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COUNCIL FOR THE CITY OF SCRANTON
Interviews for Mayor of the City of Scranton

HELD:

July 22nd, 2019

LOCATION:

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

Maria McCool, RPR
Official Court Reporter

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

PATRICK ROGAN, PRESIDENT

TIMOTHY PERRY, VICE PRESIDENT

WAYNE EVANS

WILLIAM GAUGHAN

KYLE DONAHUE

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. Mr.
10 Gaughan.

11 MR. GAUGHAN: Here.

12 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

13 MR. ROGAN: Here. The purpose of
14 today's meeting is to interview candidates for
15 the position of Mayor. We do have a set of
16 questions that Council came up with. All the
17 applicants are going to be offered a
18 five-minute period to give a pitch on why they
19 should be selected.

20 Following that, there will be
21 questions from members of Council, possibly
22 follow-ups from each individual member. I
23 would remind the members of the public to be
24 quiet during the interviews. If you need to
25 have a conversation or make a phone call,

1 please step out and show the respect to these
2 applicants that they deserve. Our first
3 applicant is Wayne Evans. The floor is yours.

4 MR. EVANS: Good afternoon. First,
5 I would like to offer --

6 MR. ROGAN: Mr. Evans, I'm sorry.
7 Before you begin, there are two questions that
8 we're going to ask every applicant prior to
9 their opening statement.

10 We do know the answer to the first
11 one but we're going to ask it anyways. Are you
12 a resident of the City of Scranton and have you
13 been a resident for the past year?

14 MR. EVANS: Yes, I have.

15 MR. ROGAN: And secondly, if
16 selected, would you run in a special election
17 for a full term?

18 MR. EVANS: No, I won't.

19 MR. ROGAN: The floor is yours.

20 MR. EVANS: Good afternoon. First
21 of all, I would like to offer a brief recap of
22 my experience with Scranton City Government,
23 two years a member of the Golf Commission; 10
24 years as a member of the Scranton City Planning
25 Commission; two years as a member of the Home

1 Rule Charter Study Commission; two years as a
2 member of the Ethics Commission; three years as
3 a member of the HARB; and five years as a
4 member of Scranton City Council, a total of 24
5 years in service to the City of Scranton.

6 Today, my focus will be on my time
7 on City Council. On July 24, 2014, I was
8 appointed by the then majority -- Democratic
9 majority led by Bob McGoff to a seat on
10 Council, a decision that was notable for
11 the seismic shift away from partisan politics
12 by making a completely nonpartisan decision
13 based on the qualifications of the candidate.

14 I'm very proud of my record for the
15 past five years and you should be too because
16 with very few exceptions, it's your record as
17 well. Together we watched closely over the
18 sale of the Scranton Sewer Authority and the
19 monetization of the Scranton Parking Authority.

20 Most importantly we made the best
21 and right decisions post sale and monetization.
22 Besides remaining accountability, we resisted
23 the urge and pressure to use sewer proceeds
24 mostly for pension and funding by shifting
25 priorities to paying down high interest debt.

1 As a Finance Chair for City Council,
2 I was an early adopter for that decision. On
3 the parking side, we helped foster as situation
4 that went from receivership to a system that
5 today is being rebuilt every day with cleaner,
6 safer garages and soon we will add a new
7 on-street parking system that will take us into
8 the 21st century.

9 This Council demanded the creation
10 of a downtown resident parking plan will not
11 only give residents a monthly discount, it will
12 get more cars off the street every single night
13 to allow the downtown businesses to flourish
14 with more available parking spaces. We also
15 had the foresight and the fortitude to reduce
16 the real estate transfer tax from 4.4 percent
17 to 3.7 percent creating an environment that
18 continues to meet budget expectations while
19 reducing the financial pressure on new
20 homeowners in our City.

21 We as a Council played a vital role
22 in creating the Scranton Homeownership
23 Assistance Program taking money earmarked for
24 the Foreclosure Registration Program and
25 directing it to SHAP to help new homeowners

1 repair and update the exteriors of their new
2 homes improving their home as well as
3 increasing their values of adjacent properties.

4 This unique partnership in
5 NeighborWorks is so successful it now has a
6 waiting list. Another partnership in
7 NeighborWorks is underway, the Beautiful Blocks
8 Program. I discovered a similar program in
9 Oswego, New York and that became the model for
10 Beautiful Blocks where a group of neighbors
11 compete for matching grants of up to one
12 thousand dollars each for beautification
13 blocks or projects on their blocks.

14 We are bringing neighbors together
15 and improving our neighborhoods at the same
16 time. Of course, transparency should also
17 always be important. We brought Granicus to
18 City Hall and now each week our agenda and
19 backup information on important legislation is
20 available to the public online and for free.

21 We created a three-year tax
22 abatement program. When that simply did not do
23 enough to spur economic development, we led the
24 charge for ten year all encompassing citywide
25 LERTA. We stand on the cusp of a dramatic

1 increase in new construction and growth.

2 Of course, we had our idea sessions
3 and from there developed an internship program
4 for City Council's office. We have led the way
5 and we should be very proud of what we all have
6 accomplished together. So what does the future
7 hold? Well, first of all, as interim Mayor, I
8 will not require on-the-job training.

9 Quite frankly, we do not have time
10 for that. On day one we must begin to restore
11 the trust and confidence of all of our
12 citizens. So during the next five plus months,
13 I expect to get things done, a lot of things
14 done. In my first week, I will create the
15 Mayor's Leadership Council bringing all City
16 Hall -- bring to City Hall business and
17 community leaders along with the key members of
18 the administration and hopefully some members
19 of City Council as well to brainstorm about
20 current and future initiatives.

21 In my first week, I promise to begin
22 to address the LIPS situation, the NRS
23 situation, and explore new relationship with
24 the Tax Claim Bureau. When you return from
25 your August recess, we will begin to work on

1 moving forward with the Walkability study, the
2 LIPS study, the expansion of the downtown
3 historic district, a plan and strategy to
4 restore this building, a shift to a payroll
5 prep tax.

6 We will continue to press for
7 regionalization of stormwater management, the
8 total revamping of the Quality of Life
9 Ticketing Program; and finally we expect to
10 implement See, Click, Fix and clear gov dot
11 com. We will do all of that together.

12 We are here today because politics
13 ran amok. I will commit to you again today
14 that if appointed I will not run in November.
15 And within one week I will dissolve my campaign
16 committee and disburse my remaining funds to
17 take away further the stench of politics from
18 this process.

19 You have a difficult choice to make.
20 So I offer a little advice on how sometimes I
21 might approach these moments. I think I have
22 pretty good instincts for getting things done
23 the right way. But at times we all struggle
24 with certain decisions. When I do I --
25 especially in the world of government and

1 politics. I simply ask myself, what would Bob
2 McGoff do? And it all becomes a little bit
3 clearer. Thank you very much for the time and
4 I look forward to your questions.

5 MR. ROGAN: Thank you. Mr. Perry,
6 any questions?

7 MR. PERRY: Yes. Mr. Evans, thanks
8 for coming out. Thank you for putting your
9 letter of interest in. This is a big tipping
10 point in our City. Again, like I said during
11 our meeting last week, I appreciate everybody
12 who stepped up to the plate to take leadership
13 and help guide us right now when we need it
14 really the most.

15 I have done my fair share of
16 interviewing in business. And one thing I
17 always want to find out first is where the
18 person's heart is and where their motivation is
19 for the job at task.

20 So what motivated you? Why would
21 you like to be interim Mayor and what separates
22 you specifically with the rest of the
23 candidates that we're going to be talking to
24 today?

25 MR. EVANS: Well, first of all, I

1 guess my motivation is, you know, I have a
2 track record of 40 years of community service.
3 So my time on City Council was basically an
4 extension of that and this is an extension of
5 that as well.

6 We're in a tough spot right now.
7 You know, we are basically in some ways just
8 trying to keep the lights on. I'm trying to
9 look beyond that, trying to actually get more
10 things done. But in my heart I know that this
11 is the time, this is the place for me to be.

12 I feel -- as you know, we're all
13 Councilmen. If anybody is qualified to be in a
14 position to be interim Mayor is a Councilman.
15 For five years I lived, breathed this entire
16 process. We had a tough five years but we've
17 got a lot accomplished. We saw ourselves
18 through the worst economic times. We were on
19 the brink of bankruptcy in 2014. And now we're
20 exiting Act 47.

21 So I believe in my heart that I have
22 the tools, the intelligence, the integrity to
23 move this thing forward. And as you know
24 without question as you all do, I love this
25 City with all of my heart.

1 MR. PERRY: Thank you.

2 MR. EVANS: You're welcome.

3 MR. ROGAN: Mr. Donahue?

4 MR. DONAHUE: Thank you, Mr. Evans,
5 for applying. The criminal information
6 outlining federal charges against the former
7 Mayor stated that unindicted coconspirators,
8 associated with the City of Scranton or City
9 employees to put it simply, were directed by
10 the former Mayor to solicit payments, campaign
11 contributions and other property for the
12 benefit of the former Mayor.

13 Given this information, what, if
14 any, steps will you take to not only identify
15 any unindicted coconspirator who is currently
16 employed as a City employee, but also, to hold
17 them accountable for their illegal actions in
18 order to begin to restore trust in City
19 Government?

20 MR. EVANS: That's a tough one
21 because, as you know, the investigation is
22 ongoing. And the coconspirators have not been
23 identified yet. So we will continue to work
24 with the FBI. All the employees in City Hall
25 should absolutely cooperate at all times.

1 I have to tell you, I'm like you,
2 Councilman Donahue, because I know how mad you
3 are. I am mad. You know, I'm mad about what
4 happened what. I'm mad about what was left
5 behind. I'm mad about the political cesspool.
6 And when these people are identified, they will
7 be dealt with swiftly and quickly. And if we
8 can, they'll be removed from their positions.

9 MR. DONAHUE: Okay. Thank you. As
10 you know, one of the major impediments to
11 economic growth in the City is the archaic
12 business privilege and mercantile tax. Both
13 the Recovery and Exit Plan include the
14 recommendation of replacing the business
15 privilege and mercantile taxes with payroll
16 prep tax. And that's only allowable to Act 47
17 municipalities. So it has to be done this year
18 since we're scheduled to exit Act 47 next year.
19 So what are your thoughts on replacing the BP
20 and mercantile taxes with a payroll prep tax?

21 MR. EVANS: Well, again, I'm an
22 early adopter to that process as well. I've
23 been pushing for the payroll prep tax as soon
24 as we first discussed it three or four years
25 ago. And you're right. The business privilege

1 and mercantile tax is a tax that hurts
2 businesses at every level. So not only am I in
3 support of it, it has to happen this year or
4 into 2020 because the clock is ticking. Act 47
5 we're exiting it.

6 Once we exit it we can't do it
7 again. But the key to all of this, by the way,
8 is the school district. The City of Scranton
9 is fully on board with a payroll prep tax
10 because it's broader, it's fair and will
11 actually grow. The school district has not
12 made their position known. So I will reconvene
13 all the leaders of both the City and the school
14 district and once and for all get a commitment
15 from the school district to move forward on
16 this.

17 MR. DONAHUE: Thank you.

18 MR. ROGAN: Mr. Gaughan?

19 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you. Councilman
20 Evans, if you're appointed, you will be the
21 Mayor of the City of Scranton for approximately
22 five months. What do you plan to specifically
23 accomplish in that short time period and what
24 are your goals and visions for the City?

25 MR. EVANS: Well, Councilman, as you

1 know in my opening remarks I laid out quite an
2 extensive list of things that I would like to
3 do. Maybe I could expand on a couple of them
4 just for -- not to repeat myself. One of the
5 things I've been very vocal about is the
6 failure of the Quality of Life Program, the
7 Ticketing Program.

8 There is 29 different items on that
9 ticket. That is absolutely ludicrous. I want
10 to reduce that to less than ten. The fines are
11 150 to \$200. I want to reduce those fines to
12 25 or less. I also want to put a warning on
13 there so first time offenders and property
14 owners will have a chance to clean up their
15 property before they are ticketed.

16 We totally blew that program. And I
17 want to get it back on track. Another thing --
18 one of the things that I'm very interested in
19 and you all know this is the walkability study.
20 I think that is a game changer.

21 Walkable downtowns across the
22 country see increased tourists, increased
23 commerce, increased traffic in pedestrians, not
24 necessarily cars. And that's a way for our
25 City to grow and continue to grow. We have a

1 lot of momentum happening in the downtown right
2 now. And a walkability study will only enhance
3 that. Is there something in particular that
4 you want me to key in on, I would be happy to.

5 MR. GAUGHAN: Councilman Donahue
6 mentioned it a little bit. But from a city
7 ethics perspective, we were trying to get the
8 Ethics Commission up and running. Can you just
9 talk about your stance and your views on that
10 and what you think needs to change inherently
11 in City Hall to kind of get rid of the stench
12 as you called it and what would you do in the
13 next five months to start that process?

14 MR. EVANS: Well, first thing I
15 would do is appoint the fifth member of the
16 Ethics Commission so we get this thing started.
17 But that's been delayed from the very beginning
18 not having that last appointment.

19 I was fully supportive of that. I
20 served on the Ethics Commission so I know how
21 important it is. There's a culture in some
22 portions of this building that have to be
23 changed. And it's not just the employees, of
24 course, it's the culture.

25 And also it happened to be part of

1 the administration which we found out recently.
2 I'm fully supportive of the ethics. Our new
3 code has guidelines in there for people that
4 run for office as well. So it's really
5 extensive. It's based on what happened in
6 Reading.

7 And we were proactive in that, by
8 the way. You know, we did that prior to any
9 knowledge of what was happening with the Mayor.
10 So I think that says a lot about what this
11 Council has been trying to do over the last
12 five years. Other than to say I'm fully
13 supportive and I will put that within -- as
14 soon as I can, I will take applications and get
15 that fifth member in there and we'll get the
16 Ethics Commission started once and for all.

17 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you. And
18 finally, can you please tell us what your
19 experience is in managing budgets and
20 supervision and managing employees? As you
21 know, as the Mayor of the City of Scranton,
22 you're going to be in charge of a budget of
23 roughly 110 million dollars along with managing
24 dozens of City employees. In addition to that,
25 are there any additions or cuts that you would

1 plan to make to the 2020 budget?

2 MR. EVANS: All right. Well, first
3 of all, I'm the Finance Chair of City Council
4 so I've been involved in all the major
5 financial decisions over the last five years.
6 And I worked very closely and have a very good
7 relationship with the Business Administrator,
8 which means a lot in this current environment.

9 I'm a small business owner. On a
10 personal level, I usually have roughly 12 to 14
11 agents that I oversee. I'll wait for that.
12 But it's important beyond just supervising
13 employees. When you're a small business owner,
14 it's all of that. It's understanding what fees
15 are, what fines are, what it takes to run a
16 business.

17 You know, 80 percent of the growth
18 in America right now is through the small
19 business sector. So it's very, very important.
20 But I also have experience in large business.
21 I worked for 30 years for a Fortune 500
22 company. As an engineer I oversaw 10 million
23 dollar budgets on construction in engineering.
24 So I have a vast experience in the private
25 sector as well as the public sector.

1 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you.

2 MR. ROGAN: Two questions, and thank
3 you for applying. First one is, what are you
4 are specific plans to promote economic
5 development in Scranton?

6 MR. EVANS: Well, as I mentioned
7 earlier, we're on the cusp of doing some great
8 things. I really believe that. The 10 year
9 LERTA I think is a game changer. The reason it
10 is, when we had the three year tax abatement it
11 never got off the ground.

12 And one of the reasons is the City
13 does a poor job of marketing those types of
14 programs. The difference with this one is
15 we're partners with the Chamber of Commerce.
16 They committed to marketing the 10 year LERTA
17 as much as they can. And we expect big
18 dividends from that. So that's very, very
19 important.

20 We used to pick winners and losers
21 with the LERTA and now we're only going to be
22 picking winners and that's important as well.
23 I think that in conjunction with the LERTA we
24 had the federal opportunity zones. That's
25 another opportunity for us to expand our base

1 -- our growth and our new construction base.

2 And the walkability as I mentioned
3 earlier is also about commerce. There's been
4 studies shown that if you do a simple thing
5 like reverse a one-way street to a two-way, it
6 increases commerce on that street by 35
7 percent. So these are little things that can
8 be done.

9 Something that doesn't get talked
10 about much I mentioned it earlier in my opening
11 remarks is I would like to expand the historic
12 district for downtown. Now what that does do
13 for you is allows you to finally market
14 downtown Scranton as historic downtown
15 Scranton, a major marketing tool for all the
16 stores, all the shops, all the restaurants
17 downtown.

18 And it's something I think that we
19 can't minimize. So that's part of things we
20 can do on the economic side. Also I mentioned
21 earlier the Mayor's leadership Council, they're
22 the kind of things what we'll be talking about
23 in that group.

24 MR. ROGAN: Thank you. And lastly,
25 there's no question that Scranton's current

1 refuse billing system is broken. What
2 solutions would you support or oppose in
3 regards to refuse billing and collections?

4 MR. EVANS: Well, as we know, the
5 system is broken. It's been broken for a long
6 time. We have over 16 million dollars in
7 delinquencies. So do we try to repair the
8 broken system or do we scrap the broken system?
9 I happen to be in favor of scrapping the
10 system.

11 What I would like to see happen is,
12 take those 16 million dollars, package them as
13 receivables, sell them to a collection agency
14 for a lump sum. If we get 5 million or 7
15 million, we take that money, we're out of the
16 business. Then we take that money and we use
17 that as a basis for the first two or three
18 years and we rollover from the garbage bill
19 and, you know, getting a separate refuse bill
20 and you're vetting that back in your taxes.

21 The truth of the matter is, we're
22 collecting the refuse fee at a rate of 70
23 percent. We collect property tax at well over
24 90 percent. So right off the bat we're
25 increasing our collection rate.

1 The other side of it is on the
2 refuse fee, we don't even know the amount of
3 property out there that we're not collecting
4 the refuse fee for. You know, we have a rental
5 registration program that has always struggled
6 because we don't have the resources to really
7 do what they need to do.

8 But by expanding -- you know, we
9 expanded that. We tried. But we still don't
10 know all of these apartments, all of these
11 landlords, they are not paying the fair share
12 as far as the refuse fee is concerned. So the
13 best thing to do in my eyes, at least look at
14 that. Vet that, see if that is the right way
15 to go.

16 If the numbers don't work, it's
17 going to be too difficult for the homeowner
18 we'll look at that as well. But everything's
19 on the table. But that's one thing that I want
20 to look at right out of the gate.

21 MR. ROGAN: Well, thank you. We're
22 going to move onto our next applicant if you
23 want to come up to take your seat for the rest
24 of the interviews and we'll call in the next
25 applicant.

1 (John R. A. Tarantino)

2

3 MR. TARANTINO: Good afternoon.

4 MR. ROGAN: If you could state your
5 name for the record, please?

6 MR. TARANTINO: John R. A.

7 Tarantino.

8 MR. ROGAN: Before we turn it over
9 to you for opening remarks, two quick
10 questions. Number one, are you a resident of
11 the City of Scranton and have you been a
12 resident for the past year?

13 MR. TARANTINO: I'm a resident,
14 never been arrested.

15 MR. ROGAN: And secondly, if
16 selected would you run in the special election
17 to fill the full remainder of the term?

18 MR. TARANTINO: No.

19 MR. ROGAN: The floor is yours for
20 opening comments and then we'll turn it over to
21 the Council members for questions.

