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SCRANTON CITY COUNCIL MEETING
PUBLIC HEARING

IN RE: PUBLIC HEARING FOR PUBLIC COMMENT ON
APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR THE EXPENSES OF THE
CITY GOVERNMENT FOR THE PERIOD COMMENCING ON THE FIRST
DAY OF JANUARY, 2011 TO AND INCLUDING DECEMBER 31, 2011
BY THE ADOPTION OF THE GENERAL CITY OPERATING BUDGET
FOR THE YEAR 2011.

HELD:

Tuesday, November 30, 2010

LOCATION:

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

CATHENE S. NARDOZZI - COURT REPORTER

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CITY OF SCRANTON COUNCIL:

JANET EVANS, PRESIDENT

PAT ROGAN, VICE-PRESIDENT

ROBERT MCGOFF

FRANK JOYCE

JOHN LOSCOMBE

NANCY KRAKE, CITY CLERK

CATHY CARRERA, ASSISTANT CITY CLERK

BOYD HUGHES, SOLICITOR

1 MR. ROGAN: The purpose of this
2 meeting is public comment regarding the
3 budget. We have a sign-in sheet and the
4 first speaker is Ozzie Quinn.

5 MR. QUINN: Good evening. Ozzie
6 Quinn, City of Scranton, Scranton Taxpayers'
7 Association. In regards to the city police
8 I read a week ago today in the Times-Tribune
9 regarding the budget Chief Duffy said that
10 the elimination of the Scranton Police
11 Officers would have no -- much of an impact
12 because of the fact that there will be
13 employment that they would have, you know,
14 and therefor, pick it up. Of course, we
15 know Sergeant Bob Martin doubted that, you
16 know.

17 That was on the 23rd and the 25th
18 the chief is interviewed again by a
19 different reporter from the Times-Tribune
20 and he said it's the night before
21 Thanksgiving, and he's talking about DUI's.
22 He says, "It's a big night and I have always
23 have been a big advocate for not drinking
24 and driving enforcement so I'm going to go
25 out myself and enforce it, Chief Duffy said.

1 The more help the better."

2 Okay. Then on Sunday with the
3 boondoggle of the cameras that they had for,
4 you know, the big article in the paper
5 Captain Graziano says, "We need more cameras
6 and we need more people to monitor them.
7 That's the truth. That would make them more
8 effective without question."

9 So I think that -- I don't know
10 Chief Duffy, but I think that the mayor had
11 the -- figuratively speaking, I think he had
12 his throat down the chief's neck when he
13 spoke about the budget, you know, since he
14 seems to water it down when he talks about
15 the DUI's and everything, you know? And the
16 chief has to, you know, be eligible, you
17 know, watch either's back. I'm the sure the
18 Chief doesn't want to lose those ten men
19 just as the people in the City of Scranton
20 doesn't want to.

21 Now, also the fact is that because
22 of the extenuating circumstances, you know,
23 we are going to have probably a deficit, did
24 we get the audit yet, the 2010 audit?

25 MR. ROGAN: I don't believe so.

1 MR. QUINN: If we have a deficit
2 2010 and a deficit 2011, we have a debt, I
3 don't know \$148 million and police and
4 firefighters are going to have a tough time,
5 again, like I said last week, ten years
6 again, I put it in perspective of one of
7 their children is in 7th grade they would be
8 a young man and young woman and now
9 graduated from college, so ten years it's a
10 long time.

11 What I'm saying is that because of
12 the extenuating circumstances the mayor has
13 done it for year after year after year and
14 got away with it, okay, and I don't know
15 where you are going to get the money, okay,
16 in regards to paying the \$10 million back
17 paying everything like that and trying to
18 also fight off the deficit -- the debt, so I
19 think there's a possibility that you might
20 have to look at refinancing something, you
21 know, and try to help out here because I
22 don't want to see these police and firemen
23 left out in the cold and, therefore, the
24 spin off would be the citizens in the City
25 of Scranton.

1 Now coming from the taxpayers that's
2 not, you know, usually you say save money,
3 watch money. I'm not asking that we raise
4 taxes, but that's one way that we've got to
5 figure how we can sort of get out of this
6 mess that he got us in, the mayor. Thank
7 you very much.

