

SCRANTON CITY COUNCIL MEETING

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HELD:

Thursday, November 2, 2017

LOCATION:

Council Chambers

Scranton City Hall

340 North Washington Avenue

Scranton, Pennsylvania

CATHENE S. NARDOZZI, RPR - OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER

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CITY OF SCRANTON COUNCIL:

JOSEPH WECHSLER, PRESIDENT

PATRICK ROGAN, VICE-PRESIDENT

WAYNE EVANS

WILLIAM GAUGHAN

TIM PERRY

LORI REED, CITY CLERK

KATHY CARRERA, ASSISTANT CITY CLERK

AMIL MINORA, ESQUIRE - SOLICITOR

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

3 MR. WECHSLER: Roll call, please.

4 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Perry.

5 MR. PERRY: Here.

6 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

7 MR. ROGAN: Here.

8 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

9 MR. EVANS: Here.

10 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

11 MR. GAUGHAN: Here.

12 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

13 MR. WECHSLER: Here. Dispense with
14 the reading of the minutes.

15 MS. REED: THIRD ORDER. 3-A. TAX
16 ASSESSOR'S RESULTS REPORTS FOR HEARING DATES
17 HELD OCTOBER 11, OCTOBER 18, OCTOBER 19 AND
18 OCTOBER 25, 2017.

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

21 MS. REED: 3-B. MINUTES OF THE
22 SCRANTON-LACKAWANNA HEALTH AND WELFARE
23 AUTHORITY'S REGULAR MEETING HELD JUNE 15,
24 2017.

25 MR. WECHSLER: Are there any

1 comments? If not, received and filed.

2 MS. REED: 3-C. SINGLE TAX OFFICE
3 CITY FUNDS DISTRIBUTED COMPARISON REPORT
4 2016-2017 YEAR TO DATE OCTOBER 31, 2017.

5 MR. WECHSLER: Are there any
6 comments? If not, received and filed. Do
7 any council members have announcements at
8 this time?

9 MR. PERRY: Yes, I have one. It is
10 for the Hallock's Heroes. Again, I've been
11 reading this for the last couple of weeks,
12 it's a topic near and dear to my heart.
13 Chris Hallock is diagnosed with a rare form
14 of leukemia and the FOP is having a
15 fundraiser for him and his family. It's
16 going to be Saturday, November 18, from 6 to
17 10 at the Scranton/Dunmore FOP Lodge and
18 that's at 401 Railroad Avenue. It's \$15.
19 Tickets can be purchased at the door and
20 they'll be having all sorts of fundraising
21 there baskets, 50/50. They will be selling
22 t-shirts and bracelets, so please make an
23 effort to come help and support Chris who is
24 always out this helping us in our time of
25 need. Thank you.

1 MR. ROGAN: I have one as well. The
2 application period for the Home Assistance
3 Program know as LIHEAP opens today. This
4 program, I think many in our community know
5 about and provides crises grants up to \$500
6 for families and in immediate danger of
7 losing heat and it also provides grants for
8 those who have a hard time paying their
9 heating bills. The program determines
10 eligibility based on annual income household
11 size. Families whose income listed at 150
12 percent of poverty level are eligible for
13 heating assistance grants. That means a
14 single person earning no more than \$18,090
15 can receive a heating assistance grant. A
16 family of five with a total household income
17 of \$43,179 or less is eligible.
18 Weatherization grants are also available on
19 200 percent of the poverty level.

20 Those eligible may pick up
21 applications at Lackawanna County Assistance
22 Office located in the State Office building
23 at 100 Lackawanna Avenue, or you can call
24 11-866-857-7095 and I do know that
25 Representative Marty Flynn's office assists

1 people as well to fill out those
2 applications, so if you think you might be
3 eligible it's definitely worth looking into.

4 MR. WECHSLER: An executive session
5 was held this evening to discuss a matter of
6 litigation. Daylight saving time begins
7 this Sunday, November 5. Please remember to
8 turn your clocks back one hour. As usually
9 recommended, change the batteries in your
10 smoke alarms as well.

11 Next week City Hall will be closed
12 on Tuesday, November 7 for Election Day and
13 on Friday, November 10, in observance of
14 Veteran's Day. DPW workers will be off on
15 Tuesday, the 7th. Refuse and recycling will
16 be one day behind next week. They will be
17 working on Friday, the 10th.

18 Also, on the November 10 there will
19 be free concert for veterans. It will be
20 held at the Lackawanna College theatre at 7e
21 p.m. The concert will be presented by David
22 Stone. He will be presenting the Johnny
23 Cash experience. It's a free concert.
24 Donations are accepted and they will be
25 going towards the Scranton Veterans Memorial

1 monument.

2 MS. REED: FOURTH ORDER. CITIZENS'
3 PARTICIPATION.

4 MR. WECHSLER: As we mentioned last
5 week, I cannot restrict what is said at the
6 podium. People are free to speak as they
7 will. I would ask them to keep their
8 comments away from personal criticism and
9 insults. Like I said, I can't control what
10 is said, but I do believe that that podium
11 should be respected. The speakers who
12 follow the rules here they should be
13 respected and, like I said, please keep your
14 comments away from personal attacks.

15 Sean Bingham.

16 MR. BINGHAM: Good evening,
17 gentlemen, ladies. I'm here tonight --

18 MR. WECHSLER: Mr. Bingham, could
19 you state your name?

20 MR. BINGHAM: Mr. Sean Bingham.

21 MR. WECHSLER: State your name and
22 the city that you reside in?

23 MR. BINGHAM? Pardon me?

24 MR. WECHSLER: And the city you
25 reside in.

1 MR. BINGHAM: I reside in the City
2 of Scranton. My name is Sean Bingham. I'm
3 a taxpayer and I'm a business owner in the
4 City of Scranton as well. A few months ago
5 I did some work for myself, because no one
6 else seemed to want to do it, in regards to
7 the Licensing and Inspections Department of
8 the City of Scranton. It goes as follows:
9 In 2012, Chris Doherty entered into an
10 agreement with NEIC to perform inspections
11 for our city. So in 2015, February 6, it
12 automatically renewed. The problem is in
13 Article III or Article IV, it states: "That
14 Scranton agrees to pay the contractor in
15 full for furnishing all of the services
16 stated within," which means all of their
17 inspections; fair?

18 All the way in the back of the
19 contract it states that NEIC agrees to
20 reimburse the City of Scranton 50 percent of
21 all inspections performed. I did another
22 Right-to-Know and I come up with \$512,000 to
23 the city of Scranton, which is \$512,210.94
24 to NEIC to perform the inspections in the
25 city.

1 Now, it wouldn't be so bad other
2 than the fact that as a contractor, and we
3 can take Mrs. Jones, who is a resident of
4 the city, we are paying twice for what we
5 used to pay one time, a fee. License
6 Inspections a Permit Department you would
7 pay a fee and then the inspection would be
8 included. So along the way here somehow,
9 bottom line is this, there is a \$250,000
10 line item budget in the budget for third
11 party inspections, okay? Reimbursement to
12 me, gentlemen, is this. Run over to
13 Boscov's, get me a pair of work boots and
14 I'll reimburse you when you come back in.
15 It states in the contract as well. If
16 performance of work and services here then
17 the contractor shall act solely as an
18 independent contractor, nothing contained or
19 implied shall at that time be so construed
20 as to create the relationship of
21 employer/employee or partnership, but I beg
22 to differ. 50/50, I don't know how anybody
23 else describes it, to me is a partnership.
24 What would you say to that? Would you say
25 to that. It's your job, city council.

1 Whoever was on here into 2012,
2 agreed with this, and I can tell you who
3 signed it February 6. It says proposals
4 were opened, proposals meaning plural,
5 right? There was one bid. One bid. I have
6 it. One bid. It's called a monopoly. We
7 used to be able to use Joe Gabella, BIU. I
8 contacted BIU this week, they were not aware
9 that this was already put out for bid, so I
10 went to the Right-to-Know Office where I was
11 told Right-to-Know is a pain in the you know
12 what. Well, I big to differ there, also.
13 I'm a resident, I pay taxes. So they don't
14 like me there, and that's fine with me, but
15 I have all of the stuff I needed right here
16 and this isn't against anybody in general.

17 I'm not here to --I'm simply here to
18 say this. Let me give you an analogy real
19 quick. There was a condemned house, this
20 lady up on East Elm Street on the top. An
21 orange sticker gets put on her house, that's
22 \$250 to get that house off of condemnation.
23 NEIC takes \$125 and gives the City of
24 Scranton \$125. So that being said, the city
25 has already had \$125. She needed a 4 by 4

1 post installed to hold up -- and I have all
2 the paperwork, to hold up the porch. So I
3 go up to her she has \$50. Fifty bucks. So
4 I said, "Ma'am, listen I'll put the post up
5 for you, no problem."

6 I come down to the city, because you
7 have to get a permit at that point, and it
8 cost \$30 to pull the permit. The post was
9 \$28. The shoe to fit under the post is \$6.
10 So if you do the math the \$50 is already
11 wiped out. So I then in return have to give
12 NEIC \$75 to come out there and inspect that
13 again? So they pay \$37.50, and they give it
14 to the city. So go 30, 37.50 is 67.50 and
15 \$125 you are at \$195. So let's do the math.
16 Mr. Jones got her house fixed for the \$50.
17 The City of Scranton pocketed almost \$200.
18 NEIC got \$125 and then \$37.50, which is
19 \$162.50, Sean Bingham got negative. Zero.
20 Is it fair? I don't get it.

21 This is going to renew. It says it
22 automatically renews in three years, you can
23 get this right over -- I could give it to
24 you. I'll e-mail it to every of yous. The
25 bottom line is this, when this renews in

1 2018 without being done, I'm not stopping
2 here at this office, I just wanted to
3 enlighten yous all because I tried enlighten
4 Jessica, the city attorney, and I went in
5 there on Thursday and her secretary stated
6 to me, "Mr. Bingham, we do -- Mondays we do
7 the week's schedule so we'll fit you in."

8 So I walked in today Thursday,
9 November 2, and I said, "I guess I wasn't
10 that important, huh? Well, remember I'm
11 going to city council tonight and it will be
12 quite interesting, but I'm not going to stop
13 here."

14 She, said, "No, I told you --"

15 I said, "No, verbatim what you told
16 me is this. On Monday you will get me in
17 the schedule, you didn't."

18 So I didn't want to come down here
19 and waste anybody's time, but I'll be honest
20 with you, you know, I'm a hard working
21 father, I have three kids.

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

24 MR. BINGHAM: Thank you. Can we do
25 something about it? Mr. Gaughan, you have

1 an e-mail address I can get off of you?

2 MR. GAUGHAN: Sure.

3 Gaughnbill@gmail.com.

4 MR. BINGHAM: Thank you.

5 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you.

6 MR. WECHSLER: Fay Franus.

7 MS. FRANUS: Fay Franus, Scranton.

8 Tonight what I want to say I hope everybody
9 pays close attention to because of the
10 election on Tuesday, November 7. I have
11 been watching Mayor Bill Courtright for
12 years since he has been a councilman and
13 here are a few of the things that I take
14 note of that I think anybody should know.

15 Bill Courtright started as a
16 councilmen and many times he voted for Mayor
17 Doherty's million dollars loans like the \$5
18 million loan for the parking garage. He
19 does it very quietly, he doesn't say much,
20 but he still passes that vote. Then when he
21 became a tax collector he ran on the
22 platform that he would run on like his
23 predator -- listen to me, previous person,
24 saying that he would not comingle the funds.
25 Well, for about three years Mr. Courtright

1 commingled the funds. What happened was we
2 had to take him to court and he stopped but
3 we had to go to court to stop him.

