  
2 the fire houses and when I talked to the  
3 guys at our fire department the biggest  
4 complaint that I hear is about the condition  
5 of the fire houses, and I did ask  
6 Mr. Bulzoni in the caucus when the last time  
7 meaningful work was done on these fire  
8 houses and his first answer was probably  
9 around the time he was born and the second  
10 answer was around the time I was born, so  
11 1986, which was prior to me being born, was  
12 when they did the last repairs on some of  
13 these properties and prior to that was in  
14 the 60's.

15 So you have had number of fire  
16 houses in the city that really have been  
17 built and left to deteriorate. Take your  
18 own home if you didn't do any basic  
19 maintenance for 30 years the cost and we  
20 have to look -- after these repairs are  
21 done, because it's a large sum of money that  
22 is being spent for these repairs, and they  
23 need to be done for the public safety or the  
24 safety of the guys that are working on our  
25 fire department, but once these repairs are

1 done they need to be maintained the same way  
2 in an individual maintains their home. Like  
3 I stayed, it's a large expenditure and we  
4 need to make sure we are protecting that  
5 investment, but anyone who has been to any  
6 of the fire houses or talked to anyone out  
7 of the department knows that this should  
8 have been done 10, 15, 20 years ago. Again,  
9 it was because of economic issues why it's  
10 been deferred and deferred and you get to  
11 the point where instead of doing a repair  
12 you are doing a complete redo. All of these  
13 roofs, seven out of the eight roofs need to  
14 be completely replaced. That's a very large  
15 expenditure. Again, comparing it for a  
16 regular individual if the roof on your house  
17 goes it's a very expensive proposition and  
18 it's very stressful, you know, that amount  
19 of cost. Multiply that times seven, seven  
20 properties and they're obviously much larger  
21 than single family homes so you could  
22 imagine the cost.

23 So we do have to make sure that we  
24 keep up on the maintenance, and as Mr. Perry  
25 mentioned, it's definitely something that we

1           need to make sure that not only the current  
2           mayor but any future mayors and future  
3           councils as well we need to hold their feet  
4           to the fire for budgeting for ongoing  
5           maintenance. They say a stitch in time  
6           saves nine, and it's true and it's something  
7           that we really need to make sure we apply  
8           to.

9                           And, finally, it was nice to see a  
10           couple of new speakers here today, I forget  
11           your name, but you mentioned about younger  
12           people in the city, and you may not know  
13           this because we have been up here awhile,  
14           but myself and Mr. Gaughan are technically  
15           millinneals. I actually looked it up, I was  
16           born in 1987, so you know, there are a lot  
17           of younger people in the city that are  
18           involved and one of the biggest frustrations  
19           as a -- I still consider myself younger, I  
20           hope I am, one of being younger in the City  
21           of Scranton is brain drain, which people --  
22           young people go through our school system  
23           and they go off to college and they never  
24           come back, or they may go to college here  
25           and then move away for a job and never come



1 back.

2 And two of the biggest problems and  
3 one Mr. Perry hit on already is the lack of  
4 good family sustaining jobs within the area  
5 and that's something that is, you know, it's  
6 not just here in Scranton, that's something  
7 that's happening all throughout the rest of  
8 the country so that's one major issue, but  
9 we do have a lot of positive things that  
10 have been happening in the community for  
11 younger people as well and, you know, just  
12 going through the downtown on a weekend you  
13 can see a lot of the different festivals  
14 that are going on, arts festivals, all types  
15 of different events, which are nice, but we  
16 do have to have that go out into the  
17 neighborhoods as well, not just in the  
18 downtown. So that is all for tonight.  
19 Thank you.

20 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you, Mr. Rogan.  
21 Mr. Evans?

22 MR. EVANS: Thank you. First, a  
23 little business, I'd like make a motion to  
24 send correspondence to Senator John P. Blake  
25 requesting that he review legislation which

1           would enable Scranton to have the option to  
2           follow the state real estate tax laws  
3           thereby allowing the city to have the  
4           opportunity under the Municipal Claim  
5           Process and to streamline the tax sale  
6           process for the City of Scranton.

7           MR. ROGAN: Second.

8           MR. WECHSLER: There's a motion on  
9           the floor and second, on the question? All  
10          those in favor signify by saying aye.

11          MR. PERRY: Aye.

12          MR. EVANS: Aye.

13          MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

14          MR. ROGAN: Aye.

15          MR. WECHSLER: Aye. Opposed? The  
16          eyes have it and so moved.

17          MR. EVANS: Thank you. I was glad  
18          to see the gentleman come and discuss  
19          reassessment. I wish he was still here  
20          because I actually would say to him I  
21          disagree with 95 percent of what he said,  
22          but specifically the \$15 million price tag.  
23          As the former director of the assessment  
24          office and being involved with the  
25          reassessment the last time it was in

1           Scranton, I believe, in my opinion, the real  
2           numbers are closer to \$7.5 million, probably  
3           half of that, because a lot of the data was  
4           already accumulated. Every single property  
5           in the Lackawanna County was inventoried,  
6           every single one, so that's a pretty big  
7           head start, it has to be updated, it's nine  
8           or ten years old, but a lot of that  
9           information is already done so these  
10          inflated numbers on reassessment sort of get  
11          into my craw a little bit.

12                    And to the young lady that spoke as  
13          well, hopefully we'll get your contact  
14          information and talk a little bit more  
15          because I'm very involved in the downtown, I  
16          live downtown, and I think one thing you are  
17          right about is the downtown needs to be more  
18          of a community, and I think that's what  
19          evolving. What you are seeing now with the  
20          millennials, young professionals and empty  
21          nesters moving down as well all the other  
22          senior citizens and etcetera, you are  
23          starting to create a neighborhood that  
24          wasn't here before, and I think it's  
25          important to harness that energy and that

1 process and use it to our advantage because  
2 I think ultimately the downtown is going to  
3 be the answer to a lot of what we need to do  
4 to move forward so that's very, very  
5 important.