8 MR. ROGAN: Thank you. Bill
9 Jackowitz.

10 MR. JACKOWITZ: Good evening, city
11 council. As far as the budget goes, \$75
12 million is a high budget. That basically
13 breaks down to about \$1 million per person
14 because I think the population is about
15 77,000, somewhere in that area, and that's
16 including all payments, so if you go down to
17 voting age and higher, you know, it's
18 probably like \$2 million per person for the
19 residents of the City of Scranton. We can't
20 afford it, okay? The minimum wage, the
21 medium wage for a family of four is about 37
22 to 38 thousand dollars. We have the lowest
23 per capita income in the state.

24 We have the -- you know, I mean, all
25 of this has to be taken into consideration

1 and it should have been taken into
2 consideration for the last ten years, but
3 none of this has ever been taken into
4 consideration and who is to blame? All of
5 these people right here. All these pictures
6 on the wall. All of the mayors past and all
7 of the city council pasts because they
8 allowed this to happen.

9 It needs to stop so I hope that when
10 the budget time is it come in a couple more
11 weeks I hope the budget is slashed. I'd
12 like to see it slashed about 12 to 15
13 million dollars, I really would, because the
14 taxpayers didn't put us in this position,
15 the elected officials did, you know. We
16 came here week after week and complained, we
17 were laughed, we were called names, you
18 know, but we were right. We knew this was
19 going to happen and now it's crunch time
20 now.

21 Also, today Act 47 went before the
22 Supreme Court so their ruling should be
23 coming down very soon. Either way the
24 taxpayers are going to lose, whether the
25 ruling is in favor of the city or whether

1 the ruling is in favor of the police and
2 firemen, firefighters, the taxpayers are
3 going to get slaughtered either way around.
4 Again, it's not -- was not the taxpayers'
5 fault, it was the elected officials, the
6 people who we put our trust in, the mayors
7 and the city councils of the past. They
8 slammed us and they slammed us hard and
9 hopefully the 2010 City Council will pay
10 attention to this and really start making
11 changes because the city -- we have been
12 distressed for 19 years, the judges couldn't
13 even understand why we have been distressed
14 for 19 years. I still don't know why we
15 have been distressed for 19 years, but we
16 have been, it's a reality. It needs to stop
17 in 2010 and 2011.

18 As far as the firemen and police
19 officers goes, like I have said many times
20 from this podium, probably the most
21 important thing an elected official has to
22 do is provide for the safety of their
23 residents and their citizens and their
24 taxpayers. You know, the cameras, we find
25 out the cameras don't work. We find out

1 nobody has been monitoring the cameras. How
2 ridiculous is that? We spent \$250,000 plus
3 to mount cameras, I talked about this two
4 years ago when we were doing this. I was
5 laughed at. I worked security for many
6 years. I work in a place now where we have
7 cameras. Guess what? They have people
8 monitoring the cameras. A camera is useless
9 if nobody is looking at it. It's
10 ridiculous. How many more times are the
11 City of Scranton going to embarrass
12 themselves with ridiculous answers and
13 ridiculous solutions. We wasted money on
14 cameras.

15 You know, we wasted money on just
16 about everything that we have spent our
17 money on that's why we are in debt 140 some
18 million dollars or whatever it is, I don't
19 even know what the number is anymore, but I
20 don't think it really matters because it's
21 never going to get paid anyway. So really
22 let's, you know, let's use some common sense
23 and good judgment and let's make some right
24 decisions for a change. Thank you.

25 MR. ROGAN: Thank you. Joe

1 Talimini.

2 MR. TALIMINI: Good evening,
3 Council. All I can say about this budget
4 is, you know, grow up, people, start facing
5 reality. Even the president of the United
6 States has put a freeze on wages and it's
7 about time this city put a freeze on wages,
8 too.

9 Now, I haven't had a cost of living
10 raise last year and I won't get one next
11 year and I'm on a fixed income, but you know
12 what, when you pay \$2.95 a gallon for that
13 gasoline so do I, Pal. And all of these
14 clerks with assistant clerks who has
15 assistants to them it's ridiculous. It's
16 time to clean house in this city and
17 starting with the administration, with this
18 city hall right here and working on down.

19 I can't feel sorry for somebody who
20 is making 40 grand a year and is crying for
21 a 2 1/2 percent wage increase. I'm sorry,
22 it just doesn't work in my book. I live on
23 less than ten grand a year, which is less
24 than you people make sitting up there in
25 what's considered a part-time job, so when

1 it comes to the taxes and when it comes to
2 raising taxes and when it comes to salary
3 increases, you are not going to get any
4 sympathy from me. It's just means you are
5 going to have to tighten your belt, just
6 like this entire city has to tighten it's
7 belt.

8 I didn't get a cost of living raise,
9 but my cost of living is still going up on a
10 daily basis. Gasoline prices went over 20
11 cents a gallon in the last two weeks. I
12 still have to use that same gas and I don't
13 see anybody going to -- I can't go to Price
14 Chopper and ask them to give me a break. I
15 can't go to the Housing Authority and ask
16 them to give me a break. I can't do any of
17 the things that you do and ask for a break,
18 but I also don't have the extra money to pay
19 for it, and this city doesn't have the money
20 to pay for these fallacies that we have,
21 with everybody who needs more money,
22 everybody who needs a second TV set, who
23 needs an extra car, who wants to buy a
24 better house. It would be wonderful if I
25 could to that, too, but I can't.

1 It's about time these people started
2 doing the work they get paid to do. They
3 don't need assistants on top of assistants
4 on top of assistants. They don't need new
5 equipment for something they are not doing.
6 Mr. Jackowitz pointed out \$220,000 worth of
7 cameras which are absolutely useless. Put
8 them in here. Let them get some use out of
9 it.

10 I guess all over this county and all
11 of Luzerne County and other counties people
12 who read my newsletter call me, they e-mail
13 me, they say the same thing, the joke is no
14 longer the Scranton City Council, the joke
15 is the City of Scranton and it's about time
16 it changed.

17 Now, you are elected officials,
18 think about this, the Republicans and the
19 Democrats spent \$21 million in campaign
20 advertising this year alone on TV. \$21
21 million. That's almost one-third of the
22 budget that you have in front of you. Now,
23 if they can do that let them put some of the
24 money back into the city. It's got to be a
25 cost-effective operation. That's what you

1 were elected for and we expect you to do
2 that. We don't expect the mayor to do it
3 because he doesn't have enough sense to come
4 in out of the rain, but we do expect you to
5 do some budget cutting and do it without
6 benefit of friends and family, etcetera.
7 Thank you.

8 MR. ROGAN: Thank you. Charlie
9 Newcomb.

10 MR. NEWCOMB: Good evening, council.
11 What I'd like to say about the budget is I'm
12 going to give you a figure \$84,550. What
13 that figure is, that's the figure that a
14 child of somebody who would be born in 2011,
15 next year, that's how much they already owe
16 the federal government the way our budgets
17 are. \$84,000 for the infants that aren't
18 even born yet with the trillions of dollars.
19 They want to extend unemployment, want to
20 extend everything else, there is no money to
21 pay for this stuff.

22 What I want to say about the City of
23 Scranton's budget is this we have a lot of
24 consultants I believe we could do without,
25 we have lot of assistants for the

1 assistants, we have an \$85,000 business
2 administrator who I believe even when we had
3 Mr. Nixon he was only \$76,000 and then it
4 went up to Mr. Pichesky for \$85, which he
5 had a lot better credentials, I believe,
6 than the gentleman we have now and we are
7 paying \$85,000. I think what you have to
8 look at in this day and age and economy, I
9 know it's tough for anybody to have to lose
10 a job, but what I want to see is a taxpaying
11 citizen.

12 First of all, I want to see somebody
13 start collecting these million of dollars of
14 delinquent taxes money over all of these
15 years because I'm sure that would help us
16 with our budget, and what I'd like to see
17 done is not lose one policeman, not one lose
18 one firemen, and I believe the chief should
19 not be out on the street working. I believe
20 that's a union job. I believe he is taking
21 work away from somebody. But, city council,
22 I know have you a hard job ahead of you and
23 you got a budget coming up by December 15,
24 but really what I'd like to see done is I
25 would like to see you look by line, cut

1 where you can cut. If I was working for the
2 city, and I'm just going to use a number, if
3 I was making let's say \$60,000 a year and I
4 had to take my salary down -- got reduced
5 down to let's say 35, well, I'd have to look
6 at is 35 better than nothing or is 35 better
7 than collecting unemployment and keeping the
8 police and firemen on the streets? So I
9 know you have a hard job to do and you are
10 not going to make everybody happy, but as a
11 taxpayer, like I said last week, I do have
12 two properties that we own, we pay our
13 taxes, we are up-to-date, and I do not want
14 any services taken away from us, because
15 like Mr. Jackowitz said, all of the mayors
16 on the wall here previously, councils and
17 everybody just said, "Ahh, we'll worry about
18 it later."

19 Well, we seen what happened with our
20 federal government, we seen the last
21 election, we see the trouble we are in,
22 spending has to stop. You have to sit down
23 and look at line-by-line item and, please, I
24 ask you, do not we stabbings at the
25 Steamtown Mall, we've seen some other things

1 recently in the newspaper that didn't come
2 out, stabbing on the Expressway the other
3 night, they are still looking for the
4 person, please do not cut any police, do not
5 cut any firemen, don't cut the citizens
6 short.

7 (Mr. Joyce joins the meeting while
8 Mr. Newcomb was speaking.)

9 MR. ROGAN: Thank you. Marie
10 Schumacher.

11 MR. SCHUMACHER: Good evening, I'm
12 glad to see our finance chair has joined the
13 party.

14 MR. JOYCE: Thank you.

15 MS. SCHUMACHER: I would like to
16 start by saying I agree with whatever
17 speaker, whether it was last week or the
18 week before, stated that the fire department
19 should be separate from the property tax.
20 It should be a fee on all property owners.
21 It's everyone who has an improvement on a
22 property is covered by the fire department
23 and everyone should chip in, so that fire
24 department should switch to a fee for
25 service basis.

1 I think we are missing new
2 opportunities. I see nothing in here,
3 although I'm sure it's incorporated, but I
4 would like to know precisely how much the
5 expiration of the K0Z's at the end of this
6 year will increase our property taxes next
7 year. I would like to know why -- well,
8 maybe you people haven't -- I hope we are
9 going to see your budget tonight as well
10 your amendments because I have heard for a
11 long-time about establishing an EMS and what
12 that would bring in and what it brings in in
13 Bethlehem and Reading and so I hope we are
14 looking at that.

15 I believe I have also seen some
16 estimates on what regular towing in-house
17 would be instead of contracting it out and
18 that brings up another humongously missed
19 opportunity which is the enforcement of
20 existing laws. It's just pitiful. I have
21 every year since I have started coming to
22 council meetings I have complained that we
23 don't seem to be able to afford enough paint
24 to paint the T's at the parking meters, so
25 people know where they are supposed to park.

1 Just tonight I came down parking meter, I
2 thought, oh, there is a space. Well, wrong,
3 because the middle of the car was at the
4 parking meter and people parking up on Vine
5 Street when I came down Vine Street somebody
6 pulled in, their rear bumper was right at
7 the edge of the avenue. That is a dangerous
8 situation and that is increasing. People
9 just park wherever they want, they don't
10 care.

11 We have and if I hadn't already
12 accepted a job for next year I would
13 volunteer to do it for free and that is to
14 ticket pedestrians for cross -walking. I
15 think the University of Scranton, I've said
16 this before as well, needs a special course
17 in teaching their students that that little
18 red light under the traffic signal that says
19 "Don't Walk" means you stay on the curb
20 until it turns white and tells you to walk.
21 We could make a small fortune just at the
22 corner of Linden and Jefferson, although,
23 I'm sure that they would learn what those
24 lights mean.

25 Well, unfortunately, I can't read my

1 writing on that, but I do think another
2 thing you have to go back to the Recovery
3 Plan. The people of this city voted for the
4 Recovery Plan and that Recovery Plan had
5 wage and salary costs that were capped.
6 There was a certain amount allocated for
7 each year and that was totally ignored. I
8 think -- I'm hoping that that was the
9 starting point of your, city council's
10 budget, that we'll be seeing and again
11 hopefully tonight.

12 I believe our firemen and policemen
13 have to be compensated for the cost of
14 living during that period, but then I think
15 we need to go back to square one and go by
16 the Recovery Plan.

17 And then we need to look -- I
18 brought this up last week, apparently a lot
19 of people think that a nonprofit 1023 or
20 501-C-3 organizations means you're property
21 tax exempt automatically, and that's not
22 true. All that you are exempt from is
23 paying the federal income tax and you really
24 need to look at all of those exempt
25 properties, I didn't bring the number, but I

1 had it last week and it's -- I believe it
2 was in the thousands and whether or not some
3 of those could not be switched from tax
4 exempt to tax paying.

5 And then we need to know whether or
6 not the hold harmless issue that was brought
7 up by Attorney Jennings, that question needs
8 to be answered. Will the City of
9 Scranton -- may I do one more? I will stop
10 there, but I would like to know also what
11 the auditor's audit. I don't know a lot
12 about auditing, although I tutored
13 accounting, but I find auditing incredibly
14 boring, but during the hearings or trial
15 whatever it was when the mayor sued city
16 council earlier this year, Mr. Renda made a
17 statement, I believe there was some
18 discussion about the controller's report at
19 the end of every year was showing a surplus
20 and he said, well, that was not accurate
21 because other things came in after the close
22 of the year and some things did not such as
23 the wage taxes didn't come in until
24 sometimes as late as the end of February, so
25 I did a Right-to-Know. I did a

1 Right-to-Know to Mr. Renda and I asked what
2 the -- what the City of Scranton wage taxes
3 were for calendar years 2005 through 2009.

4 I also went and got the controller's
5 financial -- annual financial statement and
6 I was very surprised because since the
7 controller's report comes out and showed
8 these big surplus I expected that it would
9 be a different figure. But, in fact, the
10 audit report and the report of the
11 controller are exactly the same all the way
12 down.

13 But the other Right-to-Know I did
14 was to the Single Tax Office and for the
15 Years 2005 through 2008 they show that the
16 City of Scranton wage taxes were \$118,845
17 and change, and that is 36.4 million above
18 what the audit report and what the report of
19 the controller shows at \$82,458, so I would
20 hope you would find out where the missing
21 \$36 million might be and I hope we get the
22 figures for -- we get an audit soon so we
23 have the figures for 2009. Thank you very
24 much for your time.

25 MR. ROGAN: Thank you.

1 MR. JOYCE: Mrs. Schumacher, I do
2 want to apologize. I was running a little
3 bit late from work, but I had one question
4 for you, when you say that the fire service
5 should be a fee, are you suggesting that
6 this should be a flat fee for every
7 homeowner or --

8 MS. SCHUMACHER: No, on the
9 improvements, again, I'm sure that brush
10 fires on vacant lots, but personally I would
11 do it as a percentage on the assessed
12 improvement.

13 MR. JOYCE: On the assessed
14 improvement.

15 MS. SCHUMACHER: On the assessed
16 improvements on all properties.

17 MR. JOYCE: Okay.

18 (Mrs. Evans joins the meeting during
19 Ms. Schumacher's comments.)

20 MS. EVANS: Is there anyone else who
21 cares to address council?

22 MR. NEWCOMB, JR.: Good evening,
23 City Council. Charlie Newcomb, homeowner
24 and taxpayer. First of all, I'm upset that
25 there is not about 100 people here at this

1 public hearing for what is about -- for what
2 the mayor has -- or he wants to do.
3 Everybody is talking about the police and
4 fire, and like I stated last week, I'm
5 adamantly cutting any of those positions,
6 but I'm also against after researching any
7 clerical positions. When this mayor took
8 office there was a 100 clerical positions
9 and he wants to eliminate ten of them, which
10 will be down to 52, and also DPW positions
11 positions. In my on opinion these are the
12 people that do the daily grinds of the
13 functions of this city day-to-day.

14 Since this mayor has sat in the seat
15 downstairs before it was even warm he has
16 tried to take the legs off of the union
17 people of this city in every aspect that he
18 possibly can and as roadblocks have been
19 thrown in front of him from the Courts, as
20 they should be.

21 I stood at this podium eight, nine
22 years ago before any of you were seated up
23 there, Mrs. Evans might have been here at
24 the time, I think, and I stood here with a
25 stack of bills from when this mayor first

1 took office of things he did within his
2 first couple of months of his term. There
3 was thousands upon thousands of dollars for
4 flower pots. There was millions of dollars
5 being putting into Nay Aug Park for
6 senseless renovations.

7 The authorities have been funneled
8 millions of dollars around the city council
9 so they could spend it at their leisure. We
10 have spent hundreds off thousands, I could
11 be wrong, maybe a million dollars to date, I
12 don't know, on lawyers for appeal after
13 appeal after appeal after appeal, and now
14 this mayor comes forward all of a sudden he
15 turns conservative overnight and wants to
16 cut positions in the budget, but yet the
17 people that work for him still have their
18 jobs and their bloated salaries.

19 It is not your fault or my fault
20 that the city is in the situation that's
21 it's in, this was done by one person and the
22 councils that sat here before you like other
23 people that said that just said, it's okay,
24 it's okay. Now the chicken is coming home
25 to roost and you have to make the ultimate

1 decision as far as what needs to be done.

2 I implore this council to cut every
3 single salary that these people that work
4 for this mayor, like I stated before and I
5 will say it again, below \$50,000 a year. I
6 don't get paid more than my boss, correct me
7 if I'm wrong if you get paid more than your
8 boss, I don't know anybody that does expect
9 in this city.

10 The situation that we are in
11 wouldn't be in if the people that came to
12 this podium, and Mrs. Evans when she talked
13 under the last two councils that I came here
14 before, if the people actually -- if he
15 actually listened and said, "You are
16 spending money, you are out of control, you
17 have an open checkbook," finally people are
18 coming to say, "You can't spend it anymore."

19 He had a 2.3 million surplus when he
20 took office. What's the surplus now? I
21 haven't heard the term surplus in nine years
22 because there isn't one. How could one
23 person possibly spend that much money and
24 then turn around and tell me that you want
25 to put my family's public safety at risk.

1 It's completely unacceptable.

2 We are the only city in Lackawanna
3 County that has a paid fire department, the
4 only city in the whole county that has a
5 paid fire department with the exception of
6 Carbondale that has seven drivers that are
7 in the firehouse and Dunmore which reduced
8 their fire department and they just haven't
9 had a disaster yet to see the ramifications
10 of that. Why would we want to change that?

11 I contacted my insurance agent and I
12 pay a little less than \$1,000 a year for a
13 lot of homeowner's insurance. If I lived in
14 an outside area Taylor, Old Forge or Clarks
15 Summit it would be triple because of the
16 response of the fire department. They
17 specifically told me that. That we are at a
18 rating right now because I live less than a
19 mile away from a fire department and the
20 response time would be considered under five
21 minutes that I -- and I forget the word that
22 she used, but a certain code, that I'll pay.
23 Why would we want to change that? The
24 people of this city have to realize that if
25 these cuts happen you are going to pay more

1 all around whether it's in your taxes or
2 what.

3 And I'll be the first person to
4 stand here and tell you if you come forward
5 with the budget and you could show me
6 personally, I'm speaking for myself, that
7 you have cut these people that work for this
8 administration down to the bare minimum and
9 you come forward and you say you still have
10 to raise taxes in order to pay for these
11 positions that he wants to get rid of, I'll
12 be the first person for you to tell me --
13 I'll write the check out with my taxes next
14 year, but you can't do it if these people
15 are still bloated in this administration.

16 And nothing made me happier last
17 week when I heard what you said about the
18 Parking Authority that even one realm of the
19 possibility to get rid of these people that
20 as far as I'm concerned just suck this city
21 dry for every nickle that they possibly can.
22 If that is a possibility and get rid of
23 these people and this bloated salary, please
24 do it because this mayor has taken advantage
25 of these authorities like no other.

1 I attended the Recreation Authority
2 meeting, and I'll wrap up, years ago, when I
3 seen the way they were spending money and I
4 asked how much money that they were spending
5 on Christmas lights at Nay Aug Park, and
6 believe me, nobody enjoys the Christmas
7 lights more than my kids when I drive
8 through there, but it's nearly 40 to \$50,000
9 just for the electrical bill for these
10 Christmas lights. That's the salary of a
11 police officer or a firefighter or two
12 clerical workers. That's what needs to be
13 looked at in the city. Thank you.

14 MS. EVANS: Thank you.

15 MR. JOYCE: Thank you.

16 MS. EVANS: Is there anyone else who
17 cares to address council?

18 MR. MORGAN: Good evening, Council.

19 MS. EVANS: Good evening.

20 MR. MORGAN: Maybe I'll save myself
21 five minutes later, you know, I got here a
22 little late, I'm assuming that this is a
23 hearing on the budget; is that correct?

24 MS. EVANS: Yes. That is correct.

25 MR. JOYCE: Correct.

1 MR. MORGAN: Okay, I got here late.
2 Well, what I really think we should do is I
3 think we should ask the mayor to take a 25
4 percent pay cut. I think we should ask
5 council to do the same thing. I think we
6 should ask all of the employees to take a
7 small cut, a 1 or 2 percent. I think we
8 need abolish all the authorities. I think
9 in the process of abolishing all of the
10 authorities and taking all of their debt and
11 extinguishing them I think we need to sell
12 all of the assets of the Scranton Parking
13 Authority if they will satisfactory the
14 debt.

15 I think it's time for a real change
16 in direction here. I mean, I know I'm a big
17 supporter of SAPA, I think that needs to be
18 put back on the table. I think we see the
19 President of the United States has a
20 commission looking at the deficit federally.
21 I think our nation realizes that we borrowed
22 more money and we can never pay back.

23 I don't agree with any fees to fund
24 the fire department. I believe that the
25 residents of this city are seriously

1 overtaxed under a lot of pressure. I think
2 it's time for some changes in direction and
3 I think the only way we can really
4 accomplish this is we also need to look at
5 the Scranton sure authority because we need
6 to find out what every -- I think we need to
7 use the power of subpoena of this council,
8 all right, to get answers to question on if
9 somebody is on the payroll what is their job
10 function? What do they do? Let's take a
11 good hard look at the budget. We don't see
12 anybody hit the unemployment lines, but we
13 have to find out where the money is going.

14 I think it's time to hold hearings
15 here with the controller and the mayor and
16 if necessary use the power of subpoena to
17 bring them here. I think it's time to use
18 the power of subpoena to get the information
19 we need to find out if council itself has
20 any questions on the financial status of the
21 city and where the money is going and the
22 answers that council needs to prepare it's
23 budget if it's going to make changes.

24 I think we need to change everything
25 we are to doing to be honest with you. We

1 are tearing all of the houses down in the
2 city, I think -- I don't personally find the
3 mayor completely responsible for what's
4 happened here, and a lot of people aren't
5 going to appreciate what I'm saying here,
6 but you know what, the people and the
7 residents of this city who voted for this
8 Recovery Plan without ever reading it,
9 without ever understanding what was inside
10 of it, I really think they are responsible
11 for where this city is.

12 I think the residents of this city
13 are responsible for where this city is
14 because you can see by the few people here
15 how much general interest there is in making
16 government work for us. You know, growing
17 up as a kid I listened to all of the seniors
18 laugh about all of the money the federal
19 government was borrowing and now we are
20 borrowing money that are grandchildren are
21 going to pay back.

22 I think the joke is on us. I mean,
23 we are talking about -- and it may not seem
24 to have a lot to do with the city, but we
25 are wondering where we are going to get 900

1 billion dollars to pay the Chinese back and
2 where is the city going to get all of the
3 money it needs to pay all of it's creditors
4 back? I honestly think it's time to go to
5 the Court and ask for intervention. People
6 don't like the term bankruptcy. We need to
7 restructure our debt.

8 I personally think personally
9 speaking I think it would be important for
10 every resident to know how many police are
11 on every shift and let them really have an
12 understanding of what kind of police
13 protection we really have in this city
14 because to be bluntly honest with you, I
15 think we are heading in the same realm as
16 Wilkes-Barre only it's going to be a lot
17 worse.

18 I think the people in this city have
19 a right to know exactly how many firemen
20 they actually have and the amount of --
21 amount of the city have covering. I think a
22 lot of people are under false impressions
23 that we have too many employees in fire and
24 police and DPW and in my opinion it's not
25 true.

1 I think we need to really take a
2 good hard look at nonprofits. I think
3 somebody needs to have a conversation with
4 some of them, and I don't want single the
5 University of Scranton out, but are they
6 paying their fees for their lots and why --
7 how can a college rent dorm space and the
8 city not capture revenue? I just don't
9 understand it. I really don't.

10 All we ever talk about is how we are
11 going to raise more taxes off people that
12 are already overtaxed and I think this
13 council knows because you walked through
14 these neighborhoods and knocked on people's
15 doors. I think you see the poverty there
16 and you know what's there and there is no
17 more to give, and I really honestly, you
18 know, I commend you for whatever you are
19 going to try to do for the city. We'll wait
20 for your budget. I have a lot of respect
21 for you, it's not an easy job you have. I'm
22 not here to pound you, you know, I just hope
23 that, you know, you realize that the
24 residents of this city need their fire and
25 police protection and we need the DPW and

1 the residents are really responsible for
2 this because they voted for it and then the
3 PEL stood here and as Rome burned it's like
4 Nero just fiddling away, and it's time for
5 the people to stand up and demand change
6 without sacrificing more of our employees
7 and our public safety. Thank you.

8 MS. EVANS: Thank you. Is there
9 anyone else who cares to address council?
10 Thank you for your participation. City
11 council will consider your input in it's
12 budget deliberations. This public hearing
13 is now 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