4 Then he hired -- when he first took
5 office he hired Bulzoni, Dave Bulzoni from
6 out of town and a year and a half later it
7 was brought up by Joan Hodowanitz that he
8 never got a waiver, so council gave him a
9 waiver but that was illegal. The waiver was
10 supposed to be before you get hired, so what
11 do we do, took him to court, city court
12 about Dave Bulzoni. The judge ruled he was
13 working here illegally. He was supposed to
14 get the waiver before so in my mind he's
15 still here illegal because he -- he is still
16 here illegally, so anything that Mr. Bulzoni
17 signed I would think is illegal. All you
18 had to do, and I told you this but you never
19 did it, was fire him, hire him the next day
20 with a waiver before you hired him and he
21 would be here legally. So right now
22 everything he has done could be illegal and
23 that was Mayor Courtright taking care of his
24 friend for all of these years.

25 And then we have the garbage fee.

1 Mayor Courtright since 2014 kept the garbage
2 fee at \$300. He didn't have to, but he did
3 and this garbage fee went to the general
4 fund, but three years on trying to get a
5 Right-to-Know answered, and they still
6 haven't give it to me in the proper ways, to
7 get the information what is in the general
8 fund, and what it turns out is the money in
9 the general fund is for everything that the
10 city pays, all of the bills. They were
11 using the garbage fee money to pay all their
12 bills, not just garbage-related bills, which
13 is the way it's supposed to be by law,
14 another law that Mayor Courtright broke.
15 Then we have the -- oh, and then it went to
16 court. That's in court rather. That's in
17 court right now, so that's energy thing
18 Mayor Courtright did that brought court
19 action, that's to be determined.

20 The rental registration fee, Mayor
21 Courtright he is in court now because of
22 that, because of the high cost that was
23 probably illegal, okay?

24 Then we get the sewer deal. The
25 sewer sale and the loans that were illegally

1 paid, in my estimation, Municipal
2 Authorities Act, Mayor Courtright violated
3 that law. That's also in court. Everything
4 that mayor Courtright is done has gone to
5 court and we, the taxpayers, may end up
6 paying a huge amount of money to get this
7 money back. Where it's going to come from I
8 have no idea.

9 He also didn't put out to bid his
10 lawyer's fees for the Scranton Sewer
11 Authority sale. Another law he violated in
12 the city code. That was supposed to go out
13 to bid, it didn't. That's included in the
14 lawsuit.

15 Now, the 511 tax, the judge ruled,
16 Judge Gibbons ruled that that's illegal.
17 That's another thing that Mayor Courtright
18 kept taking the money from the people that
19 worked in the city. That also is illegal.

20 So do you get the pattern here?
21 Everything that Mayor Courtright has done
22 since he has been a tax collector has been
23 illegal and he has had to be taken to court.
24 People had to take him to court and pay
25 their own money to fight this man who did

1 everything wrong in the city. So when all
2 of these judge decisions come back here's
3 the thing say, for example, we get money
4 back from the garbage fee because we paid
5 too much; right? Mr. Wechsler said last
6 week, well, all of this money has to be paid
7 back the only way to get this money back is
8 to pay high property taxes; right? So here
9 we are, the taxpayers, are going to get
10 money back because we have it coming to us
11 legally, but now all of a sudden the money
12 we get back will be put back into the city
13 and the property taxes will makeup for the
14 money they just gave us that they owed us.
15 Now, that to me is like double taxation and
16 should be illegal. So for anybody to say
17 that we are going to pay for the money we
18 just got back that we had coming to legally
19 is totally beyond me.

20 So I really hope this November 7, we
21 only have one option, that is to go out and
22 vote. That's the only way we can get rid of
23 Mayor Bill Courtright because are only the
24 things that we know how about. How about
25 all of the other things we don't know about?

1 He just happened to get caught with all of
2 these and the courage of people to take him
3 to court to prove that he was wrong. So if
4 he want to continue four more years of Mayor
5 Courtright think very hard before you vote
6 on Tuesday. That's our only opportunity to
7 make things right in this city. Thank you.

8 MR. WECHSLER: Doug Miller.

9 MR. MILLER: Good evening, Council.
10 Doug Miller, Scranton. I want to go back
11 just for a moment to the first gentlemen
12 that spoke this evening. I think it just an
13 example of total frustration that most of
14 the residents of this community have at this
15 time. No answers, no solutions, empty
16 promises, empty suits for the most part, and
17 this has been going on for a long time in
18 this community. I mean, myself personally I
19 have been coming here for a long time, as
20 have many other people that come here and
21 participate each week.

22 You know, we get criticized and
23 people want to call names because we come
24 forward and we are concerned, but we are not
25 the ones that have sat on the sidelines like

1 most of the residents of this city have done
2 for a very long time, for decades, and yet
3 they whine and cry when they see the current
4 financial state of this city. Yet, tonight
5 we need to ask yourselves one question, what
6 did you ever do to protect your own interest
7 rather just sit back and let it happen?

8 You know the few people that come
9 out and vote I give them credit, but the
10 problem is those few people that do come out
11 and vote in most instances are the donors
12 and the special interests of these
13 candidates that are handpicked by these
14 people and that's why we are in the
15 situation we are in today because the
16 average every day Scrantonian they have
17 given up, they are frustrated. The seniors,
18 they have had it. They have nothing left to
19 give. I deal with every day in my job in
20 the federal government, I deal with these
21 people, and I feel very bad for them, I
22 really do. How did you expect a 70 year old
23 to live on \$500 a month in social security
24 and then they are have \$134 taken away for
25 their Medicare? Does that ever come into

1 your mind when you making your decisions
2 ever? Not just you, but the mayor, anybody
3 in city government? Because I really don't
4 think it does.

5 And if you really want to educate
6 yourself go walk through the city, as I'm
7 sure a lot of you have done at this point
8 because that's typically this time of year
9 is the only time you will do that is when
10 it's election time and we are begging for
11 votes. Not all of you, but for the most
12 part the good majority of the people in the
13 city who run for office so you should see
14 it. Go down a city block and every house is
15 for -- every other house is for sale.

16 Porches are falling apart, but yet
17 we got inspectors out there right now with
18 these ridiculous quality of life tickets,
19 oh, \$100, your porch is falling apart. "Oh,
20 you didn't cut your grass today, Mrs. Smith,
21 \$100."

22 That' those bull crap, okay? That's
23 bull crap. And you know what I would do if
24 I was Mrs. Smith, I would take that ticket
25 and I'd go you know what there you go,

1 that's what I'd do with the ticket.

2 We need real solutions. The budget
3 needs to be cut. This council hasn't
4 offered anything. The council majority
5 hasn't offered anything and, quite frankly,
6 this mayor hasn't done anything productive
7 either. He sat on council for six years and
8 he was part of the problem. Voted for
9 massive borrowing and tax increases, and we
10 can go on and on, and I'm not here to make
11 personal attacks, I'm here to speak about
12 facts and reality. Look at the sewer deal.
13 I think it was Mr. Gaughan last night at the
14 council debate, which I was only able to
15 watch a few minutes of it because truthfully
16 I had to turn it off. I mean, it was
17 actually comical to see that that's the
18 selection we have to choose from, but I
19 thought you did a great job though,
20 Mr. Gaughan, and you brought up a good
21 point. You know, the mayor told us we need
22 to trust -- both trust the attorneys. Well,
23 let me tell you, that is beyond scary. I
24 mean, you know, you want to talk about
25 Halloween. That is just nightmarish to

1 think that we are going to trust the
2 attorneys who just made great -- are you
3 kidding me, I'd love to have a payday like
4 that \$20,000 in one month. Geez, sign me
5 up. I'm sure a lot of residents in this
6 community that are barely surviving will do
7 the same thing and they are driving around
8 living luxurious lives and they are just
9 laughing, too, because they know how stupid
10 we are that we got people in positions here
11 that are stupid. We have a mayor downstairs
12 who is delusional, okay? And it's just we
13 bring in one consultant after another. We
14 still don't -- we were still never told
15 where Mr. Amoroso came from, the great
16 Messiah. Who really brought him here? See,
17 I know the answer but I just want to see if
18 any of you do, where did he come from?
19 Where did Mr. Amoroso come from?

20 I mean, you know, it's just at this
21 point I don't know where we go. You know,
22 Tuesday the residents have a choice to make,
23 a decision. It's a difficult decision. Do
24 we want to take the city back and try to
25 make it solvent again or are we just going

1 to keep kicking the same can down the road
2 and getting the same result. I mean, the
3 people in this community can't take it
4 anymore. They have nothing left to give and
5 when the Courts tell you that this sewer
6 deal went down the wrong way and this city
7 is on the hook for all of that money you
8 know who is going to pay for it all? The
9 people watching tonight. The people that
10 sit home and laugh week after week and don't
11 vote and think it's all a big game. Well,
12 guess what, you got a nice little game
13 coming to you soon and let me tell you it's
14 not going to be pretty and you only have
15 yourselves to blame. So I tell you get out
16 Tuesday, get out and vote and make a change
17 and maybe we can take our city back and save
18 it. Thank you.

19 MR. WECHSLER: Joan Hodowanitz.

20 MS. HODOWANITZ: Joan Hodowanitz,
21 city residents and taxpayer. Well, it's
22 five days to the election and the only thing
23 I want to say about the election is four
24 days after election we have Veteran's Day so
25 if you want to thank the veterans for what

1 they have done for the country and for the
2 city exercise your right to vote, that's the
3 best way to thank the veteran/TRAPB.

4 Tomorrow is First Friday, November
5 3, and the masks which are on the walls of
6 the Library Express will be displayed at St.
7 Luke's Church on Wyoming Avenue from 5 to 9
8 p.m. These masks were part of a project
9 between the library and the juvenile
10 detention center. Twenty-five teenagers 13
11 to 18 years old made these masks. This was
12 one of their therapy sessions, so see a good
13 project something that went well in the
14 prison system, St. Luke's Church 5 to 9 p.m.
15 tomorrow.

16 The draft 2018 budget, is there any
17 idea when a copy would be available for
18 public review? I know it's coming up
19 shortly.

20 MR. WECHSLER: I don't think you
21 will see the draft. I don't think that will
22 be posted online anywhere because it's a
23 draft, we are supposed to get that
24 information to us in draft form next week.

25 MS. HODOWANITZ: Would there be a

1 copy at City Clerks' Office?

2 MR. WECHSLER: I don't think there
3 will be a copy of the draft. I don't think
4 so.

5 MS. HODOWANITZ: Well, how can the
6 public make comments and review it if a copy
7 is not made available when it's in draft
8 form?

9 MR. WECHSLER: That's what I'm not
10 sure of to be honest with you. I'm thinking
11 there will be a draft copy, I don't want to
12 say there will be, but I'm not sure.

13 MS. HODOWANITZ: Okay. I hope so,
14 and I do agree with your comments last week
15 that the budget has to be prepared with the
16 facts that are on hand right now and yes,
17 there are lawsuits out in the wings but we
18 have to go, you know, really as it stands
19 right now. Nevertheless, I think it's
20 important that the administration and you as
21 a council do some "what if" planning. This
22 is what we do the military, what if, because
23 if things go south you are going to need a
24 Plan B in a hurry, okay? You not going to
25 be able to just say, "Gee, you know, that

1 surprised us," because you know there are a
2 lot of things to worry about. Potential
3 land mines, all of those lawsuits and I
4 won't go through all of them. Is the school
5 district going to go belly up and have the
6 state come in and take over with
7 receivership? That's going to impact the
8 city. What's going to happen with
9 reassessment, is it in, is it out is, it up,
10 is it down? You know, how is it going to
11 effect the values of properties and real
12 estate taxes overall.

13 And then there is the big question
14 mark we still don't have any cost estimates
15 on the storm water management because the
16 Arcadis study, if it's done, has not been
17 made public yet, so I'm hoping that that's
18 going to come up before the budget goes to a
19 final vote. You need to know something
20 about those projected costs as you prepare
21 the 2018 budget or as you review what the
22 mayor provides to you.