6 So a couple of other issues, Marie  
7 asked about NRN, the first part of the NRN  
8 process that plan I'll try to get that for  
9 you, the second part really is the evolution  
10 of Scranton Tomorrow, how Scranton Tomorrow  
11 is going to evolve their organization that's  
12 a lot of what's going on in the NRN process  
13 right now because they were designated as  
14 the first one to be the organization that  
15 will lead the downtown charge, but there is  
16 a lot of changes that will be made in order  
17 for that to happen.

18 A little while ago I asked LIPS to  
19 do a study on the 17 fees that I identified  
20 that may be eliminated or consolidated  
21 totaling approximately \$71,000, so I'd like  
22 to send another letter to Deputy Director  
23 Oleski, who I understand had been tasked  
24 with this, for a status report, and I'd also  
25 like to request that LIPS give me a report

1 on the fees currently being charged by the  
2 department which are required by state or  
3 federal law, and if they are required please  
4 provide the statute that mandates that fee  
5 because if I don't get the information by  
6 budget time I'm going to start eliminating  
7 fees or at least make a motion to eliminate  
8 fees in the budget so I want to make sure  
9 that if they are required by the state or  
10 federal government we don't do that, but if  
11 they don't and are not then they up for  
12 grabs because we have to do everything we  
13 can to start sending a message to the public  
14 that we are finally getting business  
15 friendly and these nuisance taxes and fees  
16 are absolutely ridiculous.

17 On the rental registration, I  
18 visited he county assessment office  
19 yesterday with James Moran, who has been  
20 hired to assist with the rental registration  
21 program and Nancy Krake from the B.A.'s  
22 Office. We are there to review the  
23 documents and field work in conjunction with  
24 the 2007 reassessment. We all felt that the  
25 information found, and we found the boxes,

1 approximately 11 boxes filled with  
2 information based on Scranton properties, we  
3 think there is value there. We think there  
4 is information there that we don't have so  
5 we are going to explore that more and I  
6 think it's going to be very positive as the  
7 rental registration process moves forward.

8 So I'd like to thank Andy Wallace,  
9 who is the county chief of staff, in helping  
10 me coordinating that meeting and review, as  
11 well as John Foley, who is the deputy  
12 director of the assessment office, for all  
13 his help and cooperation and continued  
14 cooperation which we expect as we move  
15 forward. And I'll keep everybody informed  
16 of that project as the project moves forward  
17 as well.

18 I attended a housing appeals board  
19 meeting on Monday at the request of several  
20 neighbors who were attending because of a  
21 nuisance property in the neighborhood that  
22 was slated for demolition. It went well for  
23 them and that was great, I just wanted to  
24 comment on the meeting. I thought it was  
25 well run. I thought the members of the

1 board all formulated fields from involved in  
2 construction or architecture, were  
3 professional, acted professionally, in my  
4 mind made sound decisions and sound  
5 recommendations that night, so that's my two  
6 cents on the Housing appeals Board.

7 On the exit plan, my general feeling  
8 is if the administration sent the  
9 legislation down that I feel is consistent  
10 with the recovery plan, I'll support it. If  
11 they send legislation that is inconsistent  
12 with the recovery plan, I will not. I know  
13 Marie mentioned the fees not being  
14 consistent with it, but we are talking about  
15 \$71,000 and I think that good far outweighs  
16 the bad in that scenario, again, to be more  
17 business friendly. But I said many times  
18 before beyond the plan, there must be  
19 dramatic systemic changes in the day-to-day  
20 operations of city government if we are  
21 going to thrive post Act 47.

22 If we don't, we don't recognize  
23 that, we are going to fail, so big dramatic  
24 changes have to be made.

25 And, finally, I want to acknowledge

1 the passing of Herb Nealon. Herb was a  
2 father of former councilwoman Sherry Nealon  
3 Williams. I had the pleasure of knowing  
4 Herb and his wife Isabella for many, many  
5 years. I was never in his company that he  
6 didn't make me smile and everyone else in  
7 the room. He was a good soul with a big  
8 heart. Herb Nealon will be missed by many  
9 and my deepest, deepest condolences to the  
10 Nealon family. That's all I have tonight.

11 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you, Mr. Evans.  
12 Mr. Gaughan.

13 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you. A few  
14 items. First a few citizen's requests from  
15 the past week. There have been major issues  
16 and we've been getting a lot of e-mails  
17 about a food truck on Pittston Avenue and  
18 Elm Street that residents are upset about.  
19 They think that the food truck is operating  
20 illegally so the city inspector are working  
21 on that along with the chief of police.

22 The 300 block of Foster Street,  
23 which there is a foreclosed home, neighbors  
24 are having serious issues with bushes around  
25 the house which is impeding traffic to and



1 from the farmer's market so we'll send that  
2 again to Licensing and Inspections. I  
3 received several complaints about Little  
4 Oram Street, which is off Main Avenue and  
5 intersects with Powderly Court. Mrs. Reed,  
6 I would like to please request that this be  
7 put on the paving list, the next paving  
8 list, the residents tell me that this street  
9 has not been paved in 41 years and it's in  
10 terrible condition.

11 We received a request from a  
12 gentleman living in the 1500 block of Muncy  
13 Avenue about issues with truck traffic. I  
14 was able to speak with this gentleman on the  
15 phone this week and we did send something to  
16 the city engineer and to the Department of  
17 Public Works so we will keep him updated on  
18 that.

