

COUNCIL FOR THE CITY OF SCRANTON

City Council Interviews

HELD:

Wednesday, August 7th, 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 - absent

WILLIAM GAUGHAN

KYLE DONAHUE

LORI REED, CITY CLERK

KATHY CARRERA, ASSISTANT CITY CLERK

AMIL MINORA, ESQUIRE - SOLICITOR

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(Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silent reflection was observed.)

MR. ROGAN: Roll call, please.

MS. CARRERA: Mr. Perry.

MR. PERRY: Here.

MS. CARRERA: Mr. Donahue.

MR. DONAHUE: Here.

MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

MR. GAUGHAN: Here.

MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

MR. ROGAN: Here. The purpose of today's meeting is to conduct interviews for the vacant City Council seat that was vacated when Councilman Evans was appointed to become Mayor Evans.

So we're going to follow the same process we followed when we filled the vacant mayoral position. We're going to have interviews, a few questions and then Council will take a recess in executive session to debate the merits of the candidates and hopefully have a decision today.

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(Jay Walsh)

MR. ROGAN: Mr. Walsh, before we begin, one quick question. Same startup question when we had the mayoral appointments. Are you a resident of the City of Scranton.

MR. WALSH: I am.

MR. ROGAN: The floor is yours.

MR. WALSH: Excuse me?

MR. ROGAN: The floor is yours.

MR. WALSH: Okay. My name is Jay Walsh, resident of Scranton. I'd like to lead off with the Lord's prayer. Our father who art in heaven, hallow it be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Now, I'm going to speak on the fact that I'm still into a forensic audit for the City as also for the county, the state and the federal government. That's not the -- that's my work outside of City Hall.

1 I'd like to touch on collective
2 capitalism which floats all boats. It's a
3 concept that was developed after World War II
4 with the Japanese and later written about by an
5 economist in 1962. Collective capitalism
6 floats all boats. I'd like to say a word on
7 the Diocese of Scranton clergy situation.

8 It's reportedly now that there's 18
9 hundred people who have called the hotline to
10 complain. Having been a sexual victim myself
11 at the age of eight by my little league
12 baseball coach and I didn't come to terms with
13 it until the Sandusky situation. Never told my
14 wife, never told anybody.

15 Referendum voting, I believe in
16 referendum voting because I rather deal with
17 issues than politicians. I'm not a politician.
18 I'm a facilitator. I'm open for your
19 questions.

20 MR. ROGAN: Does anyone have any
21 questions?

22 MR. PERRY: Yeah, thank you,
23 Mr. Walsh, for putting in your letter of
24 interest. Why do you want to be a City Council
25 person?

1 MR. WALSH: Because I think I could
2 bring about change.

3 MR. PERRY: All right. Thank you.

4 MR. ROGAN: Anyone else?

5 MR. DONAHUE: Thank you, Mr. Walsh,
6 for applying. How would you define the
7 governmental function of the City Council? In
8 other words, what is the purpose of having a
9 City Council?

10 MR. WALSH: I think the current City
11 Council is dysfunctional. Okay, I believe that
12 there should be facilitators instead of dealing
13 with issues rather than personalities.

14 MR. DONAHUE: Thank you.

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

17 MR. GAUGHAN: Sure. What would you
18 like to try to accomplish in four and a half
19 months on Council?

20 MR. WALSH: My main goal would be to
21 get the City books under control and make
22 people aware of the idea of referendum voting.

23 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you.

24 MR. ROGAN: Thank you very much.

25 This will conclude the interview. We'll bring

1 in the next candidate.

2 MR. WALSH: Thank you.

3
4 (Richard Pica)

5
6 MR. ROGAN: Good afternoon. If you
7 could state your name for the record and we
8 have one quick question before we begin. Are
9 you a resident of the City of Scranton?

10 MR. PICA: Yes, I am.

11 MR. ROGAN: The floor is yours.

12 MR. PICA: My name is Richard Pica.
13 Good afternoon Council and City residents. I
14 first want to take this opportunity to thank
15 you for think invaluable experience to
16 interview for the vacant Councilman position.

17 As I stated earlier, my name is Rick
18 Pica. I want to take this opportunity to tell
19 you about myself and my qualifications and
20 experience and my love for the City of Scranton
21 which would all be an asset to City Council.

22 I'm a lifelong resident born and
23 raised in the City of Scranton. I attended
24 public schools. My parents and grandparents
25 are also lifelong residents of the City.

1 My family is deep enriched in family
2 history of public service in Scranton where my
3 father was a fireman, fire chief, and my uncle
4 was a police officer.

5 These family ties to Scranton make
6 growing up in the City a wonderful experience.
7 Knowing the City, the families of the firemen,
8 the police, the City employees and City
9 officials. All of these experiences are what
10 brought me back to Scranton where my wife and I
11 are -- currently raise our family. My wife is
12 from upstate New York and she now calls
13 Scranton her home.

14 Upon my return from the military, I
15 was employed by Geisinger Health System. I
16 worked for Geisinger for 20 years as a
17 technician, a manager and a director of
18 clinical engineering.

19 I gained years of experience in
20 management, finance, procurement. I was
21 responsible for over 50 employees, budgets,
22 project management, large expansions and
23 procurement of medical equipment and contract
24 management.

25 I also during that timeframe worked

1 with my father and his family owned garage door
2 business. In 2010, I left Geisinger to take
3 over my family garage door business based in
4 Scranton. I served Scranton and the northeast
5 PA. I'm also on the board of directors for the
6 Northeast PA Youth Shelter here in Scranton
7 where we provide quality emergency shelter and
8 related services to unaccompanied youths ages
9 14 through high school graduation.

10 These experiences of being a
11 lifelong resident, family history, working in
12 the City, a homeowner, a small business owner
13 and being involved in community give me
14 invaluable knowledge, experience and the good
15 and the bad of the great City of Scranton.

16 That's why I am here before you
17 today so I could keep our great City moving
18 forward and work with Mayor Evans and the City
19 Council to address this current City business
20 and issues to bridge the gap until our new City
21 Council starts in January. Thank you.

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

24 MR. PERRY: Yes. Thank you,
25 Mr. Pica, both for your letter of interest and

1 your service to the country. Thank you very
2 much.

3 MR. PICA: Thank you.

4 MR. PERRY: So you did talk a little
5 bit about why you wanted to be a City
6 Councilman. How will you apply your private
7 sector skills to your Council seat when you get
8 appointed?

9 MR. PICA: With my experience in the
10 business sector being familiar with the
11 mercantile tax and garbage fees, that will be
12 valuable knowledge to help work the City
13 through the issues that we currently have
14 trying to attract businesses. I'm not a big
15 fan of the mercantile tax.

16 MR. PERRY: No one is.

17 MR. PICA: The Scranton Prep tax
18 that I think we're looking at or the payroll
19 prep tax, I believe they use that in Pittsburgh
20 as well from what I read. And I haven't
21 contacted anybody in Pittsburgh to see how well
22 it's working and if it's a good fit for the
23 business people there. But that would be a
24 start where I would begin to see if that would
25 be a better option than the mercantile tax.

1 MR. PERRY: Thank you.

2 MR. ROGAN: Mr. Donahue.

3 MR. DONAHUE: Yes. Thank you for
4 your interest. How would you define the
5 governmental function of City Council? In
6 other words, what is the purpose of having a
7 City Council?

8 MR. PICA: Well, my understanding
9 we're the legislative branch of the City. And
10 my view as the role of the City Council is to
11 work with the Mayor and work with all the
12 department heads and try to uniformly make our
13 City better. It's a very important role.

14 MR. DONAHUE: Thank you. In your
15 opinion, what is the biggest challenge facing
16 the City government and what could you bring to
17 Council to help us address that challenge?