23 All right, I'm upping the ante, \$10.
24 Do I see a Knowel's insurance list? Hey,
25 I'm doing my part for the budget.

1 MR. EVANS: I know.

2 MS. HODOWANITZ: Hey, it's been over
3 seven months, okay? This is silly. There
4 is no excuse. I want to see that list. And
5 I'm not going to bother with a Right-to-Know
6 request, I'm just going to embarrass you
7 every week. Maybe you can give me the list
8 for Christmas and put a bow on it.

9 Ok. Oh, October 11, page one, the
10 Times did a story on the Crowley Park, do
11 you remember that? Was the debris that was
12 dumped was it clean, was it dirty, what was
13 going, I mean, it was a two-page story, even
14 had video link. Guess what came out today
15 on page four? 107 words. The clean -- the
16 dirt is clean fill. Now, I don't know
17 whether the study that this company did, you
18 know, whether their findings are accurate or
19 not, but I think if you are going to make
20 such a fuss on page one it deserved a little
21 more exposure. Maybe Mr. Seitzinger wants
22 to rebut the findings of that company, okay,
23 but I'm disappointed that the Times dropped
24 107 words, you know, just in there, a little
25 box, okay, when the original brouhaha took

1 two pages and a video link. And as far as
2 I'm concerned, maybe, maybe there is garbage
3 up there that needs to be remediated, I
4 don't know, but I don't think 107 words
5 explains to us what went on. And I'll save
6 the rest and I'll up the ante next week.
7 Thank you.

8 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you.

9 MR. WECHSLER: Les Spindler.

10 MR. SPINDLER: Good evening,
11 Council. Les Spindler, city resident and
12 homeowner and taxpayer. First off, I
13 finally got a turning lane on Main Avenue
14 and Jackson Street. Councilman Perry, I
15 want to thank you for the work you did on
16 that.

17 And next thing, something I have
18 been talking about every once in awhile
19 here, which council seems not to care about,
20 I talked about this for years we need a
21 dangerous dog legislation in this city. I
22 brought it up to this council before and
23 nobody seems to take the bull by the horns,
24 nothing is being done, but you want votes on
25 Tuesday but you don't do anything to help

1 the citizens of this city. I talked about
2 this for years and nothing is done so I'm
3 going to keep bringing it up until something
4 is done.

5 Moving on, I saw in the paper
6 yesterday a letter to the editor by Fay
7 Franus, who conveniently left, and she is
8 talking about the mayor and she says in
9 January 2014 our garbage fee increased 178
10 to 300 and she said the mayor refused to
11 decrease it. In January of 2014, when
12 Courtright took office Scranton property
13 taxes have increased by 65 percent. Now,
14 Fay Franus seems to have her facts mixed up
15 because these increases were done under the
16 Doherty administration. They were passed by
17 the Janet Evans council in 2013. The mayor
18 had nothing to do with these increases.

19 And she says later on about the
20 mayor giving raises to the police and fire
21 unions. Again, if Chris Doherty sat down
22 and negotiated with the unions we wouldn't
23 have that huge Supreme Court decision the
24 city lost which the city was paying \$100,000
25 a month in interest, so the mayor had to do

1 this. He had to settle with the unions or
2 we would still be paying \$100,000 a month in
3 interest and God knows how much we would
4 have owed the unions by then. So Fay better
5 get her facts straight before she puts
6 things in the paper, and I'm surprised the
7 Times-Tribune printed these lies.

8 Lastly, in the editorial page the
9 other day I saw something about the
10 Republican candidate Mr. Mulligan said he
11 has made attracting business from other
12 areas the centerpiece of his recovery.
13 Well, that's funny he's talking about moving
14 businesses into the city when he moved his
15 own law business out of the city to Moosic.
16 So I don't think this is a man who we want
17 running this city when he has not truthfully
18 with the city about moving businesses here
19 when he moves his own business out of the
20 city. So I hope everybody gets out and
21 votes on Tuesday and votes for the person
22 that's got the city moving in the right
23 direction, not another liar from Greenridge.
24 Thank you.

25 MR. WECHSLER: Bob Bolus.

1 MR. BOLUS: Good evening, Council,
2 Bob Bolus, Scranton. Last week's meeting I
3 asked if I could make an announcement. I
4 blame old age for forgetting to mention
5 before my time was up while at the podium.
6 My announcement had nothing to do with
7 corruption in the city, but an invitation
8 for you to attend a presentation regarding
9 PTSD at the Lackawanna County Commissioners.
10 A renowned clinical psychologist and an
11 expert in PTSD that I paid to bring from
12 Florida here was doing a presentation with
13 the commissioners and other people that
14 showed up there. The time you spent arguing
15 with me that my time was up took more time
16 than it would be for me to invite you to
17 something very important to the members and
18 the people of this community.

19 Mr. Gaughan, you should be
20 embarrassed for your childish behavior and
21 ashamed of yourself for making a comment
22 stating your mother has always told you if
23 you fight with a skunk you will come out
24 smelling like one and you directed that at
25 me. Takes a lot of nerve to insult any

1 Scranton resident who pays Scranton city
2 taxes and contributes to your paycheck. I
3 would like you to define that comment you
4 directed at me, if you will do so.

5 MR. GAUGHAN: No.

6 MR. BOLUS: I don't think you would.
7 You made comments the city lacks leadership
8 by the mayor. To the contrary, leadership
9 is lacking by you and Jim Mulligan. The law
10 is the law and it's for everyone, including
11 Mulligan. He got health insurance when he
12 was not entitled to it. He was a lawyer, he
13 knew better, he took something from the
14 people and breaking the law is no excuse,
15 especially when you take health insurance
16 when you not entitled to it, especially
17 being an attorney in the Sewer Authority
18 where you were a solicitor for.

19 The mall was reassessed a couple of
20 weeks back what's going on, nobody here went
21 over there to see that it was dropped even
22 lower. That accounts for money going to the
23 school board and everywhere else.

24 I spoke to Attorney Abrahamsen, he
25 said if you people want a letter from him

1 stating that the mayor acted on behalf of
2 the advice of council in selling the Sewer
3 Authority he would be glad to hand it to
4 you, number one. Number two, you guys all
5 signed off on the Sewer Authority when you
6 signed the recovery plan, so don't keep
7 putting it on the mayor that the mayor did
8 something wrong, you were all involved in
9 it, and he gave you the authority to do it
10 just as his legal council said it was legal
11 to do it.

12 The other issues we have are I'm
13 asking all my fellow veterans, those with
14 PTSD to remember you, Mr. Gaughan, that you
15 had the opportunity to attend the meeting at
16 the commissioners without Dr. Linfeld and it
17 was better to insult me than hear what I had
18 to say, be concerned about the vets and
19 those that are effected with PTSD.
20 Remember, that when comes time to vote for
21 Mr. Gaughan I hope on November 7 people
22 remember this.

23 The next thing is, Mr. Wechsler, I
24 received your letter in the mail with your
25 support of the mayor, and I also received

1 one from Mary Dunleavy. I disagree with
2 Mary Dunleavy's support of Mr. Mulligan on
3 East Mountain. As you know, when you were
4 there, I was member of the board of East
5 Mountain when you were there and Mary
6 Dunleavy. I support you 100 percent and as
7 a staunch Republican who was 100 percent
8 behind the President of the United States
9 and vice president, as a Republican, I stand
10 hand-in-hand with you, and this is the first
11 time I'll telling you that, Joe, I'm 100
12 percent --

13 MR. WECHSLER: I'm shocked.

14 MR. BOLUS: -- you, I hope you don't
15 have a heart attack tonight, but I'm 100
16 percent behind you on your support for Mayor
17 Courtright because he has done the job in
18 this city. He has stood up before the
19 people, he stood there with honor and he
20 stood up on the stage, Mr. Gaughan came out
21 badgering him and banging at him like a wild
22 bull in a china shop, which you did, yet you
23 told me my time was up but you didn't
24 respect your time.

25 I'm not here to fight with you,

1 people, okay? I'm here to see things get
2 done in this city and when you start getting
3 insulted and people turn around and start
4 badgering you and want to play stupid games
5 I take offense to it. I'm born and raised
6 in this city. I have been here a long, long
7 time. In fact, I'm here a lot longer than
8 you were born, Mr. Gaughan, so keep that in
9 mind, I'm been an employer, and one thing
10 people have to understood for 55 years I
11 have employed people. I've had my ups and
12 my downs but never taken from this
13 community, I have always given, and people
14 that sit here and insult me, as you did last
15 week, I have to just give you one little
16 comment to take with you, I read your
17 resume, you are a well-educated individual,
18 but there is a difference between being well
19 educated and being smart and what you pulled
20 off wasn't smart. I just hope people
21 recognize that on November 7. Thank you.

22 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you.

23 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you, Mr. Bolus.
24 Lee Morgan.

25 MR. MORGAN: Good evening, Council.

1 Lee Morgan. You know, every once in awhile
2 somebody comes in here and presents
3 something and, you know, I appreciate Mr.
4 Bingham coming here tonight and talking
5 about licensing and inspections, and
6 Mr. Miller touched on the quality of life.
7 This city is in real trouble, it's just
8 never going to end because I don't know,
9 should everybody need a building permit to
10 maintain their property? Has the city
11 reached the point where they want to hold
12 the last little bit of blood out of every
13 resident they can? I mean, don't we want
14 our city well maintained by the people who
15 own these properties? I mean, it makes no
16 sense. And, you know, when you when you see
17 what the city has done over a very long
18 period of time, I mean, you know, some
19 people came here to the podium tonight and
20 blamed the mayor for a lot of this stuff and
21 he shoulders some of the blame, there is no
22 doubt, but I really think this council
23 shoulders more it than him. You had a job
24 to do and you just did, in my opinion, you
25 did a terrible job. You passed flawed

1 legislation, enacted it, created law and the
2 residents are paying for it week after week
3 after week and they are going to keep paying
4 for it and it's never going to end.

5 And, you know, I think it's time for
6 the residents of this city to realize one
7 thing, being a Democrat or Republican is
8 basically meaningless. There is no meaning
9 to either one of those ideologies. Every
10 resident in the city needs to take look at
11 themselves in the mirror and wonder how is
12 your quality of life in this city? Take a
13 good hard look at the amount of money you
14 earn, where all of that money goes, and the
15 people who represent you and if that cannot
16 bring you to the polls to make the changes
17 necessary to make your life better I don't
18 know what to say to you because your life
19 may never change, and for a city to be in
20 distress for over 25 years with no solutions
21 is ridiculous and for the residents of this
22 city not to demand the change necessary to
23 propel this city into the future, that's
24 also just as ridiculous.

25 You know, I really blame the

1 residents because they made an ass of
2 themselves and their pain is only beginning
3 because if all of these Court cases hit I
4 would have to ask if I was resident at this
5 point right now why the council didn't take
6 every bit of the funds, whether it's the 511
7 taxes, whatever is in Court, and remove it
8 from the budget and set it aside, because
9 Fay had it kind of right the residents are
10 going to pay for all of this, the hundreds
11 of millions of dollars that's it's going to
12 cost is going to right back to the taxpayers
13 and what's the city going to do? Well,
14 maybe it's going to borrow the money, but
15 the residents are going to pay it again and
16 they have lost all of their assets, and none
17 of your solutions were real because the
18 pension plan that's in no better shape than
19 it was before.