19 I received several complaints about  
20 a property in the 1300 block of Farr Street,  
21 again, bushes blocking visibility up the  
22 hill at the intersection of Farr Street  
23 coming from Main avenue and the whole  
24 property is extremely overgrown so we need  
25 to ask Licensing and Inspections if this

1 property is part of the foreclosure register  
2 program.

3 I would like in September, I know I  
4 have made this request, but I hope that we  
5 can set up a caucus with ABM and NDC for a  
6 progress update on the parking garages.  
7 It's been I think, I believe a year and a  
8 half now, so I think we need an update on  
9 that.

10 Also, we are still working on rules  
11 of the park signage of Robinson Park and  
12 other parks throughout the city, still not  
13 sure if we need legislation to do this, but  
14 we are working to get that completed and  
15 hopefully we will have that ready to go in  
16 September.

17 Regarding the hiring of  
18 Mr. Abrahamsen as special counsel to the  
19 city, I would like to request that a letter  
20 be sent to Roseann Novembrino, the city  
21 controller, asking her for her opinion on  
22 whether or not that position should have  
23 been bid out. She did say in the July 6  
24 Scranton Times article that she was going to  
25 look into the issue so I would like that in

1 writing if possible.

2 Over the past few weeks there have  
3 been several comments, concerns and  
4 questions brought about the dissolution of  
5 the Scranton sewer authority, an ordinance  
6 that this council voted on back in December  
7 of 2016. Myself and Councilman Wechsler  
8 voted against it for several reasons. Over  
9 the past few months there have been  
10 continually been questions about whether or  
11 not the Scranton Sewer Authority should, in  
12 fact, exist. We also just voted on using  
13 \$19 million from the sale of the Sewer  
14 Authority from the proceeds to pay down  
15 debt. I voted against that because my fear  
16 is that we may have to pay that back at some  
17 point. My other fear is that this whole  
18 thing was not done properly, and I think  
19 legitimate questions have been brought up by  
20 the public and the newspaper and by myself  
21 over the past few weeks.

22 I asked Solicitor Minora to look  
23 into the issue to review the effect that a  
24 Pennsylvania state statute 53 Pa. C.S.A.  
25 4612 would have on distribution of funds to

1 the city following the asset sale to  
2 Pennsylvania American Water by the Scranton  
3 Sewer Authority. I'm not going to read  
4 through the whole memo issued by Mr. Minora,  
5 but there were several things that he said  
6 that I would like to take note of.

7 In the memo Mr. Minora says that it  
8 should be noted here that the remaining  
9 Scranton Sewer Authority function, that is,  
10 completing the eminent domain actions, could  
11 have been taken in-house by the city and  
12 still can be at any time. I think it would  
13 have been a cleaner way to transfer the  
14 funds of the sale to the city if the  
15 Scranton Sewer authority had been  
16 terminated. My reasoning for this is a  
17 conflict between 53 Pa. C.S.A. 5607 (d) and  
18 Statute 5612.

19 I would like to send a letter to the  
20 mayor asking the following: Why hasn't the  
21 mayor filed a termination certificate that  
22 was passed by this council back in December  
23 of 2016 with the Office of the Secretary of  
24 the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and  
25 shouldn't the city have assumed the easement

1 issues and taken it in-house as Mr. Minora  
2 has suggested?

3 I looked back on the ordinance that  
4 was passed in the December of 2016  
5 dissolving or given the city the right to  
6 dissolve the Authority and I look at few  
7 sections that were a cause for concern.  
8 Section one says, "The city approves the  
9 termination certificate submitted by the  
10 Sewer Authority to terminate it's existence  
11 following the satisfaction and discharge of  
12 all Scranton Sewer Authority bonds by the  
13 Scranton Sewer authority.

14 Section II. The city hereby agrees  
15 to assume liability for all claims  
16 outstanding against the Scranton Sewer  
17 Authority following the discharge of all  
18 Scranton Sewer Authority bonds and all other  
19 Scranton Sewer Authority indebtedness, which  
20 I believe that has all taken place.

21 And, finally, Section III, council  
22 hereby authorize the mayor and other  
23 appropriate city officials to file a copy of  
24 the approved termination certificate with  
25 the Secretary of the Commonwealth and upon

1 receipt of the approved termination  
2 certificate from the Secretary of the  
3 Commonwealth authorizes that it be filed in  
4 the Office of the Recorder of deeds of  
5 Lackawanna County.

6 So my basic question is why hasn't  
7 this been done yet? Now, I think many of  
8 these questions probably will be answered in  
9 the court case that's ongoing because these  
10 questions have been raised, but I would like  
11 to know why the termination certificate was  
12 not sent to the Office of Secretary of the  
13 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania by the mayor  
14 when this occurred because I think that all  
15 of us were under the assumption or at least  
16 I was under the assumption at that time even  
17 though I voted against this for other  
18 reasons that once we -- this council passed  
19 this legislation that the Sewer Authority  
20 Board and Sewer Authority as it used to  
21 exist would have been, in fact, been  
22 terminated. And that is all I have for this  
23 week. Thank you.

