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COUNCIL FOR THE CITY OF SCRANTON

HELD:

Wednesday, July 17th, 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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3 PATRICK ROGAN, PRESIDENT

4 TIMOTHY PERRY, VICE PRESIDENT

5 WAYNE EVANS

6 WILLIAM GAUGHAN

7 KYLE DONAHUE

8

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10 LORI REED, CITY CLERK

11 KATHY CARRERA, ASSISTANT CITY CLERK

12 AMIL MINORA, ESQUIRE - SOLICITOR

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

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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.

15 MR. EVANS: I would like to make a
16 motion to take from the table Resolution Number
17 128 2019.

18 MR. PERRY: Second.

19 MR. ROGAN: On the question? This
20 piece is being taken from the table and being
21 placed in Seventh Order for a final vote. The
22 resolution concerns the settlement and mutual
23 general release for 500 Lackawanna Development
24 regarding the UDAG loan in the amount of
25 \$550,000.

1 Anyone who wishes to speak on this
2 particular piece of legislation may do so
3 during Fourth Order, Citizens Participation.
4 All those in favor signify by saying aye.

5 MR. PERRY: Aye.

6 MR. DONAHUE: Aye.

7 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

8 MR. EVANS: Aye.

9 MR. ROGAN: Aye. Opposed?

10 (No response.)

11 MR. ROGAN: The ayes have it and so
12 moved. Please dispense with the reading of the
13 minutes.

14 MS. REED: THIRD ORDER. 3-A. TAX
15 ASSESSOR'S RESULTS REPORT FOR HEARING DATE HELD
16 JUNE 26, 2019.

17 3-B. BREAKDOWN OF ELIGIBLE SALARIES
18 FOR THE LIQUID FUELS ACCOUNT FOR THE MONTHS OF
19 APRIL, MAY, AND JUNE 2019.

20 3-C. LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND
21 INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT FOR THE
22 PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2016 TO DECEMBER 31, 2017.

23 3-D. CHECK RECEIVED IN THE AMOUNT OF
24 \$2,262.00 FROM GOODWILL AT NORTH GERALD T.
25 LANGAN APARTMENTS, WHICH IS PAYMENT IN LIEU OF

1 TAXES FOR THE CITY OF SCRANTON.

2 3-E. CONTROLLER'S REPORT FOR MONTH
3 ENDING JUNE 30, 2019.

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

6 Do any Council members have
7 announcements at this time?

8 MR. PERRY: Yes, I have one
9 announcement. This July 20th coming up at
10 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., is going to be the Operation
11 Carvet Car and Bike Show at the Circle
12 Drive-in. It's going to be family friendly.
13 Car and Bike Show -- car and bike registration
14 is \$10. General admission is a voluntary
15 suggested donation of five.

16 All proceeds benefit the American
17 Legion of Post 568 and the Veteran Promise of
18 NEPA. Multiple classes will be judged and
19 awarded including best in show, top 20 best in
20 show. It's going to be rain or shine. I think
21 we all know what the weather is going to be the
22 next couple of days.

23 So we kind of know what to expect.
24 Wear your sunscreen. If you need more
25 information, you could call 570-892-2060.

1 There's going to be entertainment, kids bouncy
2 house, food and beverage. And there's going to
3 be local businesses set up with their vending
4 stations. So please come out and help support
5 the vets. Thank you.

6 MR. ROGAN: Just one announcement.
7 Regarding the mayoral appointment by Council,
8 Council is working on this process. We've
9 collected 16 letters of interest and resumes
10 from potential appointees. I would like to
11 thank everyone who made a submission.

12 We're reviewing them and we've begun
13 discussing our next steps. Tentatively we're
14 hoping to hold interviews next Monday with
15 candidates and then move from there. So there
16 will be a public advertisement placed in the
17 newspaper regarding when these interviews are
18 going to take place.

19 And there will be more to come on
20 that. Secondly, Council will hold a public
21 caucus in Council Chambers with PEL on
22 Wednesday, July 21st at 12 noon to discuss the
23 city's exit plan -- 31st.

24 MS. REED: FOURTH ORDER. CITIZENS
25 PARTICIPATION.

1 (The following speakers offered
2 public comment as follows:

3 Joan Hodowanitz spoke on city
4 business and matters of general concern.

5 Fay Franus spoke on matters of
6 general concern.

7 Bob Bolus spoke on matters of
8 general concern.

9 Len Srebro spoke on matters of
10 general concern.

11 Dave Dobrzyn spoke on matters of
12 general concern.)

13
14 MS. REED: FIFTH ORDER. 5-A
15 motions.

16 MR. ROGAN: Mr. Perry, any motions
17 or comments?

18 MR. PERRY: Yeah, just very quickly.
19 I just want to take time and I know my
20 colleagues will speak on this a little bit. I
21 just want to thank everybody for their letters
22 of interest we received this week for the
23 vacancy of mayor for our city.

24 I know it takes a lot of time, a lot
25 of thought and a lot of consideration to

1 actually put yourself forward and knowing full
2 well the job at hand. On a good day, the job
3 at hand of running our city is immense.

4 So I could only imagine what those
5 people must feel walking into a situation right
6 now where we really need a fantastic leader
7 with the qualifications and the intestinal
8 fortitude to do the job at hand.

9 So I appreciate everybody who
10 stepped forward to submit those letters of
11 interest along with their resumes.

12 And I know the five of us are right
13 now currently pouring over everything. Again,
14 we'll talk more on the process of how we're
15 going to handle that. I know Mr. Rogan already
16 did.

17 Mr. Bolus made a comment about
18 having the Council stay on as the Executive
19 Branch until November. Unfortunately, you
20 know, we've been eating and sleeping this
21 process for the last month now. And that's
22 just something that's just not -- it's just not
23 by law available.

24 If we don't make a decision within
25 30 days, if Councils fails to make a decision

1 on appointment, the judges will just make that
2 decision for us. So we don't have that option
3 to stay on as the Executive Branch and keep the
4 city running until an election in November and
5 a swearing in in January. It's just not --
6 it's just not on the table.

7 And the whole time the process and
8 the mindset behind this Council was to take
9 this decision of the mayor out of the hands of
10 the few and put it in the hands of the many.
11 And that's why we don't want it to go to the
12 courts.

13 We want to make this short-term
14 appointment right here with five and then give
15 that to a November election. Now, the November
16 election isn't perfect either. But that's the
17 system that we have. Right now how it's going
18 to work is the November election if there is
19 any independent candidates who qualify with a
20 signed petition, they're going to be able to
21 be on the ballot as well as any -- as well as
22 the two parties' candidates that come of their
23 choosing.

24 There won't be a primary like there
25 normally is. But the general -- once the

1 Democratic party, Republican party and any
2 qualifying independents, they will get their
3 chance on the ballot and then there will be an
4 election.

5 All the plans that were laid out to
6 us to get ourselves a leader that we need I
7 felt and we all felt that that was the best way
8 to do it. You know, we did not want to have to
9 make a decision of the five us to see who's
10 going to be in charge of the city for five
11 years -- or for the next two and a half years.

12 I think that was just -- that was
13 just too immense. So, you know, that's kind of
14 the situation that we have right now. And, you
15 know, we're going to make -- next week we're
16 going to make painstaking measures to go over
17 and talk to as many candidates as possible.

18 I guarantee you every candidate who
19 submitted a letter of interest will be
20 contacted and notified. And if we get a chance
21 to interview everybody, we will. If not, you
22 know, that's just -- everybody will be notified
23 and contacted.

24 Because again, that is something
25 that when you take the time to submit a resume

1 and a letter of interest for a job this
2 immense, it comes with -- respect works both
3 ways. And I think we owe that to everybody.
4 And I thank them for stepping up to do their
5 role.

6 And also Mr. Srebro was here with
7 that ongoing problem that you're having. I'm
8 going to just -- you want a different response.
9 I'm thinking as you're talking not being an
10 engineer and not being able to dig the hole
11 myself, unfortunately, we're a -- I know I say
12 this quite often. We're a conduit.

13 This body right here is a conduit to
14 get citizens' issues and issues of our
15 community into the right hands of the people
16 who can actually get the problem done. And the
17 problem right now hasn't been fixed even though
18 we have given that information to the people
19 who have the ability to fix it.

20 So sometimes that's kind of where
21 the roadblock is. You're coming to us. We
22 already went to them. The problem is not
23 fixed. You come back to us. And, you know, we
24 already handed that off to the people who
25 should have that taken care of.

1 Now, if there is not information
2 coming back to the resident, then that's also
3 an issue. So that's kind of where we are right
4 now. Is there an issue? Is there a timetable?
5 So I'll make a -- I'll call the engineer myself
6 in the next couple of days. And I still have
7 your number, Mr. Srebro. So I'll get
8 information off to him and see where we are
9 with this.

10 But unfortunately, you know, it's
11 just -- that's just not something that we delve
12 into every day. We make sure we take the
13 information. We give it to the right person.
14 And, you know, nothing feels worse than someone
15 coming to me for help or one of us for help and
16 we're not able to fulfill our obligations.

17 You know, it's kind of -- it's
18 definitely not satisfying. I know you're not
19 happy with it either or why should you be. But
20 that's something that we'll just keep working
21 on. And that's all I have for today.

22 MR. ROGAN: Thank you. Mr. Donahue,
23 any motions or comments?

24 MR. DONAHUE: I have nothing at this
25 time.

1 MR. ROGAN: Mr. Evans, any motions
2 or comments?

3 MR. EVANS: Yeah, very briefly. A
4 little before the noon deadline, I delivered
5 to our City Council Office my letter of
6 interest for the interim Mayor position. This
7 was not an easy decision for me. Those closest
8 to me know how much I struggled with making it.

9 But in the end at this moment at
10 this time and in my heart, I feel I made the
11 right choice. So to the many people who urged
12 me to bypass this entire scenario and run for
13 the full two-year term in November, thank you
14 for your support and your kind words along the
15 way.

16 I know you may be disappointed in
17 this particular decision. But I know that you
18 care more about Wayne Evans the person than
19 Wayne Evans the political candidate. So
20 because of this, I now am a candidate for this
21 position. I will be removing myself from the
22 decision making process to appoint the interim
23 mayor.

24 These four capable gentlemen to my
25 right will now have the full responsibility.

1 And I know they will take it very seriously.
2 And in the end, they will do what they believe
3 is the right thing to do for the City of
4 Scranton. So that's all I have tonight.

5 Who knows what the future will
6 bring. In the meantime, every day is your
7 chance to make this city a little better.
8 Thank you.

9 MR. ROGAN: Thank you. Mr. Gaughan,
10 any motions or comments?

11 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes. Thank you.
12 Yesterday I had the opportunity to visit the
13 300 block of Harrison Avenue. Mrs. Reed has
14 been helping me with a property on this block.
15 I visited with the neighbors who live next
16 door.

17 I thought 913-915 Eynon Street was
18 one of the worst homes that I had seen in the
19 city in regards to being blighted. But this
20 one might be on par with that. The people who
21 live next door are elderly. They had been
22 calling the city over a number of different
23 years.

24 The interesting thing is this house
25 has not been occupied in 20 years. The porch

1 is falling in. I could go on and on. But
2 anyways, I'm going to try to get together with
3 the Council, the LIPS Department to see if we
4 can find some sort of resolution to that issue.

5 Also, we received a complaint about
6 107-109 North Sumner Avenue. I talked to the
7 neighbor last night about that. So we're going
8 to try to help him get that safety issue taken
9 care of.

10 Also, Mrs. Reed, 950 James Avenue,
11 the property's been abandoned since 2013. It's
12 been foreclosed since 2014, same thing, issues
13 with the property, quality of life issues.

14 Also, Mrs. Reed, if you could check
15 when the utility project is set to begin on
16 Oram Street. I've gotten several calls about
17 the condition. We were in touch with DPW. We
18 did receive word back that they weren't going
19 to put it on the paving list or improve it
20 because the utility company is doing a project.
21 But they would like to know at this point when
22 that's going to occur.

23 Also, the city was awarded a Green
24 Light-Go project grant in the amount of
25 \$135,200 from PennDOT for traffic signal

1 replacement at Green Ridge Street and Wyoming
2 Avenue. And the city will put up \$33,800 as a
3 cash match.

4 I also just want to say that I'm
5 still obviously going through all of the
6 resumes that were submitted. I think now we're
7 at 16. I would like to thank everyone who
8 submitted their name.

9 In the last few weeks with what has
10 gone on, I've actually never been more hopeful
11 for this city. Never in my five and a half
12 years have I had more hope. And that is
13 because I have spoken to so many people in this
14 city who are not ready to throw in the towel
15 and they're not ready to give up.

16 Last week I met with some neighbors
17 up on East Mountain, same thing. People have
18 invested their time, their money. They've
19 lived here their entire lives. And they are
20 hopeful.

21 So whoever the next mayor is, if
22 it's Councilman Evans or any of the other 15
23 people that submitted their names, I think all
24 of us, this Council and all of the people in
25 the city need to rally around whoever that

1 person is because for all the negative things
2 that you hear about Scranton -- and some of
3 them are true; there are a lot of positive
4 things that have gone on in the last few years
5 and are currently going on.

6 One of the things that we have going
7 for us in the city is our people and our
8 neighborhoods. We have very strong
9 neighborhoods. We have very strong
10 neighborhood groups.

11 Whoever the next Mayor is really
12 needs to focus on holding our neighborhoods
13 together. That is the most important thing I
14 think that is going to have to be accomplished
15 here in the next few years.

16 Because once the neighborhoods go,
17 then we're in trouble. So I think we have
18 great people. We have strong neighborhoods.
19 We need to bring people together. Whoever the
20 next mayor is we do need to stand behind them.

21 And as I mentioned last week,
22 there's no place to go in my opinion but up.
23 So, you know, I pledge as a member of this
24 Council and I think my colleagues would agree
25 with me that we are all going to work together.

1 We're taking this process very
2 seriously. And we're going to try our best to
3 make the best choice for the citizens of
4 Scranton. Thank you.

5 MR. ROGAN: Thank you. Just a
6 couple quick comments regarding the
7 appointment. I would first like to thank
8 everyone who reached out to me and encouraged
9 me to apply.

10 For me, the timing certainly wasn't
11 right. And I really do appreciate Councilman
12 Evans stepping up as well as the other 15
13 people who have put in their applications. It
14 is as I'm seeing as Active Mayor over the last
15 few weeks, it is a very important and very
16 stressful job.

17 And it's one that certainly requires
18 100 percent attention from the applicants.
19 Although it's something I would be interested
20 in doing at some time in my life, I have a
21 one-year-old daughter at home who I love
22 spending time with.

23 So unfortunately, the timing for me
24 wasn't right. But I do appreciate all of those
25 that have put in, especially our colleague

1 Mr. Evans.

2 I just want to remind the folks who
3 did apply and we did mention this at our first
4 meeting. We are requesting the applicants not
5 to contact individual Council people to lobby
6 them. And we've also asked them not to contact
7 others to lobby us.

8 We want to do this process, do the
9 interviews, debate amongst ourselves without
10 any outside influence from other people
11 involved in politics or the community trying to
12 pressure Council people to vote for a certain
13 candidate.

14 I know that's happened unfortunately
15 in the past when there's been appointments for
16 City Council. I know all of our phones rang
17 off the hooks during that time period. So we
18 want to do this process amongst ourselves.
19 Obviously if there's members of the public that
20 have input they are free to speak at our public
21 meetings.

22 But we are going to work through
23 this process. I think we have a good idea of
24 how this is going to go as far as having the
25 special meeting to hear from candidates,

1 whittle it down and then debate amongst
2 ourselves and come to a conclusion.

3 One important point I do want to
4 make and I think all of us up here express
5 support for having a special election. But a
6 special election does not happen unless Council
7 makes an appointment. If it does go to the
8 courts, the courts would make the pick for two
9 and a half years.

10 So this is a very critical process
11 for Council to come to a consensus regarding
12 one of these applicants for the short term six
13 month appointment to allow that special
14 election to take place. That is all.

15 MS. REED: 5-B. No business at this
16 time.

17 SIXTH ORDER. 6-A. No business at
18 this time.

19 SEVENTH ORDER. 7-A. PREVIOUSLY
20 TABLED FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMITTEE ON
21 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FOR ADOPTION RESOLUTION
22 NUMBER 128 2019 APPROVING AND AUTHORIZING THE
23 MAYOR AND OTHER AND APPROPRIATE CITY OFFICIALS
24 FOR THE CITY OF SCRANTON TO ENTER IN A
25 SETTLEMENT AND MUTUAL GENERAL RELEASE WITH 500

1 LACKAWANNA DEVELOPMENT COMPANY CONCERNING
2 PROJECT NUMBER AS NOTED FROM THE URBAN
3 DEVELOPMENT ACTION GRANT PROGRAM FOR LOAN IN
4 THE AMOUNT OF \$550,000 PASSED BY RESOLUTION
5 NUMBER 39 2006.

6 MR. ROGAN: What is the
7 recommendation of the Chair for the Committee
8 on Community Development?

9 MR. DONAHUE: As Chairperson for the
10 Committee on Community Development, I recommend
11 final passage of Item 7-A.

12 MR. PERRY: Second.

13 MR. ROGAN: On the question?

14 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, on the question.
15 We had a caucus before the meeting with
16 Attorney Kelly from the Redevelopment
17 Authority, Attorney Gallagher who represented
18 OECD, and Mary-Pat Ward who is the Executive
19 Director of OECD.

20 I'm going to be voting in favor of
21 this legislation if for no other reason than if
22 we all vote against it after speaking with
23 everyone in the caucus, we're going to continue
24 to embroil ourselves in further cost and
25 litigation.

1 This has been going on now for a
2 number of different years. So that would be
3 the reason that I would vote for it. The
4 second reason is that this vacant lot that
5 currently sits next to Buona Pizza on
6 Lackawanna Avenue will become now a tax
7 producing property.

8 According to the settlement
9 agreement, the owners of this property now
10 either have put up a building, some kind of
11 improvement there or make it a green space.

12 And the third reason is the city
13 would get -- the SRA would get \$197,000 now
14 free to redevelop other projects or other
15 properties or to start another development. So
16 again, the benefits here in my opinion outweigh
17 the negatives. Thank you.

18 MR. ROGAN: Anyone else?

19 MR. EVANS: Yeah, on the question.
20 I want to touch on the SRA component for a
21 little bit. That is truly the silver lining in
22 this process is the critical funding of the
23 Scranton Redevelopment Authority.

24 You know, I've long been an advocate
25 for the -- creating more active and

1 re-energized SRA. And crazy enough, this
2 legislation found a way to do that and put
3 \$197,000 into the SRA is going to be a big, big
4 deal for them as well as the city.

5 And if they use that property, we
6 can see some great activity going on in the
7 city with that money. So that's all I have.

8 MR. ROGAN: Roll call, please.

9 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Perry.

10 MR. PERRY: Yes.

11 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Donahue.

12 MR. DONAHUE: Yes.

13 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

14 MR. EVANS: Yes.

15 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

16 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

17 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

18 MR. ROGAN: Yes. I hereby declare
19 Item 7-A legally and lawfully adopted.

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

22 MR. PERRY: Motion to adjourn.

23 MR. ROGAN: Meeting adjourned.

24

25

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.

8
9
10 _____
11 Maria McCool, RPR
12 Official Court Reporter
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