22 MR. TARANTINO: I wanted to be here
23 to be considered. I have a big stake in
24 Scranton. I moved here about three years ago.
25 I have three properties in Scranton. And I

1 love the City. It's a beautiful city. Even
2 this building is beautiful. I see so much
3 potential. But I really don't see it being
4 used to the fullest.

5 I'm not going to lecture you on how
6 to make the City better. But I would do my
7 best to make it better. I'll work with you. I
8 don't owe anybody anything. My allegiance is
9 to the City and to myself and to the people.

10 Everything I do will be strictly
11 above board. I'll have an open-door policy.
12 Anybody could come in and talk to me. I
13 understand it's four or five month term. But
14 even if I just open up your eyes and allow you
15 to -- a vision of what I have of what the City
16 could be.

17 It may not get done but it's a
18 start. That's what I'm looking for is to be
19 able to have Scranton become what it used to be
20 because I have been reading up on it. It was a
21 glorious city. And it could once again be a
22 glorious city. I love it. I live by the Moses
23 Taylor Hospital. I could go out 2, 3:00 in the
24 morning. My wife could go out 2, 3:00 in the
25 morning. I feel safe. It's a safe city.

1 It's got wonderful people. It's
2 peaceful. And it just -- it makes me feel good
3 to say I'm a resident of Scranton. I love this
4 city so much that if you read my letter of
5 intent, I won't even get paid for the job.
6 I'll donate that to some organization. I want
7 to do the job because I feel it in my heart to
8 do the job. That's about it.

9 I mean, I really love this city.
10 I'm retired. I could devote all my energy, all
11 my effort to make it better. I could talk to
12 you. We can discuss things. I could discuss
13 things with anybody. I don't have all the
14 answers. But I may have some of the answers --
15 even if I had one answer.

16 And my job as a mayor I believe is
17 to bring the City together and to work out the
18 differences. I understand it's a fiscal crises
19 where even that could be worked out. So is
20 there anything else I could say? This is all
21 coming from my heart. Nothing is prepared. I
22 hope you understand what I'm saying.

23 I hope you understand what I feel
24 because I really feel this. If I have to go
25 down to Harrisburg every week to talk to the

1 Governor I'll do that too. There is no limit
2 to what I'll do. Thank you.

3 MR. ROGAN: Thank you. Mr. Perry,
4 any questions?

5 MR. PERRY: Yes. Mr. Tarantino,
6 thank you very much for putting your letter of
7 interest in. I've read it over. And, you
8 know, you already answered the first part of
9 my question which is why you wanted the job.
10 And, you know, I could feel the passion and
11 dedication that you do have for the City and I
12 thank you for that.

13 That being said, what do you feel
14 like you bring to the table that separates you
15 from the rest of the candidates that we're
16 going to talk to today?

17 MR. TARANTINO: Okay. Well, that's
18 a good question. And I've lived in
19 Pennsylvania. I lived in the Poconos. I had
20 business in Dallas. I lived north of
21 Pittsburgh. I lived on Long Island, which I
22 guess you figured out from my accent. I lived
23 in New York.

24 And I see the one thing that
25 Scranton has that the other places don't have

1 is beautiful affordable housing. The housing
2 up here that -- they are like mansions. If you
3 put these houses in those cities that I
4 mentioned, it would be two, three, four times
5 the price.

6 I think we should be drawing people
7 here. If it was up to me I would start an
8 investigation maybe see if there's a bus route
9 that could go from -- leave from Scranton to
10 Philly with a stop in Allentown, maybe get
11 communities coming here.

12 People will do anything for their
13 kids. They'll travel two hours if it's a
14 better life for the kid because I did it. And
15 other people will do it too. The
16 neighborhoods, it's a clean city. It's clean.
17 And the buildings -- even this building if you
18 look at it, it's magnificent.

19 St. Peter's Cathedral a few blocks
20 away it's gorgeous. This is what we have to
21 offer. I have a vision too with the baseball
22 team, Scranton/Wilkes-Barre. They should be
23 involved with the community, teach these kids
24 something. Let the kids look up to them.

25 MR. PERRY: Very good. Thank you.

1 And finally, what do you think the biggest
2 challenge is going to be as interim Mayor and
3 how do you plan on dealing with that challenge?

4 MR. TARANTINO: Biggest challenge I
5 believe will be to work with the City Council
6 and to alleviate the misconception that people
7 have that the government you can't work for the
8 people. This government should be working for
9 the people of Scranton -- not me, not you.
10 It's the people.

11 And they have to feel like they are
12 part of it. They should not be neglected. And
13 this is what I see happening. It's like I
14 drive through downtown Scranton 4:00 in the
15 afternoon on Friday and I say, Is this Sunday
16 morning? There's nobody out.

17 You have to get the people walking.
18 You got to get volunteers in here, get the kids
19 involved. It's a wonderful city. How many
20 times did I tell you that. I just love it.

21 MR. PERRY: Thank you. Thank you
22 very much.

23 MR. ROGAN: Mr. Donahue, any
24 questions?

25 MR. DONAHUE: Yes. Thank you for

1 applying. The criminal information outlining
2 the federal charges against the former Mayor
3 stated that unindicted coconspirators,
4 associated with the City of Scranton or the
5 City employees to put it simply, were directed
6 by the former Mayor to solicit payments,
7 campaign contributions and other property for
8 the benefit of the former Mayor.

9 Given this information what, if any,
10 steps will you take to not only identify any
11 unindicted coconspirator who is currently
12 employed by the City but also to hold them
13 accountable for their illegal actions in order
14 to being to restore trust in City Government.

15 MR. TARANTINO: Well, if they did
16 something that's against the law if -- we have
17 attorney generals. I'll work with the state.
18 I'll work with the state police. I'll work
19 with the City Council. You can't. If people
20 have your trust, your word is your bond. You
21 don't live up to your trust, I have no -- I
22 have no compassion for you.

23 Whatever happens to you should be
24 done to the fullest extent of the law. Like I
25 said, I have no allegiance to nobody. Nobody.

1 I live by me -- I basically live by myself. I
2 stay by myself. I'm happy. I want to see
3 people held accountable for their actions. You
4 just can't shake it off. I'll do everything I
5 can to make sure these people are brought to
6 justice.

7 MR. DONAHUE: Thank you. One of the
8 major impediments to economic growth in the
9 City of Scranton is the archaic business
10 privilege and mercantile tax that are levied on
11 gross receipts. Both the Recovery Plan and the
12 Exit Plan include the recommendation of
13 replacing the business privilege and mercantile
14 taxes with a payroll prep tax.

15 But that's only allowable to Act 47
16 municipalities. We're on track to exit Act 47
17 in the next year. So that has to be done this
18 year. So what are your thoughts on replacing
19 the BP and mercantile tax with a payroll prep
20 tax.

21 MR. TARANTINO: Again, with taxing
22 the people, every time I turn around you can't
23 keep reaching into people's pockets. Maybe
24 something else could be worked out because from
25 personal experience I had a leaking roof in a

1 house that I wanted to get it fixed. I had to.

2 I called contractors and they don't
3 want to come out when I tell them Scranton. I
4 said why not? They say you got to pay for a
5 permit. They have to fill out permit papers.
6 And then they got to wait for the permit to be
7 completed and given to them. It's just a
8 hassle. People have a bad -- sometimes you
9 have a bad feeling when it comes to working in
10 Scranton. That's got to stop.

11 You have to make it friendly for
12 people to come here. You have to make it
13 inviting. Like I said in my letter, this
14 should be a destination city, not just the
15 Electric City. It should be a destination
16 city. That's what I hope to make it.

17 MR. DONAHUE: Thank you.

18 MR. ROGAN: Mr. Gaughan, any
19 questions?

20 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, thank you. If
21 appointed, you will be Mayor of the City of
22 Scranton for approximately five months. What
23 do you plan to specifically accomplish in that
24 time period? What are your goals and your
25 vision for the City?

1 MR. TARANTINO: Okay. In those five
2 months, I'm hoping to reach out to the baseball
3 team. I'm hoping that they work with the City
4 to have some exhibitions, have the players meet
5 with the kids.

6 I'm also hoping to have a
7 moratorium, make it like I said on these
8 permits, these building permits, maybe have a
9 moratorium. See how that goes. You know, see,
10 if people improve their house, they improve
11 Scranton. Things hold them back when you have
12 to pay extra money.

13 You're hit with a bill for fixing a
14 roof. Now you have a bill to get a permit to
15 allow you to fix the roof. That doesn't sound
16 like the American way to me. I'm also thinking
17 about, like I said, investigating maybe Martz
18 Trailways, maybe a private bus line that will
19 start a bus route from Scranton to Allentown to
20 Philadelphia.

21 People will commute if they find it
22 better. Better mousetrap at the end of the bus
23 route. I believe that mouse trap is Scranton.
24 I believe we should get the kids volunteering
25 at the schools. Maybe they could help with

1 trash days, you know, clean the yards or
2 something or visit elderly people that are
3 locked up, you know, in their homes. This is
4 just a few of the things that I believe in.

5 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you. As Mayor
6 of the City of Scranton, you will be in charge
7 of a budget of roughly 110 million dollars
8 along with managing dozens of City employees.
9 Can you please tell us what your experience is
10 in managing budgets and supervising or managing
11 employees and what additions or cuts would you
12 plan to make to the 2020 budget?

13 MR. TARANTINO: Okay. Well, I used
14 to have a restaurant in Dallas. I was on a
15 tight budget. I employed about eight to ten
16 people. I cut back there as much as I could.
17 Unnecessary spending was stopped. And I ran a
18 taxi garage. I had five workers there.

19 In New York City, talk about
20 regulations, it was -- and same thing. It just
21 kept, you know, getting hit with bills and
22 bills and bills. And I cut back where I could
23 over there. As far as cutting back in Scranton
24 with the budget, well, I'd have to see it
25 first. I just can't make a blanket statement

1 cut everything.

2 I have to see if there is waste, it
3 has to stop. My decisions are based on
4 business, not on feelings, not on emotions.
5 That's how I operate. If I make a decision
6 based on business aspect, I don't have no
7 regrets.

8 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you.

9 MR. ROGAN: Thank you. I don't have
10 any questions at this time. So we appreciate
11 you coming in. And we're going to go onto the
12 next applicant. Thank you.

13 MR. TARANTINO: Thank you very much,
14 gentlemen.

15 MR. ROGAN: Thank you.

16

17 (Brad Foley)

18

19 MR. ROGAN: If you can you state
20 your name for the record and then we'll have
21 two quick questions and turn it over to you for
22 an opening remark.

23 MR. FOLEY: Sure. My name is Brad
24 Foley.

25 MR. ROGAN: And two quick questions,

1 are you a resident of the City of Scranton and
2 have you been a resident for the past year?

3 MR. FOLEY: Yes, I have.

4 MR. ROGAN: And if selected, would
5 you run in a special election to fill the
6 remainder of the term?

7 MR. FOLEY: No.

8 MR. ROGAN: The floor is yours.

9 MR. FOLEY: Okay. Thank you. Well,
10 first of all, I would like to thank Council for
11 the opportunity to apply for this job. Again,
12 my name is Brad Foley. I live in the Green
13 Ridge section of Scranton. I'm a retiree from
14 the federal government.

15 I currently am an employee of
16 Pennsylvania State University. I teach -- I'm
17 an adjunct instructor up there and I teach
18 business. The courses I have taught before are
19 management, human resources, negotiation,
20 marketing and every other core course that they
21 have up there all but accounting.

22 What you'll expect from me is some
23 honesty, some integrity, and I will do my
24 absolute best at the job for the next five
25 months. I realize right now you're not going

1 to change very much in the next five month.

2 What you'll get from me at the very
3 end is some recommendations, maybe an
4 organizational structure that may be more
5 efficient. You will get some recommendations
6 to the next mayor on maybe who should be here
7 and who should not be here, okay?

8 Also, what you won't get from me is
9 any sweeping changes, okay, you will not see me
10 try to reinvent any wheels or anything like
11 that. I consider myself sort of a bridge
12 between our time right now, our next five
13 months and the next mayor who will fill out the
14 ex-Mayor Courtright's term.

15 So I am a business person. I am not
16 a politician. I promise you that. I have no
17 ambition of being in politics after these five
18 months. What I do bring to the table -- and I
19 believe I think the City needs this is a
20 business sense, okay? I know we have a
21 business manager here. But I think we need
22 maybe some more business experience out here.

23 And again, I'm not a politician
24 although over the years I have politiced in my
25 jobs with the federal government, okay? Prior

1 to this, I worked at the highest levels within
2 the Department of Defense.

3 I worked for the Army Materiel
4 Command and I worked for the department of -- I
5 worked for the Secretary of Defense, okay. So
6 I have some awards from them and things like
7 that. But I have worked for them. And again,
8 right now I'm a teacher at Penn State
9 University. And I'm an adjunct instructor.

10 I think that's pretty much it. Feel
11 free to ask any questions that you feel
12 comfortable asking.

13 MR. ROGAN: Councilman Perry, any
14 questions?

15 MR. PERRY: Yes. Mr. Foley, thank
16 you. Thank you very much for putting your
17 letter of interest in for this position.
18 Again, I can't tell you how much that means to
19 the whole City to have this many people that
20 are actually willing to step up to the plate.

21 That being said, whenever I
22 interview someone and as businessman yourself,
23 I'm sure this is one of the very first things
24 you ask somebody. You want to know what their
25 motivation is and where their heart's at.

1 What made you decide to put pen to
2 the paper and actually send in a letter of
3 interest for this position. And secondly, what
4 do you bring to the table specifically that
5 separates yourself from the other candidates
6 that we're going to talk to today?

7 MR. FOLEY: Well, one of the things
8 that separates -- I'll start from the very end,
9 okay? And if I miss a question, Mr. Perry, let
10 me know.

11 MR. PERRY: The floor is yours.
12 You're fine.

13 MR. FOLEY: But what I bring to the
14 table is I have good social responsibility. I
15 understand what I'm supposed to say, what I'm
16 supposed to do, okay? I have good emotional
17 responsibility as well from the standpoint of I
18 don't lose my cool, okay, I could handle those
19 kind of things.

20 What sets me apart from other
21 candidates? Maybe my enthusiasm. I look
22 forward to new challenges. And this would
23 certainly, certainly be a good challenge for
24 sure what we have here, okay. Again, my
25 honesty, my integrity -- and I'm sure every

1 single person in the other room, the other 15
2 candidates certainly have the honesty and
3 integrity that they have.

4 What motivates me? The idea of
5 doing something good. I really appreciate the
6 opportunity to do this. But what motivates me
7 certainly is not money, okay. I don't have
8 any -- I don't owe anybody. And nobody owes me
9 anything either.

10 But money does not motivate me with
11 anything like that. But I think just the idea
12 of doing a good job, being part of a
13 transition. That's what I would look for
14 myself as a transition person and a bridge to
15 the next mayor. That's what kinds of sets me
16 apart.

17 MR. PERRY: Thank you. And finally,
18 I'm sure you follow the news and you're
19 familiar with our City. Obviously you are for
20 showing interest. What do you think our
21 biggest challenge is right now and how do you
22 plan on dealing with that challenge once you
23 become interim Mayor?

24 MR. FOLEY: Okay. The first thing I
25 think that the City lacks is respect, okay. Of

1 all the places -- of course, people talk, okay,
2 people give you advice and all of those kind of
3 things.

4 But I think the reputation of the
5 City is really in peril for lack of any other
6 thing. How I would address that? I think I
7 would ask the staff and the people that work
8 here -- I'd instill some professionalism into
9 them, okay. I think that is what they lack
10 here is professionalism.

11 I walk through the halls here and I
12 don't see anybody dressed for the occasion of
13 working, the privilege of working for the City.
14 So I think that is what I would do, okay.
15 Yeah, I think I would just instill
16 professionalism.

17 Again, five months is not a very
18 long time. People might think it is. My
19 grandson who I was with this morning, he thinks
20 five months is an eternity. He thinks one week
21 is an eternity. But five months is really a
22 very short period of time. And I think that's
23 what this City needs right now.

24 Also one of the things I think that
25 they need quite a bit of is automation.

1 There's a lot of things here that aren't
2 automated. I know the minutes are put on line
3 and things like that. But I think some of the
4 things could be automated a little bit more
5 than they are. I would like to see at least
6 the ball will start rolling in that direction.

7 MR. PERRY: Okay. Thank you. Thank
8 you very much.

9 MR. ROGAN: Mr. Donahue, any
10 questions?

11 MR. DONAHUE: Yes, thank you.
12 Mr. Foley, thank you for applying. The
13 criminal information outlining the federal
14 charges against the former Mayor stated that
15 unindicted coconspirators associated with the
16 City of Scranton or for lack of a better term,
17 the City employees, were directed by the former
18 Mayor to solicit payments, campaign
19 contributions and other property for the
20 benefit of the former Mayor.

21 Given this information, what, if
22 any, steps will you take to not only identify
23 any unindicted coconspirators that are
24 currently employed by the City but also to hold
25 them accountable for their illegal actions in

1 order to begin to restore trust in City
2 Government.

3 MR. FOLEY: Well, first of all, I'd
4 let the FBI do their job, okay. Of course, I
5 would not want one of those people whoever they
6 may be to work for the City or work for me if I
7 was the one that was selected. I certainly
8 wouldn't want that. I would want proof, of
9 course.

10 But no union can, you know, protect
11 somebody that has done something that wrong for
12 lack any other word, okay? So did I answer
13 your question?

14 MR. DONAHUE: Yeah.

15 MR. FOLEY: The bottom line is, I
16 don't think they should work -- I know they
17 shouldn't work -- not that I don't think, I
18 know they shouldn't work for the City.

19 MR. DONAHUE: Okay. Thank you very
20 much. One of the major impediments to economic
21 growth in the City is the archaic business
22 privilege and mercantile taxes. So in our
23 Recovery Plan and our Exit Plan they give the
24 recommendation to convert those taxes into a
25 payroll prep tax. And that's only available to

1 Act 47 municipalities.

2 So given the fact that we're on
3 track to exit Act 47 in 2020 next year, that
4 would have to be done this year. What are your
5 thoughts on, you know, replacing the BP and
6 mercantile taxes with a payroll prep tax.

7 MR. FOLEY: Well, I've read the
8 Recovery Plan that Mr. Ambrose came up with or
9 his company came up with. And I find that
10 there is no problem with what they have to say,
11 okay? I think that you have to follow a plan
12 no matter what it is. And I believe that that
13 plan is working.

14 For now right now, you know, for the
15 City to be in a business of, for example, sewer
16 authorities, I think that's more of a private
17 industry type event, okay. It may not be
18 everybody's opinion, but that's at least mine.
19 I don't think the City belongs in those kinds
20 of businesses, okay. But from a tax
21 standpoint, I'd have to support what the
22 Recovery Plan brings.

23 MR. DONAHUE: All right. Thank you.

24 MR. ROGAN: Mr. Gaughan, any
25 questions?

1 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, what do you plan
2 to specifically accomplish in the next five
3 months if you are appointed as Mayor of the
4 City of Scranton and what are your goals and
5 vision for the City?

6 MR. FOLEY: What I would plan to
7 accomplish, number one, I would take some
8 advice from Council on maybe some project that
9 can be finished within the next five months. I
10 don't think that, you know, again, five months
11 is not a very long time, okay.

12 What I would like to accomplish is,
13 number one, I mentioned before that
14 professionalism and within the building and
15 within the City Government. I think that is
16 lacking for lack of any other word than that.
17 And professionalism, how would I attack that?
18 First of all, I would make sure every
19 department chair -- I think there is 15 of
20 them, would wear a tie that comes to work would
21 look the part, okay?

22 That was one of the first things
23 that I would start off with is being
24 professionalism. Like I mentioned before, I
25 think the automation, certain functions within

1 the organization whether it's internal or
2 external, I believe they could be automated in
3 the next couple of months or at least a program
4 and a plan ahead for that, okay.

5 What else, again, organization. I
6 think to take a look at the organization from
7 an outside view. And I think what I would
8 bring into there is a nice outside view from
9 it. Again, not being political or any ambition
10 of being political, I think that's kind of a
11 plus for this next five months at least for
12 that, okay.

13 But that's what I would try to
14 accomplish in the next couple months and also I
15 would like to bring out some recommendations
16 for the next whoever that may be Democrat,
17 Republican, Independent whoever that may be and
18 I would like to bring out some recommendations
19 on how I feel that it should work, whether they
20 take them or not is up to them.

21 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you. As Mayor
22 of the City if you are appointed, you would be
23 in charge of a budget of roughly 110 million
24 dollars along with managing dozens of City
25 employees. So can you tell us what your

1 experience is in managing budgets and
2 supervising employees and a look towards the
3 2020 budget that you will be crafting along
4 with the Business Administrator, what additions
5 or cuts would you plan to make?

6 MR. FOLEY: What kind of cuts?

7 MR. GAUGHAN: Additions or cuts to
8 the 2020 budget.

9 MR. FOLEY: Well, I'll start with
10 the first one what is my experience in working
11 with budgets. I've always worked with budgets.
12 Working for the federal government that was
13 kind of my job was working with budgets.

14 We've gone up to probably 40 or 50
15 million dollars per year, probably never 110
16 but probably 40 or 50 million dollars a year
17 I've managed. The people, you know, I mean,
18 I'm sorry, Mr. Gaughan, too many questions I
19 think. But just what is my experience of
20 working with budgets, I have worked with
21 budgets and its allocation of what resources
22 you are going to use and those budgets went
23 for materials, went for labor hours, went for
24 travel and numerous other things, office
25 supplies and things like that.

1 So our budgets were in the
2 government at least where I worked were pretty
3 close to 50 or 60 million dollars. So I have
4 some experience working with that. It seems
5 like it always balanced. You know, we always
6 had a little bit of extra money at the end of
7 the year for bonuses and things like that. But
8 that's a whole different lifetime.

9 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you very much.

10 MR. ROGAN: What are your specific
11 plans to promote economic development in
12 Scranton?

13 MR. FOLEY: First thing I would do
14 is I would take a walk around personally and I
15 would always take somebody with me. I've never
16 gone anywhere without taking somebody with me.
17 But I would take somebody with me. And I would
18 go around to some businesses out there and find
19 out what's working for them and what's not
20 working for them. And I'd ask.

21 Again, not being part of the
22 economic development world out there I would
23 ask where people work what would make them want
24 to be in business here. And I would definitely
25 entertain people that would come that want to

1 invest in here. And I would also -- it all
2 depends on the budget, of course.

3 But I would attend some conferences
4 outside of the City, find out what's in
5 Northeastern Pennsylvania and make
6 recommendations back to them and kind of
7 promote. And that's kind of really what you
8 have to do is you market yourself. Okay, you
9 market yourself to other places.

10 And what I would do personally, I
11 would definitely look to Council for guidance
12 on some of these things. I'm not -- you know,
13 I don't have every answer for every thing and
14 nobody does. And so but I don't have the
15 answers, but I would look for help with those
16 kind of things.

17 MR. ROGAN: And secondly, there is
18 no question that Scranton's current refuse
19 billing system is broken. What solutions would
20 you support or oppose in regards to refuse
21 billing and collections?

22 MR. FOLEY: I don't personally think
23 that \$300 is too much to throw your garbage out
24 personally. Some people do. But I would let
25 the courts decide whether it was legal or not

1 legal to charge 300. I think it was 175
2 before, okay, and now it's 300. And if you
3 pay it early it's 270. And I always pay mine
4 early.

5 But I just don't think that that's
6 too much to pay. I think our garbage men, I'll
7 call them garbage men or sanitation workers or
8 DPW workers, whatever words are the right words
9 to use. I think they do an excellent job.
10 Every Tuesday my garbage gets picked up.
11 That's kind of what I care about, okay?

12 It's a cost of doing business. It's
13 a cost of living in the City. You could live
14 in Moscow. And I lived up there 20 years --
15 we're actually Roaring Brook Township. But I
16 lived in Moscow for those years. And we paid
17 by the bag. It added up to \$300 no matter
18 what.

19 So I kind of think the \$300 is a
20 fair assessment for the services that are
21 provided. And you just can't give things away.
22 I don't believe the City needs to give things
23 away. But I think they have to have value
24 added to it.

25 MR. ROGAN: Well, thank you very

1 much. We thank you for your time and for
2 coming in. This will conclude our interview.
3 We'll bring in the next applicant.

4 MR. FOLEY: Thank you. Thank you
5 everybody here for coming.

6
7 (Stephen Tunis)

8
9 MR. ROGAN: State your name for the
10 record and we'll have two questions for you and
11 then the floor will be yours for opening
12 statements.

13 MR. TUNIS: Stephen Tunis.

14 MR. ROGAN: And two quick questions.
15 First, are you a resident of the City and have
16 you been a resident for the past year?

17 MR. TUNIS: Yes.

18 MR. ROGAN: And secondly, if
19 selected, would you run in a special election
20 to fill the remainder of the term?

21 MR. TUNIS: I will.

22 MR. ROGAN: I want to ask my
23 colleagues, do we want to continue with the
24 interview at this point because I know that we
25 said that we're not going to entertain

1 applications for those who wanted to run?

2 MR. PERRY: Yeah, I have no problem
3 if --

4 MR. ROGAN: We'll continue with the
5 interview. We did state though for candidates
6 to be considered we would like them not to run
7 for the remainder of the term. But the floor
8 is yours.

9 MR. TUNIS: You know, I just see as
10 being a resident for my whole life here, things
11 come and go. And the way that this City has
12 become it really needs to change. It really
13 needs to get a step in the right direction.

14 It needs to get back to being for
15 the residents. Everything with infrastructure,
16 anything like that with budgeting the way it
17 pretty much is, where's all the -- where's
18 everything go? You know, we have crumbling
19 streets with the older generation that needs to
20 leave because they can't afford their houses
21 anymore because of taxes and everything else
22 is. You know, younger generation, yeah,
23 they're fine with working down here but they
24 are living out of town.

25 You know, they'll live right next

1 door, Dunmore, Throop, it's better for them.
2 You know, nobody wants to really move back into
3 the City once they get out. And it's time to
4 change. It's time that we're here for what
5 really matters, the residents.

6 MR. ROGAN: Mr. Perry, any
7 questions?

8 MR. PERRY: Yes, thank you very much
9 for putting your letter of interest in. As I
10 said to all of the candidates it really means a
11 lot knowing that there's this many people that
12 want to step up and actually do the right
13 thing.

14 That being said, why did you step
15 up? Why do you want this job? And what do you
16 think that you bring to the table that the
17 other candidates that we talked to today,
18 they're not going to have?

19 MR. TUNIS: I stepped up really to
20 try to get something. There needs to be
21 changes, all right, so fresh face -- listen,
22 I'm not really into politics that much. But
23 there's a plus side there.

24 I also -- I'm a small business
25 owner. So when it comes to budgeting, yeah,

1 let me tell you. It's a lot to do with
2 budgeting especially when you're a one-man
3 show. And you know, knowing different ways and
4 how to get different things done throughout the
5 City that is not going to cost an arm and a leg
6 because there is multiple ways to do
7 everything. And that's what needs to happen.

8 MR. PERRY: Thank you. Also I'm
9 sure you're in tune with the City and what's
10 been going on lately. What do you feel our
11 biggest challenge is and as interim Mayor, how
12 would you deal with that challenge?

13 MR. TUNIS: I think it's gaining the
14 trust of the residents again. You know,
15 gaining the trust and showing them that we're
16 actually here for them and you know we all got
17 to work together. So there's no sides.

18 It really needs to be everybody on
19 the same team. You know that's how it has to
20 be anymore. We can't keep going we're this
21 party and we're that party. It's work here for
22 the residents. That's what we need to do.

23 MR. PERRY: Okay. Thank you.

24 MR. ROGAN: Mr. Donahue, any
25 questions?

1 MR. DONAHUE: Thank you for
2 applying. The criminal information outlining
3 the federal charges against the former Mayor
4 stated that unindicted coconspirators
5 associated with the City of Scranton or City
6 employees for lack of a better term, were
7 directed by the former Mayor to solicit
8 payments, contributions and other property for
9 the benefit of the former Mayor.

10 Given this information, what, if
11 any, steps do you take to not only identify any
12 unindicted coconspirator who is currently
13 employed by the City but also to hold them
14 accountable for their actions in order to begin
15 to restore trust in City Government?

16 MR. TUNIS: Yeah, the investigation
17 needs to go further, you know, and I'm sure it
18 is. And it will be. And it needs to be a
19 fresh start. We need to get all the corruption
20 out. And it's going to take some time because
21 you know there's little things that are going
22 to pop up here and there throughout the next
23 year or two or even, you know, further down the
24 line. But it needs to get taken care of
25 because, again, they are all looking out for

1 themselves. That can't happen anymore.

2 MR. DONAHUE: Okay. Thank you. One
3 of the major impediments to economic growth in
4 the City is the business privilege and
5 mercantile tax. Both the Recovery Plan and
6 Exit Plan include a recommendation of replacing
7 both with a payroll prep tax. But that's only
8 available to Act 47 cities.

9 So the City's contracted to leave
10 Act 47 next year. So that would have to be
11 done this year. So what would be your thoughts
12 on converting the BP and mercantile tax into a
13 payroll prep tax.

14 MR. TUNIS: I mean, if it makes
15 sense to do that, then that's what we should
16 do, you know, sit down, look at everything.
17 Figure out how it's going and see how it is for
18 the citizens and see how it is for all the
19 small businesses and bigger businesses that are
20 around but see which is best for them.

21 MR. DONAHUE: Okay. Thank you.

22 MR. ROGAN: Mr. Gaughan, any
23 questions?

24 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you. If you're
25 appointed you'll be Mayor of the City for

1 approximately five months. What do you plan to
2 specifically accomplish in that time period?
3 In other words, what are your goals and your
4 vision for the City?

5 MR. TUNIS: My goal is to restore
6 trust back for the residents and sit down,
7 figure out with budgeting, figure out what we
8 can do to get better, you know, with
9 infrastructure and everything else in a City
10 and just budgeting really. We need to figure
11 out a budget so we're not in the hole so much
12 and, you know, try to get everything that they
13 want to come back.

14 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you. Can you
15 please tell us what your experience is in
16 managing budgets and supervising employees?

17 MR. TUNIS: I have been in -- well,
18 I've been an assistant general manager as well
19 years ago at Snow Mountain it was called when I
20 took over. So, you know, I had employees every
21 day. I had to go through with interviews and
22 get everything, figure out with budgeting for
23 all of our, you know -- I mean, figure out
24 budgeting for everything in the restaurant
25 field that I was in charge of.

1 And then I progressed into working
2 as a -- up in Harley Davidson also and I
3 still -- there I had to work, you know, be
4 there for the customer, make sure all the
5 inventory was correct and everything was in
6 check, later into being a small business owner
7 myself. So, you know, I'm every day making
8 sure the inventory is to a "T" and making sure
9 everything is there because you got to keep
10 track of all of your funds.

11 MR. ROGAN: Thank you for coming.
12 I don't have any further questions. So this
13 concludes the interview. And we appreciate you
14 applying. And we will call the next applicant.

15
16 (Jay Walsh)

17
18 MR. ROGAN: State your name for the
19 record, please.

20 MR. WALSH: My name is Jay Walsh.

21 MR. ROGAN: And two questions before
22 we turn the floor over to you. Are you a
23 resident of the City of Scranton and have you
24 been a resident for the last year?

25 MR. WALSH: Yes, I have.

1 MR. ROGAN: And secondly, if
2 selected, would you run in a special election
3 for a full term?

4 MR. WALSH: Excuse me?

5 MR. ROGAN: If selected for the five
6 month position, would you run in a special
7 election for the two year term.

8 MR. WALSH: Probably.

9 MR. ROGAN: The floor is yours.

10 MR. WALSH: I don't have anything to
11 say.

12 MR. ROGAN: Do any Council members
13 have any questions?

14 MR. PERRY: Yes. Mr. Walsh, thank
15 you for taking the time to put a letter of
16 interest in for this position. And what I
17 would like to know from everybody is, what was
18 your motivation? Where is your heart? Why did
19 you want this job? And what do you bring to
20 the table that the other candidates that we're
21 going to talk to today aren't going to have?

22 MR. WALSH: Well, I don't know the
23 backgrounds of all of the candidates that came
24 today. I do know Robby Webber. But I have a
25 lot of experience in sales, marketing. And I

1 think I love this City. I lived here for I
2 believe 45 to 50 years of my life. That's just
3 about what I got to say.

4 MR. PERRY: And finally, what do you
5 think the City's biggest challenge is and as
6 interim Mayor how do you plan on dealing with
7 that challenge?

8 MR. WALSH: Well, first of all, I
9 think that the fiscal responsibility I would
10 like to bring in an outside forensic auditor to
11 basically get a firm grasp on what the City's
12 finances are because I'm not sure what they
13 are.

14 MR. PERRY: Okay. Thank you.

15 MR. ROGAN: Mr. Donahue, any
16 questions?

17 MR. DONAHUE: Yes, thank you. Thank
18 you for applying. What are your thoughts on
19 replacing the business privilege and mercantile
20 taxes with a payroll prep tax?

21 MR. WALSH: Well, again, I think it
22 comes down to fiscal responsibility and getting
23 a firm grasp on where the -- what the forensic
24 accountant comes up with. So I would be
25 projecting something that's not within my

1 expertise at this particular moment.

2 MR. DONAHUE: Okay. Thank you.

3 MR. ROGAN: Mr. Gaughan, any
4 questions?

5 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, thank you.
6 Mr. Walsh, if you're appointed you will be
7 Mayor of the City for approximately five
8 months. What do you plan to specifically
9 accomplish in that time period? What are your
10 goals and your vision for the City?

11 MR. WALSH: I think my goals are --
12 I think the Scranton Times had a list of people
13 that were -- what they were looking for in
14 their Mayor. I think I meet that criteria.
15 And my goal is specifically to understand the
16 fiscal responsibility and where the City sits
17 right now. Without that I'd be ship without
18 any sails.

19 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you very much.

20 MR. ROGAN: I don't have anything
21 further. But thank you for applying. This
22 concludes the interview and we'll call in the
23 next candidate.

24 MR. WALSH: Okay.

25 MR. ROGAN: Thank you.

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(James Freethy)

MR. ROGAN: Can you please state your name for the record?

MR. FREETHY: James Freethy.

MR. ROGAN: Then I'll have two questions and then we'll turn the floor over to you. The first one is are you a resident of the City of Scranton and have you been a resident for the past year?

MR. FREETHY: I am a resident. And I couldn't hear that second question.

MR. ROGAN: Have you been a resident for the past year?

MR. FREETHY: Yes.

MR. ROGAN: And secondly, if selected, would you run in a special election for the remainder of the term?

MR. FREETHY: I will.

MR. ROGAN: The floor is yours.

MR. FREETHY: I realize that this is to fill out the term of the last Mayor that's in this town. So a lot of the programs that have been started and a lot of the sanctions that have come from Harrisburg are in place.

1 So I'm going to be able to work with
2 the team of the managers of the different
3 departments and also realize that I have to be
4 flexible. I know that I'm honest. And I have
5 to be committed.

6 One of the things that has come to
7 my mind, I live over in the West Scranton area.
8 And I get up every morning early and I walk.
9 And I see a lot of litter that is all over the
10 place. One of my endeavors is to form a group
11 of men and women and kids in the four sections
12 of Scranton and equip them with garbage bags
13 and brushes and shovels to enable them to
14 determine what work is like.

15 I understand and I see a lot of
16 youth walking the streets and I realize that
17 school was probably just out. So that would be
18 good for them to do to learn how to work. When
19 I was a child, I was involved in the Boy Scouts
20 and the Junior Pilgrim Fellowship of the church
21 I go to and the Senior Pilgrim Fellowship. And
22 to earn merit badges, I had to -- I had to be
23 willing to do things.

24 I do believe that -- that this City
25 is -- has beyond the point of a turning point.

1 They are back in a positive direction. And I'd
2 like to keep it going that way. I'm honest.
3 I'm forthright. I don't know if you've read
4 the letter that I sent to a woman that is
5 involved in the election system.

6 And a couple of times I was a
7 minority inspector over at Jackson Heights and
8 in order for them to hire me or choose me, I
9 must have, you know, fit the bill. And I was
10 thinking about this yesterday. And I'm going
11 to say it today because it came up. If God
12 wants me to be in this position, then it's his
13 will. Thank you.

14 MR. ROGAN: Thank you. Mr. Perry,
15 do you have any questions?

16 MR. PERRY: Yes, I do. I'm sure
17 you're well in tune what's going on with the
18 City of Scranton. What do you feel our biggest
19 challenge is right now? And as interim Mayor,
20 how would you deal with that challenge?

21 MR. FREETHY: Our biggest challenge
22 is to show some honesty. And in that, that
23 would be reflected in what I had said that I
24 would like to have done, young people, people
25 that can do what I said that I came up with

1 with the litter pickup and maybe some
2 recruitment from the Boys Club, maybe some
3 recruitment from the churches and some
4 recruitment from the Boys and Girl Scouts.
5 Like I've said I'm going back -- to earn a
6 merit badge, I had to -- I had to complete
7 archery or rifle or basket weaving or anything
8 like that.

9 But -- and at that time, there was a
10 YMCA. I don't know where it was located. I
11 know there was one on North Washington Avenue
12 right up here. But I know some people that go
13 to the Dunmore Y to swim and exercise -- so to
14 go to the schools to have publicity to get
15 young people involved and in a work ethic. And
16 it's probably all up to who the administration
17 and -- that's in place now to have that work
18 passed. Thank you.

19 MR. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Freethy.
20 That's all I have, Mr. Rogan.

21 MR. ROGAN: Mr. Donahue?

22 MR. DONAHUE: Yes. Thank you for
23 applying. One of the major impediments to
24 economic growth in the City is the business
25 privilege and mercantile tax. Both the

1 Recovery Plan and Exit Plan include a
2 recommendation of replacing that tax with a
3 payroll prep tax. But that's only allowable to
4 Act 47 municipalities.

5 So we're scheduled to leave Act 47
6 in the next year. So what would be your
7 thoughts on replacing the BP and mercantile
8 taxes with the payroll prep tax?

9 MR. FREETHY: My thoughts are that's
10 a move in the positive direction. I know this
11 that I used to live on Sumner Avenue in West
12 Side. My father worked for the phone company.
13 And he bought a house up in Clarks Summit in
14 the 60s. And my mom is still in that house.
15 And she's still being taxed by the City of
16 Scranton. And that's a burden on her.

17 So to eliminate that is a good
18 thing. To replace the monetary need, that
19 would come from probably from Harrisburg after
20 they put another sanction on the City to come
21 up with an honest number of delinquent
22 properties and out-of-town landlords as they
23 are determined or called to have an honest
24 evaluation and to get I would believe the money
25 that's owed. Thank you.

1 MR. DONAHUE: Thank you.

2 MR. ROGAN: Mr. Gaughan?

3 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, thank you. If
4 appointed you would be Mayor of the City of
5 Scranton for approximately five months. What
6 do you plan to specifically accomplish in that
7 time period and what are your goals an your
8 vision for the City?

9 MR. FREETHY: Well, a couple of the
10 accomplishments -- well, hope to get is what I
11 had just spoke about. And with that in
12 practice, I believe many people that have an
13 open mind anyway will see that that this City
14 and this administration means business. There
15 was a big negative back when the Mayor had to
16 leave office.

17 And to get the confidence back
18 immediately -- this is what I know, immediately
19 is to show them in the nice weather the energy
20 of the youth and the determination of the youth
21 and objective of, you know, cleaning up the
22 litter. You know, I come into Scranton once in
23 a while on the expressway. And there is a sign
24 there that says Welcome to the City of
25 Scranton.

1 And I don't know what shape that's
2 in -- that sign is in. So maybe it needs to
3 be repainted. Maybe it needs to be
4 illuminated. But I'm really going for the
5 first aid -- the first aid is stop the
6 bleeding and along with that first aid is to
7 show many people in different areas of
8 Scranton, North Scranton, West Scranton, East
9 Side, South Side that there is work, visible
10 work being done in the neighborhoods.

11 And the neighborhoods like I said a
12 while back they used to have YMCAs and bring
13 the neighborhoods back and bring it back
14 through the work and toil and cooperation of
15 the City and the maintenance and supplies that
16 I believe like rakes and brooms and shovels and
17 bags and illuminated vests, reflected vests
18 that could come as a one shot deal before 2019
19 is over with.

20 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you.

21 MR. FREETHY: You're welcome.

22 MR. ROGAN: I don't have any further
23 questions. So this will conclude our
24 interview. Again, we thank you for applying
25 and we will call in the next applicant.

1 MR. FREETHY: Will I hear one way or
2 the other?

3 MR. ROGAN: You will.

4 MR. FREETHY: Okay. Thank you very
5 much.

6 MR. ROGAN: Thank you.

7

8 (Joseph Albert)

9

10 MR. ROGAN: Good afternoon. Would
11 you state your name for the record, please?

12 MR. ALBERT: Sure. Good afternoon.
13 For those of you who don't know me, my name is
14 Joseph Albert, US Army retired.

15 MR. ROGAN: Mr. Albert, we have a
16 couple questions --

17 MR. ALBERT: I'm also a Scranton
18 business man.

19 MR. ROGAN: Mr. Albert, we have two
20 questions before you begin your presentation.
21 The first question is, are you a resident of
22 the City of Scranton and have you been a
23 resident for the past year?

24 MR. ALBERT: Yes.

25 MR. ROGAN: And the second one is,

1 if selected, would you run in a special
2 election for the remainder of the term?

3 MR. ALBERT: No.

4 MR. ROGAN: The floor is yours.

5 MR. ALBERT: Okay. Thank you. As I
6 said, US Army retired. I'm also Scranton
7 business man who's been involved with the local
8 insurance agency that's been operating here in
9 Northeastern Pennsylvania for over 100 years.
10 I assume you all received a copy of my resume
11 from your clerk's office. When I filed I
12 delivered five copies but I was told they only
13 needed one and the office would duplicate
14 everything, recollate, restaple.

15 I suppose I should be honored to be
16 here and questioned regarding my ability to be
17 named Mayor of the City of Scranton under
18 Section 607 of the Scranton Home Rule Charter.
19 But I must tell you in reality I'm sad and
20 disappointed that this is how we have to fill
21 the office of the City of Scranton.

22 I was told by the City Clerk that I
23 would have five minutes to offer an opening
24 statement. And I thought in doing so that my
25 statement probably should be like a lady skirt,

1 long enough to cover the subject and short
2 enough to keep interest.

3 I know you're aware of the
4 perspective and the recent column from the
5 Times Shamrock publication Chris Kelly who
6 promoted this process but one missed, quote,
7 this week we will appoint Councilman Wayne
8 Evans, remember you read it here first. Evans
9 will serve until the end of the year when he
10 will win a special election and take over and
11 finish the two years plus left in Courtright's
12 reign of error, unquote.

13 Gentlemen, this fears a reaction.
14 Courage is a decision. But remember, the City
15 that forgets its past has no future. And I've
16 been in the City from a population of over
17 125,000 down to less than 65,000. And through
18 being a leader in the Commonwealth, Scranton,
19 producing two of its greatest Governors it's
20 now the laughing stock of the state
21 Northeastern Pennsylvania and the county.

22 That's not how it has to be. In
23 fact, I admire Noah. You remember the man that
24 sailed on a wooden boat with two termites?
25 There's a lot that can be done. But it's time

1 to think outside the box and put partisanship
2 aside.

3 Because as Winston Churchill once
4 said, an appeaser is one who feeds a crocodile
5 hoping it eats him last. You've seen what has
6 happened with the Scranton School District
7 where some of you have come from. But now you
8 have the responsibility to do what has to be
9 done. Gentlemen, I'll return the floor to you
10 for questions.

11 MR. ROGAN: Thank you. Mr. Perry,
12 any questions?

13 MR. PERRY: Yes. Thank you for your
14 letter of interest, Mr. Albert. I do
15 appreciate that. For knowing our City and
16 seeing it from the outside looking in, what do
17 you feel the City's biggest challenge is and as
18 interim Mayor, how would you deal with that
19 challenge?

20 MR. ALBERT: I see seven
21 significant -- several significant challenges.
22 The first is to restore some credibility,
23 integrity and ethics as the face of the City.
24 Whoever you appoint as Mayor has to get out,
25 communicate to the public and present a new

1 image for the City of Scranton.

2 It's not going to be done overnight.
3 It's not going to be done in four years. It
4 may take two terms whoever the next Mayor of
5 the City. But the City can rebound, recoup and
6 become a significant contributor to the State
7 of Pennsylvania and the United States of
8 America.

9 MR. PERRY: Thank you. Mr. Rogan,
10 that's all I have.

11 MR. ROGAN: Mr. Donahue, any
12 questions?

13 MR. DONAHUE: Yes. The criminal
14 information outlining the federal charges
15 against the former Mayor stated unindicted
16 coconspirators associated with the City of
17 Scranton or City employees for a lack of a
18 better term, were directed by the former Mayor
19 to solicit payments, campaign contributions and
20 other property for the benefit of the former
21 Mayor.

22 Given this information, what, if
23 any, steps would you take to not only identify
24 any unindicted coconspirator but to also hold
25 them accountable for their illegal actions in

1 order to restore trust in City Government?

2 MR. ALBERT: I'm sorry, I didn't
3 hear you, sir. Say that again.

4 MR. DONAHUE: Given this
5 information, what, if any, steps would you take
6 to not only identify any unindicted
7 coconspirator who is currently an employee for
8 the City but also to hold them accountable for
9 their illegal actions in order to begin to
10 restore trust in the City?

11 MR. ALBERT: I think whoever you
12 choose as the Mayor has to step forward and
13 start exercising leadership. He has to work
14 very closely or she whoever you choose. They
15 have to work with the Council. This is a team
16 effort. It's not one person. The City is
17 comprised of people. It's a team.

18 Council has a responsibility. The
19 Mayor has a responsibility. And they also have
20 hopefully the time to work together and share
21 information, share ideas and work for the
22 betterment of the people that they were elected
23 to serve.

24 MR. DONAHUE: Thank you. One of the
25 major impediments to economic growth in the

1 City is the business privilege and the
2 mercantile tax. In the Recovery Plan and Exit
3 Plan, one of the recommendations is to replace
4 those taxes with a payroll prep tax. So what
5 are your thoughts on doing that? And it would
6 have to be done this year because it has to be
7 done under Act 47. And we're projected to
8 leave Act 47 in the next year. So that would
9 have to be done this year. So what are your
10 thoughts on that?

11 MR. ALBERT: I don't really have any
12 to be perfectly frank with you. I would have
13 to really seriously take a hard look, consult
14 our legal counsel, consult with Council -- City
15 Council and hopefully come to a conclusion and
16 make some recommendations.

17 MR. DONAHUE: All right. Thank you.

18 MR. ROGAN: Mr. Gaughan, any
19 questions?

20 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes. If you're
21 appointed as the next Mayor, what do you plan
22 to specifically accomplish in the next five
23 months and what are your goals and your vision
24 for the City?

25 MR. ALBERT: Well, hopefully take

1 Scranton out of the cesspool of ridicule and
2 give it some credibility, give it a permanent
3 face, positive for the community for not only
4 its citizens but for the county, and as I said,
5 the state and hopefully the country. They'll
6 pick up on it.

7 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you. Can you
8 please tell us what your experience is managing
9 budgets and supervising employees and what
10 additions or cuts would you plan to make to the
11 2020 budget?

12 MR. ALBERT: I won't make any at
13 this point. And it would be strictly a matter
14 of sitting down meeting with them. Hopefully I
15 would meet with every City employee that is
16 currently on the City payroll, find out what
17 they think. That's going to take time. It's
18 just not going to be resolved in 30 seconds, 24
19 hours or even a month or two months or three
20 months. The best -- whoever you appoint, they
21 can do is change the image of the City of
22 Scranton.

23 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you.

24 MR. ROGAN: What are your specific
25 plans to promote economic development in the

1 City of Scranton?

2 MR. ALBERT: I don't have any
3 specific plans.

4 MR. ROGAN: Fair enough. And what
5 solutions would you support or oppose in
6 regards to the refuse billing and collections
7 for the City?

8 MR. ALBERT: I don't have any
9 solutions right now. It's a matter of if you
10 think outside the box and you decide to do
11 something nonpartisan and you pick someone who
12 you think is a leader, not a follower who will
13 give direction. Some problems will be solved.
14 And some problems will not be solved.

15 MR. ROGAN: We appreciate you taking
16 the time to interview with us. This will
17 conclude our interview. We're going to call
18 one more candidate then we'll take a ten minute
19 break. Thank you, Mr. Albert.

20 MR. ALBERT: Thank you.

21
22 (Thomas Welby)

23
24 MR. ROGAN: State your name for the
25 record, please and we'll have two quick

1 questions and the floor will be yours.

2 MR. WELBY: Tom Welby.

3 MR. ROGAN: And, Mr. Welby, two
4 questions. Are you a resident of the City of
5 Scranton and have you been a resident for the
6 past year?

7 MR. WELBY: Yes, I am.

8 MR. ROGAN: And secondly, if
9 selected, would you run in a special election
10 for the remainder of the term?

11 MR. WELBY: No.

12 MR. ROGAN: The floor is yours.

13 MR. WELBY: Thank you. And thank
14 you all for the heck that you all have been
15 through through this period. I'm sure you'll
16 agree with me that the City of Scranton is
17 wretched with a great number of residents
18 business and City employees that care greatly
19 about this community and were and are greatly
20 disappointed in what's occurred in the last
21 several months.

22 I personally know many employees and
23 department heads that are still in a state of
24 disbelief and just want to move forward doing
25 the right thing and to show everyone that the

1 City is full of honest, hardworking people that
2 genuinely care about our community.

3 While there are several issues that
4 I would like to see resolved or implemented, I
5 think it's important to get the input of our
6 employees and our department heads on many of
7 those issues.

8 One of the items that need to be
9 addressed as soon as possible are the contract
10 with Northeast Revenue and whether or not the
11 decision to not work with the county on the
12 delinquent collections was influenced in any
13 unfair way.

14 I would like to work on the
15 Licensing and Inspection and Permits Department
16 to resolve what appear to be many ongoing
17 issues regarding the amount of time that it
18 takes to apply for and receive a permit to do
19 work in the City.

20 The City's website says that it will
21 take one to two business days with possible
22 exceptions. You all know because I know it
23 also bothers your heart as well how long it
24 takes some people to get a permit, as much as
25 30 days to get a permit to fix a leaky roof.

1 As I understand under the structure
2 of the department right now, the permits can
3 only be signed by one person that being the
4 director. I think that the requirements should
5 be met that would allow for a second person --
6 at least a second person to be able to sign for
7 them.

8 Also, we have to find a way to work
9 with the union to put an inspector on the
10 streets on weekends. It's common knowledge
11 contractors or alleged contractors that if you
12 do any work in the City of Scranton on a
13 Saturday or a Sunday, you do not need a permit.

14 There are more roofing jobs done in
15 the City of Scranton on Saturday and Sunday
16 than all of the week days combined in any given
17 month and besides the likely lack of permits
18 for that work being done. The bigger or at
19 least equally concern is the quality of the
20 work that might be done by many unlicensed
21 workers. And there's also with all of us a
22 genuine fear that the work would be shotty and
23 unsafe for the resident.

24 Another concern that I have is that
25 I believe that there are many grant

1 opportunities that are not pursued in the City
2 leaving money on the table that will go to
3 other communities if we don't apply for them.
4 I'd like to work with your primary grant writer
5 and Mr. Bulzoni to grow that department and
6 bring in added revenue to our City and also to
7 work with our federal, state and county
8 officials in that area.

9 Personally in my present position we
10 meet regularly, that being the Chief of Staffs
11 for the Governor's Office for the Congressmen's
12 Office, for the Senator's Office, for the State
13 Senator's Office from the county and also with
14 all the other state representatives. We sit
15 and talk about opportunities that can help move
16 the region forward.

17 I would like to see the City a
18 little bit more involved in that as well.
19 Also, communication is important for obvious
20 reasons. I would like to see regular meetings
21 with the Mayor with one or two members of
22 Council and perhaps the City Clerk every two
23 weeks for the discussion of what progress and
24 obstructions we are experiencing that affect
25 our City and the taxpayers.

1 I'd also like to see the
2 establishment of a business council composed of
3 small and large business representatives that
4 would meet monthly to discuss opportunities and
5 to discuss roadblocks.

6 Another issue that has come up
7 recently that I believe must be dealt with
8 immediately and it's the security for this
9 building. With all due respect, it is
10 irresponsible for this building to not be a
11 security building. It's 2019 and we're at
12 least 10 years lax on this incredibly important
13 issue.

14 There are other issues that I think
15 must be dealt with that are equally important,
16 not the least of which is taxpayer relief for
17 our residents. People work in the City and
18 businesses that want to exist or grow in the
19 City, we're not going to grow our City if we
20 don't find a way to extend tax relief to our
21 residents and to our businesses.

22 Some of the other issues that are
23 equally important are blight. I've spent a
24 great deal of my life obsessed about blight
25 issues and graffiti issues. I've spent a lot

1 of my time going around personally helping to
2 clean up at that time. I didn't speak much of
3 myself as far as my involvement, but I can tell
4 you that by my actions, I am involved in the
5 community and a lot of community organizations.
6 And I respect the time that I had passed.

7 MR. ROGAN: Mr. Perry, any
8 questions?

9 MR. PERRY: Yeah. Mr. Welby, thank
10 you for taking the time not only to come here
11 today but submit your letter of interest. As I
12 mentioned to all the candidates, it's just
13 overwhelming. It's just a positive spin that
14 we're -- there's this much good will and people
15 willing to step up to take leadership in really
16 one of our biggest times in need to entrust
17 government again.

18 But what I'd like to know from
19 everybody is what was your motivation for
20 submitting that letter of interest and what do
21 you bring to the table that separates you from
22 the other candidates that we're going to
23 interview today?

24 MR. WELBY: Good question. My
25 motivation is what has driven me for all the

1 volunteer work that I have done for most of my
2 life. And I actually retired from WNEP TV
3 eight years ago. And at that time my intention
4 was to do public service work. And I did it
5 for almost a year when I got talked into going
6 to work for Representative Marty Flynn in his
7 office.

8 And the intention there first was to
9 be part time. And second was to be able to use
10 that office to work for him and also to serve
11 the people. And there we get a lot done
12 helping people that I as Tom Welby can't call
13 an agency or a state department and get an
14 answer. I can't get anybody to pick up the
15 phone.

16 I call and I say or I write to them
17 and say it's Chief of Staff from State
18 Representative Marty Flynn's office. I get an
19 answer almost immediately. We can help a lot
20 of people. So it's terrific that I actually
21 get paid for helping people.

22 But some of the other things that I
23 have done as former chairman and still board
24 member for the last 15 years for the Lackawanna
25 Heritage Valley Authority and we're responsible

1 for building a lot of trails and helping to
2 grow this City.

3 In a lot of different ways other
4 than just the trails, 15 year board member for
5 the Visitor's Bureau which I resigned from that
6 last year being a board member -- former board
7 member of Outreach EOTC, board member of
8 Neighborworks. And there's executive director
9 volunteer for First Friday of Scranton and a
10 few others.

11 It's, I guess, the same nature that
12 many of use, you included have. You're on
13 Council to help the City and to help our
14 people. And I feel the same way. As far as
15 separating me from the other individuals I
16 can't really speak to that. I think
17 everybody -- the 16 people that have stepped up
18 for this position know what they're getting
19 into.

20 And for them to have the heart and
21 the willingness to do that and sacrifice a lot,
22 I couldn't say what separates me from that
23 other than I thank them for stepping up as
24 well. It's not going to be easy for them for
25 the next five months what they have to do in

1 their personal life because of the decision
2 they chose.

3 MR. PERRY: Thank you. And finally,
4 I know in your opening statement you talked
5 about many of the different issues and
6 challenges that we do have in our City right
7 now. What would you prioritize to be our
8 number one issue, our number one challenge and
9 how would you deal with that as interim Mayor?

10 MR. WELBY: Boy, it's almost like
11 pick something out of a -- there are so many
12 that are equal. I think probably finding a
13 way to -- tax relief. If finding a way to
14 lower and change the structure of the wage tax
15 is a good first step and also for the saving of
16 the business mercantile tax. If we don't
17 continue to bring businesses into our City, we
18 have to do something.

19 The other part of the tax thing is
20 finding a way to at least tax the private
21 enterprises that exist in nonprofit properties
22 is something that has -- we have to find a way
23 to do that. Tax relief is number one. It's
24 hard to say -- it's just one though.

25 MR. PERRY: You're not going to get

1 too many complaints on this side with that
2 answer. That's all I have. Thank you, Mr.
3 Welby.

4 MR. ROGAN: Mr. Donahue, any
5 questions?

6 MR. DONAHUE: Yes. Just to touch on
7 taxes quick, one of the major impediments to
8 economic growth in the City is the business
9 privilege and the mercantile tax. As you're
10 aware under the amendments to Act 47, you
11 can -- municipalities are given -- Act 47
12 municipalities are given the opportunity to
13 institute a payroll prep tax as an alternative
14 to the business privilege and mercantile tax.

15 But that would have to be done this
16 year if -- since we're on track to exit Act 47
17 next year. So what are your thoughts on
18 replacing the BP and mercantile taxes with a
19 payroll prep tax?

20 MR. WELBY: Absolutely for it. And
21 I know that there was a lot of work that this
22 City has done to get to the level at which they
23 can present the puzzle that would allow for
24 that. And it's a fair way to better balance
25 and better structure that tax. It's unfair to

1 an awful lot of business that have a higher
2 gross, the taxes on the gross, not on the net
3 of the business. It's just totally unfair.
4 And that would be a step in the right
5 direction, a serious step in the right
6 direction for our businesses.

7 MR. DONAHUE: Thank you. And also
8 lastly, the criminal information outlining the
9 federal charges against the former Mayor stated
10 that unindicted coconspirators associated with
11 the City of Scranton or City employees were
12 directed by the former Mayor to solicit
13 payments, campaign contributions and other
14 property for the benefit of the former Mayor.

15 Given this information, what, if
16 any, steps will you take to not only identify
17 any unindicted coconspirator still employed by
18 the City but also to hold them accountable for
19 their illegal actions in order to restore trust
20 in the City?

21 MR. WELBY: That's tough. You would
22 think that anybody that knowingly was involved
23 in what has happened in the last -- I was going
24 to say several months. But it appears last
25 many years that they would step up and know

1 what they did and resign. I mean, there's no
2 gray area that they should be doing it.

3 Until all the indictments come out
4 or all the information comes out, I don't know
5 how we can make them admit and own up to what
6 they did. But anyone that took anything to
7 influence a decision should not be working or
8 serving the City of Scranton in any way --
9 black and white just should not be here and
10 should have the decency to leave.

11 MR. ROGAN: Thank you. Mr. Gaughan,
12 any questions?

13 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes. Thank you. If
14 appointed, you will be the Mayor of the City of
15 Scranton for approximately five months. What
16 do you plan to specifically accomplish in that
17 time period and what are your goals and your
18 vision for the City?

19 MR. WELBY: Well, of course, the
20 taxes -- although it's going to be very
21 difficult for someone that's in there for five
22 months. I know that and you know that. That's
23 a big road that's in front of that person and I
24 think that the next person that succeeds the
25 temporary Mayor is the one that has the serious

1 weight to carry.

2 But there are some things that can
3 be done I think almost immediately and that is
4 the improvement in how we are doing in the
5 application for grants in the City. I forward
6 from the State Representative Marty Flynn's
7 office we get notifications from Harrisburg of
8 any grant opportunities that are open and with
9 a description of what the grant is available
10 for, what it can be used for, whether or not
11 matching funds is required. And that could be
12 an obstacle for applying for something.
13 Clearly we can't apply for if we don't have the
14 money for the matching funds.

15 But a lot of them don't require
16 matching funds. And those projects that we
17 send the opportunities over for include storm
18 drainage problems, water runoff problems,
19 traffic problems, paving problems. It's just
20 about every aspect of our life it covers it.

21 It also includes what the deadlines
22 are for applying for it and all the links for
23 which to apply for. And because I believe a
24 staffing shortage, manpower shortage and a time
25 constraint shortage, we don't apply for as much

1 as we need to apply for.

2 And leaving that money on the table
3 is something that can be dealt with
4 immediately. Obviously, it can only be dealt
5 with for those that apply in that window. But
6 I think the expansion of that department or a
7 coordination within that department to improve
8 it is one of the top things and one of the
9 things that can be accomplished I think with
10 the approval of Council and finding the money
11 to do it in a relatively short period of time.

12 MR. GAUGHAN: Can you please tell us
13 what your experience is in managing budgets and
14 supervising or managing employees and what
15 additions or cuts would you plan to make to the
16 2020 budget?

17 MR. WELBY: I forget for a
18 millisecond there that that's part of the job.
19 I served as the sales manager for WOLF TV FOX
20 and also our internet department and had a
21 staff that I directed at that time.

22 Also prior to that, I worked for a
23 place down in Wilkes-Barre called the Station
24 Complex from '80 to '86 when I was the
25 advertising and promotion department manager

1 and also was responsible for a lot of the
2 entertainment that we hired that ranged from
3 Dizzy Gillespie to Todd Rundgren and Billy Idol
4 and a lot of other acts.

5 And with that we had a staff of 135
6 people that I wasn't directly responsible for
7 their primary jobs but I was directly
8 responsible for anything that affected the
9 entertainment portion of those jobs and worked
10 with a lot of people. I had success in working
11 with them.

12 And you work with those people as
13 you would and should and that is treating them
14 with respect, treating them with dignity and
15 expecting to be treated the same.

16 As far as cutting costs, that would
17 take a serious sit-down and to look at
18 everything. We clearly have to cut costs.
19 It's difficult for us to raise more money. We
20 can't raise taxes. So we have to cut costs.
21 And sitting down with Mr. Bulzoni and Council
22 and department heads and finding ways to reduce
23 those costs. It has to be done.

24 MR. ROGAN: What are your specific
25 plans to promote economic development in

1 Scranton?

2 MR. WELBY: Meeting with the
3 business leaders that I would hope that
4 everybody would agree that that's something
5 that would be okay. Monthly meetings with
6 business community from a small auto body shop
7 to our corporations that exist in the area and
8 doing it monthly and talking about things that
9 are going right, things that are going wrong
10 and how we can improve those situations.

11 And the same thing with developers,
12 sitting down with developers in the area and
13 discussing those same ways and then sitting and
14 meeting with our federal, state, and county
15 departments and talk about funding and ways we
16 can bring in more cash, the RACP Programs that
17 the state has available for the development,
18 the tax credit programs that the state has
19 available for development. They could be
20 pursued in my opinion a lot greater than they
21 are right now.

22 MR. ROGAN: And finally, there's no
23 question that our current refuse billing system
24 is broken. What solutions will you support or
25 oppose in regards to refuse billing and

1 collections?

2 MR. WELBY: That's -- first, I think
3 that the refuse collection company that we're
4 using right now in my opinion is not doing the
5 job that they could and should be doing. I
6 suspect you all have noticed the same things I
7 do.

8 We get in our office complaints
9 about nonstate related things and we follow up
10 on them. And there are a ton of people that
11 the Times Tribune article pointed out to that
12 aren't paying the refuse bills. Yet these
13 people aren't paying the refuse bills often
14 times have four, five and six apartments in one
15 building. And every month you drive by their
16 house and I posted a lot of them on FaceBook
17 with identifications of who the owners are that
18 aren't paying their bills.

19 I've knocked on the door of one of
20 them that lives on Rebecca Avenue in West
21 Scranton that owns multiple houses that aren't
22 paying their bills. Now granted, the refuse
23 collectors still have to pick up that garbage.
24 It's not fair to the neighbors to leave that
25 garbage there.

1 It's also not fair to the rest of
2 the taxpayers that are paying their bills to
3 allow them to not pay it, whether it be the
4 hiring to put the focus on that and to go out
5 and cite them and get the cooperation of the
6 district magistrates to work with the City in
7 citing these people.

8 There is legislation that was
9 enabled by the state a few years ago that
10 enables the municipalities to follow up on
11 these people, file a lien against -- there are
12 procedures to get to it. But after you get to
13 it, I think it's the third level. And I'm on
14 the County Blight to Bright Task Force and we
15 talk about this.

16 In fact, Councilman Evans is on the
17 same committee and I know he feels the same way
18 about it. There are ways to go after these
19 people. You follow the proper procedures. We
20 not only file the lien against that property,
21 but you file the lien after the steps are met
22 against every other property that they own,
23 then you could attach it.

24 And the same goes with tearing down
25 houses in the City. We -- unless it's

1 changed -- have a policy of filing the lien
2 against a single property. There's a property
3 in the ten hundred block of Cedar Avenue that's
4 owned by a company that owns 27 properties in
5 the City.

6 They let it go. The City paid for
7 the demolition of this property and put a lien
8 against that one single property I think 35
9 feet wide. Nobody's going to buy it because
10 it's too narrow, the setbacks to build there.
11 It's like filing a lien against this piece of
12 paper. It's worthless.

13 But the City could have if the
14 proper procedures have been met, filed a lien
15 against all 27 of that company's properties.
16 And I think if we start moving in that
17 direction and being more diligent and doing our
18 homework, we'll have a lot more respect to our
19 ordinances.

20 They aren't going to -- knowing --
21 if knowing that they are going to eventually be
22 dinged for that amount or that teardown,
23 they're going to take care of their property
24 before it gets there. And that includes the
25 garbage fees. They could be attached the same

1 way.

2 MR. ROGAN: We thank you for coming
3 in and for applying. This will conclude our
4 interview. Council is going to take a five
5 minute break and then we will wrap up the last
6 six interviews.

7 MR. WELBY: Thank you for your time.

8

9 (Dennis D'Augostine)

10

11 MR. ROGAN: Good afternoon. If you
12 could state your name for the record and then
13 we'll have two quick questions before we turn
14 over to you.

15 MR. D'AUGOSTINE: Dennis
16 D'Augostine.

17 MR. ROGAN: And the two questions,
18 the first one is, are you a resident of the
19 City of Scranton and have you been a resident
20 for the past year?

21 MR. D'AUGOSTINE: Yes.

22 MR. ROGAN: And secondly, if
23 selected, would you run in a special election
24 for the remainder of the two-year term?

25 MR. D'AUGOSTINE: No.

1 MR. ROGAN: The floor is yours.

2 MR. D'AUGOSTINE: Good afternoon,
3 Council. My name is Dennis D'Augostine. And
4 I'm here today because I love this City and I
5 felt I had to step forward. After all, what
6 will become of this City if its good people
7 don't do anything?

8 See, corruption is our number one
9 problem. What becomes a number one quality for
10 a Mayor? I suppose it should be someone who
11 loves the City, has lived above reproach and
12 values transparent ethical interactions above
13 all. That's why I'm here.

14 There are three virtues that we need
15 to value highly that I want to introduce as
16 Mayor. Number one, honor, integrity and trust.
17 Number two, recovery; number three, strong
18 leadership.

19 Let me begin with honor, integrity
20 and trust. Trust and integrity in all our
21 dealings as a city. For the past six years I
22 have served as Chaplin to the City. And I have
23 done so without pay and without benefits.

24 In fact, every night I responded to
25 a crisis or an emergency. I always did so

1 without any other motivation than a genuine
2 love for this City and a love for its people.
3 Last summer I received a top secret security
4 clearance, a background at the highest level in
5 an effort to be transparent, let me assure you
6 of this.

7 My efforts as a Chaplin and my work
8 as a minister at the Steamtown Church, one of
9 the largest and fastest growing churches in
10 Scranton will not be an obstacle to my work as
11 a Mayor.

12 During the five months as interim
13 Mayor, I will relinquish these roles taking a
14 leave of absence so as to pursue this important
15 and noble post that of interim Mayor.

16 I also want to be clear, religion
17 will not inhibit my role in government. I will
18 continue to honor God and our country's
19 heritage by not mixing politics and religion.
20 Let me continue with my second point, recovery.
21 To bring genuine healing to our City and its
22 people. I mean, this is what I do for a
23 living.

24 By God's grace, I pick up broken
25 pieces and try to restore them. In a time

1 where churches are dying, I live to the
2 building of two. These churches that I founded
3 and manage today are ever expanding and include
4 diverse populations such as Steamtown Espanol.

5 There are hundreds now attending
6 within the span of a decade. In reality, they
7 are truly cities within a city. And can I just
8 say that we were able to restore a beautiful
9 historic building within our great City. But I
10 want to restore more than buildings. I want to
11 restore lives. I want to help people to heal
12 and actively listen to them.

13 My third point, strong leadership,
14 to execute the office in a manner fitting and
15 representative of the people. I believe that a
16 good leader acknowledges the expertise of
17 others and influences them through personal
18 integrity and accountability to work as a team.

19 Leadership can be achieved. But it
20 can only be accomplished through active
21 listening and well-informed decisions. Facts
22 before acts will be my steadfast policy. As
23 Mayor, I want to acknowledge the vast resources
24 of potential we have in many of our people. As
25 a leader I will work with our City Council,

1 City employees, our business community and all
2 of our citizens.

3 While we have many caring employees,
4 I will reenforce to them that we work for the
5 people. And I will hold them accountable. My
6 wife and I are proud homeowners. We are
7 grateful to live debt free lives even on a
8 modest income.

9 As I manage a budget of more than
10 110 million, let me assure you I will rely on
11 the experts. But I will also be holding them
12 accountable and my honesty and integrity will
13 never be suspect.

14 In closing, here's exactly what I'm
15 going to do to ensure that my plan happens.
16 Number one, I will set up one day a week to
17 welcome all citizens to meet with their Mayor.
18 We will have direct access to me to address
19 their concerns. This is unheard of in the
20 history of our City.

21 Number two, I will be present. To
22 that end, I plan to attend City Council
23 meetings. I'm committed to face-to-face
24 interactions with Council not hiding behind
25 letters or e-mails. I will be compassionately

1 fully present at all times.

2 Number three, I will attend
3 neighborhood association meetings with Chief
4 Graziano. And I will require other department
5 heads to attend when there are specific issues
6 in the neighborhood which require their
7 attention. I will make sure their concerns and
8 ideas for our City are heard and where
9 possible, act upon.

10 Number four, I will personally
11 return all phone calls that are directed to me.

12 Number five, I will promote the
13 beautiful aspects of our City. Scranton is
14 beautiful.

15 Number six, I will strive to make
16 the office of Licensing, Inspections and
17 Permits one of the most efficient and welcoming
18 friendly offices in our City.

19 And lastly number seven, I will give
20 my best efforts to see Scranton not only heal
21 but transition and prosper. That's exactly
22 what will be accomplished in five months.

23 In one thought, why me? For 15
24 years I have been a registered independent. I
25 have two master's degrees. I am bipartisan and

1 have worked tirelessly to bring honesty,
2 integrity, trust, recovery and strong
3 leadership in all that I do.

4 I will continue to do so so that the
5 next Mayor of Scranton can step up to this
6 noble post and continue to effectively heal our
7 City. God bless you Council. God bless you
8 Scranton.

9 MR. ROGAN: Thank you. Mr. Perry,
10 any questions?

11 MR. PERRY: Yes. Mr. D'Augustine,
12 thank you for putting your letter of interest
13 and bringing all the passion that you bring
14 every day. Thank you very much for that.

15 As a candidate for Mayor, what do
16 you feel you bring to the table that's going to
17 separate yourself apart from some of the other
18 candidates that we're going to speak to today?

19 MR. D'AUGOSTINE: Integrity and
20 honesty.

21 MR. PERRY: Thank you. And finally,
22 you did rattle off some of the challenges and
23 issues that we do have in the City.

24 Prioritizing those, what do you feel is our
25 biggest challenge and how would you deal with

1 that?

2 MR. D'AUGOSTINE: I feel like our
3 biggest challenge is to rebuild the trust of
4 Scranton and its citizens. And I would be
5 committed to do it as I laid out in my plan.
6 Can I add one more thing?

7 MR. PERRY: Sure.

8 MR. D'AUGOSTINE: I also think
9 I'm -- stability is a top quality within my
10 life. And I think stability is what we need
11 until the voters choose. As evidence, my work
12 within law enforcement and my work within fire
13 department, I de-escalate for a job mixed with
14 much compassion and listening. And I think
15 that sets me apart. But I don't know all the
16 other --

17 MR. PERRY: Fair enough. Sometimes
18 I just ask that question just to get inside the
19 candidate's head to see, you know, what do they
20 feel that they do very well. And that's kind
21 of another way to look at it. But, no, thank
22 you. Your answer was absolutely fine. And I
23 appreciate all the service you do give for the
24 City. Thank you.

25 MR. ROGAN: Thank you, Councilman

1 Perry. Mr. Donahue?

2 MR. DONAHUE: Thank you for
3 applying. The federal charges against the
4 former Mayor stated that unindicted
5 coconspirators associated with the City of
6 Scranton, or City employees were directed by
7 the former Mayor to solicit payments, campaign
8 contributions and other property to benefit the
9 former Mayor.

10 Given this information, what, if
11 any, steps will you take to not only identify
12 any unindicted coconspirator but also to hold
13 them accountable for their illegal actions in
14 order to begin to restore trust in City
15 Government?

16 MR. D'AUGOSTINE: That's the job of
17 law enforcement. Can you ask it a different
18 way?

19 MR. DONAHUE: What steps would you
20 take as Mayor to make sure that trust is
21 restored in City Government in light of, you
22 know, the current circumstances?

23 MR. D'AUGOSTINE: I believe trust
24 needs be built with the citizens of Scranton.
25 Therefore, my plan revolves completely around

1 them. Also I said that I was committed to the
2 policy of facts before acts. And I think it's
3 very important that every department head I get
4 to know.

5 I hear their story where they're
6 from, where they're passionate about the jobs
7 they're doing. So I do that currently. I have
8 ten staff members at my work. And they
9 mobilize hundreds of volunteers. So I would do
10 the same thing by getting to know them.

11 MR. DONAHUE: Okay. Thank you. One
12 of the major impediments to economic growth in
13 the City is the business privilege and the
14 mercantile taxes. The Recovery Plan and the
15 Exit Plan give an alternative to both by
16 implementing a payroll prep tax.

17 But that's only allowable to Act 47
18 municipalities. So the City's on track to
19 leave Act 47 next year. So if that's going to
20 happen, that has to be done before the end of
21 this year. So what are your thoughts on
22 replacing the BP and mercantile taxes with the
23 payroll prep tax?

24 MR. D'AUGOSTINE: Once again, that's
25 before any action. And one of the things that

1 I think is what makes a good leader is to rely
2 on the expertise of others that I am able to
3 discern as trustworthy and honest individuals
4 who are incredibly skilled at what they do.

5 So although I'm not an expert in
6 everything, the way I would like to answer that
7 is I would rely heavily on experts in that area
8 and use a lot of discernment on my part to see
9 if they are skilled and if they are operating
10 in character, honesty and integrity. And
11 that's a great question, Councilman Donahue.

12 MR. DONAHUE: Thank you.

13 MR. ROGAN: Mr. Gaughan, any
14 questions?

15 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes. My first
16 question was, what you do plan to specifically
17 accomplish in five months. But I think you
18 answered that on your opening statement. So
19 thank you.

20 My second question is, as Mayor of
21 the City, you're going to be in charge of a
22 budget of approximately 110 million dollars
23 along with managing dozens of employees. So
24 could you please tell Council what your
25 experience is in managing budgets and

1 supervising employees and what additions or
2 cuts would you plan to make to the 2020 budget?

3 MR. D'AUGOSTINE: Okay. By gifting
4 I'm a people person. And I'm told that I'm
5 good at casting vision. I could manage people.
6 I could manage budgets. I could manage
7 day-to-day operations. I have done many
8 capital improvements. But once again, I'm not
9 saying this as to avoid your question. But
10 man, we have a skilled Council. Each one of
11 you I respect deeply. And we have skilled City
12 workers. And it's just picking through and
13 trying to discern how to rebuild the honesty
14 and integrity of our City.

15 And so once again, I would rely
16 heavily on department heads to do their jobs
17 but listen, have active ears to listen where
18 are some of the holes and some of the problems.

19 MR. ROGAN: Two questions, one, what
20 are your specific plans to promote economic
21 development in Scranton?

22 MR. D'AUGOSTINE: So I -- one thing
23 that I will say is I am willing to drive to
24 Philly and meet with the heads of IKEA and try
25 to get them on the border of our Dickson City.

1 And I'm a big proponent of -- I'm an
2 entrepreneur. That's -- I mean, that's what
3 I -- the same giftings that, you know, to start
4 a church would be the same giftings to start
5 a -- so I have a big heart for local business.

6 And so, I'm a go-getter. And I love
7 to seal the deal. And I want people to look at
8 Scranton and see this is as an opportunity for
9 their business to come into and to stay here
10 and for young people to want to come back and
11 young people to want to stay here.

12 And we have some of the most
13 fantastic colleges in this area. So I would be
14 absolutely committed as much as one can in five
15 months to economic development, specifically
16 IKEA.

17 MR. ROGAN: Thank you. And
18 secondly, there's no question that Scranton's
19 current refuse billing system is broken. What
20 solutions would you support or oppose in
21 regards to refuse billing and collections?

22 MR. D'AUGOSTINE: We're going to
23 collect. So -- are you referring to the 6
24 million in --

25 MR. ROGAN: Part of what's owed to

1 the City but also of a grander scheme any
2 different ideas.

3 MR. D'AUGOSTINE: I'm committed to
4 doing the right thing. That's what I'm
5 committed to. So if someone wants to bring to
6 the table and demonstrate to me how the -- a --
7 the honest thing to do would be to not collect.
8 I'm willing to listen. But I want to do the
9 right thing. And I'm committed to it.

10 And 6 million dollars of unpaid,
11 that's -- we need to collect that. And so,
12 there's that balance of like I'm willing to
13 listen. I'm willing to interact. I'm willing
14 to be open. But what drives me is doing what
15 is right. And that's what will drive me,
16 Councilman Rogan.

17 MR. ROGAN: Thank you. We
18 appreciate your time and your interest. This
19 will conclude the interview. And we're going
20 to call the next applicant. Thank you again.

21 MR. D'AUGOSTINE: Thank you,
22 Council.

23

24

(Karin Foster)

25

1 MR. ROGAN: If you could please
2 state your name for the record and then there
3 will be two quick questions before turning the
4 floor over to you.

5 MS. FOSTER: Karin Foster, resident
6 of Scranton.

7 MR. ROGAN: You already answered the
8 first one was if you were a resident. And have
9 you been a resident for the past year?

10 MS. FOSTER: Yes.

11 MR. ROGAN: And secondly, if
12 selected, would you run in a special election
13 to fill the remainder of the term?

14 MS. FOSTER: No.

15 MR. ROGAN: Okay. The floor is
16 yours.

17 MS. FOSTER: Good afternoon,
18 Councilmen and residents of Scranton. Thank
19 you for giving me an opportunity to speak. Let
20 me start off with a quote from actress Jennifer
21 Lawrence from her national campaign to fight
22 government corruption.

23 "Government is ours. We pay for it.
24 So it needs to work for us. And right now it
25 doesn't work. It doesn't really work." Her

1 words ring true to us today. Many of you know
2 me as a community leader, an advocate from West
3 Scranton. But I do much more. I do this work
4 not for personal recognition or compensation.

5 For the past decade, I've been a
6 proven civic leader and a catalyst for change.
7 I'm engaged with current pulse of the City.
8 I'm involved with public and private
9 partnerships designed to enrich the quality of
10 life for all of our residents for their health,
11 transportation, census data and the
12 revitalization of West Scranton.

13 I've been sought out as a consultant
14 for our city neighborhoods. I became an
15 advisor and I provided training for our
16 neighborhood watch programs. I've served on
17 boards, committees, and panels in leadership
18 and treasury roles to find proactive solutions.

19 I received leadership rewards at
20 national, state, and local levels. My
21 successes are contributed to my public
22 administration listening to our community
23 members and providing actual results.

24 In my professional careers as a
25 successful entrepreneur, an educator and

1 communicator, I have managed finance. As an
2 experienced grant writer and fundraiser, I have
3 acquired, budgeted, and managed hundreds of
4 thousands of dollars in grants and other funds
5 for the improvement of our neighborhoods.

6 I have been courted in the past to
7 run for political office. I declined because
8 at the time it was -- I was more successful
9 as -- working with government rather than being
10 a part of it. Right now is a time for
11 leadership, not partisanship, political gains
12 or more of the same.

13 We are faced with a generation after
14 generation of nepotism, cronyism, and
15 corruption that needs to change. We need to
16 work together to change the City's culture of
17 governments and restore the public's trust.
18 We're here today because of a fallen leader.

19 Council, your efforts have been
20 noble to give the mantle to the people. Is
21 this the time for one political position to
22 move to another or is it time to a set of fresh
23 eyes who is not indoctrinated with past
24 practices. We need your help to create
25 corrective legislation and restore the faith

1 and trust in our City.

2 Whomever you chose for this term,
3 ask yourself, what is the true motivation of
4 the person who wants this position? How will
5 they be able to make government work for the
6 people? Do you want a placeholder or do you
7 want an agent of change? Like you, I hear the
8 frustration and anger of our residents and
9 business nearly daily.

10 Our taxpayers deserve better. I'm
11 hear today for action to stand up and right the
12 ship. First and foremost, I'm not a
13 politician. I can offer a fresh perspective
14 from someone looking inside. Although I'm a
15 registered Democrat, I'm not partisan. This is
16 essential to represent the citizens of
17 Scranton.

18 I do not have any immediate family
19 members that are working for the City, nor do
20 they wish to. The City needs an approachable,
21 visible leader as interim Mayor. I can start
22 on day one with the confidence that I could be
23 prepared to do this job for the people. So how
24 do we effect positive change for Scranton?

25 We need to rip the bandage and truly

1 see what we're doing with -- dealing with. We
2 need to embrace the positive steps for the
3 independent review of the LIPS Department. We
4 need to utilize our greatest assets, our
5 citizens -- can I finish?

6 MR. ROGAN: You can wrap up your
7 thoughts, yeah.

8 MS. FOSTER: -- as a volunteer
9 coalition to review our departments. We need
10 to continue the efforts to utilize our
11 education, nonprofit and private sectors to
12 move forward. Furthermore, the budget deadline
13 is fast approaching.

14 I will meet with David Bulzoni who
15 is an incredible asset and next steps review
16 the political impact and potential impact of
17 current litigation. I'll meet with each
18 department for their input and power of those
19 who have the ability -- effective change and
20 make the tough decisions for the betterment of
21 the City.

22 Gentlemen, I'm the only choice to
23 ensure that the government is working for us
24 and answerable to our employers the taxpayers.

25 MR. ROGAN: Thank you. Mr. Perry,

1 any questions?

2 MR. PERRY: Yes. Well, first of
3 all, Mrs. Foster, thank you for taking time,
4 stepping up and, you know, doing what really
5 you do best in helping out the community and
6 applying for this position for the biggest
7 position that we have at one of the most
8 important times. So thank you very much for
9 that.

10 Now, what do you feel is our biggest
11 challenge facing us right now in the City? And
12 as interim Mayor, how would you deal with that
13 challenge?

14 MS. FOSTER: Perception of our City
15 Government needs to change. We need to show
16 them that we are working for the community and
17 that if we need to take care of issues that are
18 standing in our way that we take care of them
19 immediately.

20 MR. PERRY: And finally, what do you
21 bring to the table as far as a candidate for
22 Mayor that would more or less separate you from
23 the rest of the candidates that we're going to
24 talk to today?

25 MS. FOSTER: I have been active in

1 our community for 10 years. I am interacting
2 with all of the other neighborhood groups and
3 nonprofits as well as many collaborations. So
4 I'm -- I have the pulse of what is coming up
5 next and what has been done. I'm not afraid to
6 roll up my sleeves and get things done on day
7 one.

8 MR. PERRY: Thank you. Thank you
9 very much.

10 MR. ROGAN: Mr. Donahue, any
11 questions?

12 MR. DONAHUE: Yes. The federal
13 charges against the former Mayor stated that
14 unindicted coconspirators associated with the
15 City of Scranton or City employees were
16 directed by the former Mayor to solicit
17 payments, campaign contributions and other
18 property to the benefit of the former Mayor.

19 Given this information, what, if
20 any, steps will you take to not only identify
21 the unindicted coconspirators who are currently
22 still employed by the City, but also to hold
23 them accountable for their illegal actions in
24 order to restore trust in City Government?

25 MS. FOSTER: I would ask, first of

1 all, at this moment if they are involved, hand
2 in their resignation immediately. Any
3 information that the government needs as far as
4 to complete this case will absolutely be
5 cooperative in those methods. I would
6 immediately fire anyone who is involved in
7 this.

8 MR. DONAHUE: All right. Thank you.
9 One of the major impediments to economic growth
10 in the City is the business privilege and the
11 mercantile tax. Both the Recovery Plan and
12 Exit Plan include recommendations of replacing
13 that tax with the payroll prep tax. But that's
14 only allowable to Act 47 municipalities.

15 So given the fact that we're on
16 track to exit Act 47 next year, that would have
17 to be done this year. So what are your
18 thoughts on replacing the BP and mercantile
19 taxes with the payroll prep tax?

20 MS. FOSTER: My initial thought is
21 if we would probably need to transition. So in
22 that light, I would say, let's change the
23 requirements for the mercantile tax and make it
24 so it's on your net receipts rather than gross
25 and then look at a stepped out procedure to go

1 Mayor of the City if you're appointed, you'll
2 be in charge of a budget of roughly of 110
3 million dollars along with managing dozens of
4 City employees. Can you please tell the
5 Council what your experience is in managing
6 budgets and supervising employees and what
7 additions or cuts would you have in mind to
8 make to the 2020 budget?

9 MS. FOSTER: I worked in managerial
10 positions in retail in past years. I have been
11 a successful entrepreneur. I did not have
12 employees with them. However, I have been
13 working with budgets with the nonprofit that I
14 run and also managing large sums of money
15 through grants.

16 As far as the employees go, I expect
17 that if someone has a job that they are
18 supposed to do it. And if we go exhaust every
19 effort for the individuals to step up and do
20 what they need, then we'll have to discuss
21 where their future is.

22 MR. ROGAN: Thank you. Two
23 questions. What are your specific plans to
24 promote economic development in Scranton?

25 MS. FOSTER: I didn't quite hear

1 you.

2 MR. ROGAN: What are your specific
3 plans to promote economic development in
4 Scranton?

5 MS. FOSTER: I think we need to take
6 a very close look -- and I know that this is
7 started, but ways to make development more
8 friendly for people that want to come in and
9 redevelop our older stock of homes.

10 I would like to propose some hybrid
11 of a package contractors to come in if they're
12 rehabbing a home that it's straightforward and
13 there's not really a fast lane but cut down on
14 some of the red tape that they're seeing now.

15 MR. ROGAN: And secondly, there's no
16 question that Scranton's current refuse billing
17 system is broken. What solutions would you
18 support or oppose in regards to refuse billing
19 and collections?

20 MS. FOSTER: I see the need to have
21 a hybrid between having the additional --
22 excuse me, the existing plan here but then also
23 having something that was for low income
24 individuals, senior citizens that only have one
25 bag a week. There needs to be a better way to

1 deal with our recycling. That will cut down on
2 a lot of the trash that's going out.

3 I lived in communities -- and this
4 may not sound very popular. But I've lived in
5 communities where \$300 was only six months of
6 my trash bill and it didn't take as much trash
7 as Scranton does. So I see the value of the
8 program that's in place now. But I also
9 understand that it is quite pricey for people
10 that are on fixed incomes.

11 MR. ROGAN: Thank you very much.
12 Again, we appreciate you applying. This will
13 conclude our interview. We'll call in the next
14 candidate.

15
16 (John Drobnicki)

17
18 MR. ROGAN: Hello. Can you please
19 state your name for the record?

20 MR. DROBNICKI: My name is John
21 Drobnicki.

22 MR. ROGAN: Two questions before we
23 turn it over to you. One, are you a resident
24 of the City and have you been a resident for
25 the last year?

1 MR. DROBNICKI: I've been a resident
2 here for 10 years, own a home.

3 MR. ROGAN: And secondly, if
4 selected, would you run in a special election
5 for the full term?

6 MR. DROBNICKI: I haven't made my
7 mind up yet. There's a possibility. I won't
8 turn it down. But I haven't made up mind there
9 yet. I just basically put in to get you guys
10 out of trouble.

11 MR. ROGAN: The floor is yours.
12 Thank you.

13 MR. DROBNICKI: Okay. I worked for
14 Advanced Auto Parts 22 years. I work in the
15 store here on Luzerne Street. I'm a Navy brat
16 so my father retired when I was 10 years old in
17 Waymart. And I grew up peddling newspapers.
18 And I'm a milkman. I worked 27 years in
19 Waymart bidding company.

20 I was drafted into service in 1970.
21 I did my two years and decided to stay in the
22 reserve. I put almost 38 years into the Army
23 and Air Force Reserve total. I used my GI Bill
24 and went to Lackawanna Junior College here in
25 the City.

1 I met a lot of good people in that
2 college. It's a beautiful college. A lot of
3 businessmen taught in there. After that, our
4 company closed down so I wound up in Dunmore
5 with Advanced Auto Parts. At this time they
6 put the new highway up there. And I was
7 looking at my older age and I figured
8 Scranton's a nice place to live.

9 I found a beautiful home. My son
10 and my granddaughter, they're with me. I'm a
11 widow. And I like the City. And I want to see
12 it prosper. And I see now that you have a
13 problem. I know you're looking for
14 impartiality. I didn't grow up here. I love
15 the City but I'm not connected to anybody in
16 the City. So there is no impartiality.

17 I like to work with people. I want
18 to come in and work with everybody. I have no
19 hate for anybody. I just want to work with
20 people and be fair, do the City business until
21 everything can get back together again.

22 And down the road if things work
23 well, maybe I'll run again. But I'm not even
24 looking at that avenue. I just want to get you
25 through the few months you got ahead of you

1 here and go back to being whatever. That's all
2 I have pretty much.

3 MR. ROGAN: Mr. Perry, any
4 questions?

5 MR. PERRY: Sure. Well, Mr.
6 Drobnicki, first I want to say thank you for
7 your service and also thank you for you letter
8 of interest for the interim Mayor position that
9 we have.

10 As you know, the City of Scranton
11 has many challenges facing itself. What would
12 you consider to be our biggest challenge and as
13 interim Mayor, how would you deal with that
14 challenge?

15 MR. DROBNICKI: Well, like I says,
16 I'd like to try to maybe look out there and see
17 if we can get anybody to move into the City and
18 try to start work here. I even talked to my
19 employer. They were looking at coming into
20 this area at one time.

21 I know it's a challenge here. Us
22 older people are trying to hang onto our homes,
23 you know, taxes going up, garbage bills, things
24 like this. We're strapped with our income. I
25 see a challenge here of doing things fairly.

1 You know, there's a lot of, you
2 know, people really out there saying, hey, this
3 is the same old crooked stuff. It's going to
4 happen over. I want to get away from that. I
5 figured, hey, you know, get in here and be
6 honest with people. Let's get this place
7 going. Let's get the right people. Let's do
8 things the right way. You know, maybe from
9 here we can start it.

10 MR. PERRY: Thank you. And lastly,
11 what motivated you to send in your letter of
12 interest for interim Mayor and what do you feel
13 that you bring to the table that might separate
14 you from the other candidates that we're going
15 to speak to today?

16 MR. DROBNICKI: Well, I worked my
17 way up as a Master Sergeant in the service. I
18 worked well with people. I work in a store and
19 I have to be -- it's tough in a Fortune 500
20 company. You got to be fair with the public.
21 It's hard to deal with the public. And I spent
22 22 years with this company. I haven't been
23 fired. People must like me. So I'm thinking I
24 could get together with people and get people
25 working together. That's one of the things,

1 yes.

2 MR. PERRY: Thank you. Thank you
3 very much.

4 MR. ROGAN: Mr. Donahue, any
5 questions?

6 MR. DONAHUE: Yes. One of the major
7 impediments to economic growth in the City is
8 the archaic business privilege and mercantile
9 tax. Both the Recovery Plan and Exit Plan
10 include the recommendation of replacing those
11 taxes with payroll prep tax. But that's only
12 allowable to municipalities in Act 47.

13 So given the fact that the City's
14 scheduled to exit Act 47 next year, that would
15 have to be done this year. So what are your
16 thoughts on replacing the BP and mercantile
17 taxes with the payroll prep tax?

18 MR. DROBNICKI: I'm not really
19 familiar with that yet. I'd have to talk to
20 some people that are -- instruct me on that and
21 understood it a lot better. I don't really
22 know how to answer that question right now.

23 MR. DONAHUE: Okay. The federal
24 charges against the former Mayor stated that
25 unindicted coconspirators associated with the

1 City of Scranton, or City employees were
2 directed by the former Mayor to solicit
3 payments, campaign contributions and other
4 properties to the benefit of the former Mayor.

5 So given this information, what, if
6 any, steps will you take to not only identify
7 any unindicted coconspirator who is currently
8 employed by the City but also to hold them
9 accountable for the illegal actions they've
10 taken in order to begin to restore trust in
11 City Government?

12 MR. DROBNICKI: What did you want me
13 to do about that?

14 MR. DONAHUE: So given that
15 information of what was in the criminal
16 indictment, what, if any, steps will you take
17 to not only identify City employees who are
18 still currently employed by the City but also
19 to hold them accountable for their illegal
20 actions?

21 MR. DROBNICKI: Well, I'm hoping
22 that, you know, we have people on the job here
23 that will go through that actually let the
24 police do whatever they've got to, you know,
25 take care of that situation.

1 MR. DONAHUE: Okay. Thank you very
2 much.

3 MR. ROGAN: Mr. Gaughan, any
4 questions?

5 MR. GAUGHAN: Sure. First, thank
6 you for your service and thank you for coming
7 in today. We appreciate it. What do you plan
8 to specifically accomplish in the five-month
9 period if you were appointed Mayor?

10 MR. DROBNICKI: It's pretty hard to
11 get anything accomplished just in five months.
12 I know you have the day-to-day business to do.
13 Putting the "I"s and the "T"s on the letters to
14 get anything started. That was pretty much my
15 main thing was just to get you through to get
16 somebody elected.

17 Like I says, I can probably try to
18 look into maybe talking to some of my former
19 employers about me trying to get something
20 going here or something, work together with you
21 guys and see what kind of things you guys have
22 together, you know. That's about all I could
23 do there.

24 MR. GAUGHAN: Okay. Thank you. Can
25 you tell us any experience that you have in

1 managing budgets and supervising employees and
2 do you have any thoughts on what you might --
3 any additions or cuts you might make to the
4 2020 budget?

5 MR. DROBNICKI: Well, I do know and
6 I think it's hard for people to understand if
7 there's anybody looking for any raises, I work
8 for a Fortune 500 company. I didn't have a
9 raise for three years. I finally got twelve
10 cents. And I'm a taxpayer here. And people
11 just can't be asking for big money right now,
12 not until the public starts making money and
13 they're the ones that pay the people to work
14 for our City.

15 And I really think I like to work
16 with whoever is in charge of, you know, the
17 (inaudible) we've got to lay low and everywhere
18 you go they're dumping people. They are
19 shortening managing positions. I don't like to
20 cut anybody. But I don't see giving out any
21 big handouts right when we're trying really
22 hard.

23 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you very much.
24 Thank you.

25 MR. ROGAN: I don't have anything

1 further. Thank you for your time. We
2 appreciate you applying.

3 MR. DROBNICKI: Right.

4 MR. ROGAN: And we're going to call
5 in the next candidate. Thank you very much.

6 MR. DROBNICKI: Thank you for having
7 my time for this.

8 MR. ROGAN: Thank you.

9
10 (John Keeler)

11
12 MR. KEELER: Good afternoon,
13 Council.

14 MR. ROGAN: Before we begin, can you
15 state your name for the record?

16 MR. KEELER: John Keeler.

17 MR. ROGAN: Two quick questions
18 before we turn the floor over to you. One, are
19 you a resident of the City of Scranton and have
20 you been a resident for the past year?

21 MR. KEELER: Yes, both.

22 MR. ROGAN: And secondly, if
23 selected, would you run in a special election
24 to fill the remainder of the term?

25 MR. KEELER: If selected?

1 MR. ROGAN: Right.

2 MR. KEELER: No.

3 MR. ROGAN: The floor is yours.

4 Thank you.

5 MR. KEELER: I understand being the
6 Mayor of Scranton is a trustee position, a
7 trustee for the citizens of Scranton, I know a
8 little bit about what being a trustee
9 represents in the sense that I'll be the Mayor
10 of Scranton, has a fiduciary responsibility to
11 do what's right every single time for every
12 single decision that would be in the best
13 interest of the entire City and every one of
14 its citizens.

15 I think that we should have a total
16 open government with complete access, complete
17 accountability. We'd like to see -- to me,
18 main objective here for this five-month period
19 is to reestablish some sort of public trust in
20 the institutions of government within the City.

21 In order to do that, I propose if
22 I'm fortunate enough to be selected to conduct
23 any and all business in the outer office of the
24 Mayor, not the private office. Number two, is
25 to have a media representative present at all

1 times. I think that is so important to create
2 this atmosphere where everything is going to be
3 done out in the open, obviously except the
4 manners of personnel or other topic or subject
5 matter that requires a private discussion.

6 So I have a great deal of experience
7 in dealing with local governments in all facets
8 mainly we were fortunate enough to develop
9 products and services that I spearheaded that
10 allowed municipalities -- because all
11 municipalities regardless of where they are,
12 what size they are struggle to -- with tax law
13 requirements.

14 And the tax burdens are difficult to
15 increase whereas the expenses continue to
16 accumulate. So consequently, I believe that
17 the way to help these municipalities is to
18 create products and services that would allow
19 the governments because of their nonprofit
20 status the ability to invest the daily cash
21 requirements, whatever they had on deposit with
22 interest bearing accounts.

23 Now, granted, that money was
24 earmarked for certain -- had to be spent based
25 on allocations. But we were able to help these

1 governmental agencies increase their revenue
2 without any tax increases. It all obviously
3 depends on how much money is being invested and
4 what the rates were, but it worked and we were
5 very successful in that regard.

6 It was a great deal of fun. I got
7 to learn a lot about businesses. I served for
8 20 years as a member of the Scranton/Lackawanna
9 Health and Welfare Authority which is the
10 largest issuer of municipal bonds in Northeast
11 and Central Pennsylvania.

12 By virtue of dealing with different
13 entities associated with bond deals, I became
14 familiar with investment bankers, bond counsel,
15 and all other parties, even the printers
16 associated with how important municipal bonds
17 are.

18 And one of the most important
19 elements that needs to be scrutinized whenever
20 a municipality deals with bonds is the -- are
21 the fees associated with these bond deals, not
22 only is the interest rate expensive possibly
23 depending upon the rating, but the fees
24 associated with bonds are often considered to
25 be easily added to the bond deal which creates

1 a lot more expense.

2 So I believe right now that I have
3 the best background. I have a complete
4 background. I have always been interested in
5 the City. I have done many things to help the
6 City. I've never had an elective office. I've
7 never had a paycheck derived from a public
8 entity other than the FBI when I worked for the
9 FBI.

10 But the idea is we need to have more
11 input but also we need to be able to step out
12 of the box. We need to be able to start
13 thinking in innovative ways to develop revenue
14 which can increase the benefits to the
15 taxpayer, which my wife and I have lived in our
16 house on Orchard Street for nearly 40 years.
17 And we have I think one of the greatest fire
18 departments.

19 My brother Joe was the Captain on
20 the City Fire Department for 25 years. He
21 passed away in 2000 -- we also live where we
22 live on Orchard Street and we're so grateful to
23 see the police department go up and down
24 Orchard Street and across Irving and South
25 Webster Avenues.

1 And we recently had a police officer
2 move into the neighborhood. And I think
3 personally, the Police Department of Scranton
4 is magnificent. They do an awesome job. I
5 think if you compare Scranton to other
6 municipalities within the State of Pennsylvania
7 similar size, it's easy to see that the City is
8 hanging in there.

9 And I believe one of the main
10 reasons for that is the police department. So
11 I know there's a lot of good candidates here.
12 But I don't know if there's anyone that has the
13 same type of resume I have, the same experience
14 I have, the broad breadth of experience and
15 knowledge that I have that would be -- plus
16 leadership skills required to augment some of
17 these products and services that the bank
18 offered were significant. So I appreciate the
19 opportunity and look forward to your questions.

20 MR. ROGAN: Thank you. Mr. Perry,
21 any questions?

22 MR. PERRY: Yes. First of all, Mr.
23 Keeler, thank you very much for taking the time
24 and submitting your letter of interest for our
25 interim Mayor position.

1 That being said, what was your main
2 motivation for actually submitting a letter of
3 interest to wanting to take this job at some
4 point, you know, will become daunting.

5 MR. KEELER: Well, my main
6 motivation really is that I love being a
7 Scrantonian. I love living in the City. I
8 have the expertise. I have the education. I
9 have the experience to help. And I want to do
10 that. I want to be able to help Scranton any
11 way I can.

12 And while I was running -- raising
13 our family, it was very difficult to enter into
14 public office because I just couldn't afford to
15 lose. But now there's a situation where things
16 have changed. And I believe it's the perfect
17 time for me step forward and put this
18 information and background I have to good use.
19 So I wanted to do this basically all my life.

20 MR. PERRY: Thank you. And the
21 other question I was going to ask but you
22 already answered it was what separates you from
23 the rest, but you did touch on your knowledge
24 of the financial institutions and the bonding.

25 So finally, what do you see as being

1 Scranton's biggest challenge right now and as
2 interim Mayor, how would you go on dealing with
3 that challenge?

4 MR. KEELER: Well, I think there are
5 two big challenges. The first challenge really
6 is trying to reestablish an assemblance of
7 confidence in the accountability and openness
8 of the City Government. I think that needs to
9 be first and foremost as a requirement for
10 whomever is chosen for this job they have to be
11 aware of the fact of how important it is to
12 reestablish the sense of stability.

13 And number two, is that the City is
14 so important but it's changing. As a
15 substitute teacher the last three years
16 primarily in the Scranton schools, easy to see
17 the demographics within the City are rapidly
18 changing. And that's an element that needs to
19 be looked at all times.

20 Over in South Scranton, for example,
21 the projects at Cedar Avenue have been
22 magnificently impacted and turned into a really
23 nice place like Cedar Avenue and places like
24 that. Every -- the City is a lot different
25 than it was when I grew up here in the 50s and

1 60s.

2 We need to be aware of that. We
3 need to become more inclusive. We need to
4 understand that there are people that are
5 moving in here that are not really accustomed to
6 being Scrantonians. I think they're the two
7 biggest challenges is to create this atmosphere
8 of accountability and restoring the public
9 trust. Because after all, we are a fiduciary
10 responsibility which is a very important
11 responsibility.

12 MR. PERRY: I couldn't agree more.
13 Thank you very much.

14 MR. ROGAN: Mr. Donahue, any
15 questions?

16 MR. DONAHUE: Thank you, Mr. Keeler,
17 for coming in. And at this point, thank you
18 for your patience while we work through this
19 process. Talking on restoring trust in City
20 Government, the criminal information outlining
21 federal charges against the former Mayor stated
22 that unindicted coconspirators associated with
23 the City of Scranton, or City employees, were
24 directed by the former Mayor to solicit
25 payments, campaign contributions and other

1 property to benefit of the former Mayor.

2 Given this information, what, if
3 any, steps will you take to not only identify
4 those unindicted coconspirators that are still
5 employed by the City but also to hold them
6 accountable for their actions to begin to
7 restore trust in City Government?

8 MR. KEELER: I don't see how I would
9 be able to identify unindicted coconspirators
10 unless the FBI did. I mean, I'm not sure what
11 the legal ramifications are there. I think
12 that I would probably if I was -- like I said,
13 fortunate enough to have this job, I would
14 be -- I would be inclined to consult with
15 legal counsel on that matter because I wouldn't
16 want to slander anybody that may or may not
17 have been an unindicted coconspirator.

18 Should people be identified by the
19 federal authorities or the legal authorities,
20 that's a horse of a different color. They
21 would no longer be welcome as employees of the
22 City of Scranton.

23 Number two, I would not ever accept
24 any contributions from anybody who was either
25 doing business with the City or hoping to do

1 business with the City. That has long been a
2 pail of concern over the voter and residents of
3 Scranton is the pay for play stuff. I don't
4 believe in it. And I wouldn't do it. No way.

5 MR. DONAHUE: Okay. Thank you. One
6 of the major impediments to economic growth in
7 the City is the archaic business privilege and
8 the mercantile taxes. So the Recovery Plan and
9 the Exit Plan both recommend replacing the
10 business privilege and mercantile taxes with a
11 payroll prep tax.

12 But that's only allowable to Act 47
13 municipalities. So given the fact we're on
14 track to exit Act 47 next year, that would have
15 to be done before this year. So what are your
16 thoughts on replacing the BP and mercantile
17 taxes with a payroll prep tax?

18 MR. KEELER: I think the business
19 privilege and mercantile tax are
20 counterproductive. I am a firm believer in
21 economic multipliers. I know it to be an
22 economic law that it speaks the truth. And I
23 believe the mercantile tax has been really an
24 instrument in moving people out of the City,
25 especially automobile franchises. But because

1 they pay obviously on the gross amount. They
2 don't pay on the net amount. And it's a
3 counterproductive tax.

4 But before I would eliminate any
5 other tax, I would want to see what the
6 ramifications would be for the budget because I
7 don't know what -- how much money is being
8 generated. But I would say that if I was the
9 Mayor of Scranton, I would do whatever I
10 possible could regardless of Act 47 or anything
11 else to eliminate or get rid of that business
12 privilege and mercantile tax.

13 I think it's maybe one of the worst
14 decisions made. It's a very negative
15 counterproductive multiplier because what
16 happens is, the properties are vacated. Then
17 the properties are sold to people who may or
18 may not pay taxes.

19 The jobs go. So it's just a --
20 multipliers go both ways. And I would do
21 whatever I could. Now, as far as creating more
22 tax on income, I don't know. That -- we have
23 to be very careful in Scranton.

24 MR. DONAHUE: The payroll prep tax
25 wouldn't be a tax on income. It's a tax on,

1 you know, payroll preparation and it would have
2 to be revenue neutral what you bring in for the
3 business privilege --

4 MR. KEELER: Well, I don't know that
5 much. I'd have to look into that. I'm not --
6 I don't know the intricacies of that tax. I
7 understand municipalities have to tax. But
8 mention the word tax in Scranton and you might
9 as well mention -- it's just a negative term
10 here. You need to stop worrying about income
11 and start worrying about expenses.

12 There's only so much you can do to
13 raise income but -- without being
14 counterproductive. Just because you raise your
15 price doesn't mean your sales are going to
16 increase. Many times when you raise your price
17 depending upon how it affects other products
18 and services, your sales are going to go down.
19 That's what happens here.

20 Every time you raise taxes you lose
21 money. When you lose money and you don't cut
22 expenses, that creates more and more deficit.
23 And then when you -- that's exactly what
24 happens. It's true. It's as true as I'm
25 standing here. That's how the math works. So

1 just by the word -- increasing taxes does not
2 necessarily mean an increase in revenue.
3 That's the answer to that.

4 MR. DONAHUE: Thank you. And it
5 wouldn't be an increase in taxes. It would
6 be a revenue --

7 MR. KEELER: I think that would be
8 true. I don't know much about it. But when
9 you start talking about tax, different taxes I
10 would be very careful.

11 MR. ROGAN: Mr. Gaughan, any
12 questions?

13 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes. Thank you. What
14 do you plan to specifically accomplish in the
15 five-month period if you were to be appointed
16 Mayor and what are your goals and your vision
17 for the City?

18 MR. KEELER: Well, if I am chosen
19 for this position, which I hope I am, if I am
20 chosen for this, my first and top priority
21 would be to do whatever I can to fundamentally
22 change the way the City Government is apprised
23 by its residents. I want to be wholly
24 accountable and out in the open and as
25 transparent as humanly possible.

1 I would invite a member of the new
2 media to be in the Mayor's office all day every
3 day. And I think as many conversations that
4 can be recorded should be recorded. I would go
5 out into the City, visit neighborhoods and go
6 to neighborhood association meetings and
7 whatever public outing I could attend to let
8 people know that this is different now.

9 Yeah, we had our black eyes. We've
10 had situations that were traumatic and hard to
11 overcome. But things have changed. And we're
12 going to move in the right direction. That's
13 the tough sell here. That's going to be
14 difficult. This is not a band-aid.

15 It's not like you're going to be
16 able to pull it off and the cut is healed.
17 It's going to take some time. But I believe
18 five months with me being the Mayor is a good
19 way to start. And as far as -- what was the
20 second question?

21 MR. GAUGHAN: What would be your
22 goals and your vision for the City? I think
23 you answered the first part.

24 MR. KEELER: My main objective
25 besides that would be to try to address the

1 need for creating more jobs.

2 MR. GAUGHAN: Okay. Thank you. Can
3 you tell us what your experience is in managing
4 budgets and supervising employees and what
5 additions or cuts might you consider to make to
6 the 2020 budget?

7 MR. KEELER: Well, I have
8 considerable experience in working with budgets
9 both as a bank -- each department had the
10 responsibility of creating and managing our own
11 budgets. Plus when I was President of Scranton
12 Neighborhood Housing Services, we were required
13 by the federal statute to create, maintain, and
14 keep track of our budget to deal with the
15 auditors and accounting firm who audited the
16 books and created the financial statements.

17 I believe totally in managing
18 finances and managing budgets. I do, however,
19 know that budgets are only budgets. I saw
20 somewhere in the -- I was reading in the Home
21 Rule Charter about how some of the -- in the
22 Administrative Code about how the question
23 dealt with unrealistic income, which is a fatal
24 mistake.

25 The State of Pennsylvania when I ran

1 for state representative was just
2 overwhelmingly balanced because of unrealistic,
3 impossible revenue. They have budgeted I don't
4 know how many millions of dollars for tolls
5 from Route 80 that they knew aren't going to
6 materialize in that amount of money. But it
7 made the budget balance. I don't know. I
8 think they should be real. There should be
9 audits done to make sure that the numbers are
10 reasonable.

11 I have a great deal of experience in
12 running and managing people, in managing
13 enterprises. I ran the branch on Wyoming and
14 Spruce for years. We had an overwhelming
15 success there. And then when I was in
16 Carbondale, I managed the Consumer Lending
17 Department.

18 And in my own life, I managed our
19 household along with my wife's home. We tried
20 to keep everything above board and pay all our
21 bills, pay our taxes. I think my management
22 skills are second to none really. I'm not sure
23 that there's anybody that I know that was in
24 there. I mean, there's a lot of great people
25 in that room. But I have a significant amount

1 of management experience.

2 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you.

3 MR. ROGAN: What are your specific
4 plans to promote economic development in
5 Scranton?

6 MR. KELLER: Well, specifically I
7 think what Councilman Donahue mentioned is the
8 right way to start looking at a way to
9 eliminate the mercantile tax. I don't know
10 what -- the financial plan has changed -- the
11 way the state runs. But when we were involved
12 with the KOZ and the KOEZ zones here in
13 Scranton, which I was a big advocate of those
14 two programs, it created a tremendous amount of
15 revenue.

16 And on face value, it looked like
17 the City was giving away and it turned out to
18 be a bonanza. And the -- that's the sort of
19 thing that I will look to see. I would work
20 with the Chamber.

21 I think the Chamber needs to be a
22 lot more Scranton oriented, the City of
23 Scranton oriented. And we need -- I've spent
24 years on the MetroAction Board working close --
25 the concert with everybody connected with the

1 Chamber to try to develop business.

2 And I believe I would go out to
3 certain places. Rochester, Syracuse -- towns
4 that are not that far away that have major
5 companies headquartered there and try -- sell
6 to them how important it would be and how much
7 benefit it would be to their company to locate
8 here.

9 And that's what I would do. Plus,
10 under the Chamber through MetroAction -- and I
11 don't know if they still have that. But other
12 fundamental ways they have to provide business
13 loans even the University through their small
14 business development center can provide small
15 business with capital to get their business up
16 and running and keep it running because I think
17 the fundamental problem here as far as business
18 development and economic development is lack of
19 capital.

20 We just don't have the big entities
21 here that contribute a lot of capital to the
22 towns. And I think that's what I would try to
23 do. I would try to raise capital through a
24 couple different ways but make people aware of
25 the availability of capital through various

1 agencies.

2 MR. ROGAN: And finally, there's no
3 question that our current refuse billing system
4 is broken. What solutions would you support or
5 oppose in regards to refuse billing and
6 collections?

7 MR. KEELER: Well, to me that's
8 unconscionable what happened there. How it
9 happened only God knows. But to me, anybody
10 associated with that should be away. The fact
11 that there's 13 million and a total of 17
12 million in delinquent obligations -- 17 million
13 being with the fees and interest.

14 First thing I'd do is change
15 collection agencies. Second thing I'd do
16 whether or not it's far-reaching, I would find
17 out if there is any way to file a lien on
18 someone who has delinquent taxes -- or garbage
19 fees.

20 Now, I know that liens are hard to
21 enforce. I know that judgements are hard to
22 enforce. But I would do it anyway. And I
23 would make an example because you can't sit
24 back and let people do that to the citizens of
25 Scranton. That's exactly what I mean about

1 accountability. That is an overwhelming lack
2 of accountability.

3 We cannot sit back and allow
4 everybody else to pay their garbage fees. I
5 was petrified not to pay my garbage fee on
6 time. Not to pay -- and get away with it?
7 How's that happen? Like, I don't know how
8 anybody can allow that to transpire. I know
9 there are ramifications involving what's
10 transpired that may or may not precipitated in
11 this taking place.

12 But the idea that the citizens, the
13 vast majority of citizens in town pay their
14 garbage fees and every other tax on time, they
15 are being overlooked because the ones who don't
16 pay, nothing happens. I don't know. I'm not
17 an attorney. I've been around a lot of
18 attorneys.

19 I've been in a tremendous amount of
20 real estate deals financing properties. But I
21 do know this much that that should not stand.
22 No way should anybody in Scranton be subjected
23 to that sort of neglect. And I mean neglect
24 for people like me who pay our garbage fees
25 where somebody could have 12,000, 20,000, all

1 this money.

2 You could pay for cops and firemen.
3 You could balance the budget. You could do all
4 sorts of things. You wouldn't need these
5 taxes. That's what I mean. We can't just talk
6 about taxes. That's not going to work anymore.
7 Solution to the problems is what's required,
8 not adding more revenue or more money. Oh,
9 that's great. But the idea is we got to solve
10 the problem.

11 And the problem here is
12 accountability. The problem here is
13 understanding what the word trustee means. I'm
14 acting on their behalf. I'm acting on their
15 best interest. This City does not belong to
16 me. It belongs to the citizens. But I am here
17 to work on their behalf only, not mine. So
18 it's just a case of -- it really makes me mad
19 to think that that happened here.

20 MR. ROGAN: Well, thank you, Mr.
21 Keeler. Thank you for applying. This
22 concludes our interview. We will bring in the
23 next candidate and we'll be in touch.

24 MR. KEELER: Thank you. Thank you
25 for the opportunity. Good luck.

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(Robert Weber)

MR. ROGAN: Hi. State your name for the record. Then we'll have two quick questions before we --

MR. WEBER: Robert Weber, W-E-B-E-R.

MR. ROGAN: First, are you a resident of Scranton and have you been a resident for the past year?

MR. WEBER: I am a resident and I have not been arrested. Is that what you said?

MR. ROGAN: No, no. Have you been a resident for the past year.

MR. WEBER: Oh, yes.

MR. ROGAN: That's one of the requirements in the Home Rule Charter. And secondly, if selected, would you run in the special election for the remainder of the term?

MR. WEBER: No.

MR. ROGAN: The floor is yours.

Thank you.

MR. WEBER: As you could see from my resume that I have extensive knowledge and background in budgeting and representing local

1 unions or representing the Teamster's Union for
2 years as their Chief Officer and negotiate over
3 hundred contracts. So I understand that end of
4 it.

5 I have been involved -- I coached
6 high school and college basketball for 20 years
7 and was involved in budgeting with the athletic
8 departments throughout those years. And I had
9 my own business for 14 years running a trophy
10 and plaque business, dealt with, you know, tax
11 issues and budgeting for that.

12 Raised four children in the Scranton
13 area. I've been here for 65 years and never
14 left. And I put my name in because I think I
15 can assist and help Council with some of the
16 pending issues that might be sitting in front
17 of them that weren't signed or that were
18 refused to be signed.

19 I think I can assist in those issues
20 and help them make decisions that would
21 progress this City along. I know it's a short
22 period of time over the six months. But there
23 is some opportunity there to be able to help
24 out and help straighten the City out for some
25 of the issues that are pending. Any questions?

1 MR. PERRY: Yes. Mr. Weber, thank
2 you for submitting your letter of interest.
3 Again, I've said this to everybody. But it's
4 very overwhelming to see such, you know,
5 citizens step up in our time of need and really
6 take care of the City that we all love.

7 And although this has been a process
8 that neither one of us really wished we weren't
9 going through, I'm very proud of the way we're
10 going through it and speaking to all the worthy
11 candidates.

12 Now, you did mention why you did
13 step up and why you wanted this job. What do
14 you feel that you bring to the table that might
15 separate you from the rest of the candidates
16 that we spoke to today?

17 MR. WEBER: Well, I think my
18 background kind of, you know, states that that
19 I have basic knowledge in a lot of issues,
20 not -- maybe not the political side of it. But
21 throughout the Teamsters Union when we had to
22 run for office every three years there was a
23 lot of political issues involved in that and in
24 attaining that three year election all the
25 time.

1 And I just feel that sometimes eyes
2 from the outside can see stuff that eyes from
3 the inside might not be able to because you're
4 locked in certain issues and sometimes that
5 another view from the outside, someone that's
6 not really connected with a lot of things that
7 are currently going on. It could be very
8 helpful at times.

9 MR. PERRY: Sure. I agree. What do
10 you feel are -- and there are many, but what do
11 you feel our biggest challenge as a City is
12 right now and how do you plan on dealing with
13 that challenge when you become interim Mayor?

14 MR. WEBER: Well, that's a very hard
15 question to answer because there are basically
16 so many issues are concerning right now.
17 Obviously in long term, the infrastructure in
18 the City is -- has to be dealt with, trying to
19 bring in business to this area with the
20 infrastructure, some of the things that are
21 visible that you see.

22 Big business is going to have a hard
23 time coming in here. Taxes are an issue. The
24 uncollecting of past delinquent taxes and
25 garbage fees are a real issue. There's an

1 issue there that I think how it got so high is
2 a question. There's something that should be
3 looked at.

4 I think the company that does the
5 collecting should be dealt with quickly based
6 on the circumstances. And housing and permits,
7 there's just so many issues that in a six month
8 period I don't know if you could really handle
9 all of that in that time basically assisting on
10 issues that are brought up, yeah.

11 MR. PERRY: All right. Well, thank
12 you, Mr. Weber. Thank you.

13 MR. ROGAN: Mr. Donahue.

14 MR. DONAHUE: Yes, thank you for
15 applying. And at this point, thank you for
16 your patience as we work through this process.

17 MR. WEBER: Yeah, Mr. Keeler took up
18 all the time.

19 MR. DONAHUE: The first question I
20 have is the criminal information outlining the
21 federal charges against the former Mayor stated
22 that unindicted coconspirators associated with
23 the City of Scranton, or City employees to put
24 it simply, were directed by the former Mayor to
25 solicit payments, campaign contributions or

1 other property for the benefit of the former
2 Mayor.

3 Given this information, what, if
4 any, steps will you take to not only identify
5 any unindicted coconspirators currently
6 employed by the City but also to hold them
7 accountable for their actions in order to begin
8 to restore trust in City Government?

9 MR. WEBER: Oh, yeah. I think all
10 those issues should be directly addressed and
11 looked into. Standing from the outside you
12 couldn't give you a good knowledgeable answer
13 not knowing the facts behind some of the issues
14 that are pending. But, yes, they should be
15 dealt with.

16 And the only problem you might have
17 there is that if you're coming in for the six
18 months and you deal with that in a part-time
19 position and now there's an election for the
20 Mayor in November, that Mayor is going to come
21 in and maybe disassemble what you have attained
22 for the six months. So do you address it or do
23 you just deal with it in an ongoing basis and
24 let the new Mayor handle that. It's a tough
25 question to answer.

1 MR. DONAHUE: Okay. My second
2 question now. One of the major impediments to
3 economic growth in the City is the business
4 privilege and the mercantile tax. Both the
5 Recovery Plan and the Exit Plan have
6 recommendations transfer those over --
7 replacing those with a payroll prep tax.

8 That's only allowable to Act 47
9 municipalities. So given the fact that we're
10 on track to exit Act 47 within the next year,
11 that would have to be done this year if it was
12 going to happen at all. So what are your
13 thoughts on replacing the BP and mercantile
14 taxes with the payroll prep tax?

15 MR. WEBER: Is that one of the
16 issues that are sitting with Council right now
17 to be signed or dealt with?

18 MR. DONAHUE: Yeah, from -- I think
19 from our standpoint, you know, we're mostly in
20 agreement. It's we're going to have to get the
21 school board on board and it would be revenue
22 neutral. So any money you bring in from
23 currently from the business privilege and
24 mercantile you would set that rate based off
25 that number. You know, but it would spread it

1 out more.

2 MR. WEBER: The answer off the top
3 of my head would be, yes, I would be very
4 interested in agreeing to that. But obviously
5 you have to sit down and see how it's written
6 up and everything like that. Right off the top
7 of my head I would say, yeah, that's a very
8 good issue that should be addressed with
9 immediately.

10 MR. DONAHUE: Thank you.

11 MR. WEBER: Yep.

12 MR. ROGAN: Mr. Gaughan, any
13 questions?

14 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes. Thank you. Mr.
15 Weber, what do you plan to do specifically in
16 that five-month period if you were appointed?
17 What do you specifically plan on accomplishing
18 and in that vain, what might be your goals and
19 your vision for the City?

20 MR. WEBER: Well, again to assist
21 basically what you guys have been dealing with
22 and what is on the table to assist in maybe
23 getting that stuff passed and moved along.

24 Obviously in the short six month
25 period you try to bring a little bit of respect

1 back to the office. And for the future, again,
2 what you can accomplish in six months might be
3 a hard thing to answer. But you can probably
4 get things started to move on and hopefully the
5 new Mayor elected for the new year would
6 continue to do that.

7 I would say bringing in business to
8 this area to increase the tax base because it's
9 kind of depleting a little bit. I think that
10 would be very important. I don't know if you
11 can accomplish it in six months but you could
12 sure as hell start, you know? But that's what
13 I would look at.

14 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you. Could you
15 please tell us what your experience is in
16 managing budgets and supervising employees and
17 what additions or cuts might you be considering
18 to make to the 2020 budget?

19 MR. WEBER: Well, involved with the
20 Teamsters Union for many years. We dealt with
21 a 1.5 million dollar annual budget and had to
22 deal with making cuts sometimes to keep the
23 office and to keep the local, you know,
24 operating properly. And as far as dealing with
25 people, I've dealt with a lot of office

1 employees that we had to at times get rid of
2 for different reasons and held onto some good
3 ones.

4 And dealing with over, you know,
5 probably 35 to 4,000 members in dealing with
6 their personalities and conflicts and
7 representing them on a daily basis, I'm pretty
8 sure I can take care of any issues that are
9 presented to me.

10 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you.

11 MR. ROGAN: What are your -- you
12 touched on this a little bit. What are your
13 specific plans to promote economic development
14 in Scranton?

15 MR. WEBER: Well, again, I think
16 you'd have to start with the actual
17 infrastructure. I think again, I'm repeating
18 myself, but if I'm running a big business and
19 I'm being brought into the City and look around
20 at the tax base maybe and the infrastructure of
21 certain buildings that are here that are
22 sitting still up that maybe should be
23 demolished, it's hard for that person or that
24 company to come in here and say, okay, this is
25 going to be the area I want to come to.

1 So I would deal with that strongly
2 if you had a lot more time. But obviously
3 there's avenues you have to address with the
4 Chamber of Commerce and things like that. But
5 that would be one of the biggest issues I would
6 look at is try to get work and business in here
7 to bring people.

8 MR. ROGAN: And lastly, there's no
9 question that our current refuse billing system
10 is broken. What solutions would you support or
11 oppose in regards to refuse billing and
12 collections?

13 MR. WEBER: Well, there's two ways
14 you could probably go with that. One would be
15 the initial proposal from the county that would
16 have allowed them to collect the taxes at a
17 much better rate and return some money back to
18 the City. Is that what you're talking about?

19 MR. ROGAN: Specifically with the
20 garbage fees, not the -- that's a whole other
21 ball of wax that needs to be addressed.

22 MR. WEBER: The garbage fees, I'm a
23 very strong proponent of hiring people within
24 the City to do the work because you're paying
25 these firms tons of money on the outside to do

1 the collection process when you can employ
2 people from within the City, you know, with a
3 good supervisor and a person who has a good
4 outlook on that to go out and collect these
5 taxes from the City employee.

6 So you're employing people at the
7 same time going out and collecting instead of
8 hiring these firms from the outside because
9 usually the firms that are hired from the
10 outside to come in have some ulterior motives
11 to letting fees go beyond their time because
12 they get a higher percentage of collection.

13 MR. ROGAN: Right. Well, thank
14 you. Thank you for applying and coming in.

15 MR. WEBER: No problem. Thank you
16 for allowing me to be interviewed.

17 MR. ROGAN: This will conclude our
18 interview. We'll call in the last candidate.

19 MR. WEBER: Thank you.

20 MR. ROGAN: Thank you.

21
22 (John Sheroda)

23
24 MR. SHERODA: Good afternoon,
25 everyone.

1 MR. ROGAN: State your name for the
2 record and we'll have two quick questions then
3 we'll turn the floor over to you.

4 MR. SHERODA: My name is John
5 Sheroda.

6 MR. ROGAN: And we thank you for
7 your patience.

8 MR. SHERODA: No problem.

9 MR. ROGAN: First, are you a
10 resident of the City and have you been a
11 resident for the past year?

12 MR. SHERODA: Yes.

13 MR. ROGAN: And secondly, if
14 selected, would you run in a special election
15 for the remainder of the two-year term?

16 MR. SHERODA: I'm thinking about it.
17 I'm not really sure at this time.

18 MR. ROGAN: The floor is yours.

19 MR. SHERODA: Okay. Again, my name
20 is John Sheroda. I'm 61 years old. I'm a
21 resident of Scranton for most of my life. I
22 spent about 15 years in the Peckville area. I
23 graduated from West Scranton High School. I
24 have a Bachelor's of Science Degree from East
25 Stroudsburg University. I have a Master's

1 Degree from Cabrini College and I have 60
2 credits over my Masters from Penn State
3 University.

4 My employment is I'm a retired
5 school teacher out of the City of Philadelphia,
6 although even though when I was in
7 Philadelphia, I resided in Scranton. I just
8 bought a new home in Scranton. It's a new home
9 to me. It's not a new home. But it's a new
10 home to me. And I plan on staying in Scranton
11 until my time is up.

12 As far as my working background, I
13 was a police officer in the City of Scranton
14 for about a year and a half under the Com D
15 Development in which I chose to take up
16 education for the rest of my life and then
17 obviously when I taught at Wallenpaupack and
18 then I went into the City of Philadelphia and
19 taught for 19 years in north Philadelphia.

20 During that time I was the head
21 football coach and head baseball coach at
22 Martin Luther King High School. And as I said
23 before, I just retired in June. And I'm
24 looking forward to staying in the area and
25 being back home full time.

1 MR. ROGAN: Mr. Perry, any
2 questions?

3 MR. PERRY: Yes. Mr. Sheroda, thank
4 you very much, not only for your patience like
5 was mentioned but your letter of intent for our
6 interim Mayor at our time of need. I spoke to
7 everyone. And I'm just very thankful to see
8 just so many good citizens come and actually
9 want to do the right thing when we need it
10 most. So thank you.

11 MR. SHERODA: Yes, you're welcome.

12 MR. PERRY: Now, what do you feel is
13 our biggest challenge right now within the City
14 of Scranton and as interim Mayor, how would you
15 go about dealing with that?

16 MR. SHERODA: Actually I was
17 thinking about it. I actually feel like we
18 have three challenges really. The first one is
19 even though I'm a union man, I feel the fire
20 and police -- I can't think of the word now --
21 retirement system has to be overhauled. They
22 do deserve a retirement. They do deserve a
23 pension.

24 But I think maybe my idea would be
25 if maybe new police officers or firemen coming

1 in they would have to have a new contract for
2 them where they might not be able to receive
3 those benefits as they have in the past.
4 Obviously if you are currently a fireman or a
5 retired fireman or a police officer, you would
6 be grandfathered into what we have now.

7 However, I don't know if the City
8 could handle going on with the same procedure
9 that we're doing financially. That's number
10 one. Number two, and I know it's two different
11 areas. We have the school district and we have
12 the City Government.

13 Somehow we have to work together to
14 get that situation rectified because the school
15 district is very important. Without schools
16 obviously we don't have anything. And I think
17 those school systems -- the school system in
18 Scranton is excellent but we have to figure out
19 a way that we can fund the school system. We
20 have to work hand-in-hand.

21 And finally, when I was growing up
22 here -- and I don't mean to harm anybody by
23 this statement. But we had a small minority of
24 people here which is great. But now we're
25 very, very diversified. And I don't know if

1 the people that are coming in from the
2 different areas are truly -- want to be
3 Scrantonians or they feel like they're
4 Scrantonians. I would try to have programs or
5 some kind of issues that make them feel more
6 comfortable living in Scranton.

7 MR. PERRY: Thank you. And finally,
8 what was your motivation to put in a letter of
9 interest for Mayor and what do you feel you
10 bring to the table as a candidate that might
11 separate you from the rest of the candidates
12 that we spoke to today?

13 MR. SHERODA: 61 years old, I lived
14 here my whole life. I played football for the
15 Scranton Eagles. I played for West Scranton
16 High School. I -- this is my town. I love
17 this town. I taught in Philly for 19 years. I
18 never took residency in Philly only part time.
19 I would come home on the weekends because I
20 want to be in this area. This is my area.
21 This is my home. And I'm very proud of this
22 area.

23 MR. PERRY: Okay. Thank you.
24 Thanks very much.

25 MR. ROGAN: Mr. Donahue, any

1 questions?

2 MR. DONAHUE: Yes. Thank you for
3 applying and thank you for your patience while
4 we work through this process.

5 One of the major impediments to
6 economic growth in the City is the archaic
7 business privilege and the mercantile taxes.

8 MR. SHERODA: I'm sorry, I didn't
9 hear you.

10 MR. DONAHUE: The archaic business
11 privilege and mercantile taxes, both the
12 Recovery Plan and the Exit Plan include the
13 recommendation of replacing the BP and
14 mercantile taxes with a payroll prep tax.

15 But that's only allowable under Act
16 47, you know, for Act 47 municipalities. And
17 given the fact that we're scheduled to leave
18 Act 47 sometime next year, that would have to
19 be done this year. So what are your thoughts
20 on replacing the BP and mercantile taxes with
21 the payroll prep tax?

22 MR. SHERODA: Again, I'm not really
23 familiar with it. I really don't have an
24 answer for that. I apologize. I'm not in tune
25 to that area. I'm sorry.

1 MR. DONAHUE: All right. That's all
2 I have. Thank you.

3 MR. ROGAN: Mr. Gaughan, any
4 questions?

5 MR. GAUGHAN: Sure. What do you
6 plan to specifically accomplish over the next
7 few months if you're appointed Mayor and what
8 are your goals and your vision for the City?

9 MR. SHERODA: What I plan on if I am
10 put in this position over the next five months,
11 I just plan on working with City Council and
12 try and achieve some goals. Obviously five
13 months is a very short time.

14 But I would really like to look into
15 the firemen and the police officer pension to
16 see if we can work some kind of a contract out
17 where we don't have to pay these high fees.

18 The other thing I'm really proud of
19 in Scranton is if you go down Penn Avenue, it's
20 a beautiful area right now. There's a lot of
21 new businesses coming in. There's a lot -- the
22 old buildings are made into apartments for
23 older people, whatever, they're getting filled
24 up.

25 However, we have a problem. We're

1 losing our young people. And as I walk through
2 the streets and talk to people they're saying
3 we're losing them because of our tax base. And
4 I think that's something we have to work on.
5 Mr. Donahue, I don't know if that's what you
6 meant by that. I'm really not sure.

7 But somehow we got to figure out how
8 are we going to get the people that aren't
9 paying their garbage taxes or all of these
10 other -- how are we going to get this money
11 collected? What are we going to do to improve
12 that situation?

13 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you. As Mayor
14 of the City of Scranton, you'll be in charge of
15 a budget of roughly 110 million dollars along
16 with managing dozens of City employees. Can
17 you please tell us what your experience is in
18 managing budgets and supervising employees and
19 on top of that, what additions or cuts would
20 you plan to make to the 2020 budget?

21 MR. SHERODA: I never handled a
22 budget that big. I only made a hundred grand
23 myself. But being a football coach and a
24 teacher and everything, I've always handled my
25 classroom. I've handled my football teams.

1 I've handled budgets on a much smaller basis
2 for football equipment or teaching equipment or
3 whatever.

4 So I am familiar with budgeting and
5 things of that nature. As far as handling
6 people, again, being an educator you're always
7 in front of people. I'm not afraid to take any
8 lashes from anybody. I'm also not afraid to
9 work with people and discuss what our
10 situations are.

11 If you're a teacher, you listen to
12 what the needs are of the students. If you're
13 the Mayor, you may listen to what the needs are
14 of the people. And when you listen to those
15 and you work together with the wonderful City
16 Council that we have, maybe things could
17 happen.

18 Again, five months is not a long
19 time. I think I could really with my
20 experience, I think I could really work with
21 you, with the City Council and be a positive
22 source.

23 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you.

24 MR. ROGAN: Thank you very much. I
25 don't have anything further. This will

1 conclude our interview. And this will conclude
2 actually the entire interview process.

3 Council will be meeting and
4 discussing the applicants. And we will
5 hopefully have a decision by Wednesday. If
6 not, it could drag out until the end of the
7 month. But we will be working diligently to
8 come to a decision. Thank you.

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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