24 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you,  
25 Mr. Gaughan. I do want to make a brief

1 comment about the events of this evening.  
2 That is something that I never, ever, ever  
3 wanted to do as a councilman, especially as  
4 council president. The question of whether  
5 we can take insults and abuse is not a  
6 question, we take it every week. All we ask  
7 is that people really keep their comments to  
8 a five-minute rule. It's courtesy. All we  
9 ask is that you can pretty much say whatever  
10 you care to say here, we don't really  
11 restrict comment at all. The person who  
12 spoke tonight on reassessment is not from  
13 the City of Scranton. Technically, we  
14 probably could not have let him speak, but  
15 we all are concerned about assessment and we  
16 want to hear people's opinions on it and  
17 that will probably happen more as we move  
18 towards the referendum, but I don't think  
19 that it's proper for someone to just  
20 disregard the Rules of Council. The rules  
21 of Council have been established, they have  
22 been voted on, they have been Rules of  
23 Council that were not changed by this  
24 council. They have been established by for  
25 years and I just think it's common courtesy

1 to follow the rules. That's what I was  
2 taught as a child, follow the rules. I  
3 don't know why someone would think that the  
4 rules don't apply to them. That's part of  
5 the problem with America today, people think  
6 rules don't apply to them. It's five-minute  
7 speaking rule, we give you a courtesy of an  
8 extra minute to finish your thought, all we  
9 ask is that you follow that rule.

10 I didn't have any disagreement on  
11 what the speaker was saying. We have been  
12 trying to work on this problem for a couple  
13 of years. This particular person, as was  
14 said, just does not like the answers they we  
15 are providing. She probably has legitimate  
16 concerns. If it is abuse of the elderly,  
17 then take that claim to the Department of  
18 Aging, take that claim to Lackawanna County  
19 Department of Aging. City council is not  
20 the catch all or the do all for everyone's  
21 problems here. We are a focal point for  
22 people to come and get the problems out  
23 there, of course, we are. That's what we  
24 are here for. All councilmen here we take  
25 everybody's concerns that come to that



1 podium and we try to work them as best we  
2 can. This person does not like the answers  
3 that are being provided.

4 I'll be honest with you, I'm  
5 embarrassed that I had to call the Scranton  
6 Police Department to come here this evening.  
7 I'm embarrassed. I'm embarrassed myself  
8 that I could not get someone to understand  
9 the rules. It's a basic fact and, like I  
10 said, I was taught, my parents taught me to  
11 be a rule follower and that's what I am.  
12 For the majority of people that come to  
13 council they follow the rules. Five minutes  
14 is a long time to speak and if you are going  
15 to make a prepared statement rehearse it at  
16 home and time yourself. That's all you have  
17 to do. We do not regulate comment here for  
18 the most part. It's unfortunate. I  
19 apologize. I apologize to the citizens of  
20 Scranton that I had to call a recess in the  
21 meeting and have someone stop their comment.  
22 It's just something that they should be  
23 prepared to come and speak for five minutes  
24 and be done and, once again, I apologize to  
25 the citizens of Scranton that I had to do

1           that.

2                       And in terms of comments made by the  
3           council's vacation. Number one, it's not a  
4           vacation. The office is open, we are still  
5           taking calls, we are still attending  
6           meetings, we are still doing all of the  
7           things that council people do. If people  
8           think that council is only a Thursday night  
9           meeting from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. they are  
10          100 percent wrong. Every night we do  
11          something for the city. Every night we are  
12          either at a meeting, taking calls. I work a  
13          full-time job like everyone else does, the  
14          first thing I do when I get home is open my  
15          e-mail, check my e-mail. Check my e-mail on  
16          my personal account, check my e-mail on my  
17          city account and we respond to those  
18          e-mails, plus taking calls I get. Same with  
19          everyone here, it's not just me, it's not  
20          just Mr. Gaughan, it's not anybody else, we  
21          are constantly being approached for help and  
22          we really do try to help as best we can with  
23          every situation so I find it irresponsible  
24          to say that we are not going to be here and  
25          I'm really find it to not make any sense

1           that the process is if legislation comes  
2           down we will have the meeting and we'll  
3           always have meeting, and if someone is on  
4           vacation if we have three councilmen we will  
5           have the meeting, but I'd like the citizens  
6           of Scranton to know that we are still are  
7           serving the public even though we are, per  
8           se, on vacation. We are just not here on  
9           Thursday night and everybody will have to  
10          find something else to do.

11                         In terms of Mr. Gaughan's questions  
12           about parking, I believe that there is going  
13           to be a general meeting of the Parking  
14           Authority that I will attend by ABM while we  
15           are on break, but if that does not happen we  
16           will have them come in in September, and I  
17           was happy to see that they made progress on  
18           the elevators because that's a huge problems  
19           for the people that live in the city.

20                         And in terms of the comments made by  
21           Ms. Johns, I'm glad that you came here and  
22           we are here every Thursday except for the  
23           next five weeks, we'll be back in September,  
24           but I will give you a call while we are off  
25           and just speak to you and see what kind of

1 things you are interested in and maybe we  
2 can put you in the right direction to go in  
3 the neighborhood group or in a community  
4 group like Scranton Tomorrow or there is a  
5 lot of organizations that will be anxious to  
6 have someone, you know, of you intelligence  
7 to be a part of that and we are always  
8 waiting for new faces.

9 There are some segments of our  
10 community that are underserved and we talked  
11 about this, I ran for office a couple of  
12 times, lost once too many times, but the  
13 important thing is people get involved and I  
14 tell people and I have spoke to your  
15 community and lot of times and said you have  
16 to come out as a force, you have to have a  
17 group of people who have some power, that's  
18 where you have power, and you maybe you are  
19 the leader that gets that group together.  
20 That would be awesome. So thank you for  
21 coming this evening.

22 Just one other thing, one of the  
23 things that we have been hearing about is a  
24 problem on Route 307 by Seymour Avenue, we  
25 had a citizen send us some questions about

1 than. Director Gallagher has spoken with  
2 that person, I guess 307 is going to be  
3 repaved in the next couple of weeks and as a  
4 part of that repair they are going to be  
5 responsible for fixing the drainage part,  
6 all of the drainage on East Mountain so this  
7 is something that the city is aware of. I  
8 will contact the -- I'm not sure of his  
9 involvement in it, but our pave cut  
10 inspector is involved or the state, I'm not  
11 sure, but we will stand behind it because it  
12 is a dangerous situation. And that's all I  
13 have at this time.

