

COUNCIL FOR THE CITY OF SCRANTON

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HELD:

Monday, March 25th, 2019

LOCATION:

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

Maria McCool, RPR  
Official Court Reporter

1 C O U N C I L M E M B E R S :

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- PATRICK ROGAN, PRESIDENT
- TIMOTHY PERRY, VICE PRESIDENT
- WAYNE EVANS
- WILLIAM GAUGHAN
- KYLE DONAHUE
  
- LORI REED, CITY CLERK
- KATHY CARRERA, ASSISTANT CITY CLERK
- AMIL MINORA, ESQUIRE - SOLICITOR

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

3

4 MR. ROGAN: Roll call, please.

5 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Perry.

6 MR. PERRY: Here.

7 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Donahue.

8 MR. DONAHUE: Here.

9 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

10 MR. EVANS: Here.

11 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

12 MR. GAUGHAN: Here.

13 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

14 MR. ROGAN: Here. Please dispense  
15 with the reading of the minutes.

16 MS. REED: THIRD ORDER. 3-A. TAX  
17 ASSESSOR'S RESULTS REPORT FOR HEARING DATE HELD  
18 MARCH 13, 2019.

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

21 MS. REED: 3-B. TAX ASSESSOR'S  
22 REPORT FOR HEARING DATE TO BE HELD APRIL 10,  
23 2019.

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

1 MS. REED: 3-C. MINUTES OF THE  
2 SCRANTON FIREFIGHTERS PENSION COMMISSION  
3 MEETING HELD FEBRUARY 20, 2019.

4 MR. ROGAN: Are there any comments?  
5 If not, receive and filed.

6 MS. REED: 3-D. MINUTES OF THE  
7 SCRANTON POLICE PENSION COMMISSION MEETING HELD  
8 FEBRUARY 20, 2019.

9 MR. ROGAN: Are there any comments?  
10 If not, received and filed.

11 MS. REED: Excuse me, I omitted 3-D.  
12 MINUTES OF THE NON-UNIFORM MUNICIPAL PENSION  
13 BOARD MEETING HELD FEBRUARY 20, 2019.

14 MR. ROGAN: Any comments? Received  
15 and filed.

16 MS. REED: 3-F. MINUTES OF THE  
17 COMPOSITE PENSION BOARD MEETING HELD FEBRUARY  
18 20, 2019.

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

21 MS. REED: 3-G. AGENDA FOR THE  
22 NON-UNIFORM MUNICIPAL PENSION BOARD MEETING  
23 HELD MARCH 20, 2019.

24 MR. ROGAN: Are there any comments?  
25 Received and filed.

1 MS. REED: 3-H. AGENDA FOR THE CITY  
2 PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING TO BE HELD MARCH  
3 27, 2019.

4 MR. ROGAN: Are there any comments?  
5 Received and filed. Do any Council members  
6 have announcements at this time?

7 MR. DONAHUE: Yes, I have a couple,  
8 Jog for Jude will be held Sunday, April 28th,  
9 at 9 a.m., at the Dunmore Community Center.  
10 The 5K run and one mile fun walk will benefit  
11 S.I.D.S research being conducted at the Boston  
12 Children's Hospital as well as the St. Joseph's  
13 Center Baby Pantry. You could register for the  
14 race at Jude Zayac Foundation dot com.

15 The St. Joe's Young Professionals  
16 will also be hosting a Jog for Jude happy hour  
17 this Friday from 6 to 8 at the Backyard  
18 Alehouse. A \$10 donation is suggested. And  
19 guests are encouraged to bring baby clothing  
20 and/or toiletries for the St. Joseph's Baby  
21 Pantry.

22 And also, the City of Scranton will  
23 be establishing a Complete Count Committee to  
24 bring together citizens and/or community  
25 leaders to increase awareness and motivate

1 residents to respond to the 2020 census.

2 If you or your organization would  
3 like to be a part of the Complete Count  
4 Committee, we will be holding an informational  
5 session along with representatives of the  
6 Census Bureau this Thursday, March 28th at 5:30  
7 at Posh across from City Hall. And then I'll  
8 have more on the Complete Count Committee in  
9 Fifth Order. Thank you.

10 MR. GAUGHAN: I have one. I  
11 received an interesting call this afternoon  
12 from a resident. She wanted me to mention --  
13 and I did not know this for those of you in the  
14 audience who might have Greek ancestry. Today  
15 is actually Greek Independence Day.

16 So I just wanted to mention that and  
17 hope that we're celebrating our Greek culture  
18 in the City of Scranton. I had a very  
19 interesting conversation with this woman who  
20 explained all of the different contributions  
21 from our Greek ancestors to the City of  
22 Scranton.

23 We do have a very strong Greek  
24 culture in the city. I would also like to ask,  
25 Mrs. Reed, if you could send a letter to the

1 Mayor asking if he would be interested next  
2 year in raising the Greek flag.

3 This woman -- in front of City Hall  
4 for Greek Independence Day. This woman had  
5 mentioned that years ago that was done every  
6 March 25th. So see if we can start that  
7 tradition again. That's all I have. Thank  
8 you.

9 MR. ROGAN: Anyone else?

10 MS. REED: FOURTH ORDER. CITIZENS'  
11 PARTICIPATION.

12  
13 (The following speakers offered  
14 public comment as follows:

15 Joan Hodowanitz spoke on City  
16 Business.

17 Gerard Hetman spoke on matters of  
18 general concern.

19 Lenny Srebro spoke on matters of  
20 general concern.

21 Les Spindler spoke on matters of  
22 general concern.

23 Sara Lancaster spoke on matters of  
24 general concern.

25 Alfreda Martin{sic} spoke on matters

1 of general concern.

2 Robert Bolus spoke on matters of  
3 general concern.

4 Ron Ellman spoke on matters of  
5 general concern.

6 Marie Schumacher spoke on City  
7 Business.

8 Dave Dobrzyn spoke on matters of  
9 general concern.

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

11 MOTIONS.

12 MR. ROGAN: Mr. Perry, any motions  
13 or comments?

14 MR. PERRY: Just a few comments.  
15 Lenny, I will get in touch with you as soon as  
16 we hear something back, which I'm sure will be  
17 shortly and we'll get some kind of -- some  
18 schedule set for you.

19 Something I wanted to bring up and  
20 Miss Hodowanitz brought it up anyway. When  
21 this whole issue of City Hall and some of the  
22 expenses came up, from time to time a city this  
23 size that owns this many assets with  
24 facilities, there's going to be repair  
25 maintenance. That's just the way it is.



1                   But I think something that we can do  
2 more preemptively to prepare for these things  
3 and reduce cost is have a PM calendar or  
4 preventative maintenance calendar. I know  
5 we've discussed this in the past. But I think  
6 I would like to take a harder look at it.

7                   In my mind, a preventative  
8 maintenance manager would have kind of like all  
9 encompassing accountability of our facilities.  
10 And I don't know if it would be a full-time  
11 position, if it would be extra on top of  
12 someone else's responsibilities or if it would  
13 be contracted out or third party; but I  
14 definitely think, you know, we're being  
15 pennywise and pound foolish with not having a  
16 good preventative maintenance schedule.

17                   Because as you guys know, exterior  
18 issues lead to interior. As mortar goes,  
19 bricks start to move. They start to crack. As  
20 that happens, more water gets in. Now we have  
21 interior issues. And anybody will tell you  
22 moisture is just nasty. Water's nasty to  
23 buildings.

24                   And the longer it goes on, the worse  
25 it gets where, you know, if we had quarterly or

1           semiannual inspections of the buildings, we  
2           could notice something, set something up with  
3           just some adding some mortar, patching it up.  
4           You know, the stones would never be loose.  
5           They would never crack.

6                         You know, but unfortunately, you  
7           know, we don't have something that encompassing  
8           in place. We do have some things -- I know we  
9           have a lot of preventative maintenance  
10          schedules for our cars, our police, our fire.  
11          But as far as our facilities I think there is  
12          more that we can do here to prevent some of  
13          these shock and awe bills and assessments that  
14          we get.

15                        We kind of seem like we put it on --  
16          and when I say we, you know, the City of  
17          Scranton. I'm not talking about any  
18          administrations. It's just it is what it is.  
19          This is our building. And, you know, I believe  
20          we need to take care of our assets and our  
21          facilities.

22                        And I think we can do a lot better  
23          at lowering the cost of it and the burden to  
24          all of us if we just kind of, you know, we took  
25          a better look at the overall ongoing

1 maintenance of it.

2 So if Council doesn't have an issue,  
3 I would like to send out our first feelers to  
4 Mr. Bulzoni and the Mayor. I would like to  
5 invite them into an upcoming caucus to discuss  
6 specifically a preventative maintenance  
7 calendar with the possibility of -- I don't  
8 want to say creating a new position, I'm just  
9 talking about creating accountability.

10 Where that accountability would be,  
11 the preventative maintenance of our assets of  
12 facilities. And, you know, I'm sure this could  
13 be a pretty lengthy ongoing discussion. But I  
14 think it's something that the five of us and,  
15 you know, of course, Mr. King, Mr. Gallagher,  
16 Mr. Pocius and the Administration would want to  
17 be in on.

18 I expect this to grow and become,  
19 you know, more of a positive issue going  
20 forward because, you know, for one, I don't  
21 want to lose City Hall. This is our history.  
22 This is part of who we are. And, you know, I  
23 understand that as of right now, you know, it's  
24 a huge bill.

25 We do have an application on this

1           for a grant which would help. But, you know,  
2           it's still tough to see. And I think we need  
3           to do everything possible to hold onto this  
4           building. This is our history. This is who we  
5           are. And that's, you know, call me nostalgic,  
6           call me whatever. But, you know, that's just  
7           how I feel at this point in time.

8                       And I don't want to see it get to  
9           the point where it's too out of hand where  
10          we're unable to do anything with it. So maybe  
11          if we can get started and if we can, you know,  
12          get around this issue because I know we will.  
13          Where there's a will there's a way.

14                      And one way or another, we're going  
15          to fix this issue and take care of it and move  
16          on. I just want to see this as you, you know,  
17          with emergency fixes with firehouses and all of  
18          our other assets, I want to see -- I don't want  
19          us to go to the point of a breaking point  
20          before something gets done.

21                      I think there's better ways of  
22          doing -- anybody who's worked in the industry  
23          knows that anybody who owns any kind of assets  
24          or facilities, they have an excellent  
25          preventative maintenance process because it's

1 just the way to go.

2 It's how to take care of your  
3 business. It's how you take care of your  
4 assets. That's all I have for tonight. Thank  
5 you.

6 MR. ROGAN: Thank you. Mr. Donahue,  
7 any motions or comments?

8 MR. DONAHUE: Yes, just to add onto  
9 what Mr. Perry just said, Miss Reed, would you  
10 also be able to ask the Administration for a  
11 breakdown of the current building maintenance  
12 plan?

13 I also got correspondence back from  
14 Brian Fallon, the Director of Parks and  
15 Recreation regarding the price of the new  
16 showmobile. And that price was \$17,500. So,  
17 Mrs. Reed, would you also be able to send a  
18 letter to Mr. Fallon and the Mayor asking for  
19 copies for -- of the invoices for that work?

20 And also, I'd like to make a motion  
21 to put a resolution on the agenda for next week  
22 in support of our Complete Count Committee.  
23 Data obtained by the census will help -- is  
24 used to help determine how approximately 675  
25 billion in federal government funds are

1 distributed.

2 And just those little -- add up to  
3 \$2,000 in federal funding will be lost for each  
4 person not counted. So that's upwards of 20  
5 grand for a federal funding lost over ten years  
6 for each person not counted.

7 MR. ROGAN: Motion's been made. Is  
8 there a second?

9 MR. GAUGHAN: Second.

10 MR. ROGAN: On the question? All  
11 those in favor signify by saying aye.

12 MR. PERRY: Aye.

13 MR. DONAHUE: Aye.

14 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

15 MR. EVANS: Aye.

16 MR. ROGAN: Aye. Opposed? The ayes  
17 have it and so ordered.

18 MR. DONAHUE: That's all I have for  
19 tonight.

20 MR. ROGAN: Thank you. Mr. Evans,  
21 any motions or comments?

22 MR. EVANS: A few comments. First  
23 of all, I would like to reenforce my position  
24 on the restoration of City Hall. So to be  
25 perfectly clear, we need to take responsibility

1           for this building but also be open to creative  
2           ideas if they make sense.

3                       But always remembering that we are  
4           the stewards of this building. We are the  
5           caretakers of this building. And that's our  
6           responsibility. And we should take it very  
7           seriously. The current credit rating is BB  
8           plus. Generally credit ratings do not change  
9           unless there is an event that requires a review  
10          like incurring of additional debt.

11                      However, I did participate in a  
12          conference call not long ago where several  
13          financial experts were on the call. And we  
14          basically tried to make an impact on them as  
15          far as our financial story and how it's  
16          improved.

17                      So we hope that pays dividends when  
18          the time comes where the new credit rating  
19          unfold. Our goal, of course, should be at the  
20          very least a triple B minus rating which is the  
21          indication of investment grade rating,  
22          something we haven't seen in years. Something  
23          that would open the door for sound and  
24          strategic borrowing at favorable rates or  
25          further debt restructuring if it made sense

1 for the city.

2 But part of our case for a better  
3 rating is to formulate a debt policy as well as  
4 an investment policy as directed by the  
5 recovery plan. So I had conversations with BA  
6 Bulzoni this week. He's in the process of  
7 formulating those plans now. And we should  
8 expect something before Council in the very  
9 near future to create that answer to the  
10 recovery plan.

11 I also want to talk about some of my  
12 debates with PennDOT officials. First of all,  
13 there was the Kildare's Housing project. This  
14 Council tabled legislation in the hopes of  
15 having a conversation on the impact of DOT  
16 rules imposed because of that project.

17 That road is considered a state  
18 road. The lack of response by PennDOT  
19 officials to even discuss this matter is  
20 troubling at best. The second issue is one  
21 that Councilman Donahue and myself have been  
22 working on.

23 Several months ago, we met with  
24 PennDOT officials, Chief Graziano, DPW Director  
25 Gallagher to discuss the intersection of



1 Pittston Avenue and Orchard Street.

2 At the time, there were 38  
3 documented traffic accidents at that  
4 intersection over the last three years. As of  
5 today, there are 39. So we asked PennDOT at  
6 the time for what we thought was a reasonable  
7 and simple request to place a 4-way stop sign  
8 system at that location and do a 90-day trial  
9 period and then reconvene to review the results  
10 of that trial.

11 PennDOT officials in attendance, of  
12 course, said they had to go back to their  
13 office to discuss requests with the  
14 decision-makers and get back to us.

15 Months have gone by and, of course,  
16 we had no response. Every day that passes is  
17 another opportunity for a tragedy to happen at  
18 that intersection. Several things became clear  
19 at that meeting. DOT officials were seemingly  
20 more concerned with traffic congestion than  
21 they were with the issue of vehicular or  
22 pedestrian safety.

23 While Pittston Avenue is a state  
24 road, Orchard Street is a city street. And as  
25 such, we should at least be equal partners in

1           what is decided at that location.

2                       So with the risk of getting into the  
3 weeds a little bit, I'm going to talk about the  
4 difference between a road and a street as they  
5 relate to this discussion, something you may  
6 not have heard before.

7                       But a road is basically a high speed  
8 connection between two places. It's about  
9 moving cars quickly. It's designed to minimize  
10 congestion, etc. That's the primary focus.  
11 And it can be a detriment to bikes pedestrian,  
12 joggers, etc. This is the DOT motto though.

13                      Streets on the other hand are more  
14 complicated. They have on-street parking,  
15 maybe bike traffic, turning traffic, different  
16 speeds, pedestrians. This is what you find in  
17 most neighborhoods. It's why people feel safer  
18 on streets than they do on roads because they  
19 are encouraged by design and other external  
20 factors to move cars to move slower.

21                      So what Pittston Avenue is according  
22 to many urban planners is what should really be  
23 called a STROAD. A STROAD is a hybrid between  
24 a road and a street. So PennDOT tries in my  
25 viewpoint to move traffic quickly and

1           efficiently through a neighborhood street which  
2           is complicated because of the bikes and  
3           pedestrians and joggers, etc.

4                        So a STROAD just doesn't work. It  
5           shouldn't be pigeonholed into the normal DOT  
6           design guidelines because it's neither a road  
7           or a street. So it should not be applying  
8           those one size fits all strict DOT rules on  
9           what is clearly a city street environment.

10                      Earlier today I had a conversation  
11           with Chief Graziano. And he indicated to me  
12           that he had started the process of gathering  
13           information on the traffic and speed of  
14           vehicles near that intersection. And he should  
15           have that information back to us over the next  
16           several weeks.

17                      So with that said, I'm going to ask  
18           Mrs. Reed if we can invite PennDOT officials to  
19           a work session or a public caucus to discuss  
20           their design rules, regulations, and how they  
21           impact our city streets.

22                      I prefer a work session because I  
23           think we could meet with them face-to-face and  
24           have a dialogue and a conversation that  
25           hopefully will bring about broader idea of how

1 we can benefit each other. We will discuss the  
2 format as Council and we'll all decide how we  
3 want to do that.

4 But Chief Graziano, of course, and  
5 Denny Gallagher, the DPW Director should be  
6 invited as well. I would suggest sometime  
7 after April 15th. I want to give that study  
8 time to be finished and for us to have an  
9 opportunity to review it.

10 And finally, I don't want you to  
11 forget that every day is your chance to make  
12 this city a little better. And that's all I  
13 have tonight.

14 MR. ROGAN: Thank you. Mr. Gaughan,  
15 any motions or comments?

16 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, a few. First,  
17 I'd like to make a motion that we enter into  
18 Third Order at our next Council meeting the  
19 memo that we received March 23rd, 2019, dealing  
20 with municipal building improvements from the  
21 Business Administrator Dave Bulzoni.

22 MR. EVANS: Second.

23 MR. ROGAN: On the question?

24 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, on the question.  
25 I just want to talk for a minute about the memo

1           that will be put into Third Order next week  
2           because it sheds a lot of light I think on the  
3           thought process that the Administration has on  
4           this building and how they might want to move  
5           forward.

6                         So, first of all, Mr. Bulzoni --  
7           I'm not going to read through this whole thing.  
8           I'm not going to read the whole thing into the  
9           record because it's about four or five pages.  
10          But I just want to touch on some of the  
11          highlights because I think it's important.

12                        Mr. Bulzoni states that while an  
13          alternate solution to renovating City Hall may  
14          be a bridge too far, we may not know unless we  
15          investigate it further. I would agree with Mr.  
16          Bulzoni in that statement.

17                        One of the things that came to light  
18          as far as this memo is concerned, is that the  
19          Business Administrator was apprised of the sale  
20          of the former PenFed Credit Union Headquarters  
21          Building on Franklin Avenue. He says the  
22          building presently houses a credit union  
23          branch.

24                        The corporate functions have been  
25          relocated to Washington, DC. The branch office

1 will eventually close. The building,  
2 therefore, is mostly vacant. He says, "I would  
3 fairly confidently state that the building is  
4 in turn-key condition for municipal use."

5 He gives a little bit of background  
6 on this whole situation. The city which we  
7 have on our agenda tonight applied for roughly  
8 5 and a half million dollar RACP Grant with the  
9 state. The request was submitted based on an 8  
10 million dollar authorization for municipal  
11 building improvements approved in 2017.

12 Since the grant is matching, the  
13 maximum the city could apply for would be 50  
14 percent of the estimated project cost. Mr.  
15 Bulzoni states that he was advised that this  
16 round of RACP funding might be limited. He  
17 says, while I am hopeful that the city receives  
18 full funding, I would also like everyone to  
19 consider the prospects of full funding with the  
20 sense of realism.

21 Which I think is important because  
22 even though we're putting for the RACP Grant  
23 for nearly five and a half million dollars,  
24 that doesn't mean that we're going to get that.  
25 And as he states in his memo, he's been advised

1           that this round of funding might be limited.

2                       He says while I'm hopeful that the  
3           city receives full funding, I would also like  
4           everyone to consider the prospects -- I already  
5           read that part. The remaining funds required  
6           to complete the project might be obtained  
7           through a debt issue.

8                       Market factors for debt issuance are  
9           presently favorable for the city. The city  
10          might be able to use a RACP concept to keep  
11          debt service at a minimum until some existing  
12          debt matures. The city may also consider a  
13          three year construction note during the  
14          renovation period.

15                      Construction notes typically require  
16          interest only during the period the note is  
17          outstanding. Principal would be due at  
18          maturity and would be repaid from a bond issue.  
19          This is one of the things that I talked about  
20          last week and where my questions come in and  
21          where I'm concerned.

22                      And I think we should slow down just  
23          a bit and take a more deliberative approach as  
24          it relates to financing and the impact this is  
25          most definitely going to have on the budget no

1 matter which way the Administration decides to  
2 move. So I think we need to have a  
3 conversation about that.

4 Mr. Bulzoni also mentions the  
5 logistical issues abound during construction.  
6 And the gentleman from Highland Associates  
7 touched on this as well. He mentions that the  
8 building was last overhauled in 1979. During  
9 that time, the entire operation was moved to  
10 the Connell Building.

11 So I think we need to also take into  
12 account the cost of -- depending on how the  
13 city intends to do it, moving offices, moving  
14 employees, and what kind of additional cost  
15 that will take on.

16 He also mentions which I think is  
17 interesting that the city might have options  
18 following the Serrenti Building Project. He  
19 says that this public safety building project  
20 might not be completed substantially until the  
21 end of the year. I think we need to have an  
22 additional conversation about that and what he  
23 means by that statement.

24 He also says in his memo that he  
25 would not recommend a fragmented approach to



1 improvements, which is what I had mentioned as  
2 a possibility in the caucus this evening. In  
3 other words, if we're going to do this  
4 depending on how it impacts the budget, we may  
5 want to look at taking care of the first and  
6 second priorities, the things that are really  
7 pressing first. Mr. Bulzoni does not think  
8 that we should take a fragmented approach to  
9 that.

10 He also mentions which I think is  
11 important a partial completion would require an  
12 annual capital budget allocation to address the  
13 issues in entirety, which would be in addition  
14 to the debt service requirements for the  
15 amounts borrowed.

16 The building even with full  
17 renovations has issues which will not be  
18 eliminated and, obviously, as everyone knows,  
19 parking will remain an issue.

20 Couple of the other things that he  
21 mentions in here that again, I think is very  
22 interesting is that the members of the  
23 Administration -- I don't know if it was Mr.  
24 Bulzoni and anyone else but toured the PenFed  
25 Building.

1                   He mentions it impresses one with  
2                   how much turn-key potential the building has  
3                   for municipal use, parking is substantial,  
4                   refuse payments could be made at drive-up  
5                   teller windows. The Licensing and Permits  
6                   Department could have personnel located behind  
7                   teller windows on the first floor along with  
8                   many other conveniences we presently do not  
9                   have in our operation.

10                   That building is totally secure.  
11                   Upper floor access can only be made through  
12                   secure access cards and mentions that he would  
13                   estimate that operating cost might be  
14                   substantially lower than those presently  
15                   realized and forecast even upon improvement to  
16                   the municipal building.

17                   He states that it's his  
18                   understanding that the PenFed Building  
19                   presently lists for approximately 5 million  
20                   dollars. And we would need to have an  
21                   additional conversation about additional costs  
22                   to the city to make that building fully  
23                   operational.

24                   But he feels that it should be  
25                   relatively maintained -- or relatively

1 contained. The city would use the same debt  
2 structure without the need for construction  
3 financing. And then there is some other  
4 comments that he makes here.

5 But I appreciate the memo. I do  
6 think that we need to continue to have this  
7 conversation. I'm not really sold either way  
8 yet only because I think there is still a lot  
9 of outstanding questions.

10 I think financing being one of them.  
11 What is the -- going to be the impact of the  
12 budget. I think we need to see those numbers  
13 flushed out a lot more. Mr. Perry's suggestion  
14 about the preventative maintenance manager, I  
15 understand what he's saying. I disagree with  
16 it though just in the thought process that it's  
17 my understanding that the Licensing,  
18 Inspections and Permits Director is the  
19 maintainer of the building or should be in  
20 charge of maintaining the building.

21 So that should be one of his  
22 responsibilities. I don't know if we need to  
23 add another position in the budget. That may  
24 be double work. I do agree though that we need  
25 to have -- I think we need to have a public

1 caucus with the Mayor, with the Business  
2 Administrator to discuss his memo which I think  
3 is important to discuss a building maintenance  
4 plan moving forward.

5 I understand that this isn't just  
6 the fault of this administration. It's the  
7 past administrations going back decades. And  
8 it's easy to complain about what has not been  
9 done in this building and the oversight on the  
10 part of many administrations.

11 But what we are tasked with as a  
12 Council now is what are we going to do moving  
13 forward; how are we going to maintain the  
14 building if we're staying here? And I would  
15 just like to know, you know, what direction the  
16 Mayor and the Business Administrator want to  
17 move in.

18 So we need a clearer picture on  
19 that. I do think though that we need to  
20 examine all options extremely carefully using a  
21 meaningful deliberative approach taking into  
22 account the immediacy of the building  
23 maintenance issues which we saw firsthand by  
24 the PowerPoint financing and most importantly  
25 impact on the budget moving forward.

1                   And then I think we need to vote on  
2                   the motion.

3                   MR. ROGAN: Oh, we're still on the  
4                   motion? Is there a second? Actually we're on  
5                   the question. All those in favor signify by  
6                   saying aye.

7                   MR. PERRY: Aye.

8                   MR. DONAHUE: Aye.

9                   MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

10                  MR. EVANS: Aye.

11                  MR. ROGAN: Aye. Opposed? The ayes  
12                  have it and so ordered.

13                  MR. GAUGHAN: The second thing I  
14                  wanted to mention, I agree with Mr. Perry that  
15                  we need to as I said invite the Mayor and the  
16                  Business Administrator and any other members  
17                  that might be helpful from the Administration  
18                  to a public caucus. But I think we should do  
19                  that by motion.

20                  So I would like to make a motion  
21                  that City Council ask the Mayor, the Business  
22                  Administrator and any other administration  
23                  official that may be helpful in discussing this  
24                  topic to a public caucus within the next few  
25                  weeks.

1 COUNCILPERSON: Second.

2 MR. ROGAN: All those in favor  
3 signify by saying aye.

4 MR. PERRY: Aye.

5 MR. DONAHUE: Aye.

6 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

7 MR. EVANS: Aye.

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

10 MR. GAUGHAN: The second thing,  
11 Mrs. Reed, I'm going to ask just because I've  
12 been approached -- I think it would be helpful  
13 anyways. But I've been approached by a few  
14 members of different neighborhoods throughout  
15 the city who would like to see and request a  
16 park cleanup schedule.

17 So how does the city plan to address  
18 each park, when they're going to go in since  
19 the spring is here and summer is approaching,  
20 how they are going to address the needs of each  
21 park and what that schedule looks like, when  
22 and in what order. So if we can ask the  
23 Administration about that.

24 Also, if you could ask the DPW when  
25 pothole patching will begin. Mrs. Schumacher

1 had brought up about the street sweeper. I'm  
2 also curious, I may have missed this, but can  
3 we also ask if the city received the grant for  
4 the second street sweeper that we were going  
5 for? I can't remember if we did or not.

6 And then if you can follow that up  
7 by when they're going to start that program.  
8 Last week I inquired about the Mayor appointing  
9 two people to the Ethics Board. We did get a  
10 response back from the Mayor's Office.  
11 Mrs. Reed, do you -- what did Mrs. Garvey say?  
12 I can't remember now.

13 MS. REED: Inaudible.

14 MR. GAUGHAN: Okay. So the Mayor --  
15 thank you. The Mayor is actively in the  
16 process of submitting those names to Council.  
17 And hopefully we can get the ball rolling on  
18 that. Also, I received a letter from a  
19 resident. I just want to read it really quick  
20 into the record.

21 I'm writing to you to find out why  
22 our neighborhood cannot get disgusting garbage  
23 and clothes from the riverbank behind the Ice  
24 Box cleaned up. I have spoken to DPW on behalf  
25 of the neighborhood at least three times. The

1 response is they know about it, yet it remains  
2 there for months. This is disturbing to me  
3 when I have company at my house for repairs,  
4 visits, etc.

5 It stands out like the eyesore that  
6 it is. I'm asking you to see if you can do  
7 something for us. This causes blight and a  
8 rodent problem which we don't need. I would  
9 appreciate it if you could help us. So if we  
10 can forward this letter to the DPW, Mrs. Reed,  
11 please and also, I don't know, maybe the  
12 Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority can  
13 coordinate with the DPW some kind of cleanup.

14 And we might want to copy Bernie  
15 McGurl on that letter as well. Lastly, the  
16 paving program for this summer -- I don't even  
17 know if we're having one at this point. But if  
18 we can check on that. And I've also been asked  
19 by a resident to see if the Administration  
20 would consider paving the 16 and 1700 blocks of  
21 Wyoming Avenue. And that's all I have. Thank  
22 you.

23 MR. ROGAN: Thank you. Just a  
24 couple comments. Most of our discussion  
25 tonight has been about the repair of this



1 building or alternative solutions. And again,  
2 I would like to urge everyone to remain  
3 open-minded.

4 Personally I feel judging by the  
5 numbers that we've seen so far, financially  
6 it's in the city's best interest to explore  
7 other options. That's not to say that's the  
8 route I fully support. If it costs more money  
9 to move, I wouldn't support it.

10 But one thing that our caucus  
11 tonight really brought into my realization is  
12 that this 10 million dollar plus project  
13 doesn't take care of everything. There is a  
14 number of items and big ticket items that are  
15 not replaced or repaired in this renovation.

16 One of the biggest is being windows.  
17 And I understand the reasoning why because it  
18 would cost even millions more to do that. But  
19 when you're looking at doing all of these  
20 upgrades, you would hope some of the benefit  
21 would be energy efficiency, less utility bills.

22 We're not going to achieve a whole  
23 lot of that by leaving these old windows in  
24 place. Also, some of the other items that  
25 aren't taken care of in this review are the

1           bathrooms. The bathrooms are functional. But  
2           if you've gone in them, they're not --  
3           especially the first floor bathroom is not  
4           the -- it's not a state-of-the-art facility by  
5           any means.

6                         Security which is something that has  
7           been brought up, Scranton City Hall is probably  
8           the only government building in the city that  
9           doesn't have any type of security. Whether  
10          that is something that needs to be looked at in  
11          the future or not is something that, you know,  
12          certainly up for debate.

13                        But that's not part of this plan as  
14          well. IT upgrades, which I know we spend a ton  
15          of money on trying to get our IT up to where it  
16          should be. It's nowhere near where it should  
17          be. And again, part of it at least within this  
18          building, you know, it's because of the age.

19                        Water shutoffs, I know I did meet  
20          with Paul O'Hora who handles almost all the  
21          building maintenance. I know there's a lot of  
22          issues with the current plumbing within our  
23          building. To do a small repair in a bathroom,  
24          we have to shut down the whole plumbing  
25          system. That certainly shouldn't be the case.

1           And without these bathrooms being addressed, I  
2           wonder what will happen with that as well.

3                       And finally, the last thing that  
4           really wasn't included at all -- and I hope  
5           it's not in the building but any type of  
6           environmental issues. Looking at those  
7           pictures, to me it looked certainly like it may  
8           be asbestos. There is also mold. There could  
9           possibly be led. Removing these type of items  
10          is not cheap.

11                      That is not included in this 10  
12          million dollar figure as well. I think the  
13          suggestion that Mr. Bulzoni made in his memo to  
14          explore the PenFed Building makes a lot of  
15          sense. I've never been in that building. But  
16          I do really like the idea of having parking for  
17          residents.

18                      One of the biggest frustrations with  
19          this building for any resident coming here is  
20          there is only a couple spots, 15-minute spots  
21          in front of the building. There is no parking  
22          lot for the public. And you pay a meter. So a  
23          lot of times after driving around the block  
24          five, six times, they're frustrating before  
25          they even come in the building and then going

1 up a flight of stairs, waiting for an elevator.

2 A new facility can be much more  
3 citizen friendly for people coming in to pay a  
4 garbage bill, get a permit from Licensing and  
5 Inspections. And the building could be  
6 structured in a way where the first floor is  
7 all of those departments that the public is  
8 interacting with every day.

9 And then the upper levels would be  
10 the departments that don't have quite as much  
11 foot traffic. And on the parking note, one  
12 thing to keep in mind is -- and again, it's a  
13 beautiful building. It's a historic building.  
14 I'm certainly not saying tear it down or throw  
15 away the key.

16 But this building was built before  
17 people had cars. So you could see were there  
18 is deficiencies from an ease of use  
19 perspective. So I really think looking at  
20 other facilities outside of this building if  
21 the numbers make sense really is the direction  
22 that we should be going.

23 Like I said, a 10 million dollar  
24 price tag which in my opinion doesn't even  
25 cover -- maybe covers 75 percent of what needs

1 to be done versus purchasing a building that's  
2 listed for 5 million.

3 That means hopefully we would be  
4 able to get it for less than that, doing some  
5 renovations and having a new building with  
6 lower utility costs. It makes sense to  
7 explore. I do support the grant application.  
8 It doesn't hurt to ask.

9 But before voting for any actual  
10 funding, if the city were to do a match, it  
11 would be 5 million dollars. I'm sure there  
12 will be debt associated with that. Before  
13 voting on anything where we're actually  
14 spending money, I would want to see a  
15 side-by-side comparison based on the renovation  
16 of this building and a few other buildings that  
17 are possibly for sale in the city.

18 But I do think the presentation  
19 tonight was helpful. And I do agree if  
20 renovations are done, there needs to be a  
21 number of firms bidding, not just one.

22 And finally, I know myself and a  
23 number of my colleagues spoke with some  
24 residents on the way in. They were going to  
25 speak and then they talked to all of us. So we

1 did get a list of -- a lengthy list of issues  
2 with the property located at -- a four-unit  
3 property at 1208-1210 Philo Street. It's a  
4 four-unit apartment house. Residents state  
5 there's been 42 police calls in the last couple  
6 years, two or three abandoned cars towed, which  
7 I know that personally because I helped them  
8 get them towed, three pitbulls removed,  
9 numerous quality of life violations. Today a  
10 drug addict left and passed out on the  
11 neighbor's lawn next door.

12 And part of the issue is when the  
13 police go to this property or inspectors, the  
14 doors aren't answered. So they're having a  
15 hard time getting in. So if we can send  
16 correspondence -- and there is much more here.  
17 I don't want to read it all over the air.

18 But if we can send a copy of this  
19 letter to the Police Chief, to the Licensing  
20 and Inspection's Office to see what can be  
21 done. It sounds to me like it may qualify as a  
22 nuisance property. Because it's a rental  
23 property, we have another route to see if it's  
24 registered.

25 So I would like to check into that

1 as well. If the building is not registered  
2 that would trigger an inspection. Which from  
3 what it sounds like in this letter, if anyone  
4 walked into that building for an inspection, I  
5 don't think it would be passing.

6 So if we can pass this along to all  
7 those departments and ask for a reply, this has  
8 been going on for a long time. And this is one  
9 of the worst ones I heard in a while. That is  
10 all. Thank you.

11 MS. REED: 5-B. FOR INTRODUCTION -  
12 AN ORDINANCE - AMENDING FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO.  
13 28, 2013, AN ORDINANCE AS AMENDED TRANSFERRING  
14 A TEMPORARY CONSTRUCTION AGREEMENT OF CITY  
15 OWNED PROPERTY LOCATED IN THE 100 BLOCK OF  
16 HARRISON AVENUE TO THE COMMONWEALTH OF  
17 PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
18 ("PENNDOT") FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE REMOVAL  
19 OF THE HARRISON AVENUE BRIDGE AND INSTALLATION  
20 OF A NEWLY CONSTRUCTED HARRISON AVENUE BRIDGE  
21 FOR THE SUM OF SEVEN THOUSAND DOLLARS  
22 (\$7,000.00) TO EXTEND THE TEMPORARY EASEMENT  
23 FROM TWO (2) YEARS TO FIVE (5) YEARS WITH AN  
24 UPDATED OFFER OF JUST COMPENSATION OF TEN  
25 THOUSAND SIX-HUNDRED (\$10,600.00) DOLLARS.

1 MR. ROGAN: At this time I'll  
2 entertain a motion that item 5-B be introduced  
3 into its proper committee.

4 COUNCILPERSON: So moved.

5 MR. EVANS: Second.

6 MR. ROGAN: On the question?

7 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, on the question,  
8 I just asked for clarification on this piece of  
9 legislation from the Law Department and they  
10 did get back to Mrs. Reed. PennDOT needs  
11 additional time to finish this project.  
12 Originally an easement was requested for two  
13 years for which they offered \$7,000 as  
14 compensation.

15 This legislation they're asking to  
16 extend the temporary easement from two to five  
17 years and updating the compensation value to  
18 \$10,600. Thank you.

19 MR. EVANS: On the question, yeah,  
20 since we're at looking extending this  
21 agreement, I would like to ask PennDOT if they  
22 can find out from their contractor when they  
23 will be cleaning up the debris that has  
24 accumulated up and down the Lackawanna River  
25 from the construction or demolition of the old



1 Harrison Avenue Bridge.

2 The debris from the bridge  
3 construction found its way all the way down  
4 along the banks of Lackawanna River almost to  
5 the Taylor line. So anybody that walks up and  
6 down the Lackawanna Heritage Valley Trail would  
7 see it. And my understanding is it came from  
8 the construction site.

9 And quite frankly, I think it's a  
10 disgrace. So I'll get with Mrs. Reed and draft  
11 a letter if that's okay with everyone and we'll  
12 get that out next week.

13 MR. ROGAN: Anyone else on the  
14 question? All those in favor of introduction  
15 signify by saying aye.

16 MR. PERRY: Aye.

17 MR. DONAHUE: Aye.

18 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

19 MR. EVANS: Aye.

20 MR. ROGAN: Aye. Opposed? The ayes  
21 have it and so moved.

22 MS. REED: SIXTH ORDER. 6-A, no  
23 business at this time.

24 SEVENTH ORDER, 7-A. FOR  
25 CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE - FOR

1 ADOPTION – FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO. 59, 2019 –  
2 AMENDING FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO. 17, 2018,  
3 AMENDING FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO. 4, 2018  
4 ENTITLED “AN ORDINANCE AMENDING FILE OF THE  
5 COUNCIL NO. 17, 1994 ENTITLED “AN ORDINANCE (AS  
6 AMENDED) AUTHORIZING THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE  
7 CITY OF SCRANTON TO ENACT ‘A WASTE  
8 DISPOSAL AND COLLECTION FEE’ FOR THE PURPOSE OF  
9 RAISING REVENUE TO COVER THE WASTE DISPOSAL AND  
10 COLLECTION COSTS INCURRED BY  
11 THE CITY OF SCRANTON FOR THE DISPOSAL OF  
12 REFUSE”, BY IMPOSING A WASTE DISPOSAL AND  
13 COLLECTION FEE OF \$300.00 FOR CALENDAR YEAR  
14 2019 AND THE SAME SHALL REMAIN IN FULL FORCE  
15 AND EFFECT ANNUALLY THEREAFTER” TO EXTEND THE  
16 MAY 1, 2019 DISCOUNT DATE TO MAY 31, 2019 TO  
17 ENABLE RESIDENTS TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE 10%  
18 DISCOUNT WHEN PAYING THEIR REFUSE BILL IN FULL.

19 MR. ROGAN: What is the  
20 recommendation of the Chairperson for the  
21 Committee of Finance?

22 MR. EVANS: As Chairperson for the  
23 Committee on Finance, I recommend final passage  
24 of item 7-A.

25 MR. PERRY: Second.

1 MR. ROGAN: On the question?

2 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, on the question.

3 I just want to make it clear that -- Council is  
4 not voting on garbage fee or instituting the  
5 garbage fee. We've already done that back in I  
6 think December or January.

7 This legislation that we're voting  
8 on is extending the May 1st discount date to  
9 May 31st. So that's all we're voting on. We  
10 are not voting on instituting the \$300 fee.  
11 That's already been voted on previously.

12 MR. EVANS: Yeah, this happened last  
13 year and again this year. The bills weren't  
14 all getting out -- are going out later than  
15 anticipated. So we all felt it was a good idea  
16 to continue with that --

17 MR. DONAHUE: We hadn't voted on the  
18 garbage fee yet. So this is a vote on the  
19 garbage fee.

20 MR. GAUGHAN: I don't think so. Is  
21 it, Amil?

22 ATTY. MINORA: I didn't hear you.

23 MR. GAUGHAN: Isn't this a vote --  
24 what we're voting on right now is to extend the  
25 discount period. We're not voting to enact the

1 garbage fee. I thought we already did that  
2 months ago.

3 ATTY. MINORA: We did that.

4 MR. EVANS: That was part of the  
5 enabling legislation back in December, I think,  
6 right? Or at least I thought it was anyway.

7 MR. GAUGHAN: Yeah.

8 MR. ROGAN: While we're on the  
9 question, two points with all of these fees and  
10 taxes. When the rate doesn't change, we do  
11 vote on them every year although it's not  
12 mandatory because each one of them does state  
13 annually every year thereafter.

14 One thing I think we should look at  
15 because we have had to extend this discount  
16 period because of delays in billing multiple  
17 years is making that May 31st discount  
18 permanent instead of having to go every year  
19 and extend this. Anyone else? Roll call,  
20 please?

21 MR. ROGAN: Roll call, please.

22 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Perry.

23 MR. PERRY: Yes.

24 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Donahue.

25 MR. DONAHUE: No.

1 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

2 MR. EVANS: Yes.

3 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

4 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

5 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

6 MR. ROGAN: Yes. I hereby declare

7 Item 7-A legally and lawfully adopted.

8 MS. REED: 7-B. FOR CONSIDERATION  
9 BY THE COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT – FOR  
10 ADOPTION – RESOLUTION NO. 108, 2019 –  
11 AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND OTHER APPROPRIATE  
12 CITY OFFICIALS TO APPLY FOR AND  
13 EXECUTE A GRANT APPLICATION FOR A REDEVELOPMENT  
14 ASSISTANCE CAPITAL PROGRAM (RACP) THROUGH THE  
15 COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA’S OFFICE OF THE  
16 BUDGET IN THE AMOUNT OF \$5,376,583.00;  
17 ACCEPTING AND DISBURSING THE GRANT IF THE  
18 APPLICATION IS SUCCESSFUL FOR THE RENOVATION OF  
19 THE SCRANTON MUNICIPAL BUILDING.

20 MR. ROGAN: What is the  
21 recommendation of the Chairperson for the  
22 Committee on Community Development?

23 MR. DONAHUE: As Chairperson for the  
24 Committee on Community Development, I recommend  
25 final passage of Item 7-B.

1 MR. PERRY: Second.

2 MR. ROGAN: On the question? Roll  
3 call, please.

4 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Perry.

5 MR. PERRY: Yes.

6 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Donahue.

7 MR. DONAHUE: Yes.

8 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

9 MR. EVANS: Yes.

10 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

11 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

12 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

13 MR. ROGAN: Yes. I hereby declare  
14 Item 7-B legally and lawfully adopted. If  
15 there is no further business, I'll entertain a  
16 motion to adjourn.

17 MR. PERRY: Motion to adjourn.

18 MR. ROGAN: This meeting is  
19 adjourned.

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C E R T I F I C A T E

1  
2  
3 I hereby certify that the proceedings and  
4 evidence are contained fully and accurately in the  
5 notes taken by me of the above-cause and that this copy  
6 is a correct transcript of the same to the best of my  
7 ability.

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