18 MR. PICA: The high taxes in
19 Scranton and Lackawanna County I think are one
20 of our biggest challenges. I mean, we can make
21 a laundry list of challenges here in the City.
22 But I would say taxes so we can attract new
23 business and new people, young people into the
24 City so we have a bigger tax base and a bigger
25 business base to help bring people into the

1 City.

2 MR. DONAHUE: Thank you.

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

5 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes. What specific
6 ideas do you have that would improve City
7 operations?

8 MR. PICA: Could you repeat that,
9 Mr. Gaughan?

10 MR. GAUGHAN: Yeah, sorry. What
11 specific ideas do you have that would improve
12 City operations?

13 MR. PICA: City operations, well, I
14 would work with all the department heads first,
15 go talk to them and see if there is any way we
16 could as Council help streamline the operation,
17 look at their budgets and see if there is any
18 way we can streamline budgets.

19 I also am a big fan of what
20 Pittsburgh has is they call it an institution
21 and service privilege tax where they tax the
22 non-for-profit businesses, foundations that
23 provide service or other related services to
24 the City to help bring some more revenue into
25 the City to relief some of that tax burden.

1 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you.

2 MR. ROGAN: Thank you very much.

3 This will conclude the interview. And we're
4 going to bring in the next candidate and we're
5 hoping to make a decision today. Thank you
6 very much.

7 MR. PICA: Thank you very much.

8

9 (Joan Hodowanitz)

10

11 MR. ROGAN: Good afternoon. One
12 quick question before you begin. Are you a
13 resident of the City of Scranton?

14 MR. HODOWANITZ: Yes, I am.

15 MR. ROGAN: The floor is yours.

16 MS. HODOWANITZ: My name is Joan
17 Hodowanitz. I've been attending City Council
18 meetings for five and a half years. But my
19 frustration meter maxed out long ago. I'm so
20 tired of standing at this podium asking for
21 information and getting little or no feedback.

22 I'm fed up with the parade of
23 taxpayers who contact City Hall for help with
24 their problems and get only lip service or
25 worse yet are totally ignored. I realize that

1 many problems can't be solved in the near term.

2 And some can't be solved at all
3 without legislative action. Nevertheless,
4 residents deserve a prompt response from City
5 officials and a full explanation of what can or
6 cannot be done to resolve their problems and
7 why.

8 I understand that you, as Council
9 members can only pass on information the
10 administration provides to you. And I am
11 confident Mayor Evans will direct City
12 employees to answer our requests for
13 information in a prompt courteous and
14 uncensored manner.

15 We should not have to rely on
16 right-to-know requests for the most basic
17 information about our City's financial status
18 or it's internal operation. If I'm appointed
19 to City Council, I will work with you, the
20 Mayor, his department heads and other City
21 employees to get answers to questions, find
22 solutions to problems and reduce the risk of
23 fraud, waste and abuse in local government.

24 If City Council's request for
25 information or taxpayer assistance are

1 stonewalled or ignored, I will have no problem
2 confronting the responsible employee including
3 the Mayor. After all, what can they do to me?
4 Bend my dog tags and send me to Baghdad?

5 Jerry Cross hit the nail on the head
6 when he said, "I had no business coming to this
7 podium to complain if I wasn't willing to
8 recommend my own solutions and take my fair
9 share of public criticism."

10 Finally, I believe that five months
11 on Council will give me at least some insight
12 into how things really work in this building.
13 And if the way we do things cannot stand public
14 scrutiny we must change the system so that it
15 better serves the needs of the people.

16 So win or lose, I will be here in
17 the peanut gallery on January 6th. And I will
18 use whatever I learn in the next five months to
19 make Scranton as Mayor Evans would say, just a
20 little bit better. And with that I'll take
21 your questions.

22 MR. ROGAN: Thank you. Mr. Perry,
23 any questions?

24 MR. PERRY: Yes. Well, Joan, thank
25 you very much. I was very happy to see that

1 you put your letter of interest in. It puts a
2 big smile on my face to see you do that. I
3 would love to see your name on a ballot some
4 day.

5 No one comes to this Council every
6 week and week out without the passion and
7 tenacity as you do. And that's from the heart.
8 I really mean that.

9 MS. HODOWANITZ: Thank you.

10 MR. PERRY: Now, when you get your
11 appointment for a couple months until the end
12 of December, what skills do you have that
13 you're going to bring to Council that's going
14 to help you be an effective Council person?

15 MS. HODOWANITZ: Well, for one
16 thing, my education will help me with things
17 like budgets and audits. I have a bachelors in
18 accounting. And I have an MBA and I could even
19 do research. I have a masters in library
20 science.

21 I have seven published articles on
22 fraud. I love fraud. It just turns me on.
23 But I don't like fraud in my City. So I do
24 have a certain number of skills. I know how to
25 read an audit. I know how an audit should be

1 done. And I know when the auditors are not
2 meeting the task when they are missing red
3 flags and the auditors need to be challenged.

4 MR. PERRY: Thank you. Again,
5 thank you, Joan, for putting your letter of
6 interest in. I'm pulling for you.

7 MS. HODOWANITZ: You're welcome.

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

10 MR. DONAHUE: Yes. Thank you for
11 your interest. How would you define the
12 governmental function of City Council? In
13 other words, what's the purpose of having a
14 City Council?

15 MS. HODOWANITZ: Well, a City
16 Council according to the Home Rule Charter is
17 the legislative body. And it takes the
18 proposed legislation. You could also do your
19 own legislation, you know, to help run the
20 City. You have to work in concert with the
21 executive branch which is the Mayor.

22 You are the ones that will finally
23 approve the budget. You are the ones that
24 receive the audit. And in addition, the Mayor
25 is also an addressee on those things. But you

1 should be working with the department heads to
2 number one, make sure we have the right
3 legislation that our ordinances are not out of
4 date, that new ordinances are enacted as
5 required.

6 You should be making sure when you
7 look at the budget, not only the revenues and
8 expenses that you're going to approve, but that
9 we have the right people in the right
10 positions. And they have to have the right
11 qualifications.

12 You look at the 2020 budget. One of
13 the things I would strongly encourage you to
14 adopt and consider is a new hire. And it is a
15 certified internal auditor because the public
16 watchdogs, the independent auditor, the State
17 Auditor General, and the Controller's office
18 missed all the red flags on the double pensions
19 and what Mr. Courtright was doing for five
20 years.

21 So you have a larger role than just
22 legislation. You should be aggressively
23 working with the Mayor and his department heads
24 making sure the appropriate legislation is
25 being drafted, old ordinances are being changed

1 and then you have to look very closely at the
2 budget. And that's a hard call because you're
3 going to have to cut some things that are nice
4 to have to start beefing up the things that are
5 essential.

6 MR. DONAHUE: In your opinion,
7 what's the biggest challenge facing City
8 government and what could you bring to Council
9 to help us address that challenge?

10 MS. HODOWANITZ: Do you want me to
11 do that in alphabetical order?

12 MR. DONAHUE: I said the biggest.

13 MS. HODOWANITZ: A lot of people
14 talked about taxes how unfair they are with
15 delinquencies not being collected. A lot of
16 people talk about the City's image of being a
17 corrupt government pay to play. But I'm going
18 to introduce two other issues that I think you
19 need to look at that don't get as much
20 attention.

21 One is the deteriorating
22 infrastructure of this City. And that includes
23 under that rubric stormwater management, okay?
24 We're just getting -- no pun intended, we're
25 just getting our toes wet on the issue of

1 stormwater. But look at all the buildings and
2 the real estate and the vehicles that the City
3 owns and needs to maintain.

4 When are we going to see a long-term
5 maintenance plan so we don't have to look at a
6 10.7 million dollar bill to renovate City Hall
7 just to make it workable, okay? I know it's
8 not sexy in a budget to plug in numbers for
9 long-term maintenance, but you could kick the
10 can down the road so far.

11 How many times in the last 20 years
12 have we had to do emergency repairs to
13 firehouses, okay? And, you know, vehicles that
14 DPW needs, vehicles that our fire department
15 needs, you got to bite the bullet. It may not
16 be very sexy, but you got to dedicate money to
17 that. We need a capital budget that's very
18 serious and it's posted on the website.

19 The other thing that is not talked
20 about and runs shivers up and down my spine is
21 the ongoing litigation against the City. What
22 I mean is, I want a Plan B in the event
23 unlikely it may be, but in the event we lose
24 something like the Act 511 lawsuit or the sale
25 of the Sewer Authority lawsuit, what's our Plan

1 B if the courts tell us that we're going to get
2 hit up for a lot of money?

3 Do you realize that Act 511 taxes
4 account for 42 percent of the revenue in this
5 year's budget? 42 percent. So, you know,
6 we're putting a lot of faith in winning those
7 lawsuits. You look at the 2017 audit,
8 management which means the Mayor and his staff
9 is supposed to discuss litigation.

10 Read the paragraph. It's less than
11 a hundred words. It basically says, yeah,
12 we're going to cover that in our financial
13 statements. No Plan B. You do that in the
14 corporate world, the auditor is going to give
15 you a going concern finding meaning basically
16 you're probably going to be out of business
17 next year or when those lawsuits come due.

18 So I think those two challenges, the
19 infrastructure, you know, stormwater management
20 which we've not been pushing too hard and
21 maintenance of all of our property and
22 litigation, you got to have a Plan B. Don't
23 want to make that decision in a rush should
24 something happen.

25 MR. DONAHUE: Thank you.

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

3 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes. Thank you. Miss
4 Hodowanitz, what specific ideas do you have
5 that would improve City operations?

6 MS. HODOWANITZ: Well, one would be
7 bring in a certified internal auditor. I would
8 place that individual in the BA's office
9 because the BA is responsible for monitoring
10 and directing operations and the budgets of all
11 the other departments.

12 An external auditor, one who does
13 our annual independent audit, he does not look
14 at the City's internal controls to evaluate
15 them as to their effectiveness. He only looks
16 at internal controls as they impact directly on
17 the financial statements.

18 You have got to have an internal
19 auditor. And by the way, when I say you put
20 the -- certified internal auditor, you get a
21 certified internal auditor. You don't stick a
22 body in there, give him the job title and say
23 let it be written let it be done. It has to be
24 a qualified person.

25 It's going to cost money. On the

1 other hand, you could finally discharge Rainey
2 and Rainey because they could teach the BA
3 staff how to prepare for an audit. You don't
4 need to contract that out anymore. That's one
5 thing I would do.

6 I think you're going to have to look
7 at the entire personnel listing in the budget
8 to make sure, like I said, that you have the
9 right person with the right qualifications and
10 if we need a new hire, suck it up and hire
11 them.

12 But, you know, you may have to
13 eliminate some nice to do functions. You're
14 going to have to prioritize essential services.
15 That's one thing. And more automation, you can
16 never have enough of that. That's the way to
17 go in the future. That will save you a lot of
18 personnel cost. And work closely with all the
19 local universities and schools and get their
20 interns down here.

21 That is free hidden brilliant
22 manpower. And a lot of them are local
23 residents and maybe we can get them to stay in
24 Scranton.

25 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you very much.

1 MR. ROGAN: No questions. Just one
2 comment though. Really appreciate you applying
3 and it's very refreshing to hear all of your
4 ideas and there is no question that you know
5 the issues so far than anyone else that's been
6 in front of us from being here so often. But
7 it is very refreshing to spend a little bit
8 more time than we do on --

9 MS. HODOWANITZ: Yeah, I got more
10 than my five minutes.

11 MR. ROGAN: You did get more than
12 your five minutes. So thank you very much.
13 And we're going to call in the next applicant.
14 And we hope to have a decision today. Thank
15 you.

16
17 (Mary Walsh Dempsey)

18 .
19 MR. ROGAN: Before you begin just
20 one quick question we're asking every
21 applicant. Are you a resident of the City of
22 Scranton?

23 MS. DEMPSEY: I am.

24 MR. ROGAN: The floor is yours.

25 MS. DEMPSEY: Thank you. Good

1 afternoon everybody. Thank you for having me
2 today. I apologize I'm coming off a three day
3 bout of laryngitis. But I'm pretty sure I
4 could get through today.

5 But if there is any scratching of my
6 voice, my apologizes. Let me introduce myself.
7 My name is Attorney Mary Walsh Dempsey. I
8 have been an attorney in the City for the last
9 28 years. And a few things have led me to this
10 decision here today. And you may be surprised
11 to hear what the first one is. It's actually
12 you four.

13 And I mean that with the utmost of
14 sincerity. When I -- because I'm not a
15 political creature by nature. And when I saw
16 that you four put aside the ideological
17 philosophy that are historically associated
18 with political parties whether it be democrat
19 or republican.

20 And four democrats voted to appoint
21 a republican Mayor. I was overwhelmed. Thank
22 you. I really was because for the first time
23 in a long time I thought the residents of this
24 City are being protected. And I was
25 invigorated and I was revitalized. And I was

1 excited. That's number one.

2 Mayor Evans, I don't know if he's
3 here today. I don't see him. But to him as
4 well, he put aside what could have been his
5 individual time to run for a two year seat and
6 he said I'm going to take this five month term
7 because it's what's best for this City.

8 The second thing that brought me
9 here is I was involved recently in a legal
10 dispute that was on public access TV. Two
11 things I learned. Number one, I didn't know
12 that many people watched public access TV but
13 they do.

14 And the second thing I learned is
15 people appreciated my voice. They appreciated
16 the passion that was associated with it. And
17 they appreciated what was said. And while this
18 voice has historically been reserved for
19 private legal disputes for a long time, I
20 thought, you know what, maybe this voice has a
21 place in the public.

22 Maybe I can represent people. Maybe
23 I can articulately say what needs to be said on
24 behalf of the residents in the City of
25 Scranton. So those are two of the reasons that

1 brought me here today.

2 A little bit about myself, as I
3 said, I've been practicing law for 28 years in
4 the City. It's not just I have a law degree.
5 I practice law every day of my life. Sometimes
6 more than I want, to be candid with you. I
7 have been in every courtroom. I have been in
8 front of every judge. I say that so that you
9 know I'm a business woman.

10 I have been involved with two law
11 firms only in my 28 years of practicing. One
12 was O'Malley and Langan for 20 years. I was a
13 managing partner. I oversaw three offices. I
14 oversaw the budget. I oversaw our employees.
15 I understood what challenges were facing
16 downtown Scranton at that time, parking, a lot
17 of the blight issues that are not -- now being
18 solved.

19 Quite frankly, I think there is a
20 homeless issue in downtown Scranton that I
21 happen to see every day because I have a large
22 window facing my office; the mercantile tax,
23 the trying to get and retain good employees in
24 the City. I saw firsthand the challenges that
25 we faced. The last eight years I actually kind

1 of switched sides.

2 At O'Malley and Langan I represented
3 individuals. They came to me and I assisted
4 them in every way I can. I will bet I
5 represented thousands of residents of the City
6 of Scranton. In the last eight years I
7 switched and I am now representing businesses.

8 Many of the businesses in the City
9 of Scranton who will remain unnamed due to
10 confidentiality; but again, I speak with their
11 CEOs, their COOs, their CIOs, their -- vice
12 president of HR. I understand the challenges
13 that are facing them. They tell me what's
14 wrong and I have to fix it. A lot of things I
15 can fix and a lot of things are a creature of
16 this City that we just need to fix on our own.

17 So I understand. And while a lot of
18 people may come in here to you today and say
19 this is one of the most dire and calamist times
20 in our City's history, I'm going to tell you
21 something. I look at it differently.

22 We have nowhere to go but up. And I
23 mean that honestly. And I for one am willing
24 to work as hard as I can for as long as I have
25 to which is five months to make that happen

1 with you four if I'm appointed.

2 We have to build. We have to create
3 honest, open, relationships. We have to
4 maintain integrity. One of my favorite
5 things -- and I have my binder. I've been
6 studying up on the Home Rule Charter and the
7 Ethics Act and many other things, the Exit Plan
8 for Act 47.

9 One thing you'll find about me is I
10 don't do anything halfway. You know, my kids
11 think I'm working on some big case because they
12 see me studying these binders every night. I
13 have been working for this. If I don't get it,
14 at least I learned something new.

15 But if I get it, I want to hit the
16 ground running. You're not going to have to
17 teach me a lot. Now, am I going to know
18 everything? Absolutely not. I'm going to need
19 to learn from you four. But I'm going to
20 listen to you four because you've got the
21 experience over me. I'm also going to maintain
22 my own independent and objective judgment,
23 which if you look at the Ethics Act are the
24 exact words that's listed there. I think
25 that's important for any of us.

1 A couple other quick things that may
2 be important for you to know about me. I'm the
3 incoming President of the Lackawanna Bar
4 Association. I only say that for two reasons.
5 Number one, I understand what it's like to be
6 in a fiduciary role.

7 I've sat on that board for four or
8 five years. I've represented the lawyers of
9 Lackawanna County in that role. Oh, boy, I
10 didn't get through half of what I wanted to
11 say. Let me just finish my thought and I'll
12 complete.

13 But I was elected by my peers. And
14 to me, I was humbled and I was honored -- am I
15 bound by that? I have other things I wanted to
16 say. But I will be bound by it if need be.

17 MR. ROGAN: You can have another
18 minute. We're going to have questions from
19 Council members as well.

20 MS. DEMPSEY: Yes, and maybe some of
21 them I could cover. I just want you to know
22 that I've done my best to stay aware of issues,
23 not just for coming in here today but over the
24 course of my career. I follow Joshua Mast and
25 his Scranton Tomorrow team.

1 I follow Bob Durkin and his Chamber
2 of Commerce. I'm familiar with the lawsuits
3 that are facing the City with the garbage fee
4 and the taxation fee by Attorney John McGovern.
5 I know that we've got the City delinquencies.
6 I know that by the end of this year to come out
7 of Act 47, we've got to make a change from the
8 business mercantile tax to the payroll tax.

9 I also know that we have to look
10 into putting a debt policy into place. I
11 understand what needs to be done in the next
12 five months. This is not just someone who is
13 showing up and saying I want to fill a seat for
14 five months.

15 Mayor Evans said I want to get a lot
16 of work done. I feel the same way. And I'm
17 willing to do it. And I'm willing to work
18 hard. And I'm willing to work with you and for
19 you. Thank you.

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

22 MR. PERRY: Yeah, well, Attorney
23 Dempsey, thank you for your letter of interest
24 and coming up by stepping up to the plate.
25 That means a lot to us I know. Now, one of the

1 things that I learned fairly quickly on this
2 seat was how different the public job is than
3 the private sector.

4 So how do you intend to apply the
5 skills that you've learned privately to this
6 more of a public type atmosphere in government?

7 MS. DEMPSEY: Understood. I think
8 one of the main issues I will face in making
9 that transition is time. In the private sector
10 I can kind of control how I solve a problem.
11 Whereas I understand the public sector, things
12 may take more time. But to answer your
13 question more directly, I think I bring two
14 very important things to the table. And they
15 are my critical and analytical thinking skills.

16 I've been solving complex problems
17 for 28 years. And I've been doing it for some
18 big companies in this area. And they are
19 problems and they are disputes that have lasted
20 over a period of months and a period of years.
21 And I have the ability to look at a problem and
22 I'm not going to say I can solve it
23 immediately.

24 But I can come to a thinking or a
25 thought process or I can decide who or where we

1 need to reach out to. I also have the ability
2 to listen to other people. Like I said, I'm
3 diplomatic. I don't want you to think I
4 come -- I'm going to come in here and say this,
5 this, this and this.

6 I listen and I respect and I
7 dialogue with others so we can come to a
8 solution that it's in the best interest of the
9 City.

10 MR. PERRY: Thank you.

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

13 MR. DONAHUE: Yes. Attorney
14 Dempsey, thank you for applying. I followed
15 the zoning hearing. And you should be
16 commended for your preparation in that. And it
17 was one of those rare instances where even
18 though you argued back and forth for up to ten
19 hours, at the end of the day you came together
20 and you made a consensus.

21 So my first question is, how would
22 you define the governmental function of City
23 Council? In other words, what is the purpose
24 of having a City Council?

25 MS. DEMPSEY: Two-fold I would

1 think, maybe more so. I mean, I've read a lot
2 of things and I started to realize everything
3 that's -- that's involved in it. And I
4 certainly realize what an enormous undertaking
5 it is. But I think the way the Council is set
6 up, there should be a checks and balances to --
7 with the Mayor, obviously. We've learned that
8 the hard way and with his administration to
9 make sure everything is going okay.

10 I also think it's a proactive role
11 to listen to our neighborhood leaders to listen
12 to our residents. I know, I watched that July
13 31st meeting with the Pennsylvania Economy
14 League and DECD. And what a great roadmap they
15 set out for us. So part of our role is to
16 listen, listen to others who have the
17 expertise.

18 Listen to others who could tell us
19 what to do, where to go and how to do it and
20 also to have foresight. You know, some of
21 these health care benefits they are calling
22 them legacy benefits, which I'm quite familiar
23 with from my job.

24 These are decisions that were made
25 years ago that are adversely impacting us now.

1 So I also think a Council has to have foresight
2 to know how their decisions are not only going
3 to affect the present day but the future.

4 MR. DONAHUE: Thank you. In your
5 opinion, what is the biggest challenge facing
6 City government and what could you bring to
7 Council to help us address that challenge?

8 MS. DEMPSEY: Well, honestly right
9 now in the position we find ourself in I think
10 it's a lack of integrity.

11 There's obviously other challenges.
12 I think exiting Act 47 although a roadmap has
13 been set out for us has to be done, you know,
14 relatively quickly. I think those lawsuits are
15 important. I'd like to get on top of those
16 garbage delinquencies.

17 That makes me angry that some people
18 pay and certain people don't pay and certain
19 people get deals and certain people don't get
20 deals. And the garbage is still picked up.

21 And I'm a regular citizen just like
22 everyone else. So if I think like that,
23 there's no reason other people shouldn't think
24 like that. But getting back to the integrity
25 point, I very -- I have difficulty -- I'm

1 modest and I'm humbled patting myself on the
2 back. But I think the one thing you will hear
3 if you talk to anyone about me is my honesty
4 and my integrity.

5 And I have treated everyone with
6 that during the course of my career. And in
7 response, I expect that from other people as
8 well. So I think those are a few things that
9 face us immediately and again, maybe in the
10 course of the next five months.

11 MR. DONAHUE: Thank you.

12 MS. DEMPSEY: Thank you.

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

15 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes. Thank you. What
16 specific ideas do you have that might help
17 improve City operations over the next five
18 months?

19 MS. DEMPSEY: That's a good question
20 because I actually thought about this a lot.
21 And I'm not sure in a five month period --
22 there's so much that needs to be done. I don't
23 know how much proactive work is going to get
24 done in the next five months because I think we
25 have to respond to so much that needs to be

1 done that's already created for me.

2 But, you know, ideas, a couple
3 things. In terms of our neighborhoods, I feel
4 like our neighborhoods are the core of our
5 being in this City. And it was funny, Dan
6 Simeral{sic} had a -- was quoted saying, he
7 called us lifers. I consider myself a lifer.
8 People who like -- love Scranton no matter how
9 bad it gets we're not leaving.

10 And a lot of people in our
11 neighborhoods are lifers. But there are
12 grassroots organization. There are people on
13 the street. You want to know anything in Green
14 Ridge, you could come out and ask us. And we
15 know because we see the strange cars going in
16 and out of alleys. So I would like to start
17 some sort of -- and again, this is very
18 premature and, no, I haven't thought about
19 funding or anything like that.

20 But if you have a neighborhood
21 liaison or someone to meet with our
22 neighborhoods, monthly maybe optimistic, maybe
23 bimonthly, six times a year. I'd like to hear
24 what they have to say to us. And good
25 neighborhoods create good schools. And good

1 schools create good neighborhoods. They feed
2 off of each other.

3 So that's kind of one of the ideas I
4 have. I think I can bring a lot to the table
5 to you in terms of managing some of these
6 lawsuits. I'm not going to say I'm going to
7 come in and solve them all or settle them all.
8 But I really do think I could give you some
9 good guidance.

10 I understand the workers comp system
11 which for years has been in disarray in the
12 City of Scranton. And I know that. And I know
13 our reserves. And there's issues with that and
14 PMA.

15 So again, I think my goal during
16 five months is to respond to a lot of what's
17 already on the table. And I think I had a list
18 of eight things which I didn't get to. But if
19 I could do something proactively during that
20 time, those are a few things that come to mind.

21 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you.

22 MR. ROGAN: Well, this will conclude
23 our interview. We appreciate you coming in.
24 We're going to have four more candidates come
25 through and then we're hoping to make a

1 decision today.

2 MS. DEMPSEY: Okay. Thank you so
3 much.

4 MR. ROGAN: Thank you very much.

5

6 (Marie Schumacher)

7

8 MR. ROGAN: Good afternoon. Before
9 you begin just one question. Are you a
10 resident of the City of Scranton?

11 MS. SCHUMACHER: I am.

12 MR. ROGAN: And the floor is yours.

13 MS. SCHUMACHER: Pardon me?

14 MR. ROGAN: The floor is yours.

15 MS. SCHUMACHER: Oh, okay. I'll
16 keep it short. The reason I'm here is because
17 I do have some issues and ideas that cannot be
18 presented from this podium within the five
19 minutes that's allotted to the speakers. And
20 so I thought this was an opportunity. It's --
21 I've made a lot of complaints.

22 I made a lot of suggestions, not
23 always a lot of feedback. And I thought maybe
24 things would be different if I looked at it
25 from the other side of the podium, which is the

1 reason I'm here.

2 MR. ROGAN: Mr. Perry?

3 MR. PERRY: Yes, Miss Schumacher,
4 thank you for putting your letter of interest
5 in. Just like Miss Hodowanitz, I was happy to
6 see your name on this sheet and to see you up
7 here interested. Your passion is second to
8 none. You come well prepared every meeting.
9 And you do come with some very good questions
10 and sometimes we can't get the answers for you
11 timely. And I think this is a very good place
12 for you to be right now.

13 So thank you for coming. So I know
14 why you want to be a Council person. So one of
15 the things that I realized pretty quickly was
16 that my skills that I learned in my private
17 sector didn't naturally translate into the
18 public sector. What skills do you have that
19 you grew up with that you learned and how will
20 you be able to apply them into your Council
21 person position?

22 MS. SCHUMACHER: Well, as you know
23 from my resume, I worked for a defense
24 contractor. And I was a leadership position at
25 one of the associations, electronics industry

1 association where we did 10 year budget every
2 year that forecast the expenses on each
3 department of defense and NASA project as well
4 as we had went to the Department of Energy as
5 well.

6 And in that process, we took what
7 was already published, of course, and then we
8 went out and the association set up interviews
9 for us. And we went out and interviewed the
10 people that we needed to talk to to form our
11 opinions. So I am familiar with government
12 from both sides.

13 I did Congressional stuff. And
14 again, the budgeting certainly and my official
15 title for a long time was research. And I
16 think you're familiar with the fact that I --
17 I'm very curiously naturally. And I just see
18 something and the light goes ding and I go
19 after it until I find the answer.

20 So I think all of those things would
21 be helpful here. And I do -- again, see where
22 there's a problem and where there's been
23 successes.

24 I mean, one of the things I'd be
25 happy to share which is I don't think this body

1 or the school board interfaces enough with our
2 elected officials. I mean, you all need to be
3 lobbyists and go to those people. There's a
4 lot that they can do for this body and they
5 should be doing.

6 And I don't think they're called
7 upon often enough or held accountable when they
8 don't do anything for us. So, you know, that's
9 just one of the things that I think would
10 translate.

11 MR. PERRY: Thank you.

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

14 MR. DONAHUE: Yes. Thank you for
15 applying. How would you define the
16 governmental function of the City Council? In
17 other words, what's the purpose of having a
18 City Council?

19 MS. SCHUMACHER: Is to balance the
20 administrative body. You don't want a dictator
21 which could probably happen if you didn't have
22 a council that they had go through the wickets
23 of you people. And also, you're able to bring
24 things to the administration's attention that
25 you don't have that they haven't addressed.

1 So -- and represent the people.
2 There are, you know, four of you soon to be
3 five, four of you have been elected by the
4 public to represent them here. It's important.

5 MR. DONAHUE: Thank you. In your
6 opinion, what's the biggest challenge facing
7 City government and what could you bring to
8 Council to help us address that challenge?

9 MS. SCHUMACHER: I think the
10 revenues, increasing the revenues or cutting
11 the cost or both, one of them, you know, any of
12 those things need to be done. And again,
13 researching what others have done, advocating
14 for what we would like the state to do for us
15 and in some cases, the federal government.

16 And I think those things could all
17 be very effective. And I have other ideas on
18 what we can do to either increase the revenue
19 or decrease costs.

20 MR. DONAHUE: Thank you.

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

23 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, thank you. What
24 specific ideas do you have that would improve
25 City operations?

1 MS. SCHUMACHER: Probably a
2 reorganization and looking at doing some
3 analytics on functionality of each of the
4 departments and where they could be combined
5 and where they might be bid out even. So that
6 would be one of the things and again, lobbying.

7 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you.

8 MR. ROGAN: That will conclude our
9 interview. We appreciate you coming in. We're
10 going to call -- we have a few more candidates
11 and we hope to make a decision today.

12 MS. SCHUMACHER: You are? Okay,
13 thank you.

14 MR. ROGAN: Yep. Thank you.

15
16 (Kathleen Madzin)

17
18 MS. MADZIN: Hello.

19 MR. ROGAN: Good afternoon. One
20 question before we turn it over to you. Are
21 you a resident of the City of Scranton?

22 MS. MADZIN: Yes, I am.

23 MR. ROGAN: The floor is yours.

24 MS. MADZIN: My name is Kathleen
25 Madzin. I am a resident of South Scranton. I

1 graduated from Dunmore High School. And I also
2 graduated with a bachelor's degree in
3 psychology from the University of Scranton.

4 I'm not sure what you need to know
5 from me from my introduction here. But I did
6 start my first real job which was in November
7 of '88 at the Educational Opportunity Center
8 which is a nonprofit federally funded grant
9 program.

10 And that was to help people seek
11 further education, whether it be getting a GED,
12 getting a certificate, getting a bachelor's
13 degree, whatever.

14 And in my position, I assisted
15 adults who wanted to go back to school. My
16 position afforded me a lot of experiences that
17 other jobs have not. I partnered and traveled
18 to local job centers. They were the Career
19 Links of today in Scranton, Honesdale, Milford,
20 Montrose, Susquehanna and even Stroudsburg.

21 So my territory was pretty big. I
22 also went into the Lackawanna County Prison and
23 worked with women who were soon to be released
24 by getting them some footing as to what their
25 next career step would be. I worked with GED

1 programs at Marywood. I was also part of a
2 rapid response team who went into factories and
3 businesses that just told their employees that
4 they were closing down.

5 So what we did is we came in and
6 kind of tried to buffer them back up and say
7 there are opportunities beyond where you are
8 now. I also did help families figure out
9 financial aid. So all of these different
10 things I learned how to organize my time,
11 execute tasks, speak to groups of people as
12 well as individuals one on one.

13 And I successfully met criteria and
14 goals set by the grant that funded the program
15 that we worked at. So these skills I think
16 would be valuable to take the position with
17 Council.

18 Then in 1999 I was afford an
19 opportunity to open my own business with two
20 other women that I partnered with. We bought a
21 building at 320 Penn Avenue in Downtown
22 Scranton.

23 And during that time Penn Avenue was
24 definitely not the Penn Avenue that it is
25 today. There was a lot of undesirables roaming

1 the streets. The Metro was set to open on the
2 other end of the corner. And really in between
3 there were just a couple of businesses that may
4 have been open like 9 to 5.

5 With that building, we worked on it
6 for a good solid year. We built it. And we
7 opened it in January of 2001 as the Banshee.
8 And that I think started the restoration of
9 Penn Avenue. I'd like to take a little bit of
10 credit for that, just a little.

11 During my time as owner there, I
12 also wore a lot of hats. One of them I was
13 actually a chef hat cooking in the back. But
14 the opportunity that -- to build my skill set
15 there gave me experience in staffing and hiring
16 folks and actually having to fire some folks.

17 I was responsible for the inventory
18 ordering and I also had to adhere to LCB codes
19 and different laws. And obviously we needed to
20 make sure there was good customer service
21 provided. I scheduled entertainment there,
22 organized bar events.

23 And we even worked with community
24 events like Party in the Park which used to be
25 up at Everhart. We were one of the donors to

1 provide the food up there for the folks that
2 attended that.

3 In order to open the business, we
4 worked closely with the Chamber of Commerce,
5 other supporting groups that gave us funding
6 packages together. So it really reenforced
7 knowing how to kind of open a business in
8 Scranton.

9 In 2005, my husband started a job
10 with MetLife. I sold the Banshee probably
11 around 2004, 2005. So once we sold that, he
12 went and worked with MetLife and I was his
13 office manager.

14 He was a captive agent with them.
15 So I was responsible there for basically
16 running the office, organizing the files, doing
17 customer service, supply, ordering and all the
18 typical things you need to do every day to keep
19 your business running.

20 That job fortunately allowed me to
21 have some free time. I wasn't a full-time
22 employee there. So during that time, I started
23 volunteering in the community.

24 In around 2008, I started a reading
25 program at Connors Park. And Connors Park is

1 over on Orchard Street over in South Side. And
2 that was just because one day I met a little
3 kid outside of my house who was coming up from
4 the store and said he can't read. And it kind
5 of struck me because kids usually say I don't
6 know how to read. I haven't learned to read.

7 But this kid really was like I can't
8 read. So I thought well, in the summer kids
9 need something that seems like it's fun but
10 they're learning. So I decided to figure out a
11 way to get a program at the park. So I
12 partnered with the woman that runs the free
13 lunch program there. And I would just come in
14 on Wednesdays. It's five minutes already?

15 MR. ROGAN: You could have another
16 minute to wrap up your thoughts.

17 MS. MADZIN: So I did that. And
18 then in addition to all the rest of my
19 community volunteer, I'm a volunteer with the
20 Elm Street Project in South Side which is now
21 the South Side Revitalization. I'm on the
22 Image and Identity Committee. So we've been
23 building the image of South Side. And that's
24 about eight years, seven years of doing that.

25 I participated in the Blight to

1 Bright training the county offered. I sat on
2 the board -- or the awards board -- I'm not
3 sure what it was for the Beautiful Blocks
4 Grant. I was able to vote on who got what
5 awards for that.

6 And what else do I do? And I just
7 volunteer over in South Side. Oh, and I'm Vice
8 President of the Neighborhood Association. And
9 that really is what kind of facilitated me
10 getting my interest in doing community work and
11 helping out the neighbors.

12 So really to sum it up, I'm here
13 because I like to champion Scranton. And
14 lately, that's been a little bit difficult
15 because we're facing several challenges in the
16 City. And we really need to reenforce with our
17 neighbors who are the real stakeholders in this
18 City that they do truly have a stake in this
19 City.

20 I would like to be part of a team
21 that makes sound decisions for our neighbors.
22 And I think my experience volunteering, my
23 experience in employment really has me -- a
24 good solid resume for this kind of position.
25 So I figured I better put my name in because if

1 I can't put my name in, I can't expect someone
2 else to do it for me. So that's really why I'm
3 here today.

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

6 MR. PERRY: Yes. Miss Madzin, thank
7 you for your letter of interest (inaudible)
8 that really does mean a lot to us. Sorry, the
9 mic was off there. Thank you, Miss Madzin, for
10 your letter of interest and your dedication and
11 your love for the City. That means a lot to
12 us.

13 How will you use your skills that
14 you learned in the private sector on your seat
15 as a Councilwoman?

16 MS. MADZIN: In my private sector, I
17 have learned to be organized. I have learned
18 to be task oriented. So I also have learned
19 that I don't always know the answer to
20 questions. So I am not opposed to saying I
21 don't know the answer to this question. Let me
22 go and find someone who does know the answer.

23 So I think I can be a very good
24 listener to the folks of our City and to the
25 problems of our City and try to figure out a

1 way to get a successful answer to the issues.

2 MR. PERRY: Thank you.

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

5 MR. DONAHUE: Yes. Thank you for
6 your interest. How would you define the
7 governmental function of City Council? In
8 other words, what is the purpose for having a
9 City Council?

10 MS. MADZIN: I did read the charter
11 for what the Council does. And basically
12 you're the legislative branch. So we can kind
13 of align that with the Congress that we know,
14 the House of Representatives and the Senate on
15 the federal level. And you need to work -- I
16 believe the Mayor and you folks have the same
17 equal power.

18 So you kind of have to work together
19 to get the best focus and answer for what needs
20 to be done within the City.

21 MR. DONAHUE: Okay. Thank you. In
22 your opinion, what is the biggest challenge
23 facing City government and what could you bring
24 to Council to help us address that challenge?

25 MS. MADZIN: Right now I think the

1 biggest challenge is that we kind of don't have
2 support from the citizens in the City. When I
3 told folks that I was doing this, a lot of them
4 are like, good luck. This is great. And the
5 other side of the coin was why?

6 So it's hard. We have challenges.
7 They're not going to upend the ship. We just
8 need to right the ship back on its course. So
9 I think transparency and automation are really
10 the two things you have to pay attention to.

11 It would be wonderful if someone
12 could come in the door and they sign in and
13 they have their list of what needs to be done
14 so they go to department A, department B,
15 department C and they could follow -- each
16 department could follow where they were and
17 what they did and what kind of extras still
18 need to be done. That would be a really good
19 thing to be able to do for the City.

20 MR. DONAHUE: Thank you.

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

23 MR. GAUGHAN: Sure. Thank you.
24 What specific ideas do you have that would
25 improve City operations?

1 MS. MADZIN: Specifically I would
2 like to see the departments automated. I would
3 like to be able to bring in our brain trust
4 that surrounds us, students from the
5 University, students from Marywood, students
6 from Lackawanna, students from Johnson Tech to
7 be able to come in and figure out a way to
8 automate us and bring us not only into the 21st
9 century, but maybe the 22nd and be ahead of the
10 game.

11 So that way we can build support
12 from our outside folks looking in and getting
13 some ownership into this City, show our
14 citizens that are here that we're working
15 towards making everything clear and simple and
16 a plan that you know how to jump into and
17 really get right, like, the right path because
18 it seems like from the complaints I hear from
19 folks is everybody has to go in 16 different
20 directions to try and find one answer. And
21 that's really been confusing and somewhat
22 difficult for some folks.

23 MR. ROGAN: Thank you very much.
24 This will conclude our interview. We have two
25 more candidates and then we're going to break

1 and we're going to hope to make a decision
2 today.

3 MS. MADZIN: Thank you.

4 MR. ROGAN: Thank you.

5

6 (John R. A. Tarantino)

7

8 MR. TARANTINO: Good afternoon,
9 gentlemen.

10 MR. ROGAN: Before you begin one
11 question to start off, same as last time. Are
12 you a resident of the City of Scranton?

13 MR. TARANTINO: Yes, I am, a proud
14 resident.

15 MR. ROGAN: The floor is yours.

16 MR. TARANTINO: Okay. You might
17 remember me. I was here a few weeks ago for
18 the Mayor's position. I mean, you picked the
19 second best man. I was the best man but I
20 could live with that. You know, Evans deserves
21 all the credit and all the luck.

22 I want to do something for the City
23 of Scranton. I've been reading up on what's
24 happening to Scranton. It seems like it's a
25 cookie jar that people just put their hand in

1 and take stuff out. Now, that's depressing.

2 One thing I could say, I could only
3 speak for myself as I have the City's good
4 intention at heart. One of the reasons is I
5 have three properties myself in Scranton. If
6 you steal from Scranton, you're stealing from
7 me. I don't like that.

8 I want to see Scranton fulfill its
9 promise. It's a beautiful City. Like I told
10 you before, I lived outside of Pittsburgh. I
11 lived outside of New York City. I lived in New
12 York City. This City is clean. I mean, the
13 streets -- it's impressive. The building's
14 impressive. I told you before this building's
15 impressive.

16 I have the highest regard for people
17 like yourself because I know you're not doing
18 this for the money. That's for sure. You're
19 doing it for probably the same reason I'm going
20 to do it. I want to help the people. And just
21 to sit back and complain helps nobody.

22 If I could help -- if I could
23 work -- I could work with anybody. And if I
24 don't have the best idea, I'll listen to the
25 best idea. And I'm open to anything that makes

1 the City better if it makes it better for the
2 people.

3 The people -- everything I read
4 about Scranton residents is they could put up
5 with incompetency, maybe. But they can't put
6 up with dishonesty. Now, this Mayor, I get
7 angry. I get angry. I would drive him myself
8 to the city jail and throw away the key if I
9 could.

10 But I don't have that option. If
11 you give it to me I'll do it though free of
12 charge. I really want to help the City. And
13 if you got -- I have some ideas, you know, as I
14 explained to you before and maybe they're good
15 and maybe they're not so good.

16 But I'll listen to you. I'll work
17 with anybody. I've been a shop steward before.
18 I've owned business before. I've had million
19 dollar businesses. I've been around. And one
20 thing I could tell you is nobody, nobody could
21 have asked me for a favor and expect me to give
22 it to them if I'm a City Councilman. I don't
23 work like that. Thank you, gentlemen.

24 MR. ROGAN: Mr. Perry, do you have
25 any questions?

1 MR. PERRY: Yes. Welcome back.

2 MR. TARANTINO: Thank you.

3 MR. PERRY: Good to see you again.

4 And thank you again for the letter of interest.
5 Question a little bit different than the last
6 time you were here. How will the skills you
7 learned in the private sector, how will you
8 apply them to your job as Councilman?

9 MR. TARANTINO: Okay, simple. It's
10 not just in the private sector, I'm at an age
11 now I did all I wanted to do as a worker. Now,
12 I want to see things get better for me and for
13 people. I want to help people. Like I said,
14 I've been a shop steward. I've been a manager.
15 I've been on both sides. And I'm open to
16 anything.

17 I can work with people. I can take
18 advice. I can take criticism. I can take
19 rejection. I can take success. I want to
20 succeed. I want to see this City -- I moved
21 here two and a half years ago. I've got three
22 properties. I'm looking a fourth one. That's
23 how much I believe in this City.

24 And once Scranton gets better for
25 me, it gets better for everybody. That's my

1 main objective to make it what it used to be.
2 It was 150,000 people here in 1940. Now
3 there's half of that. Why?

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

6 MR. PERRY: Thank you.

7 MR. DONAHUE: In your opinion, what
8 is the biggest challenge facing City government
9 and what could you bring to Council to help us
10 address that challenge?

11 MR. TARANTINO: All right. Well,
12 besides the -- I guess the fiscal restraints.
13 I mean, it's tough for the City. I've been
14 reading the papers, been reading the articles,
15 look at the news. Even this building here, I
16 mean, it has to be renovated. And I read it's
17 11 million dollars is what I read to renovate
18 the building.

19 And I'm wondering, who's the
20 contractor, Michaelangelo? 11 million dollars?
21 You want to sell it. You want to keep it.
22 There's a lot of problems facing the City
23 fiscally. You can't keep digging into people's
24 pockets and grabbing all at once.

25 But you could reach in and take a

1 little bit at a time, just a little bit to get
2 by. That's all I say -- maybe a little payroll
3 tax for the people that work here. That's the
4 biggest problem is the fiscal restraints.

5 MR. DONAHUE: Thank you.

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

8 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes. Thank you. What
9 specific ideas do you have that would improve
10 City operations?

11 MR. TARANTINO: To improve City
12 operations, well, the first thing I would do
13 I'll put street signs on the street corners.
14 You drive by, I can't even read the streets,
15 you know, either the signs aren't there or
16 they're missing.

17 I would have more -- maybe more
18 volunteer work for kids for schools, get them
19 involved, maybe reach out to seniors in nursing
20 homes make them understand that they're not
21 forgotten. They were people that were
22 productive at one time. Now they're in the
23 twilight of their life. And it's hard for
24 them.

25 People want to feel needed. People

1 want to feel like you'll listen to them.
2 That's what I see here. You have to make
3 people believe that you have their interest at
4 heart. Other things for the City, well, maybe
5 make Nay Aug Park maybe more user-friendly,
6 maybe have more open days at the museum for
7 people, maybe make the police maybe walk on
8 patrol a little bit and talk to the people.

9 That's nice, you know, when the
10 police are -- they know who the people are.
11 They talk to them. You never know. These are
12 some of the things I might do.

13 MR. ROGAN: Thank you very much.
14 This will conclude our interview. We have one
15 more interview and we're going to hope to make
16 a decision today.

17 MR. TARANTINO: Okay, thank you,
18 gentlemen.

19 MR. ROGAN: Thank you very much.

20 MR. TARANTINO: Thank you.

21
22 (John Drobnicki)

23
24 MR. ROGAN: Good afternoon. Before
25 you begin, one quick question, same question we

1 had last time. Are you a resident of the City
2 of Scranton?

3 MR. DROBNICKI: Yes, I've been a
4 resident here for 10 years. I own a home.

5 MR. ROGAN: And the floor is yours.

6 MR. DROBNICKI: Very good. Yes, I
7 see this opportunity for a Council position
8 open up, of course, in my later years I can't
9 jump in the military anymore. They retired me
10 from there. And I see that you could probably
11 use somebody. I've been around the world.
12 I've been in a few situations around the world.
13 I know people.

14 I like this City. And I think I
15 could work well with you. I'm not out to cut
16 anybody down or make, you know, I'm out to work
17 with people. I mean, I know we have a
18 president that was an actor became a president.
19 You have another president that wasn't a
20 politician. He became president. So I'm not
21 into politics. But I think whatever is thrown
22 at me I think I could take the bat at it and
23 try to do something.

24 I have a granddaughter lives in the
25 City. I have a son. And I'd like to make

1 things better for them and the rest of the
2 people in this City. Other than that, you can
3 hit me with whatever you need to hit me for.

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

6 MR. PERRY: Yes. Welcome back.
7 It's good to see you again. Again, thank you
8 for your service.

9 MR. DROBNICKI: Right.

10 MR. PERRY: So how do you think the
11 skills that you learned in the private sector,
12 how are they going to be applied to your
13 Council appointment?

14 MR. DROBNICKI: Well, as each
15 point -- as each problem comes along, I'd
16 probably try to get ahold of somebody that's
17 been involved in that before, you know, I try
18 to, you know, try to find things out on my own.
19 I don't know about things, about stuff, but I
20 could get things done it seems like. As I've
21 said, I've been around. I been in -- I've
22 dumped tanks in the ocean for the fishes.

23 I've been up in Alaska unloading an
24 island to clear it off. We had 60 days to
25 unload an island. We had to get all the

1 furniture off that base and on barges. I've
2 been on Iraq. I've been among the busiest
3 airports in the world. For six months I was on
4 that base and, you know, under extreme heat and
5 45 days without even a break, without even a
6 day off or anything. So like I says, I've been
7 in a lot of situations. And I think if I got
8 something thrown at me I could try to work with
9 people and get something done.

10 MR. PERRY: Thank you.

11 MR. ROGAN: Mr. Donahue.

12 MR. DONAHUE: Yes. Thank you for
13 your interest. In your opinion, what is the
14 biggest challenge facing City government and
15 what could you bring to Council to help us
16 address that challenge?

17 MR. DROBNICKI: One of the things
18 I've noticed here, I've been to a couple
19 meetings. And I know I've never been called
20 back or told, you know, my neighbors have, you
21 know, asked me to stop here. And I've never
22 been told or -- how can I say this in words?
23 They never come back and resolve the problem or
24 said why or anything else. I'd like -- as a
25 Councilman, if somebody has a problem, I'd like

1 to at least give an answer.

2 I'd say, I'm sorry, we didn't have
3 the money or we were looking at this or
4 something. It just seems as though a lot of
5 people say we can't find anything out. There's
6 a door here that doesn't open. I'd like to see
7 a lot more open communication with the City
8 with the people who live here.

9 MR. DONAHUE: Thank you.

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

12 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you. What
13 specific ideas do you have that might improve
14 City operations?

15 MR. DROBNICKI: Well, one thing I'd
16 like to do is I know -- I work for a Fortune
17 500 company. They're not paying big money.
18 And I don't like to take anything away from
19 people. But I think we really need to look at
20 some of the wages that we're paying people.

21 You know, I think when you're going
22 to start hiring more people, you know, I think
23 we got to say, hey, this is what so and so
24 makes. This is all we can afford to pay. We
25 can't be looking at union demands today and

1 We appreciate your interest. This will
2 conclude our interview. We're actually -- if a
3 Council member has a motion to recess, we're
4 going to recess and discuss all the applicants
5 and possibly come back out shortly for a vote.

6 MR. PERRY: I make a motion to
7 recess so we can meet in executive session to
8 discuss a personnel matter.

9 MR. ROGAN: Motion has been made to
10 recess in order to meet in executive session.
11 Is there a second?

12 MR. DONAHUE: Second.

13 MR. ROGAN: On the question?

14 (No response)

15 MR. ROGAN: All those in favor
16 signify by saying aye.

17 MR. DONAHUE: Aye.

18 MR. PERRY: Aye.

19 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

20 MR. ROGAN: Aye. Opposed?

21 (No response)

22 MR. ROGAN: The ayes have it. We
23 are in recess.

24

25 (Recess was taken)

1 MR. ROGAN: Call this meeting back
2 to order.

3 MR. PERRY: I make a motion to
4 nominate a person to fill the position vacated
5 by former Scranton City Councilman Wayne Evans
6 to serve for the remainder of this year with
7 the said term scheduled to expire at 12 noon on
8 January 6th, 2020.

9 MR. ROGAN: A motion has been made
10 to fill the position vacated by former
11 Councilman Wayne Evans. Is there a second?

12 MR. DONAHUE: Second.

13 MR. ROGAN: This motion is to place
14 the nomination on the agenda. On the question?

15 (No response)

16 MR. ROGAN: All those in favor of
17 introduction signify by saying aye.

18 MR. PERRY: Aye.

19 MR. DONAHUE: Aye.

20 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

21 MR. ROGAN: Aye. Opposed?

22 (No response)

23 MR. ROGAN: The ayes have it and so
24 moved.

25 MR. PERRY: I make a motion to

1 nominate Attorney Mary Walsh Dempsey to fill
2 the unexpired term of former Scranton City
3 Councilman Wayne Evans for the remainder of
4 this year with said term scheduled to expire at
5 12 noon on January 6th, 2020.

6 MR. DONAHUE: Second.

7 MR. ROGAN: On the question?

8 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, on the question.

9 First of all, I just want to thank everyone who
10 put their name in. This is actually, in my
11 opinion, a difficult decision. We had, you
12 know, talked back there for -- for quite a
13 while and went back between several candidates.

14 All the people that showed up today
15 and took their time out of their schedule I
16 think should be commended. Your participation
17 and your interest in public service is
18 extremely valuable to this City.

19 And I want to again thank you for
20 that. So for those applicants who did not get
21 the position, I don't think that you should be
22 deterred. I think, you know, you should
23 continue to participate. And I just really
24 appreciate everyone putting their name in.

25 I do want to congratulate Attorney

1 Dempsey. I do think she will make a good
2 Councilwoman. And I think she'll be a part of
3 a good team here to move this City forward.
4 Thank you.

5 MR. ROGAN: Anyone else?

6 MR. PERRY: On the question, yes. I
7 also want to thank all the candidates. This
8 was a very difficult decision. In some ways I
9 think we saw a little bit more passion and a
10 little bit brought to the table more so than we
11 did with some of the candidates for the mayoral
12 position.

13 And this was very difficult. And it
14 did go back and forth like Mr. Gaughan said.
15 And there were more than one person that I feel
16 willing to step in and take this job. But at
17 this time, we need to make sure that we're
18 doing what's best for Council and what's best
19 for the City. And that's how we got to our
20 decision. And I want to congratulate Attorney
21 Dempsey. And I wish her all the best of luck.

22 MR. ROGAN: I would like to thank
23 all the applicants for applying. My
24 colleagues, we all worked together again on a
25 very upfront process. Everything went very

1 smoothly. I will be voting against the
2 nomination, not as a voting against Attorney
3 Dempsey.

4 I think she's going to make a great
5 addition to City Council. But I did believe
6 based on how short term the position was that
7 there was one candidate whose understanding of
8 the issues far exceeded anyone else that was
9 interviewed. That was Joan Hodowanitz who's a
10 regular speaker at our meetings.

11 I just think because of the short
12 term nature of the position that it was
13 critical to have somebody that knew all of
14 these issues on day one. So that's who I was
15 advocating for. And I think from watching the
16 interviews, her knowledge of the issues was
17 head and shoulders above anyone else that
18 applied.

19 And that's not a slight on anyone
20 else. I do understand Attorney Dempsey does
21 have at least -- does have three votes so we
22 will welcome her to the board. And as just to
23 reiterate, my vote is not a vote against her.
24 It is a vote in support of another candidate.
25 Anyone else? Roll call, please?

1 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Perry.

2 MR. PERRY: Yes.

3 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Donahue.

4 MR. DONAHUE: Yes.

5 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

6 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

7 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

8 MR. ROGAN: No. The motion passes.

9 Attorney Dempsey is going to be the new
10 Councilwoman. If there's no further business,
11 I'll entertain a motion to adjourn.

12 MR. PERRY: Motion to adjourn.

13 MR. ROGAN: Meeting adjourned.

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