14 MS. REED: 5-B. FOR INTRODUCTION -  
15 A RESOLUTION - AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND  
16 OTHER APPROPRIATE CITY OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE  
17 AND ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH MAR-PAUL CO.,  
18 INC. FOR GENERAL TRADES SERVICES FOR THE  
19 CITY OF SCRANTON FIRE DEPARTMENT FACILITY  
20 IMPROVEMENT PROJECT FOR LICENSED GENERAL AND  
21 PRIME CONTRACTORS. (EMERGENCY CERTIFICATE  
22 ATTACHED).

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

1 MR. ROGAN: So moved.

2 MR. EVANS: Second.

3 MR. WECHSLER: On the question?

4 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, on the question.

5 I'm not opposed to this project. I  
6 understand from being in the caucus and  
7 talking with Mr. Bulzoni and one of the  
8 contractors that's going to do the work that  
9 there are maintenance needs that need to be  
10 completed on some of the fire houses  
11 throughout the city. My no vote tonight is  
12 going to be procedural one. As a rule of  
13 thumb, I believe that council should have  
14 when a resolution comes before us two weeks  
15 to review that legislation. I don't feel  
16 that I had enough time to review all of the  
17 backup material. I appreciate Mr. Bulzoni  
18 and Mr. Marsenkevitch coming into the  
19 caucus, but I don't think that their exists  
20 a major emergency here. Maybe an  
21 inconvenience, but not an emergency that  
22 would allow a certificate to be attached, so  
23 from a procedural standpoint as a rule of  
24 the thumb I would prefer two weeks to  
25 review-- be able to review legislation, and

1 be able to ask questions and things of that  
2 nature. So, again, from a procedural  
3 standpoint I will be voting "no" to move  
4 this along in one night. Thank you.

5 MR. WECHSLER: Yes, on the question,  
6 I take a little bit of a different outlook  
7 than Mr. Gaughan does, I would rather be in  
8 charge of an emergency that I know when I  
9 can declare the emergency as in this case.  
10 I'm very familiar with the problems that are  
11 at Engine 10 and all of the other fire  
12 stations in the city, I think an emergency  
13 that will be decided by outside source will  
14 be perhaps the roof collapses or gets a hole  
15 in and have to shut down a fire station, so  
16 I'm happy approve an emergency that I know  
17 is happening than one that I can't see out  
18 into the future.

19 MR. EVANS: On the question, I think  
20 what was important tonight was that  
21 Mr. Bulzoni came. If he didn't come I think  
22 I would have probably voted "no" on this  
23 because when we have to do this, we have an  
24 emergency certificate, it's very, very  
25 important that the administration has





1 the city controller, and in order for city  
2 council to pass any type of legislation in  
3 one night such as in this situation, that  
4 emergency certificate I just read has to be  
5 signed by both the mayor and the city  
6 controller. So I know we mention emergency  
7 certificates every now and again, but just  
8 to explain it so the public understands what  
9 it actually is.

10 MR. PERRY: Yes, on the question.  
11 We have, as we all know, many needs in our  
12 fire houses and the utmost is the roof,  
13 without the roof you don't have anything,  
14 you don't have the building, nothing, and so  
15 we need to get these done yesterday. That's  
16 when t they needed to be fixed. The bid  
17 process took place, there was a winner  
18 awarded, the contract got signed, everything  
19 got finalized. It wasn't ready to go for us  
20 last week, it's ready to go for us this  
21 week. Our options are (a) wait until  
22 September to go through this legislation,  
23 which would be a two-week process, then  
24 other two weeks to get the assessment done  
25 and then we are talking about October we are

1           being done on six roofs, and which you could  
2           run into any type of -- anybody who has a  
3           construction background knows that once you  
4           start doing roofs in October you might be  
5           able to get one done, but you have to get  
6           them all done before winter.

7                     And Option B is what this emergency  
8           certificate represents getting this done and  
9           putting in front of us today with the  
10          certificate attached so that this work can  
11          get started as soon as possible, which now  
12          we are talking about the end of August or  
13          actually middle of August when work can  
14          begin.

15                    So, I mean, it's just the loss of  
16          property with having these fire houses go  
17          through another winter to me it's just too  
18          great. I would like to get these all done  
19          before winter and, you know, this would be  
20          the best way possible. Could it have been  
21          done otherwise? Maybe, but then we are now  
22          counting on circumstances out of our control  
23          as far as weather goes, so I'll be voting  
24          "yes" for this.

25                    MR. WECHSLER: All those in favor of

1 introduction signify by saying aye.

2 MR. PERRY: Aye.

3 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

4 MR. EVANS: Aye.

5 MR. WECHSLER: Aye. Opposed?

6 MR. GAUGHAN: No.

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

9 MR. EVANS: I make a motion to  
10 suspend the rules and move Item 5-B to  
11 Seventh Order to be considered for final  
12 passage based on the attached emergency  
13 certificate.