20 You know, as a child, I remember we
21 had four leaders when I was kid that really
22 stuck in my mind all my life even to this
23 point, they were the two Kennedys, that both
24 got assassinated, the President and his
25 brother, and we had Martin Luther King and

1 Malcolm X, and they were people who moved
2 under their own power. Don't get me wrong,
3 the Kennedys were heavily entrenched in
4 politics but then look at they created
5 Camelot, that's what people talked about,
6 but you know what JFK did some great things
7 in the second world war. He showed he had
8 leadership ability, but we keep electing
9 people who have the ability to go ask
10 somebody for some money. And then you watch
11 as all of the city assets are -- and it just
12 doesn't have to do with the city it has to
13 did with the whole nation, everything is
14 bled off and supporters are fed and the
15 residents are taxed to the breaking point.

16 And now President Trump he is trying
17 to do something with the tax situation but
18 to be really honest with you, with 22
19 trillion dollars worth of debt and Doug
20 Miller stood here today and talked about
21 seniors living on \$500 a month, this country
22 in the most severe poverty that you could
23 ever imagine and we have got people that we
24 elect, nothing personal, to put on cheap and
25 pretty little suits or blouses and skirts

1 and they go and pretend that they are
2 legislation for the benefit of the people
3 they represent and it's not happening. Look
4 around. Thank you.

5 MR. WECHSLER: Ron Ellman.

6 MR. ELLMAN: I'm sorry, you caught
7 me by surprise. I'd like to say a few words
8 about the unjust wise depraved court
9 decision on the reassessment this week. I
10 think Wednesday was a sad day for the people
11 of this city. I have noticed in the paper
12 so many of our so-called leaders can afford
13 get these tremendous reassessments. This is
14 an expensive and likely process that most of
15 us -- well, most people cannot afford. I
16 looked into it years ago and I just needed a
17 lawyer, you know, there wasn't no sense in
18 fooling with it by trying myself. I know
19 Marie did it herself, but I don't even have
20 a computer to do that.

21 You know, I have told you a dozen
22 times every time I get upset and mad I start
23 seeing sideways and upside down and
24 everything else. Everybody is talking about
25 the facts of this reassessment, borrowing

1 \$13 million it has to be paid back right off
2 the bat, then if there is a reassessment by
3 law they are allowed to raise the millage,
4 the city, county and school system can raise
5 the millage so where are we? What has been
6 accomplished with all of that except some
7 more people are going to lose houses, you
8 know. There is already thousands, I don't
9 think Mr. Volpe has ever talked to some that
10 lost their house. I have talked to probably
11 I don't know three, four, five people over
12 the years and it's a great sadness to talk
13 to some of them. He lives in a utopia. He
14 is out of touch. He doesn't know what the
15 average person in this city is like. What
16 he has done stopping this is just flaunting
17 his wealth and influence over the city, over
18 the courts. What he has said he has told
19 the people like me, like these people here,
20 that we are just too damn stupid to read
21 black and white to understand what is
22 written on there and we don't have the
23 intelligence to make a vote, an intelligent
24 decision. That's exactly what he has told
25 everybody. I don't care who likes me saying

1 that, well, tell them to get Abrahamsen to
2 sue me or something, it doesn't bother me.

3 This town is sure far from utopia,
4 I'll tell you. I know Lenny, I talked to
5 him today on the phone and he had a house
6 fire and you lose everything between smoke
7 and water and fire it so sad because I went
8 through it years ago. Fortunately, we had a
9 lot of smoke, you know, and a lot of things
10 like pictures and all we saved but he has
11 lost everything, mostly everything I guess.

12 You know, I listen to Lee Morgan and
13 he is good -- very good speaker and I know
14 he agree with me because I look forward, I
15 hope I live long enough to see the day those
16 guys in the suits and the sunglasses on
17 Blueberry Hill come in here and clean up or
18 court system and our city like they did in
19 Wilkes-Barre.

20 Look what you people have allowed
21 that mall to do. You have let that one man
22 almost take over downtown and there is a
23 half a dozen big companies, big property
24 owners not paying a penny and Bulzoni can't
25 bend over backwards to do enough for them

1 all. This is a sin. You people allowed
2 these companies, these LLCs and so forth to
3 suck the city dry. It's time somebody comes
4 in here and does something for us. Thank
5 you.

6 MR. WECHSLER: Anyone else?

7 MS. SCHUMACHER: Good evening, Marie
8 Schumacher. First, do we have a date for
9 the NDC meeting?

10 MR. WECHSLER: No. Again, I put a
11 call in to them today and no one called me
12 back.

13 MS. SCHUMACHER: Thank you. You
14 know, listening to Fay was really sobering.
15 It's true, almost everything this mayor has
16 touched has ended up in Court and costing us
17 money, lots of money, a \$200,000 a year
18 project, I don't know what it was with Mr.
19 Abrahamsen to interpret for him just blows
20 my mind.

21 I went back and reviewed the League
22 of Women Voters debate from the first
23 meeting between Mr. Mulligan and
24 Mr. Courtright and, of course, my favorite
25 from that, I think I have spoken with you

1 before, was they asked about access. He
2 said regular access. That was his first big
3 lie. He said, you know, everybody --
4 anybody can come and just sit down in my
5 office, that's all they have to do. People
6 come over, you know, come now, when I'm on
7 council and people come over to my karate
8 store and wait for me to come out and I talk
9 to them and all of that. How long has it
10 been since I have put in the letter to
11 Mr. Courtright? How many calls did I make
12 to his office? How many times did I stop in
13 the office? Did I ever get a call back?
14 Did he ever answer my questions? No. So
15 that is a major flaw in his character as far
16 as I'm concerned.

17 The other thing that he said he
18 would do was people wanted the backup to the
19 items that were on the agenda, like, what
20 three years went by, nothing was done from
21 his office. I think, Mr. Gaughan, you were
22 the one that researched and ferreted out the
23 company, is that not true?

24 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

25 MS. SCHUMACHER: And now we do have

1 access to that and, you know, it's proven
2 helpful. Our infamous property list and,
3 you know, having a library on being paid
4 twice for how many years, so it was well
5 worth the while, but did the mayor do that?
6 No. The city council did it and especially
7 you, Mr. Gaughan, and I hope you are
8 rewarded for that.

9 The other thing is Mr. Spindler said
10 that the mayor had nothing to do with the
11 2014 budget, that's not true. One of his
12 representatives, a lawyer I believe, I can't
13 remember who it was, came in at the budget
14 hearing meeting and sort of agreed with some
15 of the comments that were made on the budget
16 and then he said, you know, indicated that
17 there were -- the committee that was
18 supporting the mayor was unhappy with the
19 budget. The mayor got elected, the mayor
20 came in and what did he do? Nothing. At
21 that same League of Women Voters meeting,
22 debate, one of the questions was something
23 like we had a structural deficit and what
24 are you going to do to eliminate the
25 strategic -- or the structural deficit and

1 we are going to talk about five taxes and
2 please tell us what you would do if you
3 would increase it, decrease it, reform it
4 or, you know, whatever you want and the
5 four -- the real estate tax. The real
6 estate tax he didn't promise but he said he
7 wanted to decrease it. However, in 2014 the
8 real estate tax went up 49.9 percent. In
9 2017, a mere three years later, the millage
10 went up by 25 percent, another 25 percent.
11 This is an election year, nothing, maybe
12 next year nothing. However, the next one
13 was the business privilege tax which was at
14 .01 percent and according to the budget
15 that's online, I thought it had been
16 reduced, but it says it's still .1 percent,
17 and I went back because -- okay. Sorry, but
18 I don't think that the current mayor
19 deserves to be reelected and I hope people
20 get out and vote for Mr. Mulligan. Thank
21 you.

22 MR. WECHSLER: Anyone else?

23 MR. DOBRZYN: Good evening, Council.
24 Dave Dobrzyn, resident, taxpayer. Just on a
25 quick thing that person that was stealing

1 from cars on East Mountain, did I read that
2 he had a gun in his possession at the time?
3 Well, I would plead with the people
4 everywhere in a town if you are a firearm
5 fan, take it with you, don't leave it in
6 your car. All they need is brick.

7 And, okay, we heard a lot of
8 accusations tonight about how our local
9 politicians can't bail us out of our
10 problems. By the way, the cut, cut, cut
11 plan is out with the federal taxes and \$700
12 billion currently are being pledged to
13 foreign investors for tax cuts. It would be
14 \$17,000 per household if the money was
15 distributed equally in the United States
16 amongst all of the households, the total
17 bill.

18 Now, I'm going to talk a little bit
19 more about politics and it's not going to be
20 partisan because I'm mad at both parties,
21 okay? I'm just totally frustrated, and the
22 party behavior, like I said last week, I
23 will reiterate, voter suppression is out.
24 You won't win my heart with voter
25 suppression. It's important that you make

1 sure that votes are valid, but just because
2 somebody can't drive across three counties
3 for a photo ID in Pennsylvania doesn't mean
4 they are not a legitimate voter and
5 Mr. Turzi stated in 2012 it would guarantee
6 a Romney victory for Pennsylvania. Well,
7 personally I think that the current
8 administration was a little wimpy because I
9 would have sent the FBI to have a little
10 talk with that man.

11 And the Democrats, well, last year
12 we had 450 super delegates pledged before
13 one Democratic vote was cast. Unacceptable
14 and they're working on it right now.
15 Unacceptable. Please, if you put a sign out
16 make sure it's not in front of a slumlord's
17 house. You are shooting yourself in the
18 foot there.

19 Now, with Scranton we have the state
20 Supreme Court awarded huge wage increases to
21 the unions, they won't let us tax certain
22 things. Without the reassessment, which is
23 about the only thing that caught my ear, was
24 that you can't collect certain taxes which
25 would pass a certain threshold which would

1 ensure that it gets piled on property taxes,
2 so either way you are going to be paying and
3 paying and paying and we have tax exemptions
4 galore. It is time to go to Federal Court
5 and take the state constitution and the
6 county to task and ask the Supreme Court
7 where 35 percent of tax exempts in one town
8 is justifiable. The little places, Moscow
9 area, North Abington, they got the little
10 church by the wildwoods and they got the
11 fire company and a few other things and what
12 do we have? Everybody is piled here and
13 they are feeding off of us and then we have
14 with the -- and make no mistake about it,
15 these people are refugees and they have been
16 accepted by the federal government, but they
17 cannot all be deposited here at Scranton
18 School District's costs. I know we have
19 management problems down there, and I
20 anticipate voting accordingly, but when you
21 start trying to teach somebody 9 or 10 years
22 old English as a second language that could
23 get pretty expensive and I pledge that I
24 will get down to the -- after the election
25 and talk to the school board. We have to do

1 something about that and also with the
2 Supreme Court because that pertains to
3 school taxes. So, thank you, and have a
4 good night, get out and vote.

5 MR. WECHSLER: Anyone else?

6 MR. SREBRO: Good evening, Council.
7 Lenny Srebro, Scranton resident, sort of.
8 I'll explain. First, I want to back up to,
9 Mr. Perry, the last time I was here a couple
10 of weeks ago you told me that you lost a
11 family member and I just have to say I'm
12 sorry for you, I feel your grief. I like to
13 think of myself as a compassionate person,
14 but that evening I had to go, I had
15 something that I just couldn't hang around
16 and talk to you.

17 MR. PERRY: Thank you very much.

18 MR. SREBRO: I want to hand that to
19 you because I know grief. Not to get into a
20 personal thing, but I lost a teenage
21 daughter some years ago. She was hit by a
22 train on the Keyser Avenue bridge and she
23 died instantly. And, yeah, I like to bring
24 that up myself because I don't want her
25 forgotten about, but you reminded me of

1 that.

2 Okay, here we go. See, I would have
3 came in but, you know, about two weeks ago
4 my house burned. You know, I lost about a
5 quarter of the house. I can't believe the
6 crap you got to go through, you know,
7 dealing with insurance companies and
8 contractors and electricians and all of
9 that. And, man, I'm telling you I'm just
10 hammered, but you know what, this flooding
11 problem is still a problem. I'm asking
12 myself do I want to rebuild, you know?
13 Because there is something wrong that after
14 two years of coming here, I know you are not
15 getting answers and all of that and I
16 appreciate your help, but God almighty, you
17 know, something is wrong with the system
18 that I can't simply get that drainage pipe
19 flushed.

20 You know, this past week they were
21 predicting three inches of the rain. All I
22 thought about is here it really comes, you
23 know. This is the big one that I have been
24 waiting for to see, you know, what's going
25 to happen since they paved the roads and all

1 of this has been going on. I'll tell you
2 what, I really prepared for, you know, a
3 major flood, but you know what, it wasn't
4 that bad, I'm telling at my place anyway,
5 maybe got about inch and a half of rain,
6 yeah, I got water in the basement again, I
7 got water in my garage, but I'm telling you
8 I thought -- all I was thinking of when I
9 had the fire at my house why can't it flood
10 right now, because it's so often.

11 And something else occurred to me
12 that you know what, I appreciate the firemen
13 did a good job getting the fire out that I
14 didn't lose the whole house, but I really
15 got extensive smoke and damage and water
16 damage, but now I got a bill from the fire
17 department for \$500. Am I asking the right
18 question, don't my taxes pay for that? Now
19 I got a bill of \$500 for fire trucks. I
20 really appreciate they came out but, oh, my
21 God I can't afford anything else. You
22 better believe my insurance isn't going to
23 cover everything. I got a lot to put out.

24 And then like Lee was saying I found
25 out, okay, if I do rebuild, you know, I want

1 to make some changes now I got to go through
2 all kinds of special permits, the setback is
3 off by two feet, so now I'm telling you, I
4 don't know what to do anymore. I'm really
5 disappointed and nobody wants to help
6 expect, you know what, I really love where
7 I'm at. The flooding and all of that, when
8 I had the fire all of the neighbors came
9 out, you know, with food and can I do
10 anything, you know, is there anything I can
11 do. I love where I'm at, but it's a
12 financial thing now that, you know, I'll of
13 these permits to do anything and I got so
14 far I got \$120,000 worth of damage in the
15 house and that's not open anything up yet.
16 They said expect supplements, you know, so
17 I'm coming to the question, you know, see do
18 I really want to rebuild here?

19 Please bear with me, and you know
20 what I really want to apologize for my phone
21 going off before, I just got a smart phone
22 and I don't know how to work it, you know, I
23 really didn't know how to shut it off so I
24 want to apologize for that.

25 Yeah, the reassessment now my taxes

1 are going to about up possibly. You know, I
2 think if I had it my way somebody like me
3 would get a break from the taxes for having
4 to put up with the flooding. That's my way
5 of thinking, you know, wherever that goes,
6 but still one more time, why can't we flush
7 that drain, you know?

8 MR. PERRY: Yeah, we have been
9 asking that question forever and I haven't
10 got back -- they haven't gotten back to be
11 honest.

12 MR. SREBRO: So there is something
13 wrong with the system that we can't get an
14 answer. I have been fighting it for two
15 years, the neighbors have been fighting it
16 for 20. They've all given up, like I'm
17 carrying on the torch, but they have given
18 up. See, and I'm at that point right now do
19 I want to rebuild there or do I want to stay
20 there, you know. Okay, thanks a lot.

21 MR. PERRY: Mr. Srebro, I will
22 definitely get in touch with Mr. Booth to
23 see what that invoice was about because I'm
24 not sure, I mean, that's what our taxes are
25 for so I'm not really sure what that's

1 about, but I'll get in touch with him and
2 see.

3 MR. WECHSLER: Anyone else?

4 MR. O'HORA: Good evening, Council.
5 Paul O'Hora, City of Scranton employee,
6 building maintenance. I'm here this evening
7 to talk about, and I believe this item is on
8 the agenda tonight, it's in regard to the
9 lease of the Civil War Museum in the
10 basement of city hall.

11 Let me start off by saying, five
12 years ago when I came into this position I
13 walked into the basement of city hall and it
14 was a disaster. My predecessor had left
15 boxes from various departments scattered in
16 different rooms, different departments
17 stacked on different departments, and lack
18 of organization would be an understatement.
19 What I decided to do was get the department
20 heads and bring them down, they were unaware
21 of how this was handled. We sat down in the
22 Governor's Room, brought out the city
23 ordinance and the City Code that refers to
24 every department and retention of records
25 and I said, "We are going to set this up in

1 the basement, we are going create some space
2 for every department, you are going to have
3 racks. You put your boxes there but I'm not
4 going to take one more box down here until
5 you label it as what it is and it's
6 retention."

7 The majority of government records
8 are not permanent records, but it's spelled
9 out in the City Code two years, five years,
10 ten years. So, I said, we are going to put
11 expirations dates and we are going to
12 organize because we are not going to put on
13 addition for boxes that no one even knows
14 what's in them or be able to find them in
15 five years. That worked pretty effectively.
16 In the limited space we had when the police
17 department left we were able to give various
18 departments sections of the basement.

19 Unfortunately, with the Civil War
20 Museum in two of the largest and best rooms
21 down there we are limited in our space.
22 Now, the issue of the Civil War Museum in
23 the basement on the previous administration
24 allowed them when that became vacated to
25 give them a 10-year lease. Now, I don't

1 know about you, but I really don't hear of
2 ten-year leases in any event, especially a
3 ten-year lease for nothing.

4 I'm not here, and let me make this
5 very clear, no one is disputing the good of
6 that museum. Museums are great, the
7 artifacts are great, and it's worth walking
8 through, but last I checked the front of
9 this building says "Municipal," not
10 "Museum."

11 And I know it's election time and we
12 want to be popular and we don't want to
13 offend people, but if we want to do a good
14 thing we should look to find a place for
15 them. We have a law department that if you
16 walk in, and our city solicitor is great,
17 she really wants to organize things and have
18 things and have space in our office, I can't
19 help her. We are maxed out. And it's
20 unfortunate that it's turned in political
21 football.

22 I think, like I said, what they have
23 is great and we should find them space
24 outside of city hall. This is the people's
25 building. This is where the government --if

1 anybody in this audience wants to know, they
2 have Right-to-Know, these departments should
3 be able to go down, find a box, find the
4 file in five minute, bring it up, copy it to
5 them and get it to them, and we have done
6 that. We have got it somewhat organized but
7 we need space.

8 And I also have to give you,
9 council, credit for what you have done.
10 This building was built in 1888 and back
11 then everything was paper, paper. Well, I
12 can see that you guys are being progressive.
13 Your agenda now is online. There is so much
14 paper and still duplication in here and we
15 continue to work here within the building to
16 say who is responsible for holding onto this
17 this contract and how long, we don't need
18 four departments holding onto the same
19 paper, but old habits die hard, we are still
20 trying to get this all organized.

21 But what brought me her tonight was
22 the article in the paper regarding this
23 museum and, again, I'm not here to
24 criticize, I'm not here for political
25 football, I'm just here to say, listen,

1 great organization, let's find them space,
2 our law department needs an archive room and
3 that's first and foremost, a municipal
4 building.

5 In this article that ran in the
6 newspaper, I just want to clarify two
7 statements that were made. Number one,
8 Mr. Gaughan, I had mentioned this to you
9 about the need for this space and it says,
10 "Gaughan has forcibly called for a new lease
11 preferably 10 years."

12 Why are we giving space in a
13 municipal building, and an organization is
14 great, it is, but 10 years. We need this
15 for the government. This is our building.

16 Second of all, Mr. Wechsler said,
17 "This is where this should be in city hall
18 building. We want to make sure that the
19 stakes here become the treasure trove of the
20 city."

21 It's indisputable it's a good
22 organization, what's in dispute is our law
23 department can't archive and have all of
24 these documents, and we know there is more
25 lawsuits coming, if they can't organize this

1 in a systematic way that's not fair.

2 And one more think I just want to
3 say, Mr. Rogan said that this issue went
4 away when we purchased the Serrenti
5 building, Chief Carl Graziano has told me
6 once, he has told me five times, he had to
7 sign documents this thick saying that that
8 building is for police use only and certain
9 things, so if various departments and city
10 people have ideas and brainstorms how to use
11 that building they can't. That's not going
12 to be a place to store records nor should an
13 administrative building have administrative
14 offices 15 minutes -- or administrative
15 files 15 minutes away from city hall, but,
16 again, that discussion never took place nor
17 can we store files up there. It is police
18 use only facility.

19 Thank you, councilmen, for your
20 time. I appreciate you taking this into
21 consideration. Again, no problem giving
22 them time, we are not throwing them on the
23 street, and Mayor Courtright is clear on
24 that, we want to work with them, but this is
25 it a municipal building. Thank you.

1 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you. Anyone
2 else?

3 MS. REED: FIFTH ORDER. 5-A.
4 MOTIONS.

5 MR. WECHSLER: Mr. Perry?

6 MR. PERRY: Yes, thank you. I'll
7 pick right up where we left off with Item
8 5-B. I was happy to see the one-year lease
9 come out before -- this museum was kind of
10 out in the cold and not knowing what to do
11 so we had have a year. I think everybody on
12 this council plans on using that year to
13 find a solution, a long-term solution to
14 that issue. It looks like right now it's
15 going to boil down two things: The museum
16 is going to have to find a place or we are
17 going to have to find a place to store the
18 records. It doesn't look like they can both
19 coexist. I'm on the side of it's probably
20 easier for us to find somewhere to hold our
21 records, but we have a year to figure that
22 out. There is Iron Mountain facility, they
23 specialize in taking records that you can
24 store them away and they are just out of
25 site out of mind until we need to call for

1 them, when and if we do. You know, there is
2 it going to be some fees associated with
3 that but that's something that we are going
4 to have to discuss. I'm on the side, as
5 most of my other councilmen, that I think
6 this is a good environment for the Civil War
7 Museum. Is a ten-year lease a little
8 excessive, possibly. Is three or five more
9 acceptable? Okay, let's go there, but I
10 don't think that we should give a year to a
11 museum, that's just not a way to operate
12 business and I don't want to operate under a
13 year-to-year lease, but we do have some time
14 now to figure out what we are going to do,
15 and it's under my opinion I think it would
16 be easier for us to find somewhere else to
17 store the records, but we have many time to
18 figure that out.

19 Second item, the Arcadis meeting the
20 last information we saw Mr. Bulzoni was
21 given the next three weeks to come up with a
22 bunch of dates that he is available. He is
23 going to give the dates to Arcadis and then
24 they are going to make sure they are good
25 for that date. So no date has been set yet

1 but they are working on to get the date
2 within the next few weeks.

3 Also, South Irving Street finally
4 got their paving done and completed, I was
5 very happy to see that. Mr. Srebro, is Mr.
6 Srebro still here? I don't think so. I
7 just want to thank you for the kind words.
8 Again, anybody, and that just about includes
9 of all of us who have lost a loved one we
10 feel like we're in the same community, we
11 all know how we feel so I was very -- his
12 nice words, his kind words and his plight
13 with the fire is devastating. I feel sorry
14 for him. I hope he can get things worked
15 out, I know it's a very frustrating time
16 when you have such devastation going on.

17 Finally, for all intensive purposes
18 whether we like it or not we are a fact
19 finding body, the city council, we have
20 always gotten, you know, the tip of the
21 sphere when it comes to finding and getting
22 down to the bottom of issues. Recently,
23 there was an article in the Scranton Times
24 about possible legal actions. Now, I have
25 to make a decision, and if I'm going to make

1 and from friends of mine that took their
2 kids there it took 20 minutes to walk half a
3 city block because there were so many people
4 participating and all of our businesses on
5 Main Avenue in West Side participated so I
6 want to give a shout out to all of them, and
7 especially to Shamrock Construction because
8 they were the ones that really got the ball
9 rolling and organized this event.

10 Next, is it was brought up to the
11 podium so I'm going to address it briefly,
12 I'm sure Councilman Evans will be talking
13 about this a little bit more, is the
14 reassessment. For those who haven't read
15 the paper, the reassessment ballot question
16 currently is invalid. As we know, the
17 election is in a few days. Please keep up
18 on the news regarding this ballot question
19 because the county did appeal, so that
20 question may count. So I would encourage
21 everyone to still vote their conscience on
22 that question. Please don't skip it, just
23 because one Court said that it was invalid
24 they may decide as late as Monday, the day
25 before the election, whether that question

1 is going to count or not. So one court
2 ruling shouldn't discourage everyone from
3 filling that portion of the ballot out,
4 definitely still fill that out.

5 I had a couple of meetings this week
6 that were very encouraging with two
7 developers, I'm not going to mention them by
8 name, but myself and Mr. Evans did have
9 conversations about it as well, and they
10 were downtown developers primarily, but our
11 discussions focused on developing in the
12 neighborhoods. So I'm very optimistic that
13 there is going to be some good projects
14 coming ahead very soon from two
15 well-respected developers within our city.

16 We did receive correspondence from
17 OECD regarding the Veterans memorial project
18 that was discussed. It's a lengthy reply
19 from HUD. We are awaiting until the budget
20 is released. There has been talk that the
21 city will be funding some of this project
22 through the general fund so at this point we
23 will have to make a decision weighing out
24 the budget as well as the OECD Action Plan.

25 And, finally, some good news on the

1 double pension front, and I can't find the
2 order, here it is. As you know, council
3 made a motion many months ago to investigate
4 the double pension scandal that has been
5 talked about for a few years now. So we put
6 in -- went to Court, I was there with
7 Attorney Minora and there were subsequent
8 back and forth with the state police and
9 what Attorney Minora advised us today was a
10 draft order that will release the
11 information from that investigation to us.
12 There are a number of stipulations in here,
13 much of it is in legal language, so at this
14 point in time I'll turn it over to attorney
15 Minora to discuss this further.

16 MR. MINORA: Yes. I received a
17 draft of the proposed order from the
18 attorney for the Pennsylvania State Police.
19 As I think I mentioned a couple of times in
20 the past, criminal records are subject to
21 the Criminal History Records and Information
22 Act offered referred to as CHRIA. That
23 information is confidential and can be
24 released by a police agency except in the
25 limited circumstances. We petitioned

1 Commonwealth Pleas Court to allow us to
2 review the investigation into the double
3 pension matter and I was able to work out a
4 compromise in order for us to review this
5 document or documents that are ordinarily
6 confidential, so the order allows for
7 council to review everything, but that it
8 remain confidential and that any document
9 that are shown to council would be used for
10 the sole purpose of proposing legislation
11 which would preclude or lessen the
12 possibility of a similar double pension
13 problem in the future. There is certain
14 stipulations as to it's use, how we can --
15 we can't really disclose any of it
16 publically but we can use it for that same
17 purpose. I will have Judge Moyle review it
18 and hopefully sign the order and at which
19 time we will be able to get some records
20 from the Pennsylvania State Police.

21 MR. ROGAN: Thank you, Attorney
22 Minora. Thank you for all your hard work on
23 this. I know we have been on the phone
24 every other day since this subpoena started,
25 and while I'm very happy that council will

1 be getting this information to review, I am
2 still disappointed that it won't be released
3 to the public. You know, after reviewing it
4 there is items in there that we feel need to
5 be addressed we can review it, formulate
6 legislation to stop it so a double pension
7 scandal like this never happens again.

8 At that point, if there is other
9 information in there I think we should take
10 a step further and work on getting it
11 released to the public, but I do think this
12 is another good step and something that,
13 unfortunately, is taking a lot longer than
14 we planned, but I am happy to have the draft
15 order here today and I'm hoping we will be
16 reviewing these document within the next
17 couple of weeks. That's all I have. Thank
18 you.

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

21 MR. EVANS: And, yes, Councilman
22 Rogan, I will be talking about reassessment

23 MR. ROGAN: I assumed.

24 MR. WECHSLER: I'm shocked.

25 MR. EVANS: Shocking. The last bit

1 at the apple before the election, but first
2 of all I want to thank Mr. Volpe and Mr.
3 Eckle for stepping up and making this case
4 to invalidate the reassessment question. I
5 hope it stands. But I also would like to
6 ask the voters to still consider a "yes"
7 vote on the question even though the results
8 won't count at this point. It's very
9 important to send this message to the
10 commissioners that our ultimate objective is
11 still tax fairness and the majority feels
12 that way. And you simply want those
13 entrusted with the responsibility to accept
14 that is there job and all for reassessment
15 immediately.

16 I would like to comment briefly on
17 the prepared statement by two of the
18 commissioners on rejection of the ballot
19 question, County Chief of Staff Andrew
20 Wallace on the behalf of the two
21 commissioners, not even Notarianni, stated
22 the following. In part it said, "The Court
23 recently sided with two millionaire
24 petitioners in their apparent quest to
25 disenfranchise the voters of Lackawanna

1 County. I find that comment to be extremely
2 ironic because if there is a group that
3 doesn't want a reassessment it would be the
4 well off and the well connected and anyone
5 else that has a large property holdings in
6 the county. The lack of reassessment,
7 unlike the commissioners static and
8 unsupportive line of were just protecting
9 the seniors will actually continue to
10 protect the well connected who through
11 nearly 50 years appeals most likely have
12 their assessments right where they want them
13 to be and because of that it's the seniors
14 and everybody else who are paying for those
15 productions.

16 And as far as disenfranchising the
17 voters, that happened long ago when it was
18 decided to pass the reassessment buck to the
19 voters to decide, many of whom aren't even
20 property owners. It is not the
21 responsibility of the voters to decide for
22 the commissioners, it is their
23 responsibility to provide for tax fairness.

24 As documented between 2014 and 2016,
25 successful appeals have reduced the county

1 tax base by 44.4 million. That equates to
2 real tax dollars lost. Growth that has been
3 wiped out. Money that could have helped
4 balance budgets and minimize or eliminate
5 tax increases for municipalities, school
6 districts and, yes, even the county and
7 there is no end in sight without a
8 reassessment. The status quo of a broken
9 system that simply is not working and
10 totally unfair to property owners,
11 government entities, and developers. It is
12 almost mind boggling at this point that some
13 local officials could be against a
14 reassessment.

15 I applaud my colleagues for not
16 wavering on this issue for one second and
17 being early supporters of reassessment. So
18 where did we go from here? Of course, I
19 would have hoped by now that the two
20 commissioner, or at least one, would have
21 listened to the overwhelming evidence that
22 Lackawanna County needs a reassessment, and
23 they would finally stop the proverbial
24 kicking of the can down the road and begin
25 the necessary steps towards reassessment,

1 but I won't hold my breath on that.

2 We all know that the mayoral
3 election is next Tuesday, so next Thursday,
4 two days after the election, I will make a
5 formal motion and request to the new mayor
6 elect or the current mayor, depending on the
7 outcome, and this is something I have been
8 supportive of for almost three years, the
9 motion will be quite simply that the City of
10 Scranton shall initiate a lawsuit in
11 Lackawanna County Court to force a
12 reassessment. It's time to get off the
13 sidelines and get in the gam. That's all I
14 have tonight.

15 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you, Mr. Evans.
16 Mr. Gaughan?

17 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, thank you. First
18 of all, just an update for the two women who
19 approached me a few weeks ago about the 200
20 block of Bryn Mawr Street. There was a
21 property, as I had mentioned last week,
22 where there is dumping going on. Mrs. Reed
23 was in contact with Ralph Pappas from the
24 county because that property is a land bank
25 property, and in the intergovernmental

1 cooperation agreement between the city and
2 the county as it relates to the land bank
3 the city is actually responsible for the
4 maintenance of all of land bank properties
5 in the City of Scranton. So we did reach
6 out to the DPW to assess the vacant lot for
7 potential clean up. Mr. Pappas also
8 informed city council that the
9 Scranton-Lackawanna Human Development Agency
10 has an interest in purchasing the vacant lot
11 and the property next to it at 1344-1346
12 Bryn Mawr Street, and the county is
13 currently conducting a cost assessment for
14 the possible demolition of the structure.
15 So hopefully within the next few weeks those
16 residents of Bryn Mawr Street we'll see some
17 action there.

18 The second issue that I brought up
19 the last few weeks, and it continues to
20 really trouble me and the more that I have
21 spoken about it the last few weeks the more
22 people who seem to come out of the woodwork
23 to contact me about some of the issues at
24 the Greenridge senior apartments on Dickson
25 Avenue, off of Dickson Avenue. I just want

1 to read -- I spoke to a woman today who
2 wants to remain anonymous for several
3 reasons, but when I spoke to this woman a
4 few things came up, a few themes emerged.
5 Number one, residents are apparently being
6 charged extra just to live on the first
7 floor, that's number one. Keep in mind, a
8 few years ago when this company from New
9 York was given a tax abatement this was
10 supposed to be senior affordable housing so
11 they have to pay a little bit extra to live
12 on the first floor. They have to pay an
13 extra fee to live next to the elevator.
14 This woman told me today on the telephone
15 that a lot of times the elevator doesn't
16 even work. There are people up on the
17 second and third floor who are elderly who
18 cannot -- how are they going to get out of
19 the building, especially if, God forbid,
20 there was a fire so residents there are
21 concerned about that.

22 This woman had told me, and I
23 haven't researched this myself, but this
24 company apparently has other senior housing
25 developments and they don't have great

1 reviews, one of them she referred to was in
2 Erie, Pennsylvania. They did reach out to
3 the Better Business Bureau and the Better
4 Business Bureau has not done anything yet to
5 date. She did tell me that most of the
6 residents are in their 70's, their 80's and
7 even in their 90's, and as I have mentioned
8 the last few weeks what they have done is
9 they have sold their homes to move into this
10 place because they were under the impression
11 that their rents were going to stay
12 relatively level. When this woman first
13 moved in she was told, because she said, you
14 know, how much are the rents going to go up
15 they were told not to worry about it, the
16 rents might go up every two to three years
17 only ten to 20 dollars a year because with
18 the tax abatement the company was going to
19 be able to pay their mortgage and all of
20 these other things with the millions of
21 dollars they would saved with the tax
22 abatement.

23 The other extremely concerning thing
24 this woman has since moved out, but
25 apparently the company used her security

1 deposit to put new carpets down and they
2 have done that apparently in a lot of the
3 other apartments. They come in, a
4 maintenance person comes in, they see
5 something wrong with the carpet before the
6 person moves out and then the carpets end up
7 getting replaced and the person losses their
8 security deposit.

9 So long story short, there are a ton
10 of very concerning things going on at this
11 place. The other concerning thing, I got
12 another anonymous letter that comes from
13 someone who worked at this place, a former
14 property manager, whose last day of work was
15 Friday October 13, 2017, and she sent a
16 letter out to the Greenridge senior
17 apartment tenants, and I won't read through
18 the whole thing but one thing stuck out to
19 me and is extremely concerning. This woman
20 says in the letter, "Unfortunately, the
21 standard practice and policies and the
22 rigidness of the corporate office has made
23 this more and more difficult --" meaning her
24 job -- "therefore, I felt it necessary to
25 find employment where my professional goals

1 are more inline with my personal beliefs."

2 Now, usually, you know, a
3 legislative body would not get involved in
4 these type of matters, but the problem here
5 is these seniors that live here are afraid
6 to speak up because those who have spoken up
7 have either been kicked out in some form or
8 fashion or they have been sent nasty
9 letters, apparently from what I have been
10 told. So on November 1 city council sent a
11 letter to Mr. Jason Kavulich, who is the
12 director of the Department of Human Services
13 at the Area Agency on Aging, which is in the
14 county administration building. I'm hopeful
15 to hear back from them. Residents now have
16 reported that they did reach out to this
17 agency and were not successful.

18 I also think that this council
19 should investigate other avenues or someone
20 should step in and look at this or
21 investigate it, do something because there
22 is something seriously wrong when a company
23 from New York gets a tax abatement from
24 three bodies in Lackawanna County, the
25 county, the school district and the city,

1 selling it as an affordable housing and then
2 a few years later there is people paying --
3 seniors, mind you, on fixed incomes, social
4 security, paying 11, 12, 13 hundred dollars.
5 Paying \$15 extra to live next to an
6 elevator. Paying a little extra to live on
7 the first floor. It is mind boggling to me
8 so hopefully we will hear back from Mr.
9 Kavulich and I know a lot of the residents
10 are following now city council because we
11 are trying to get involved and help so my
12 message to them would be to hold tight and
13 let's see at least if we can get some
14 justice here for some of the things going on
15 there.

16 Second thing, the bottom of
17 Dartmouth received several complaints from
18 residents, there is going on for a few
19 months now about a curb that needs to be
20 fixed to correct water runoff problems, so
21 if we could please send something over to
22 DPW.

23 Also, I received an e-mail about the
24 state that is inviting municipalities,
25 nonprofit organizations, school district,

1 colleges, universities, across the state to
2 submit a proposal describing how they would
3 use recycling bins provided by Keep America
4 Beautiful to expand recycling opportunities
5 in public spaces and their downtowns
6 throughout the city. Keep America Beautiful
7 will award the grants in December of 2017
8 and they are going to make arrangements with
9 suppliers to deliver the bins directly to
10 the recipients in the first quarter of 2018.
11 I'm not sure if the city is going to submit
12 a proposal, but I would like to ask the
13 administration if they plan on it. If not,
14 I would recommend they do. I think that is
15 a very good program.

16 The last thing I that I have is
17 regarding the Civil War Museum, which has
18 been brought up for quite a few weeks now
19 and I have been a major proponent of the
20 museum, as I have mentioned. Mr. O'Hora,
21 who is the maintenance man in city hall got
22 up and spoke tonight and I appreciate his
23 concern and his comments. I will say a few
24 things about his comments. Number one, I
25 don't know, this is not a political football

1 so I'm not sure what he is referring to when
2 he says that. This is a very, in my
3 opinion, simple issue. The museum has been
4 there for 10 years. I believe it serves the
5 community very well and I think that they
6 should stay there. The administration and
7 the mayor obviously feel differently, but I
8 want to take a second just to explain my
9 thought process here.

10 Mr. O'Hora said that in front of
11 city hall it says "Municipal" not "Museum".
12 What a backwards way of thinking about
13 government in general, about this building.
14 We have a great opportunity, actually the
15 unique opportunity in my opinion to keep a
16 museum and to keep many of the veterans who
17 are coordinating this thing and have been
18 for a number of different years with the GAR
19 working down there for the community. We
20 should embrace our history. We should
21 embrace all of the people from this area who
22 lost their lives in the Civil war and
23 embrace the veterans who are working down
24 there, and I can't imagine that we would
25 pass the opportunity to keep a museum that

1 honors the Civil War and has so many
2 unbelievable artifacts and replace it with
3 four or five room fulls of boxes. Who wants
4 to see that? I'm not sure in the year 2017
5 that there has to be another way to find
6 room for storage for boxes in the Law
7 Department or in DPW or wherever else in
8 this building. I'm sure that we can look to
9 other cities across the country or the state
10 for that matter to find that.

11 So, again, I think it's this
12 mentality of that's the way it's always been
13 done, we have to continue to do it. We have
14 boxes full of paper, we have to send the
15 museum on their way. Even if we are giving
16 them a year less eventually they are going
17 to be asked to go, and that's fine because I
18 understand that there is two different
19 trains of thought here. All I'm saying is
20 let's use this as an opportunity to embrace
21 or history, to embrace the uniqueness of
22 actually having a Civil War Museum in the
23 basement of our municipal bidding, which
24 actually if you know the history of this
25 building really is museum in and of itself.

1 I think we can use it, the city can
2 promote it more. We can work even more
3 closely with the GAR and with local high
4 schools and our local universities and
5 colleges. So next week I plan on making a
6 motion to amend this legislation, 5-B, to
7 extend the lease to five years. Ten year I
8 can understand may be a bit of a stretch,
9 but at least give the gentlemen down there
10 and the museum some relief knowing that they
11 have a place to stay and that we are going
12 to honor the museum and take this next year,
13 if that's what it ends up being, finding
14 someplace else to store these files. And
15 that's all I have for this week. Thank you.

16 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you,
17 Mr. Gaughan. Just a follow-up on
18 Mr. Gaughan's comments, I would not like to
19 take the opportunity to criticize
20 Mr. O'Hora. He has a responsibility in his
21 job and we criticize a lot of city employees
22 for not doing their job and Mr. O'Hora has
23 been doing what he has been charged to do.
24 The storage of records is not something that
25 he just decided to do. The storage of the

1 records is required by the City Code,
2 federal regulations, state regulations, so
3 instead of criticizing him I would like to
4 compliment him on his due diligence to make
5 sure that the importance of his job in
6 maintaining the records that are required.

7 I did meet with the people from the
8 Civil War Museum the other day and I agree
9 that the museum should stay here. I think
10 it's settled, it's in a spot where it's
11 accessible to the students, accessible to
12 the public and I think actually this debate
13 that we've had has really awoken a lot of
14 people in the city to the fact that that
15 museum is there. I spoke to someone last
16 night who is very well-known in the
17 community who said he never knew that that
18 place was there, and this is person who
19 works in downtown Scranton and is very
20 visible and everybody knows his name if I
21 told you. So I do think we have to take the
22 opportunity to protect the museum and look
23 at it as an asset instead of a detriment.

24 Mr. Rogan did mention the Serrenti
25 Center, I agree with him that would be a

1 good spot, even not in the Serrenti Center
2 itself there is a lot of land up there, this
3 is something that we have to get a handle on
4 that's just as important as the museum and
5 the storage of records. We came into
6 council in 2014 and there was a water leak
7 that had really saturated a lot of the old
8 records from the city and they were going to
9 be discarded, which you can't do, so we were
10 able working for Mr. O'Hora, he got the
11 records digitized, saved the ones that we
12 could and that's a resource that we have
13 ongoing backwards so I agree with the
14 one-year lease, the one-year lease can be
15 extended next year at any time. The reason
16 why I like a one-year lease is it forces the
17 city to take care of the museum and find a
18 repository for the records. I believe if we
19 go to a longer lease than that I think this
20 thing will just keep getting pushed down and
21 pushed down and pushed down the road, so I
22 support the one-year lease, I do not support
23 a longer lease at this time, but I do think
24 it's very important that this conversation
25 has gotten out into the public, it's time

1 for the public to actually speak up for the
2 people that use it and use this opportunity
3 to take advantage of this great asset that
4 we have here.

5 Last week I talked about getting a
6 copy of the Amazon presentation that was
7 made by Penns Northeast. I did receive a
8 copy of that, it's quite lengthy, so if
9 anybody wants to peruse that it is in the
10 council office.

11 This week I attended the PEL
12 meeting, talking about some of the
13 improvements and some of the efforts that
14 have been made over the past couple of years
15 to get us into a little bit of a financial
16 better position. One of the things that has
17 been a great improvement is our workmen's
18 compensation accident claims statistics. In
19 2015, the city paid \$2.3 million in
20 workmen's compensation, wage loss and
21 medical costs. This does not include the
22 heart and lung that were paid. In 2016, the
23 amount paid out decreased to \$1.49 million,
24 and this is the number that you have to
25 really pay attention to, and for 2017

1 through the end of September that total
2 amount paid out is now down to \$228500.
3 About \$2 million less than when we came in
4 office in 2015. This decline claims to be
5 attributed to various initiatives enacted by
6 the administration and council to include
7 hiring a full-time worker's compensation
8 coordinator, increased claims monitoring,
9 the development of a safety committee,
10 increased heart and lung arbitration panels,
11 it increased from six times per year instead
12 of twice, and the creation of a light-duty
13 policy with the police department as well as
14 the negotiations that create light-duty
15 policies within the DPW and the fire
16 department.

17 So the work that we have started, a
18 lot of this came out of the contracts that
19 were awarded that are a benefit to the city.
20 At this time, we have been working with our
21 unions and reducing costs in terms of
22 compensation and disability. We have a ways
23 to go. The Safety Committee has been a
24 great edition to our city. The state has
25 recognized it as a good and functioning

1 safety committee so this is one of the
2 improvements that has been going on over the
3 past couple of years. And that's all I
4 have.

5 MR. GAUGHAN: I just want make one
6 point, if I may. I just want to respond to
7 Mr. Wechsler for a second when he said that
8 I was criticizing Mr. O'Hora. That's just
9 not true. I was not criticizing Mr. O'Hora
10 I was disagreeing with him. I have spoken
11 to Mr. O'Hora before on the telephone about
12 this issue and he knows that I disagree with
13 him, but I as not criticizing him at all.
14 There is a major difference between
15 criticizing somebody and disagreeing with
16 them.

17 All I'm saying is I think that we
18 should start thinking outside of the box,
19 literally and figuratively in case with
20 boxes of paper. So when something people
21 are looking at the basement and saying let's
22 fill it with boxes of paper that probably
23 nobody is going to look ever or no one
24 really cares about, what I'm saying is think
25 of capitalizing on the unique opportunity of

1 having a museum with hundreds of years worth
2 of history and using it as a springboard for
3 people in this community to learn about
4 their history and to take a tour of this
5 municipal building, which as I said earlier,
6 really could be considered a museum. There
7 is a lot of things that went on here over
8 the last few decades.

9 So, again, I was not criticizing Mr.
10 O'Hora. I think he has done a great job in
11 his position, I was simply disagreeing with
12 him, there is a big difference. Thank you.

13 MS. REED: 5-B. FOR INTRODUCTION -
14 AN ORDINANCE - AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND
15 OTHER APPROPRIATE CITY OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE
16 AND ENTER INTO A LEASE AGREEMENT WITH GAR
17 MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION ("GAR") TO EXTEND THEIR
18 CURRENT LEASE WHICH IS SET TO EXPIRE ON
19 NOVEMBER 28, 2017 FOR AN ADDITIONAL YEAR FOR
20 A PORTION OF THE BASEMENT OF CITY HALL TO BE
21 USED AS EXHIBIT AND MEETING SPACE.

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

25 MR. ROGAN: So moved.

1 MR. EVANS: Second.

2 MR. WECHSLER: On the question?

3 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, on the question.

4 As I just mentioned in any comments, I plan
5 next week on making a motion to extend this
6 lease for an additional five years. Thank
7 you.

8 MR. EVANS: On the question, I'm
9 going to weigh in on this conversation, when
10 I visited the museum I did come away very
11 impressed and I told the gentlemen there
12 that day that I was going to be their
13 advocate, and I will be. I think the
14 synergy through the Civil War Museum along
15 with the library and the Lackawanna
16 Historical Society are amazing work, and I
17 think as Councilman Gaughan mentioned, I
18 think there could be some other offshoots
19 with the museum and this building.

20 For example, four of those gentlemen
21 on those walls back there on the pictures
22 served in the Civil War. So there's ways to
23 integrate the history of city hall as the
24 well as the Civil War Museum. With that
25 said, I tend to agree with Councilman

1 President Wechsler that a one-year lease
2 might actually force all of us to get our
3 act together and come up with a long-term
4 solution that makes both departments
5 satisfied, so we will see how this plays
6 out. We have two more readings after
7 tonight to work it out, but I'll continue to
8 be an advocate for the museum, but I also am
9 not -- Mr. O'Hora's words are not lost on me
10 as far as the importance of the documents in
11 city hall and the departments that they are
12 affecting, so I'm sure we will work it out.

13 MR. ROGAN: On the question, I
14 discussed this -- we discussed this a little
15 bit in our caucus today, and maybe it's just
16 because I'm younger and I have little
17 different perspective, you know, I think
18 having boxes and boxes of paper doesn't do
19 anybody any good. If there is a way we can
20 digitize all of these records and have it
21 fully accessible to everyone and easy to
22 search that seems to be a solution. Now, I
23 know there will be a cost associated with
24 that so I think that's something we need to
25 look at, the cost benefit of it.

1 And, also, I believe Mr. Evans had
2 brought it up possibly having Mr. O'Hora
3 come in and have a caucus and talk about the
4 needs from his department so we can balance
5 that out with the needs of the museum as
6 well to reach a compromise and something
7 that can work for everyone.

8 Regarding the Serrenti building, you
9 know, I still think that's -- if we can
10 store records there, if we have to keep the
11 paper records I think it's a perfect place,
12 but we will have to check with the Law
13 Department regarding the stack of paperwork
14 regarding that building if it can be used to
15 store these records or not. Obviously, if
16 it's not permissible it's not permissible,
17 but we need to look at digitizing our
18 records. It's 2017. We shouldn't have
19 boxes and boxes of paper being stored in
20 city hall.

21 That being said, the Civil War
22 Museum is a hidden gem in the city. We want
23 to keep it in the city so I'm looking
24 forward to working with my colleagues so we
25 can reach a conclusion to this.

1 MR. PERRY: Yeah, on the question.
2 I'm kind of just repeating what I said
3 during my motions but, you know, it came to
4 a head where we need this space for our
5 records by federal mandate or we can have
6 this Civil War Museum and it looks like no
7 longer we can have both in-house. I'm for
8 the Civil War Museum. It's a great piece of
9 history and we have some time now to source
10 some offsite storage for our records. We
11 need to keep them, it's federally mandated
12 that we have to hold onto them for a certain
13 amount of years.

14 So with that being said, at a
15 minimal pending the outcome of Mr. Gaughan's
16 motion next we have a minimum of one year to
17 find a home for both of these issue.

18 MR. WECHSLER: All those in favor of
19 introduction signify by saying aye.

20 MR. PERRY: Aye.

21 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

22 MR. EVANS: Aye.

23 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

24 MR. WECHSLER: Aye. Opposed? The
25 ayes have it and so moved.

1 MS. REED: 5-C. FOR INTRODUCTION -
2 AN ORDINANCE - AMENDING FILE OF THE COUNCIL
3 NO. 65, 2016, AN ORDINANCE ENTITLED "GENERAL
4 CITY OPERATING BUDGET 2017" BY TRANSFERRING
5 \$14,499.00 FROM ACCOUNT NO.
6 01.401.13090.4299 (NON-DEPARTMENTAL
7 EXPENDITURES CONTINGENCY) TO ACCOUNT NO.
8 01.020.00000.4201 (OFFICE OF THE CITY
9 CLERK/CITY COUNCIL-PROFESSIONAL SERVICES) TO
10 PROVIDE SUFFICIENT FUNDING FOR THE PAYMENT
11 OF FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS THROUGH THE 2017
12 BUDGET PERIOD.

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

16 MR. ROGAN: So moved.

17 MR. EVANS: Second.

18 MR. WECHSLER: On the question? On
19 the question, this is maybe something that
20 people aren't aware of but city council is
21 responsible to pay quite a few expenses to
22 keep this part of our operation going. One
23 of them things is that we are required is
24 the city council actually by the Home Rule
25 Charter is charged with the responsibility

1 of paying for the annual audit that comes
2 under our umbrella. We also have to pay for
3 all of the advertisements that you see in
4 the paper, the Scranton Times is doing
5 pretty good off of us, don't laugh, Mr.
6 Evans, but there are some expenses that we
7 have to carry. The amount budgeted last
8 year was short. Mrs. Reed has been working
9 with Business Administrator Bulzoni to try
10 and get a more accurate number for our 2018
11 expenditures.

12 One of the things that was a benefit
13 to us in working with Mr. Gaughan through
14 Granticus we are saving a lot on paper. We
15 are making less and less papers, so there
16 will be a benefit in that for us, but this
17 is just one of those things that at this
18 time of year we are coming down to the end
19 of money available and this is why this
20 transfer has to occur.

21 All those in favor of introduction
22 signify by saying aye.

23 MR. PERRY: Aye.

24 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

25 MR. EVANS: Aye.

1 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

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

4 MS. REED: 5-D. FOR INTRODUCTION -
5 AN ORDINANCE - AMENDING FILE OF THE COUNCIL
6 NO. 65, 2016, AN ORDINANCE ENTITLED "GENERAL
7 CITY OPERATING BUDGET 2017" BY TRANSFERRING
8 \$200,000.00 FROM ACCOUNT NO.
9 01.401.13090.4299 (NON-DEPARTMENTAL
10 EXPENDITURES CONTINGENCY) TO ACCOUNT NO.
11 01.051.00082.4448 (DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING,
12 INSPECTIONS & PERMITS-BUREAU OF BUILDINGS
13 PAWC-WATER) TO PROVIDE SUFFICIENT FUNDING
14 FOR THE PAYMENT OF PAWC-WATER INVOICES
15 THROUGH THE 2017 BUDGET PERIOD.

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

19 MR. ROGAN: So moved.

20 MR. EVANS: Second.

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

24 MR. PERRY: Aye.

25 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

1 MR. EVANS: Aye.

2 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

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

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

7 SEVENTH ORDER. 7-A. FOR
8 CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMITTEE ON RULES -
9 FOR ADOPTION - RESOLUTION NO. 203, 2017 -
10 AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND OTHER APPROPRIATE
11 CITY OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE AND ENTER INTO AN
12 ADDENDUM TO THE COOPERATION AGREEMENT BY AND
13 BETWEEN THE CITY OF SCRANTON ("CITY") AND
14 THE DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS
15 AFFAIRS ("DMVA") TO FURTHER AMEND THE
16 COOPERATION AGREEMENT TO PERMIT THE SCRANTON
17 POLICE DEPARTMENT'S FORCE ENTRY TACTICAL
18 TEAM TO CONDUCT EXPLOSIVE ENTRY TRAINING ON
19 THE LEACH RANGE PROPERTY.

20 MR. WECHSLER: As Chairperson for
21 the Committee on Rules, I recommend final
22 passage of Item 7-A.

23 MR. ROGAN: Second.

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

1 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Perry.

2 MR. PERRY: Yes.

3 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

4 MR. ROGAN: Yes.

5 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

6 MR. EVANS: Yes.

7 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

8 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

9 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

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

13 MS. REED: 7-B. FOR CONSIDERATION BY
14 THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS - FOR
15 ADOPTION - RESOLUTION NO. 204, 2017-
16 AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND OTHER APPROPRIATE
17 CITY OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE AND ENTER INTO A
18 CONTRACT WITH PETROLEUM TRADERS CORPORATION
19 TO PROVIDE 80,000 GALLONS (MORE OR LESS) LOW
20 SULFUR DIESEL FUEL TO THE CITY OF SCRANTON
21 DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS FOR THE PERIOD
22 JANUARY 1, 2018 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2018.

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

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

4 MR. ROGAN: Second.

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

7 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Perry.

8 MR. PERRY: Yes.

9 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

10 MR. ROGAN: Yes.

11 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

12 MR. EVANS: Yes.

13 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

14 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

15 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

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

19 MS. REED: 7-C. FOR CONSIDERATION
20 BY THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS - FOR
21 ADOPTION - RESOLUTION NO. 205, 2017 -
22 AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND OTHER APPROPRIATE
23 CITY OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE AND ENTER INTO A
24 CONTRACT WITH D.G. NICHOLAS COMPANY TO
25 PROVIDE THE CITY BULK OIL DELIVERED FOR THE

1 PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2018 THROUGH DECEMBER 31,
2 2018.

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

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

9 MR. ROGAN: Second.

10 MR. WECHSLER: On the question?
11 Roll call, please?

12 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Perry.

13 MR. PERRY: Yes.

14 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

15 MR. ROGAN: Yes.

16 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

17 MR. EVANS: Yes.

18 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

19 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

20 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

21 MR. WECHSLER: Yes. I hereby
22 declare Item 7-C legally and lawfully
23 adopted.

24 MS. REED: 7-D. FOR CONSIDERATION BY
25 THE COMMITTEE ON RULES - FOR ADOPTION -

1 RESOLUTION NO. 206, 2017 – APPOINTMENT OF
2 THOMAS GALELLA, SR., 112 PELLER AVENUE,
3 SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA, 18505, AS A MEMBER
4 OF THE BOARD OF THE SCRANTON HOUSING
5 AUTHORITY. MR. GALELLA WILL BE REPLACING
6 BILL EAGAN WHOSE TERM EXPIRED SEPTEMBER 27,
7 2017. MR. GALELLA WILL BE APPOINTED TO A
8 FIVE (5) YEAR TERM EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 12,
9 2017 AND WILL EXPIRE ON SEPTEMBER 27,
10 2022.

11 MR. WECHSLER: As Chairperson for
12 the Committee on Rules, I recommend final
13 passage of Item 7-D.

14 MR. ROGAN: Second.

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

17 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Perry.

18 MR. PERRY: Yes.

19 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

20 MR. ROGAN: Yes.

21 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

22 MR. EVANS: Yes.

23 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

24 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

25 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

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

4 MS. REED: 7-E. FOR CONSIDERATION
5 BY THE COMMITTEE ON RULES - FOR ADOPTION -
6 RESOLUTION NO. 207, 2017 - AUTHORIZING THE
7 MAYOR AND OTHER APPROPRIATE CITY OFFICIALS
8 TO EXECUTE AND ENTER INTO A MEMORANDUM OF
9 UNDERSTANDING BY AND BETWEEN THE CITY OF
10 SCRANTON ("CITY") AND ELECTRIC CITY
11 TELEVISION ("ECTV") SETTING FORTH THE TERMS
12 AND CONDITIONS REGARDING THE OBLIGATIONS OF
13 ECTV TO THE CITY AND THE DISBURSEMENT AND
14 USE OF EDUCATIONAL AND GOVERNMENTAL ("EG")
15 CAPITAL GRANT FUNDS.

16 MR. WECHSLER: As Chairperson for
17 the Committee on Rules, I recommend final
18 passage of Item 7-E.

19 MR. ROGAN: Second.

20 MR. WECHSLER: On the question?

21 MR. ROGAN: I'd just like to
22 reiterate my support for ECTV and the
23 importance of keeping our meetings on the
24 air for the public to watch.

25 MR. EVANS: I would concur with

1 that. Mark Migliore and all of the
2 volunteers do a tremendous job. They should
3 be congratulated almost weekly because of
4 what they do. The time spent and what they
5 have achieved with minimum amount of funds
6 is really incredible, so congratulations to
7 Mark and glad we finally got this thing
8 passed.

9 MR. WECHSLER: Yes. This actually,
10 this legislation is actually one of the
11 things I'm most proud of as I leave council
12 at the end of the December. This
13 legislation has been hanging around for many
14 years not to be concluded and I thank
15 Mr. Migliore for his patience. His patience
16 and finances is very difficult, but he hung
17 in there and he kept broadcasting. He does
18 a great job not only at city council
19 meetings, but you can see him throughout the
20 city taping other events that he does on his
21 time and one of the things I'm going to miss
22 is working with Mark on city council.

23 Roll call, please?

24 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Perry.

25 MR. PERRY: Yes.

1 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

2 MR. ROGAN: Yes.

3 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

4 MR. EVANS: Yes.

5 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

6 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

7 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

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

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

13 MR. ROGAN: Motion to adjourn.

14 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.

CATHENE S. NARDOZZI, RPR
OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER