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SCRANTON CITY COUNCIL
SINE DIE MEETING

HELD:

Monday, January 1, 2017

LOCATION:

Council Chambers
Scranton City Hall
340 North Washington Avenue
Scranton, Pennsylvania

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CITY OF SCRANTON COUNCIL:

- JOE WECHSLER, PRESIDENT
- PATRICK ROGAN, VICE PRESIDENT
- TIM PERRY
- WILLIAM GAUGHAN
- WAYNE EVANS

- LORI REED, CITY CLERK
- KATHY CARRERA, ASSISTANT CITY CLERK
- AMIL MINORA, ESQUIRE - SOLICITOR

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

3 MR. WECHSLER: Roll call, please.

4 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Perry.

5 MR. PERRY: Here.

6 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

7 MR. ROGAN: Here.

8 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

9 MR. EVANS: Here.

10 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

11 MR. GAUGHAN: Here.

12 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

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

15 MS. REED: THIRD ORDER. 3-A. NO
16 BUSINESS AT THIS TIME.

17 FOURTH ORDER. CITIZENS'
18 PARTICIPATION.

19 MR. WECHSLER: Gerald Cross.

20 MR. CROSS: Members, Mr. President,
21 good morning. Gerald Cross, Pennsylvania
22 Economy League Act 47 coordinator. I'm
23 honored to see Mayor Connors here, I'm
24 honored to see the council here, I do want
25 to make a special effort today to attend the

1 sine die session to offer my congratulations
2 both to the city on a productive four years,
3 but more important to acknowledge the
4 efforts of Mr. McGaughn -- I'm sorry, Mr.
5 McGoff and Mr. Wechsler. I would say that
6 last four years started with a lowest level
7 of 25 years we have worked here. It is now
8 finishing on a very high note.

9 I want to acknowledge Mr. Wechsler's
10 continued movement towards cooperation as a
11 legislative branch. The idea of local
12 government is commitment to constancy and
13 the uniformity of the services, and I want
14 to know that I think over the last four
15 years you have made an effort to provide
16 constant service to the citizens of
17 Scranton, and I think that Mr. McGoff's
18 memory is honored by the efforts this
19 council has put together. So thank you very
20 much and I look forward to see you all plus
21 the new people in 2018.

22 I'm rarely at a loss for words, but
23 standing here --

24 MR. EVANS: A little different;
25 right?

1 MR. CROSS: But standing here
2 acknowledging everyone here I appreciate the
3 efforts you have all put together for the
4 last four years. Thank you.

5 MR. WECHSLER: Now, there is no PEL
6 meeting today; right? There is no PEL
7 meeting today.

8 MR. CROSS: You won't attend because
9 you will no longer be an officer. The
10 weekly meetings are open to all council
11 people, they are attended by administration
12 people and council and you welcome to
13 attend. Thank you very much.

14 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you. It was a
15 pleasure working with you. Thank you.

16 MR. CROSS: It was and I appreciate
17 the opportunity.

18 MR. WECHSLER: Anyone else?

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

20 MOTIONS.

21 MR. WECHSLER: Mr. Perry?

22 MR. PERRY: Yeah, just very quickly.
23 I know we spoke on this during our last
24 meeting, but again, I just want to thank and
25 congratulate Mr. Wechsler for an outstanding

1 job I thought you have done on my two years
2 here and the two years that proceeded me.
3 You made some very difficult choices and I
4 do appreciate your leadership that you gave
5 us. I know I have grown a lot from that and
6 I hope to continue forward on all the
7 progress that we made so far. I just want
8 to thank you for your service and, like I
9 said, you know, not only are you my
10 colleague but you're my friend now, and I
11 wish you the best in whatever you wish to
12 do.

13 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you, Mr. Perry.
14 Mr. Rogan?

15 MR. ROGAN: Yes. Echoing some of
16 what Mr. Perry mentioned, and much of this
17 was mentioned at our last council meeting,
18 but I would also like to congratulate
19 Council President Wechsler on a tremendous
20 term where much was accomplished and without
21 his leadership we wouldn't have all of those
22 accomplishments.

23 I'm proud to say that I voted the
24 same with Mr. Wechsler I think the vast
25 majority of the time and I believe we voted

1 in the right way to keep the city moving in
2 the right direction and those -- the fruits
3 of those labors we're finally starting to
4 see now in a city that is much more
5 financially stable than it was four years
6 ago as Mr. Cross mentioned when the city was
7 at one of it's lowest points in the city's
8 history, and now we stand here where we have
9 had two years with no tax increases, our
10 city services are finally starting to
11 improve back to the level where they should
12 be at, and much of that is because of the
13 leadership that Councilmen Wechsler took
14 being council president. His actions were
15 never politically motivated, but motivated
16 by the city's best interest, and as
17 Mr. Perry mentioned, proud to call you a
18 colleague, proud to call you a friend and
19 you will be missed.

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

22 MR. EVANS: Thank you. As you may
23 know, this meeting today is called sine die,
24 which simply put means adjournment, so we
25 are adjourning city council the last two

1 years for the final time today. The city
2 council has made great strides in moving
3 this city forward. We have been
4 transparent, professional and diligent in
5 our efforts to help the City of Scranton.
6 We stood our ground on what we felt was
7 right. We saw a compromise when it was
8 appropriate and we didn't allow the negative
9 noise to sway our beliefs in what needed to
10 be done.

11 With that said, you cannot achieve
12 any of this without a good team so we had a
13 City Clerk Lori Reed and her staff, Attorney
14 Minora and, of course, Council President Joe
15 Wechsler. In a few minutes Joe will no
16 longer be a Scranton City councilman, but,
17 Joe, your legacy is one of stepping up, of
18 leading and always doing what you truly
19 believe was the right thing for the City of
20 Scranton.

21 I know I said it before, it has been
22 my pleasure to serve with you as Scranton
23 City Council president. So, Joe, thank you
24 very much. Good luck. All the best.

25 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you, Mr. Evans.

1 Mr. Gaughan?

2 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, thank you. You
3 know, this is day that we recognize
4 Councilman Wechsler and I want to thank him
5 for his commitment to public service, his
6 commitment to this city over the last four
7 years and really for his entire life. You
8 know, I have seen firsthand the dedication
9 and the passion that Joe Wechsler has for
10 helping people and neighborhoods throughout
11 our city and that will be his legacy, being
12 somebody that you can pick up the phone and
13 call him and he will answer and he will help
14 you.

15 I know how proud Joe's family is of
16 him and they should be because he performed
17 his duties with honor and integrity. I want
18 to personally thank him for his service on
19 council, but more importantly for his
20 friendship and I want to wish him the best
21 of luck in the future. Thank you.

22 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you, Mr.
23 Gaughan. Kathy, don't hit the bell, I'm
24 going to be long. Actually, my comments are
25 going to be quite brief, but they are very

1 important to me. The first thing I want to
2 do is thank my family for supporting me
3 through these four years and actually for
4 all. I started off seeking political office
5 in 1999. I'm not from a political family,
6 I'm not Irish, if you didn't notice that,
7 but we started off, Cathy and -- my wife
8 Cathy and I started off not knowing one
9 person in politics. Gradually we went out
10 and worked, we worked, sought office a few
11 times, came close a few times, and finally I
12 was fortunate to win in 2013 to start
13 serving in 2014, and as Mr. Cross said when
14 we got here in 2014 the city was on the
15 verge of bankruptcy. There was very little
16 interest in anyone running from council, but
17 Mr. Rogan and Mr. Gaughan, myself, we
18 stepped up back then and we started to work
19 with the administration. We accomplished so
20 many different things that looked impossible
21 to do. We got out of the problems of the
22 Parking Authority, we got new contracts that
23 brought labor peace to the city for awhile
24 and we began to work on pension reform right
25 now where the pension system is the

1 strongest it's been in many years, so I'd
2 like to acknowledge my wife Cathy, she is
3 here today. My children, Amy and Drew, they
4 are huge supporters of mine, and that's
5 where I want to start off at the end of this
6 part of my life thanking my wife where we
7 started off at the beginning.

8 I'd also like to thank the members
9 of council that I have served with. Bob
10 McGoff was our president when I started.
11 Bob really laid the groundwork for how I
12 wanted to be a city councilmen. Only had
13 the best interests of city at heart. We
14 miss Bob McGoff and he will never be
15 forgotten and he was truly a great man and I
16 would like to thank him and his family for
17 their support, also.

18 I'd also -- on my tenure with
19 council I also served with Jack Loscombe.
20 Jack was a good councilmen and he gave the
21 dedication to the city and was also part of
22 the original council. And I would like to
23 thank Mr. Perry, Mr. Rogan, Mr. Evans, Mr.
24 Gaughan, for the hard work that they do. On
25 Thursday evening a lot of people think that

1 council people work Thursday from 6 to 9.
2 Being on city council is a full-time job.
3 There is constant calls, you try to help
4 what you can. And before I go, there is a
5 pothole on East Mountain Road that needs
6 serious attention, so I'll start calling
7 tomorrow. Lori, I'll call you tomorrow,
8 hook somebody up to get that pothole fixed.

9 But city council really is the first
10 place people come for help and I'm not sure
11 if it should be that which but that's the
12 way that it is. People come call us, we try
13 to help them as best we can and for the most
14 part I think we are successful in addressing
15 the people's concern. The constituent
16 service that come out of our office is
17 amazing.

18 I'd like to thank Solicitor Minora
19 for his insight. Kathy Carrera, who always
20 does an awesome job, but I do want to do a
21 special thank you to Mrs. Reed. Lori is in
22 the office all of the time. She is a help
23 to everyone. I'm not sure if any of you
24 have ever worked for five boss, five
25 different bosses, and it's difficult to

1 juggle what goes on in the office and
2 handling five sometimes difficult
3 councilmen, but I would like to thank Mrs.
4 Reed for what she has done. I'd also like
5 to take the opportunity to thank Mayor Bill
6 Courtright and his administration, we worked
7 with them. From day one we were given
8 access to the administration much greater
9 than any other group had ever had. I
10 especially want to thank former business
11 administrator Dave Bulzoni who always gave
12 us the information and worked diligently in
13 moving the city forward. I also want to
14 thank all the DPW director, chief of police,
15 fire chief, once again, those three agencies
16 are the people that touched the taxpayers on
17 a consistent basis. DPW, Mr. Gallagher,
18 Chief Graziano, Chief Desarno, they provide
19 a service to the city and they are awesome
20 people to work with and I'm happy that they
21 are all staying.

22 So we are coming to the end. It's
23 kind of like sitting at your own eulogy here
24 today, but I'm not ready for that yet, I'm
25 not ready for that yet. For me, I always --

1 as Mr. Gaughan said, I have always been
2 active in the community. I'm going to
3 continue to do that. I am going to try to
4 be a leader in the community still. Our
5 neighborhood system here is awesome, people
6 that work in the leadership in our
7 neighborhood associations do a lot of work
8 and they do it all for free and they deserve
9 more recognition than they get.

10 So I don't know if there is a right
11 word to say goodbye, but I want to just
12 thank everyone for what they have done for
13 me. I have met so many friends and voters
14 out in the community. Scranton is a great
15 place and I hope that going forward I know
16 that my colleagues here, Mr. Donahue is
17 going to be joining him in a short while, I
18 know that they will continue to service the
19 people and continue to cooperate with the
20 administration in moving Scranton forward.

21 So thank you so much for this
22 opportunity. I won't be here but I will
23 somewhere so thank you very much.

24 MS. REED: 5-B. NO BUSINESS AT THIS
25 TIME.

1 SIXTH ORDER. 6-A. NO BUSINESS AT
2 THIS TIME.

3 SEVENTH ORDER. 7-A. NO BUSINESS AT
4 THIS TIME.

5 MR. WECHSLER: If there is no
6 further business, I'll entertain a motion to
7 adjourn.

8 MR. ROGAN: Motion to adjourn.

9 MR. WECHSLER: This meeting is
10 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