14 MR. ROGAN: Second.

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

17 MR. PERRY: Aye.

18 MR. EVANS: Aye.

19 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

20 MR. WECHSLER: Aye. Opposed?

21 MR. GAUGHAN: No.

22 MR. WECHSLER: The ayes have it and  
23 so moved.

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

1 SEVENTH ORDER. 7-A. FOR  
2 CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMITTEE ON RULES -  
3 FOR ADOPTION - FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO. 111,  
4 2017 - ADOPTING AND IMPLEMENTING THE ACT 47  
5 EXIT PLAN FOR THE CITY OF SCRANTON PURSUANT  
6 TO THE FINANCIALLY DISTRESSED MUNICIPALITIES  
7 ACT; AND AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR OF THE CITY  
8 OF SCRANTON TO ISSUE AN ORDER DIRECTING THE  
9 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACT 47 EXIT PLAN WHICH  
10 WILL BECOME EFFECTIVE UPON ADOPTION ATTACHED  
11 HERETO AS EXHIBIT "A" IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE  
12 PROVISIONS OF 53 Pa. C.S.A. §11701.245, THE  
13 MUNICIPALITIES FINANCIAL RECOVERY ACT.

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

17 MR. ROGAN: Second.

18 MR. WECHSLER: On the question?

19 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, on the question.  
20 Reading through the three-year exit plan, we  
21 have had quite a long, long time to take a  
22 look at it and I have several comments and  
23 concerns.

24 Number one, which I have stated here  
25 before, and this is included in the

1 three-year exit plan, is the amount of money  
2 that is going to be put aside for the storm  
3 water management. I have objected to this  
4 before. The plan calls for \$500,000 be put  
5 aside, I think the city administration is  
6 seriously underselling storm water  
7 management. I think more money needed to be  
8 put aside for that cost, which at this point  
9 we don't know because the study has not been  
10 completed yet, so that's one concern.

11 My second concern, and I mentioned  
12 this at the public hearing that took place  
13 with the Pennsylvania Economy League, is on  
14 page -- or Chapter 9, page seven, and this  
15 is where the plan calls for -- the  
16 three-year exit plan calls for the  
17 allocation of administrative  
18 responsibilities and I would just like to  
19 read a section of this recommendation. It  
20 says that, "The fundamental objective of the  
21 operation of the office of the business  
22 administration should remain the  
23 administration of the yearly budget and  
24 completion of the audit on a timely basis.

25 The business administrator's office

1           presently assumes responsibility for  
2           departmental initiatives outside of its  
3           administrative Code responsibilities. To  
4           achieve the identified financial management  
5           objectives, various city department will  
6           assume greater responsibility for direct  
7           department initiatives such as requests for  
8           proposal preparation and execution to the  
9           greatest extent as allowed under the Home  
10          Rule Charter and Administrative Code."

11                         And I mentioned this at the public  
12          hearing, this recommendation in and of  
13          itself is very concerning to me if we look  
14          at this plan from the standpoint of the  
15          operation of the city hall over the past  
16          three and a half years. The fact that there  
17          had to be a recommendation in the three-year  
18          exit plan that department heads should do  
19          their job is extremely concerning, that the  
20          business administrator has taken on all of  
21          this responsibility, that he presently  
22          assumes responsibility for departmental  
23          initiatives outside of his Administrative  
24          Code responsibilities. I don't get it. I  
25          mentioned this a few weeks ago and I still

1 don't understand it.

2 Again, the fact that that has to be  
3 recommendation tells me one of two things:  
4 There is either -- he hired the wrong people  
5 as department heads, number one; and number  
6 two, there is no leadership so you had to  
7 have had PEL tell the mayor that he has to  
8 have his department heads perform their  
9 duties. I don't get it. So that's one  
10 concern.

11 Second concern, and I brought this  
12 up before, is with the arbitration issue  
13 that's currently going to be decided soon  
14 from what I understand over the retiree age  
15 discrepancy in the code, and I'll read from  
16 the three-year exit plan in a second, but  
17 basically this may cripple the pension  
18 system even further than it already is. The  
19 city is challenging an interpretation of the  
20 adopted city ordinances that govern the  
21 required age for retirement plan  
22 participants. There are inconsistent  
23 provisions for the age of retirement  
24 eligibility for the police and firefighter  
25 pension plans. These inconsistencies are

1 the subject of legal action by the -- I  
2 believe by the police and fire department  
3 union seeking to remove a stated retirement  
4 age and allow retirement solely upon years  
5 of service. The elimination of an age  
6 requirement will allow for a large number of  
7 retirees in the near future. Such an  
8 increase is not factored in to the current  
9 actuarial assumptions, valuations, and  
10 annual funding requirements and may result  
11 in a large increase in the city's annual  
12 required obligation which it can ill afford.  
13 Again, this in and of itself is extremely  
14 concerning. We are talking about putting  
15 millions of dollars into a Pennsylvania  
16 system when currently there is a case before  
17 a arbiter of whether or not they are going  
18 to remove the retirement age required, so in  
19 the future we have could have this  
20 three-year exit plan, if they win in  
21 arbitration we could be looking down the  
22 pike at a large number of retirees and we're  
23 right back where we started. So, again,  
24 extremely concerning.

25 Another thing that popped out to me,



1 and I have spoken about this for the last  
2 three and a half year, is when you look at  
3 the numbers in this three-year exit plan, 75  
4 percent of city expenditures are employee  
5 compensation and benefits. Over the  
6 three-year exit plan this number fluctuates  
7 but not a lot. We are still around in 2020  
8 about 75 percent of our expenditures for  
9 employee compensation and benefits. I don't  
10 know how this is sustainable. I have been  
11 talking about this now for three and a half  
12 years, and I'll read from the three-year  
13 exit plan.

14 It says, "The bottom line is the  
15 restoration of the city's fiscal health  
16 cannot be achieved without controlling it's  
17 future personnel expenditures, workers'  
18 compensation, and pension benefits.

19 Personnel expenditures for active employees  
20 and retirees represent the majority of the  
21 city's general fund operating expenses and  
22 rise annually during the review period. The  
23 level of cash compensation and benefits is  
24 offered within the context of the city's  
25 weak tax base. The city cannot adequately

1 address it's structural operating deficits  
2 without diligently managing the entire  
3 employee compensation package it offers it's  
4 employees so that the growth in employee  
5 compensation and employee benefits more  
6 closely tracks the city's revenue growth."

7 And I'll say it once again, I think  
8 one of the major mistakes that has been made  
9 over the last three and a half year was in  
10 2015 with the renegotiated police and fire  
11 contracts. I don't know that -- we may have  
12 made some progress, but I don't know if we  
13 went far enough there in regards to  
14 expenditures and how much money we were  
15 actually going to save.

16 Another concern of mine is Chapter 6  
17 page two. The Court may recommend that the  
18 city engage in discussions with it's  
19 collective bargaining unit to enter into a  
20 pension benefit memorandum of understanding.  
21 This memorandum should control the timing  
22 and the limit the amount of any pension  
23 benefit enhancements for at least ten years  
24 beginning in 2017. Moreover, any disputes  
25 between the bargaining units and the city

1 that could have material adverse impact on  
2 the funding of the pension plans as  
3 estimated or calculated by the actuary to  
4 the plans should be adjudicated or resolved  
5 prior to insignificant contributions being  
6 made from the sewer sale proceeds to the  
7 pension funds.

8 My concern here, and I don't know if  
9 it was possible, is that, you know, maybe  
10 this should have already been accomplished  
11 when the police and fire contracts were  
12 being negotiated, or at least should have  
13 been brought up that there should have been  
14 a pension benefit memoranda of  
15 understanding. I don't know if it's going  
16 to be possible to do that in the future but  
17 I think it might be difficult.

18 My last concern is Chapter 7, page  
19 two. As it was brought up tonight, the  
20 National Resource Network is developing a  
21 strategic plan that focuses on revitalizing  
22 the city's downtown. One of the  
23 recommendations within that plan, as  
24 mentioned in the three-year exit plan, is  
25 for the City of Scranton to increase its

1 capacity for economic development by  
2 designating a current or a new staff member  
3 to be the city's point person for  
4 implementation of the downtown plan. Mayor  
5 Courtright designated the Business  
6 Administrator Dave Bulzoni temporarily as  
7 the city's point person to be assisted by  
8 the deputy director of OECD. The plan says  
9 that Mayor Courtright has indicated a  
10 willingness to designate a permanent  
11 economic point person, but currently no one  
12 in the administration can assume those  
13 duties full-time. As for the full-time city  
14 economic development point person, it is  
15 anticipated that the partnership with  
16 Scranton Tomorrow will bolster the city's  
17 internal economic development capacity.

18 I had several concerns based on what  
19 was indicated in the plan. First of all, I  
20 think based on what's already occurred the  
21 city is not following one of the previous  
22 recommendations that I mentioned about  
23 allocation of the administrative  
24 responsibilities. Again, in the  
25 recommendation it says to take away

1           responsibilities from what other people in  
2           city hall should be doing away from the  
3           business administrator. Well, we are  
4           designating Mr. Bulzoni as the temporary  
5           point person for this project. Again, it  
6           does not make sense.

7                         We have an Office of Economic and  
8           Community Development. Why is the director  
9           of OECD not heading up or being the point  
10          person for this whole project? That's  
11          something that I don't understand. And it  
12          also says here within the exit plan that  
13          challenges remain to implement economic  
14          development initiatives such as the  
15          continued lack of capacity in terms of the  
16          designated economic development point person  
17          in city government other than the city  
18          business administrator.

19                        So I would like to know, and maybe  
20          we can send a letter, why the director of  
21          OECD is not the point person. I would  
22          assume that that would be the duties of the  
23          department head, and that's why the position  
24          is there and I would think that the job in  
25          it's very nature is supposed to be a point

1 person for these separate projects.

2 The other concern here, and I'll be  
3 very brief on this one, is I understand why  
4 to continue to develop the downtown, the  
5 allocate resources there, but I do think  
6 based on what I read in the three-year exit  
7 plan and I would have read so far from the  
8 National Resource Network, we are not doing  
9 enough to focus on the neighborhoods. The  
10 downtown is developing, there is a  
11 residential community, but I think we need  
12 to put more of a focus, the Office of  
13 Economic and Community Development needs to  
14 put much more of a focus on our  
15 neighborhoods. There needs to be more of a  
16 concerted effort there. And that is all I  
17 have. Thank you.

18 MR. EVANS: On the question, just to  
19 get back to some history, I don't disagree  
20 with Councilman Gaughan's concerns, they are  
21 all very, very real concerns, but the  
22 decision to exit is made by PEL, not the  
23 City of Scranton. They determine if we are  
24 exiting. If we don't -- there are three  
25 options we can make. Disincorporation of

1 the municipality, and we don't meet the  
2 criteria for disincorporation. Existence of  
3 fiscal emergency, we don't meet the  
4 definition for fiscal emergency, so the only  
5 other option we have is to exit. Now, do I  
6 agree with some of the things in the exit  
7 plan and I that's certainly appropriate, but  
8 that at this point is our only choice  
9 because we don't have the say. It is our  
10 plan, we can put up or down, but PEL  
11 determines if the city exits Act 47. That's  
12 all I have.

13 MR. WECHSLER: Yes, in regards to a  
14 few of the comments that Mr. Gaughan made, I  
15 voted for the police and fire contracts, the  
16 reason why I voted for them was to, number  
17 one, it gave us a quiet contract period  
18 while we were undergoing our efforts to be  
19 in recovery. It did result in some  
20 modifications to police contract and the  
21 fire contract that are having positive  
22 results. The amount of the compensation  
23 claims that were taking place earlier are  
24 greatly reduced. The increased  
25 contributions that both the fire and the

1 police are making a difference in our  
2 pension. I believe when this council and  
3 the administration came in, the funding  
4 balance of the pension was around \$39  
5 million and right now it sits at \$58  
6 million. That's because of increased  
7 contributions, better management of the plan  
8 and more of a focus on making sure that it  
9 performs well.

10 So I am concerned, as Mr. Gaughan  
11 is, with the state of the lawsuit, but in  
12 terms of voting for that contract and  
13 providing us labor peace for these three  
14 years I think were most important to make  
15 sure we get out of our distressed status.

16 And I'm not sure in regards to Ms.  
17 Aebli, who is the OECD director, she is paid  
18 with federal funds so I'm not sure if  
19 actually she is allowed to do other economic  
20 development work that don't include  
21 non-federal money, I'm not sure.

22 But taking a different approach on  
23 this, I come from private industry where you  
24 give people responsibility that can get  
25 things done. Mr. Bulzoni has proven that he



1 is a responsible person and he is able to  
2 manage the business office as well as  
3 contribute to other projects. If it wasn't  
4 for Mr. Bulzoni, he is our main point of  
5 contact for information for council mostly  
6 on every project, and I agree with  
7 Mr. Gaughan other managers should be  
8 stepping up, but at this time right now the  
9 only guy stepping up to get this work done  
10 is Dave Bulzoni, and I count on him, and he  
11 is a wealth of knowledge and I'm happy with  
12 -- whenever I see a project that Dave is  
13 taking the lead on I'm very happy to see  
14 that. I have to remember where I was. On  
15 the question we did. Roll call, please?

16 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Perry.

17 MR. PERRY: Yes.

18 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

19 MR. ROGAN: Yes.

20 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

21 MR. EVANS: Yes.

22 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

23 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

24 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

25 MR. WECHSLER: Yes. I hereby

1 declare Item 7-A legally and lawfully  
2 adopted.

3 MS. REED: 7-B. FOR CONSIDERATION  
4 BY THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS - FOR  
5 ADOPTION - RESOLUTION NO. 178, 2017 -  
6 AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND OTHER APPROPRIATE  
7 CITY OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE AND ENTER INTO THE  
8 SIXTH AMENDMENT TO THE FEDERAL AID BRIDGE  
9 PROJECT AGREEMENT NO. 041222 BETWEEN THE  
10 COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA ("DEPARTMENT")  
11 AND THE CITY OF SCRANTON ("MUNICIPALITY")  
12 FOR THE PURPOSE OF INCREASING CONSTRUCTION  
13 FUNDING AND UPDATING STANDARD FEDERAL  
14 PROVISIONS OF THE ROCKWELL AVENUE BRIDGE  
15 PROJECT.

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

19 MR. GAUGHAN: As Chairperson for the  
20 Committee on Public Works, I recommend final  
21 passage of Item 7-B.

22 MR. ROGAN: Second.

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

25 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Perry.

1 MR. PERRY: Yes.

2 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

3 MR. ROGAN: Yes.

4 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

5 MR. EVANS: Yes.

6 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

7 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

8 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

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

12 MS. REED: 7-C.FOR CONSIDERATION BY  
13 THE COMMITTEE ON RULES - FOR ADOPTION -  
14 RESOLUTION NO. 179, 2017 - AMENDING  
15 RESOLUTION NO. 133, 2017 ENTITLED  
16 "AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND OTHER APPROPRIATE  
17 CITY OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE AND ENTER INTO A  
18 CONTRACT WITH PMA MANAGEMENT CORP. FOR CITY  
19 OF SCRANTON SELF-INSURED WORKERS'  
20 COMPENSATION AND HEART AND LUNG CLAIMS THIRD  
21 PARTY ADMINISTRATION FOR A PERIOD OF THREE  
22 (3) YEARS FROM APRIL 1, 2017 THROUGH MARCH  
23 31, 2020" TO INCLUDE EXHIBIT "C" TO THE  
24 CONTRACT.

25 MR. WECHSLER: As Chairperson for

1 the Committee on Rules, I recommend final  
2 passage of Item 7-C.

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-C legally and lawfully  
17 adopted.

18 If anyone would like to address  
19 council on the emergency legislation, you  
20 need to do so at this time.

21 MS. REED: 7-D - FORMERLY 5-B - FOR  
22 CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC  
23 SAFETY - FOR ADOPTION - RESOLUTION NO. 180  
24 2017 - AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND OTHER  
25 APPROPRIATE CITY OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE AND

1 ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH MAR-PAUL CO.,  
2 INC. FOR GENERAL TRADES SERVICES FOR THE  
3 CITY OF SCRANTON FIRE DEPARTMENT FACILITY  
4 IMPROVEMENT PROJECT FOR LICENSED GENERAL AND  
5 PRIME CONTRACTORS. (EMERGENCY CERTIFICATE  
6 ATTACHED).

7 MR. WECHSLER: What is the  
8 recommendation of the Chairperson for the  
9 Committee on Public Safety?

10 MR. PERRY: As Chairperson for the  
11 Committee on Public Safety, I recommend  
12 final passage of Item 7-D.

13 MR. ROGAN: Second.

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

16 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Perry.

17 MR. PERRY: Yes.

18 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

19 MR. ROGAN: Yes.

20 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

21 MR. EVANS: Yes.

22 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

23 MR. GAUGHAN: No.

24 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

25 MR. WECHSLER: Yes. I hereby

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declare Item 7-D 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.

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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

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CATHENE S. NARDOZZI, RPR  
OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER