

SCRANTON CITY COUNCIL MEETING

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HELD:

Thursday, December 3, 2015

LOCATION:

Council Chambers

Scranton City Hall

340 North Washington Avenue

Scranton, Pennsylvania

Elizabeth V. Kedrick, RPR - Official Court Reporter

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CITY OF SCRANTON COUNCIL:

PATRICK ROGAN, VICE-PRESIDENT

WAYNE EVANS

JOSEPH WECHSLER

WILLIAM GAUGHAN

LORI REED, CITY CLERK

KATHY CARRERA, ASSISTANT CITY CLERK

AMIL MINORA, SOLICITOR

1 MR. ROGAN: Call this meeting to
2 order. Please rise for the Pledge of
3 Allegiance.

4 (Pledge recited.)

5 MR. ROGAN: Please remain standing
6 for a moment of silent prayer for our
7 service men and women throughout the world
8 and all of those that we lost in our
9 community over the past few weeks;
10 especially City Council President Bob
11 McGoff, our leader, who we all worked very
12 much with and we all miss very much. And
13 also, keeping your prayers for Scranton DPW
14 worker Steve Pierson who was critically
15 injured over the past week while working.

16 (Moment of silence observed.)

17 MR. ROGAN: Roll call, please?

18 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler?

19 MR. WECHSLER: Here.

20 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan?

21 MR. ROGAN: Here.

22 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans?

23 MR. EVANS: Here.

24 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan?

25 MR. GAUGHAN: Here.

1 MR. ROGAN: Please dispense with the
2 reading of the minutes.

3 MS. REED: THIRD ORDER. 3-A.
4 AGENDA FOR THE BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS
5 MEETING TO BE HELD DECEMBER 9, 2015.

6 MR. ROGAN: Are there any comments?
7 If not, received and filed.

8 MS. REED: 3-B. SINGLE TAX OFFICE
9 CITY FUNDS DISTRIBUTED COMPARISON REPORT
10 2015-2014 YEAR TO DATE NOVEMBER 30, 2015.

11 MR. ROGAN: Are there any comments?
12 If not, received and filed.

13 MS. REED: 3-C. MINUTES OF THE
14 SCRANTON-LACKAWANNA HEALTH & WELFARE
15 AUTHORITY'S REGULAR BOARD MEETING HELD JUNE
16 18, 2015.

17 MR. ROGAN: Are there any comments?
18 If not, received and filed. Do any Council
19 members have announcements to make?

20 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, I have one. I
21 would just encourage everyone to get out to
22 downtown Scranton December 4th, this Friday,
23 for First Friday Scranton. And anyone who
24 is unfamiliar with the event can download
25 the map at www.FirstFridayScranton.com.

1 Thank you.

2 MR. ROGAN: We have a 3. And I
3 mentioned part of this in our prayer. As
4 you may know, one our DPW employees was
5 struck by a vehicle on Saturday morning,
6 November 28th, 2015. Mr. Steve Pierson was
7 critically injured. He is currently
8 receiving treatment at Geisinger Medical
9 Center in Danville, Pennsylvania. Anyone
10 wishing to donate to his expenses may do so
11 by calling the Department of Public Works
12 dispatcher from December 7th through
13 December 11th. After which, all donations
14 will be presented to him and his family.
15 Secondly, this Sunday, December 6th, there
16 will be a holiday cookie bake sale hosted by
17 the McAndrew family. This will be at the
18 Learning Grove Early Childhood Center at
19 1228 Saint Ann Street in Scranton. And I
20 can attest that I know the McAndrew family
21 and specifically Mark who is a culinary
22 teacher himself and excellent chef. Always
23 have great cookies. And looking forward to
24 attending that event. And finally, I would
25 just like to extend some well wishes to a

1 frequent City Council speaker, Bill
2 Jackowitz, who as we know is still
3 recovering from the fall he had. But I
4 heard he is doing better. So I just wanted
5 to give a shout out to him. Anyone else?

6 MS. REED: FOURTH ORDER. CITIZENS
7 PARTICIPATION.

8 MR. ROGAN: Our first speaker
9 tonight is Joan Hodowanitz. And I apologize
10 for that, before you start, one other
11 announcement, an executive session was held
12 prior to this evening's meeting regarding a
13 matter of litigation.

14 MS. HODOWANITZ: Joan Hodowanitz,
15 city resident and taxpayer. I want to
16 remind everybody that the Friends of the
17 Scranton Public Library are currently
18 conducting a book sale at the Steamtown Mall
19 in the Library Express on the second floor.
20 It will run through Sunday, December 6th.
21 We are selling books for one to two dollars
22 a piece. This includes things like New York
23 Times Best Sellers. It's a wonderful way to
24 cross off gifts on your Christmas list. So
25 go there and get your money's worth. I

1 noticed in Fifth Order and the agenda, there
2 are introducing two ordinances. Does that
3 mean that we will have council meetings on
4 the 10th and the 17th?

5 MR. ROGAN: The plan is to meet on
6 the 10th and adjourn. That will be our
7 final meeting for the year.

8 MS. HODOWANITZ: Okay, then you'll
9 be doing some kind of an emergency
10 certificate to clear this off?

11 MR. ROGAN: Not an emergency
12 certificate. We would just advance the
13 reading. Emergency certificate is--

14 MS. HODOWANITZ: Okay, so the 10th
15 will probably be the final council meeting
16 for calendar year, correct?

17 MR. ROGAN: Correct.

18 MS. HODOWANITZ: Okay, I would like
19 to remind people that the last meetings of
20 the pension boards will be on December 9th
21 here in City Council chambers for those who
22 like to keep abreast of what's happening
23 with the pension funds. Having said all
24 that, can you tell me what is the status of
25 the 2014 audit?

1 MR. EVANS: Well, the pre-audit is
2 completed. And SB and Company is in the
3 building working. So we expect that to be,
4 again, a draft by the end of the year.

5 MS. HODOWANITZ: Okay, that's still
6 very disappointing. When you consider that
7 we hired Rainey and Rainey to assist in the
8 preparation of the data to go to the
9 independent auditor and now we're still
10 waiting when the Home Rule Charter calls for
11 the audit to be completed by May 31st. So
12 we're only six months behind the power
13 curve. Not much of an improvement from last
14 year when it came out in February. Again,
15 you know, I understand that there's a draft
16 copy floating around, but that document
17 should be out for public review because it
18 does affect the budgeting process. Okay,
19 what's the rumor mill on the next BA?

20 MR. EVANS: I've got nothing for
21 you.

22 MS. HODOWANITZ: Is this Mr.
23 Bulzoni's last day at work or what? Once
24 the budget gets passed, he's out of here?

25 MR. EVANS: He's still around.

1 MS. HODOWANITZ: Okay, so I won't
2 say, I'll be good. I'm not going to say it
3 about how I could get--how people can get to
4 be hired, but we all know how that works.
5 Okay, I saw a very interesting article in
6 the Times this week on the Sewer Authority,
7 the status of the potential sale or lease.
8 And, of course, it's still frightening to
9 realize that no matter what happens with the
10 Sewer Authority, we rate payers can expect a
11 swift kick in the pants. So I hope that
12 some good comes out of this. And I hope we
13 get more than 20 million dollars to stick in
14 the pension funds because we're going to be
15 paying through the teeth. And with regard
16 to the 2016 budget and future budgets, I
17 think you should push for more partnerships
18 between the city and various organizations
19 like the universities to get services in
20 kind to help bring down the cost of
21 operating in the city. I don't think we
22 have pursued that one thought aggressively
23 enough. The University could come down here
24 and run the BA's Office in all honesty. And
25 maybe that wouldn't be a bad thing. And

1 like everyone else, I hope that Mr. Pierson
2 has a speedy and swift recovery. And I hope
3 that the next person that tries to pass a
4 DPW truck or otherwise injure another
5 employee goes down the deepest pothole in
6 the City of Scranton and stays there. Thank
7 you.

8 MR. ROGAN: Thank you, Ozzie Quinn?

9 MR. QUINN: Good evening, Ozzie
10 Quinn, Hill Neighborhood Association. I
11 want to pick up off of two weeks ago in
12 regards to the city budget in relation to
13 free swimming for all city low income
14 children, youth. Look at the budget, it's
15 132 million point two or something like
16 that. And I got the figures from the--and I
17 sent them to all the Councilmen in regards
18 to the payment for the chlorine at Nay Aug
19 Park only and actually it balances out to
20 about annually \$26,000 round figures. And
21 if you look at the budget, 132 million
22 dollars, I would say my calculation on that
23 would be .02 percent of the budget. That's
24 what it would cost to have all kids swim for
25 free .02, not even a half a percent. That

1 prompts me to ask, why are you guessing?
2 Could you answer me anybody? Why? \$26,000?
3 Well, obviously you don't want to answer
4 anyway, you know. Well, you know, I'm not a
5 lawyer and you know that. However, I did
6 finish paralegal school. And I know a
7 little bit about what goes on in the world
8 of law. And I know that I was--when I was
9 saying the fact of discrimination, I know
10 that discrimination has a connotation
11 effect. People think of racial or slur or
12 something like that or sex discrimination or
13 anything. So, actually, to make it a little
14 lighter, to change the language, I want to
15 put de facto segregation. Define it, okay,
16 according to the law book, okay, according
17 to the law book, Barron's. "De facto
18 segregation is segregation which results
19 without purpose, purposeful action by
20 government officials. Actual segregation
21 from social, economic, psychological
22 conditions." That fits right in there with
23 the swimming, I think, doesn't it? There's
24 no law that says you have to do it. But,
25 it's so obvious. It's right underneath the

1 top of the lake, you know, meaning to come
2 out. It's a shame. I mean, there's no law.
3 It's a moral law. But you don't talk about
4 moral law in government, do we? Always we
5 don't with the shape of the world today.
6 But anyway, this concerns me and it concerns
7 a lot of people. And you know what? When
8 these low income children are not given the
9 equal opportunity to do something such as
10 swim with their peers, okay, studies will
11 show that they're poor in their social life,
12 they're poor at home, they're poor in
13 education, studies. It all filters, it
14 bothers them. You know, their self esteem
15 is really bothered. And why? Just at Nay
16 Aug Park. Well, I would hope you reconsider
17 it. It's just got my mind shattered. And
18 I'm going to keep on fighting for it.
19 Because not from the fact that these kids
20 deserve the right to go swimming at Nay Aug
21 Park. Now, I could walk down, you know, the
22 old proverbial park and say, oh, don't
23 worry, we're going to get a private
24 corporation, we're going to get the UDAG
25 refunds or we're going to get OECD money

1 transferred over. I've been that route.
2 I've been that route soliciting funds every
3 year. And this cannot go on forever. It's
4 got to end. If you just tab that in there.
5 And it will end it. Lastly, I want to say,
6 I hope--I want to recommend to you as a
7 taxpayer that you urge or you recommend or
8 you direct the Scranton Municipal Recreation
9 Authority to do a full blown audit, not a
10 compilation audit. A compilation audit is a
11 balance sheet. It's okay, they say the
12 state accepts an audit. An audit gives you
13 the findings, deficiencies, okay. I want to
14 tell something, there is no control over the
15 money collections at Nay Aug Park pool or
16 Christmas display lighting. It's just a
17 hand me out. No control. And I think it's
18 something that you should look into. And
19 please, do something about that .02 percent.
20 Please, you'll sleep a lot better at night,
21 I think. Thank you.

22 MR. ROGAN: Thank you. Next speaker
23 is Josh, I apologize on your--

24 JOSH: No, I won't be speaking.

25 MR. ROGAN: Okay, that's the end of

1 the sign-in sheet. Is there anyone else who
2 cares to address council?

3 MR. SBARAGLIA: Andy Sbaraglia, City
4 of Scranton, fellow Scrantonian. As you
5 know, we all got together and did something
6 to raise money for them kids up at Nay Aug
7 to swim before housing got the other grants.
8 We washed cars. Those people--and whatever.
9 But you and I know that the reason they put
10 that into the authority was to take control
11 for any kind of a project they want to do up
12 there and give it to who they wanted to.
13 That's the whole idea, the blind, the people
14 of Scranton. That's the whole--that's the
15 whole thing of the authority. An authority
16 is a separate government. They run by
17 whatever they want to do. If they want to
18 bankrupt the city like with the parking
19 garage, they go right ahead and do it. And
20 who helps them? The people we elected. But
21 I know what's been going on. I've been
22 saying this a long time ago. The people of
23 Scranton don't know who the heck they're
24 voting for or what they're even voting for.
25 Okay, let's get onto the TAN. I see we're

1 borrowing. I got the figures here,
2 \$12,750,000. Does anybody know how much
3 money we have to pay back? I mean, you're
4 going to be voting on this, you must know
5 what the amortization chart says, how much
6 we've got to pay back? I know we ain't
7 paying no 7.75 interest. But when you tack
8 on the added cost, it boosts that up to a
9 point or so. But to sit there, it doesn't
10 matter. People got to--people don't give a
11 darn anyway. If they did care, they'd be
12 here. You're right not to speak about it.
13 Just go ahead and do whatever you want to
14 do. People in Scranton don't give a darn.
15 Now, we're going to lose our business
16 administration. I hope we're not losing it
17 so we can facilitate the borrowing that has
18 to be done. Because more money could be
19 made on the borrowing that never could have
20 been made at the salary. And that's a
21 sad--I hope that's not the reason. I hope
22 he stays away from all the borrowing of the
23 city. But I doubt it. But I hope so. Mr.
24 Evans, you don't buy homes that are
25 foreclosed on, do you by any chance?

1 MR. EVANS: Not generally, no.

2 MR. SBARAGLIA: But you do do it?

3 MR. EVANS: I have in the past.

4 MR. SBARAGLIA: That makes sense.

5 Now, we know why things are being done. By
6 reason or not reason or how it works out.
7 It's perfectly legal to do what he does. Is
8 it moral? You don't raise taxes and then
9 buy foreclosed homes if you sit on council.
10 You don't do that. Morally, it's wrong,
11 even though it is legal.

12 MR. EVANS: That makes no sense
13 whatsoever.

14 MR. SBARAGLIA: What did you say?

15 MR. EVANS: That doesn't make any
16 sense.

17 MR. SBARAGLIA: What doesn't make
18 any sense? Being moral or being legal?

19 MR. EVANS: Your comment that it's
20 not moral to buy foreclosed properties.

21 MR. SBARAGLIA: It isn't moral to
22 sit on Council and raise peoples taxes and
23 then buy foreclosed homes. It just isn't
24 moral. Whether you believe it is or not,
25 that's up to you. You have to live with

1 your life. I don't. I think it's immoral.

2 MR. EVANS: I buy them so they can
3 go back on the tax rolls and improve them.

4 MR. SBARAGLIA: You don't, you take
5 peoples homes. It takes them out. Old
6 ladies that can't afford to pay their taxes,
7 they've been coming to me and asking, why
8 are they doing this to us? And I said, I
9 don't really know why they're doing it.
10 It's because they're not Scrantonians. A
11 Scrantonian wouldn't do it. Somebody that
12 claims to be a Scrantonian may do it, but
13 not a Scrantonian.

14 MR. EVANS: For--

15 MR. SBARAGLIA: People who believe--

16 MR. EVANS: For the record, my
17 office was a foreclosed property. And I
18 brought it about seven years ago and turned
19 it into an office. I think that's a very
20 good use of spending money. I am investing
21 in the city.

22 MR. SBARAGLIA: I'm not saying that.
23 I'm saying that now while you sit on
24 council. What you did before is perfectly
25 legal.

1 MR. EVANS: Okay, well.

2 MR. SBARAGLIA: And is it moral?
3 It's just that you're sitting on council.
4 You shouldn't--you should avoid that
5 practice.

6 MR. EVANS: I'll do my best.

7 MR. SBARAGLIA: Because it doesn't
8 look good. Especially when some little old
9 lady comes up to me saying I can't pay my
10 taxes. Why are they doing this to us? I'll
11 tell you why they're doing it to us. They
12 consider the voting block more important
13 than the citizens of Scranton. You've got a
14 thousand people plus maybe another couple
15 thousand associated, related, so forth that
16 votes as the block. And this is the block
17 you're protecting. You ain't protecting the
18 other 70,000 Scrantonians. You're making it
19 harder and harder to live here. You're
20 making it harder for the people who are
21 handicapped. I won't say anymore.

22 MR. ROGAN: Is there anyone else who
23 would like to address council?

24 MR. MORGAN: Good evening, council,
25 Lee Morgan. You know, I'd like to invite

1 people to find Lee Morgan on Facebook or Lee
2 Morgan: The Alliance. Because you know
3 what's actually taking place in this city as
4 far as I'm concerned is criminal. You know,
5 we have councilmen that won't tell you how
6 much they earn. We have another councilman
7 who--at least I could be wrong, Mr.
8 Rogan--but I thought you hosted a party for
9 Mr. Barletta. And now you tell me you're a
10 Democrat and you won't even acknowledge at
11 one time you were Republican. Not that it
12 really matters because both parties are so
13 corrupt they're not even worth the space
14 they take up. But, you know, the thing that
15 really gets me here is, last year, I asked
16 council, I gave them a certified letter
17 petitioning my city government to cut the
18 budget by 30 percent. It fell on deaf ears.
19 Even though council had the authority to
20 write their own budget. I think this year
21 once again we're going to do the same thing.
22 But, you know, the troubling thing is that
23 over 30 years, we have to ask, what did our
24 state representatives do to sanction the
25 city or punish it? Why didn't Mr. Blake or

1 Mr. Farina or Mr. Flynn come forward and do
2 something to city government to force them
3 to make the cuts necessary before it reached
4 the point now where we're going to give the
5 Sewer Authority away for free basically and
6 the parking garages away for free. And they
7 were assets owned by the residents of this
8 city. Now, you can ask yourself, why the
9 residents of the city don't come here? And
10 I have to say that I generally believe that
11 they fear their government honestly and
12 truthfully. And that's a terrible thing,
13 you know, when you consider exactly what's
14 taking place in our country at this time.
15 It's really quite pathetic, to be honest
16 with you. And, you know, for a council not
17 to realize that it had an oversight
18 obligation in the budget. And then, you
19 know, to grant summary relief to the
20 residents of this city. And follow this
21 thing, as you know, as it moves along and
22 look at the poverty levels in the city. And
23 you know, Mr. Evans, you brought up the
24 property you bought. Well, the Scranton
25 Times did a couple of articles on that house

1 and how people had--if it's the one that's
2 on Pittston Avenue. The people that bought
3 it, they were painting it, they were fixing
4 it, they were going to do great things with
5 that property. You know, the truth of the
6 matter is that the city has been so
7 mismanaged over such a long period of time.
8 And there's not one--not even one councilman
9 that will stand up and speak the truth to
10 the residents of this city. Because even
11 after the Sewer Authority is gone and after
12 the parking garages are gone, the city still
13 can't fund itself. So, we're going to throw
14 away the last of our assets to the wind.
15 And leave the city being nothing more than,
16 you know, taxed, just basically out of
17 existence because it can't fund its own
18 operation. It has no answers to any of the
19 problems. They've sold off, you know, the
20 South Side Sports Complex, multiple other
21 assets the city has. And when it reaches
22 the point that, you know, the bond holders
23 pay that Sewer Authority over a long period
24 of time. And then, we have the American
25 Anglian deal when Mr. Connors was in office.

1 And we had one council after another who
2 didn't do one thing. Except I do have to
3 say--and some people may disagree--I think
4 Janet Evans did a great thing when she
5 forced the Parking Authority to financially
6 collapse. But as far as anything else, this
7 budget, it's almost laughable. And you know
8 something? We've blamed the wrong people.
9 We used to blame Adrian Barrett for the poor
10 people in the city and what was happening in
11 the city. She was just somebody working
12 with the poor. You have to be honest with
13 yourself and see exactly what's taking place
14 here. And the other people we blamed, well,
15 we blamed the Scranton Times for the way
16 they reported. But you know the truth of
17 the matter is, we've got to blame the people
18 with the cheap suits and the blouses.
19 Because they have an obligation to protect
20 our standard of living and our way of life.
21 And now? I don't know. You just see all
22 the shootings taking place and some people
23 trying to get their mind around it. But,
24 you know, the one thing that troubles me in
25 my country is as a young man, I grew up

1 during the Vietnam era. And I never
2 remembered Americans being so afraid as they
3 are now of ISIS and all the things that are
4 going on in our country. But you know
5 something? When you go to war with
6 somebody, you kill your enemy wherever you
7 find them. And you know, the truth of the
8 matter is that we've been sending cruise
9 missiles into the Arab countries for a long
10 time creating collateral damage. And now we
11 have people that may be trying to do the
12 same thing to us and we don't like it. So,
13 but, in regards to the budget, I just hope
14 somebody goes into court and forces a judge
15 or somebody to do something. Because it's
16 just incompetence right from the top to the
17 bottom and you wonder why people don't vote.

18 MR. DOBRZYN: Good evening, Dave
19 Dobrzyn, resident, taxpayer, fee payer and
20 whatever payer. I would also like to agree
21 somewhat with Mr. Evans on--or Morgan, Mrs.
22 Evans made one big mistake. And that was
23 telling people what they were really worth.
24 And they were very powerful people. And
25 they weren't worth much to the average

1 person, like I said. I'd like to mention
2 that it seems like our Sewer Authority is
3 moving along, the sale of it or whatever.
4 And you may get the EMT tax next year, but
5 you're not going to get it the year after
6 that if you sell that sewer plant. So
7 that's at least three or four million
8 dollars not going to come in the front door.
9 I'd also like to note that the reason our
10 police and firemen pension are in the most
11 distress is because 26 million dollars was
12 lost back in 2008. And that being said,
13 that should have grown by 5 or 8 percent, 10
14 percent a year. That it's already 2015. So
15 that's 7 times 8 percent, let's say, lost
16 money. But that's even worse, you're
17 probably talking--it could have been 36
18 million dollars by now. All lost by Wall
19 Street on phoney securities. And nobody
20 suffered, not really, only the poor jerk
21 that brought it to somebody's attention that
22 this person was being given a loan with no
23 justification for it for a McMansion out in
24 the Poconos or something. Now, on city
25 business also, we have before us the rental

1 registration again. And it seems to me that
2 there's no penalty if I just refuse to sign
3 up my rental registration, my rental
4 property, no penalty whatsoever. How about
5 a \$1,000 fine when somebody's running four
6 trash--a three or four trash disposal from
7 units and getting away with \$900 a year.
8 How about a \$1,000 fine if they don't want
9 to register and pay their dues because the
10 people cost money.

11 MR. ROGAN: That's what we're
12 looking to do is to, you know, the hope is
13 to do a one year kind of exemption where
14 people could register and one over what's in
15 the past. And after that point, the fines
16 have to be steep and they have to be heavy
17 to get people to register their properties.

18 MR. DOBRZYN: Well, I'm tired of
19 playing around with some of these people and
20 seeing them. You know, it's time they start
21 to pay their bills and we'll be in all the
22 better shape for it. We need to borrow a
23 big hammer to smash down on them. And also,
24 on the Sewer Authority and that 20 million,
25 you're probably looking at a cost plus the

1 system. So even at 20 million, you're
2 probably going to be paying 8 percent profit
3 at least or interest. And taxes first. The
4 State Constitution requires us to just
5 accept all these tax exempts. It's like
6 some kind of endangered species or
7 something. It's illegal to kill it or chase
8 it out of your backyard. But I mean, I've
9 got a crocodile in my swimming pool. But
10 it's endangered, so I have to just sit there
11 and watch it try to eat my dog or my kid or
12 whatever. It's--nothing is ever going
13 to--ever going to improve till we get the
14 State Constitution overthrown in the courts
15 because the outlier citizens won't go along
16 with it. The two thirds of the county
17 outnumber us. And we'll just keep getting
18 saddled with more and more tax exempt
19 situations. Now, the Globe store is on the
20 tax exempt block. We have the school bought
21 the medical building over on Adams Avenue.
22 Nothing's ever going to happen. We're
23 missing probably millions and millions of
24 dollars every year. And as a final test,
25 don't forget you two youngsters, don't trust

1 anybody over 30 unless it's me because I'm
2 sufficiently and totally immature. Thank
3 you. And have a good night and a good
4 Christmas.

5 MR. ROGAN: Thank you, Merry
6 Christmas.

7 MS. SCHUMACHER: Good evening,
8 Council, Marie Schumacher. First, I'd like
9 to congratulate the Seitzingers for their
10 part in the happy resolution of the Delta
11 Medix, Highmark accord that was announced
12 today. Now, the answer to my question on
13 the dollars required to bring the pension
14 fund to 50 percent level?

15 MR. EVANS: 75 million.

16 MS. SCHUMACHER: Thank you. Now,
17 the 2013 audit stated that the 2014 and 2015
18 budget would not be met. How much are we
19 going to be deficient at the end of this
20 year? What's the estimate?

21 MR. EVANS: I'll check on Monday at
22 the meeting, but I don't have that right
23 now.

24 MS. SCHUMACHER: Okay, thank you.
25 As a general statement, I'm opposed to the

1 addition of a recycle coordinator at thirty
2 six plus thousand dollars plus the benefits
3 when we have a consultant who I understand
4 is doing that job for \$5,000. So, I think
5 that position needs to be eliminated. For
6 the first time, this year's budget provides
7 the assessed valuations on which the
8 property taxes are based. It appears the
9 collection rate of 88 percent was expected
10 this year. Last year, about 8 percent of
11 the total real estate receipts were received
12 in the last quarter. If you apply that to
13 this year's actual list through September,
14 we will not meet the budget for the real
15 estate taxes this year. And the collection
16 rate will drop to about 87 percent or maybe
17 even less. Therefore, I see no reason for
18 using an 89 percent collection rate for 2016
19 except perhaps to keep the tax increase at
20 5.7 percent instead of 6 percent. I'm
21 willing to place a bet with anybody on what
22 that turns out next year if you approve this
23 budget. It appears the wasted tax revenue
24 for 2016 continues to assume at a collection
25 rate of about 75 percent. Mr. Wechsler, a

1 year ago tomorrow you stated that this year
2 in 2015, "We were going to get the audit
3 done on time or extend the due date, if
4 reality means we can't get it done." So I'd
5 like to know what--in Fifth Order, I'd like
6 to know exactly when we will be expecting
7 the 2015 audit next year. And also, went
8 onto say, "We already put things into place
9 to be more efficient in collecting our
10 refuse tax, keeping track of who paid, who
11 didn't pay. So there's a lot of things
12 going on that may put us in better shape."
13 I believe we've been at 75 percent
14 collection rate like forever. And I don't
15 find that 75 percent rate palatable. Now,
16 have any of you read the Gannett Flemming
17 long range plan for the Sewer Authority?
18 Okay, well, no place in that document that I
19 could find does it mention needing outside
20 management for anything. So, that is a
21 bother. The other thing that's a bother,
22 which I've talked about before, is the Mayor
23 advertising that he would be happy with 50
24 percent or 50 million dollars, excuse me,
25 for the Sewer Authority. Back in--that was

1 back at the end of September, I believe, the
2 26th. As I stated before, it's already been
3 reported in the newspaper that the--a
4 financial report for the Sewer Authority
5 says they have 120 million dollars worth of
6 assets and they have, I believe, 69 million
7 dollars in long term debt. And that is
8 already covered in the fee structure. So
9 clearly, 50 million dollars is a steal. And
10 if it's not 75 million dollars to get us up
11 to the--up to the level of where our
12 pensions are funding at 50 percent, that
13 should be a real concern. I don't think the
14 Sewer Authority should be monetized. I
15 don't think we're going to get the value out
16 of it. And look down the future. What do
17 we have? Next year, we'll finally repay the
18 three years worth of the landfill. But next
19 year is the last for the EIT tax tripling
20 before the commuters goes away in 2017. The
21 MMO with this budget--the reduction for the
22 MMO expires with this budget. So we're
23 going to have to pay full budget or full MMO
24 next year. It's going to be larger.

25 MR. EVANS: Yeah.

1 MS. SCHUMACHER: And what's going to
2 fill that hole? You sold all our assets.
3 We should keep the one valuable asset we
4 have. And I fear that we are going down the
5 same road with Mr. Amoroso as the last city
6 that he saved which was Newark, New Jersey.
7 Two recent headlines, "Newark budget woes
8 makes state take over more likely. And
9 Newark debt downgraded to junk bond status."
10 Remember what he did. He went into Newark,
11 he sold their assets. And here's where they
12 are. And this, I predict, will be where we
13 are if we sell that Sewer Authority asset.
14 Thank you.

15 MR. EVANS: Thank you.

16 MR. ROGAN: Is there anyone else who
17 would like to address counsel?

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

19 MOTIONS.

20 MR. ROGAN: Mr. Wechsler, do you
21 have any motions or comments?

22 MR. WECHSLER: Just a few right now.
23 First, in regard to Ms. Schumacher, even
24 though the audit has not been completed on
25 time, we are in better shape than we were

1 last year. I know it's not much of
2 consolation, but we are in better shape than
3 we were last year. And we will continue to
4 try to make improvements on the audit
5 process.

6 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Just tell us a
7 good day when.

8 MR. WECHSLER: If I knew the answer
9 when, I would let you know. But we don't
10 unfortunately. As everyone else was here, I
11 was surprised to see the announcement of the
12 public hearing for the Sewer Authority in
13 the paper the other day. When I get my
14 paper at 5 am in the morning, I try not to
15 get surprised. But that was quite a
16 surprise when I saw that. The day that the
17 article was in the paper, City Council
18 contacted the Scranton Sewer Authority to
19 see if they would consider moving the
20 meeting to a p.m. time that would allow more
21 people to attend. We also offered them the
22 invitation to use council chambers for the
23 hearing. And as of yet, we haven't heard
24 back from them yet. And I mentioned just a
25 couple times, unfortunately, I work in

1 Mountain Top. I don't get back into the
2 city until around 4, 4:30. And a hearing at
3 1 p.m., it's very impossible for me to
4 attend. I'm sure that's true for a lot of
5 working people. So I would advise if they
6 can't move the location, at least change the
7 time to a p.m. hour where more people could
8 attend. Because this is a major issue that
9 will affect both Scranton and Dunmore. And
10 in both--in terms of our long term future
11 whether we go along with it or not, if we
12 don't go along with it, we'll have to find
13 other financing needs. And if we go along
14 with it, it will help us as we move along.
15 So it's too important to have the meeting at
16 1 p.m., I believe. On Wednesday, November
17 25th, there was a meeting held concerning
18 the traffic problem within the city. Chief
19 Graziano sent me this correspondence to list
20 some of the information that came out of
21 that meeting. According to the Chief,
22 "PennDOT is going to add time to the
23 pedestrian crossing on Lackawanna Avenue
24 side of Wyoming intersection. When someone
25 pushes the pedestrian crossing button, there

1 was a three second delay where all lights
2 stay red while the pedestrian light is
3 activated. After adjusted by PennDOT, there
4 will be a 6 to 8 second delay allowing
5 pedestrians more time to cross with red
6 lights activated in all directions. There
7 will also be an education aspect to this for
8 pedestrians as we are surveying the
9 intersection. Virtually no pedestrians were
10 activating the pedestrian crossing
11 functions. If a pedestrian crossing button
12 is not depressed, there is no delay in the
13 lights turning green and certainly does not
14 help with the problem here. There has to be
15 a balance between keeping the lights red in
16 all directions for pedestrians while not
17 letting traffic back up on Lackawanna
18 Avenue. So, I was happy to get this
19 information from the Chief. So there are
20 improvements looking to be made on
21 Lackawanna Avenue where we had so many
22 problems in the past. The other comments
23 that I have, I will keep till later in the
24 meeting. Thank you.

25 MR. ROGAN: Thank you. Councilman

1 Evans, do you have any motions or comments?

2 MR. EVANS: Yes, I would like to
3 honor Council President McGoff tonight by
4 offering some advice on a subject that sadly
5 too many of us have come to know all too
6 well. These simple words of wisdom and
7 sincerity from someone who understood the
8 importance of even the smallest of actions,
9 someone we all greatly respect, Council
10 President Bob McGoff himself. On February
11 5th, 2015--I thank City Clerk Lori Reed for
12 searching the archives for these comments,
13 Mr. McGoff, "Just one thing I would like to
14 mention, yesterday was National Cancer
15 Awareness Day. I would just like to say
16 that I know all of us have been affected in
17 some way by this insidious disease. And I
18 would just encourage anyone that knows
19 someone who is fighting this or dealing with
20 treatments involved with cancer to be a
21 friend. One of the things that happens to
22 cancer patients and those under treatment,
23 depression is a very significant aspect of
24 it. And believe it or not, simply sitting
25 down and talking with people, going and

1 watching a television show, bringing dinner
2 and having something to eat with them goes a
3 long way to helping people deal with that.
4 And I would just encourage that, if you know
5 someone, please be a friend and be part of
6 the helping process. Thank you." Bob
7 McGoff. That's all I have for now.

8 MR. ROGAN: Thank you. Councilman
9 Gaughan, any motions or comments?

10 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, just two
11 comments. First, my thoughts and prayers go
12 out to the DPW worker, Steve Pierson and his
13 family. Steve was injured in a hit and run
14 last week while on the job. We often forget
15 the dangerous nature of the job that the DPW
16 employees do on a day-to-day basis. I would
17 urge all motorists to use caution when
18 approaching a DPW truck. Let these
19 gentleman do their job. I've personally
20 witnessed within the last few days people
21 that are in a rush flying around DPW trucks
22 while the employees are trying to pick up
23 the garbage. This is unacceptable. We do
24 not want to see another incident like this
25 occur. And I would hope that Mr. Pierson

1 makes a full recovery. It has been a very
2 somber two weeks here for us on city
3 council. We endured a great loss with the
4 passing of our council president, Bob
5 McGoff. Bob's leadership, discretion,
6 kindness and sense of humor will be missed.
7 He was dedicated to providing good
8 governance and was passionate about the City
9 of Scranton which he loved. I enjoyed
10 working with Bob McGoff and I learned a lot
11 from him. He was a colleague, but more
12 important, he was a friend. Thank you.

13 MR. ROGAN: Thank you. Just a
14 couple quick remarks about Bob as well.
15 It's funny, when I first ran for City
16 Council in 2007, Bob was my opponent. And
17 obviously, he won the election. And two
18 years later, luckily I was elected. And we
19 sat right next to each other at the time.
20 Bob sat in the seat that Joe sits in. And
21 many times, we were on opposite sides.
22 Actually, most times we were on opposite
23 sides of many issues. But Bob taught me
24 something very important. That politics,
25 political disagreements doesn't mean that

1 you can't be friends. And to leave
2 differences at the door. And that's
3 something that Bob taught me my first year
4 on council. And I would never have thought
5 when we were running against each other, and
6 initially, I don't want to say adversaries,
7 but on the opposite side of many issues;
8 that as time went on, we would become
9 friends and he would become somebody I would
10 really look up to. Especially how he ran
11 the meetings and how he handled five members
12 of council with five different personalities
13 which is a very difficult task. But Bob
14 will be missed. He was a great person, a
15 great councilman and a great friend to all
16 of us. That is all. Thank you.

17 MS. REED: 5-B. FOR INTRODUCTION AN
18 ORDINANCE CREATING AND ESTABLISHING SPECIAL
19 CITY ACCOUNT NO. 02.229618 ENTITLED "PIB" TO
20 ACCEPT FUNDS RECEIVED FROM A PENNSYLVANIA
21 TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE BANK
22 ("PIB") LOAN.

23 MR. ROGAN: At this time, I will
24 entertain a motion that Item 5B be
25 introduced into its proper committee.

1 MR. WECHSLER: So moved.

2 MR. GAUGHAN: Second.

3 MR. ROGAN: On the question? All
4 those in favor of introduction signify by
5 saying aye?

6 MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

7 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

8 MR. EVANS: Aye.

9 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

10 MR. ROGAN: Opposed? The aye's have
11 it and so moved.

12 MS. REED: 5-C. FOR INTRODUCTION AN
13 ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE AND SALE
14 NOT TO EXCEED TWELVE MILLION SEVEN HUNDRED
15 AND FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$12,750,000.00)
16 PRINCIPAL AMOUNT, TAX ANTICIPATION NOTE OF
17 THE CITY OF SCRANTON KNOWN AS THE TAX
18 ANTICIPATION NOTE SERIES 2016 AWARDED TO
19 AMALGAMATED BANK; ESTABLISHING THE FORM OF
20 SUCH NOTE; APPROVING AND ACCEPTING A
21 PROPOSAL TO PURCHASE THE NOTE; AWARDING AND
22 AUTHORIZING THE NEGOTIATED SALE THEREOF TO
23 SAID AMALGAMATED BANK; PROVIDING SECURITY
24 FOR SUCH NOTE; MAKING CERTAIN COVENANTS IN
25 RESPECT OF SUCH NOTE; AUTHORIZING AND

1 DIRECTING CERTAIN OFFICIALS TO DELIVER A
2 CERTIFICATE AS TO TAXES AND REVENUES TO BE
3 COLLECTED, TO CAUSE TO BE MADE THE FILINGS
4 REQUIRED BY LAW, TO EXECUTE AND DELIVER THE
5 NOTE, TO RESTRICT THE USE OF THE PROCEEDS OF
6 THE NOTE; AND TO TAKE SUCH OTHER ACTIONS AS
7 MAY BE NECESSARY OR DESIRABLE.

8 MR. ROGAN: At this time, I will
9 entertain a motion that Item 5C be
10 introduced into its proper committee.

11 MR. WECHSLER: So moved.

12 MR. EVANS: Second.

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

16 MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

17 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

18 MR. EVANS: Aye.

19 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

20 MR. ROGAN: Opposed? The aye's have
21 it and so moved.

22 MS. REED: SIXTH ORDER. 6-A.

23 READING BY TITLE FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO.

24 127, 2015 - AN ORDINANCE AMENDING FILE OF

25 THE COUNCIL NO. 45, 2014, AN ORDINANCE

1 ENTITLED "APPROVING PENALTY, INTEREST AND
2 FEE SCHEDULE FOR COLLECTION OF DELINQUENT
3 REFUSE FEES" TO CORRECT A TYPOGRAPHICAL
4 ERROR IN THE THIRD WHEREAS CLAUSE, SECOND
5 LINE, BEFORE THE WORD "INTEREST" BY
6 INSERTING THE WORD "ADD" AFTER THE WORD "TO"
7 AND IN THE NOW THEREFORE CLAUSE, UNDER
8 NUMBER TWO INCLUDE THE ADDITION OF PARAGRAPH
9 G.

10 MR. ROGAN: You've heard reading by
11 title of Item 6A, what is your pleasure?

12 MR. EVANS: Mr. Chairman, I move
13 that Item 6A pass reading by title.

14 MR. WECHSLER: Second.

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

17 MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

18 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

19 MR. EVANS: Aye.

20 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

21 MR. ROGAN: Opposed? The aye's have
22 it and so moved.

23 MS. REED: 6-B. READING BY TITLE
24 FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO. 128, 2015 - AN
25 ORDINANCE REPEALING FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO.

1 7, 2014 AN ORDINANCE ENTITLED "AMENDING FILE
2 OF THE COUNCIL NO. 17, 2012, (AS AMENDED)
3 ENTITLED "ESTABLISHING A REGISTRATION
4 PROGRAM FOR RESIDENTIAL RENTAL PROPERTIES;
5 REQUIRING ALL OWNERS OF RESIDENTIAL RENTAL
6 PROPERTIES TO DESIGNATE AN AGENT FOR SERVICE
7 OF PROCESS; AND PRESCRIBING DUTIES OF
8 OWNERS, AGENTS AND OCCUPANTS; DIRECTING THE
9 DESIGNATION OF AGENTS; ESTABLISHING FEES FOR
10 THE COST ASSOCIATED WITH THE REGISTRATION OF
11 RENTAL PROPERTY; AND PRESCRIBING PENALTIES
12 FOR VIOLATIONS" BY AMENDING SECTION 9 FEES
13 TO INCLUDE THE INCREASES IN THE ANNUAL
14 RENTAL REGISTRATION FEE TO \$50.00 PER UNIT
15 AND THE ANNUAL PERMIT FEE TO \$150.00 PER
16 SITE.

17 MR. ROGAN: You've heard reading by
18 title of Item 6B, what is your pleasure?

19 MR. EVANS: Mr. Chairman, I move
20 that Item 6B pass reading by title.

21 MR. WECHSLER: Second.

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

24 MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

25 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

1 MR. EVANS: Aye.

2 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

3 MR. ROGAN: Opposed? The aye's have
4 it and so moved.

5 MS. REED: SEVENTH ORDER. 7-A. FOR
6 CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC
7 SAFETY FOR ADOPTION FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO.
8 125, 2015 - ESTABLISHING PERMIT PARKING ON
9 THE NORTHERN (ODD) SIDE OF THE 800 BLOCK OF
10 EAST GIBSON STREET FROM 811 TO 819 EAST
11 GIBSON STREET.

12 MR. ROGAN: What is the
13 recommendation for the chair for the
14 Committee on Public Safety?

15 MR. WECHSLER: As Chairperson for
16 the Committee on Public Safety, I recommend
17 final passage of Item 7A.

18 MR. EVANS: Second.

19 MR. ROGAN: On the question? Roll
20 call, please?

21 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler?

22 MR. WECHSLER: Yes.

23 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans?

24 MR. EVANS: Yes.

25 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan?

1 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

2 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan?

3 MR. ROGAN: Yes. I hereby declare
4 Item 7A legally and lawfully adopted.

5 MS. REED: 7-B. FOR CONSIDERATION BY
6 THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE FOR ADOPTION FILE
7 OF THE COUNCIL NO. 126, 2015 - APPROPRIATING
8 FUNDS FOR THE EXPENSES OF THE CITY
9 GOVERNMENT FOR THE PERIOD COMMENCING ON THE
10 FIRST DAY OF JANUARY, 2016 TO AND INCLUDING
11 DECEMBER 31, 2016 BY THE ADOPTION OF THE
12 GENERAL CITY OPERATING BUDGET FOR THE YEAR
13 2016.

14 MR. EVANS: Mr. Chairman, I make the
15 motion to amend Item 7B per the following:
16 Change Account 01.401.13090.4299 contingency
17 by reducing the total amount by \$30,000 to
18 \$555,000. Under non-departmental
19 expenditures, create a new account number
20 and add a line item, foreclosed
21 rehabilitation ramp program for the amount
22 of \$30,000.

23 MR. ROGAN: Motion is made. Is
24 there a second?

25 MR. WECHSLER: Second.

1 MR. ROGAN: On the question?

2 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, I just have one
3 question. Do we know yet who is going to
4 administer the grant program or how that's
5 going to be run?

6 MR. EVANS: No, we don't. I mean,
7 we would like to see--we have some ideas of
8 who should administer it. And we're going
9 to certainly try to make that happen in the
10 first quarter of the year. Pursuant to
11 that, I can't tell you.

12 MR. ROGAN: And I think for myself
13 it should be something done outside of City
14 Hall, I don't know how everyone else feels?

15 MR. EVANS: There's some very
16 qualified agencies that certainly could take
17 up the task and do a very good job. This
18 goes back to the foreclosure question that
19 one of speakers talked about before, this is
20 what you do with foreclosures. You help
21 them get back on the tax rolls. You help
22 homeowners buy them and improve them. This
23 is what we do. This is when government
24 actually works. So this is a good thing.
25 I'm very happy to be part of a program like

1 this.

2 MR. ROGAN: Absolutely. Thank you,
3 Councilman Evans, for your work on this. It
4 all kind of came together once the ball
5 started rolling with the foreclosure
6 registration and turning it into a great
7 program to help people buy houses.

8 MR. EVANS: Absolutely.

9 MR. ROGAN: Anyone else have a
10 question? All those in favor signify by
11 saying aye?

12 MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

13 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

14 MR. EVANS: Aye.

15 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

16 MR. ROGAN: Opposed? The aye's have
17 it and the amendment passes.

18 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, I had several
19 motions I'd like to make. I'd like to make
20 a motion to amend to reduce account number
21 01.040.00040.4010 standard salary, business
22 administration by \$10,000.

23 MR. ROGAN: Motion has been made.
24 Is there a second? Motion dies for lack of
25 a second.

1 MR. GAUGHAN: I'd like to make a
2 motion to amend to reduce account number
3 01.040.00041.4010 standard salary, Human
4 Resources, by \$42,500.

5 MR. ROGAN: Motion has been made.
6 Is there a second? Motion dies for lack of
7 a second.

8 MR. GAUGHAN: I'd like to make a
9 motion to amend to reduce account number
10 01.040.00042.4010 standard salary,
11 Information Technology Department, by
12 \$30,000.

13 MR. ROGAN: Is there a second?
14 Motion dies for lack of a second.

15 MR. GAUGHAN: I'd like to make a
16 motion to amend to reduce account number
17 01.051.00051.4010 standard salary, Licensing
18 and Inspections, by \$40,017.11.

19 MR. ROGAN: Is there a second?
20 Motion dies for lack of a second.

21 MR. GAUGHAN: I'd like to make a
22 motion to amend and reduce account number
23 01.060.00000.4010 standard salary, Law
24 Department, by \$30,115.38.

25 MR. ROGAN: Is there a second?

1 Motion fails for lack of a second.

2 MR. GAUGHAN: I'd like to make a
3 motion to amend to reduce account number
4 01.080.00080.4010 standard salary, DPW
5 Administration, by \$36,346.10.

6 MR. ROGAN: Is there a second?

7 Motion dies for lack of a second.

8 MR. GAUGHAN: I'd like to make a
9 motion to amend and reduce account number
10 01.380.38875, Miscellaneous Revenue/Cable
11 TV, by 1.5 million dollars.

12 MR. ROGAN: Is there a second?

13 MR. EVANS: Second.

14 MR. ROGAN: On the question?

15 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, on the question,
16 I'm making this motion, 1.5 million dollars
17 was included in Miscellaneous Revenue/Cable
18 TV, so that we can use that money to repair
19 the firehouses throughout the city.
20 However, it's my belief that we're putting
21 the cart before the horse. We haven't
22 completed a fire facilities assessment yet.
23 And also, I don't think at a time when we
24 are in severe financial difficulty we should
25 be taking on a capital expenditure of that

1 magnitude.

2 MR. EVANS: If we can clarify now,
3 is this the 1.5 million dollars that's being
4 added to the bond?

5 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

6 MR. EVANS: For the money to be
7 borrowed for the award settlement?

8 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

9 MR. EVANS: Okay, now, the reason I
10 seconded the motion was I feel that it
11 should be discussed. I don't necessarily
12 want to link this to the pension, but is the
13 city really looking to borrow 1.5 million
14 dollars as part of a bargaining package to
15 pay the court award? We're adding money
16 onto the court award bond to fix
17 expenditures as Councilman Gaughan said,
18 that won't even be identified until the plan
19 is completed. My bigger concern is the
20 unions have remained silent on if they would
21 allow the interest that's been accrued to
22 the ending award to be used for pension
23 plans, their own pension plans. This money
24 is not part of the principal amount. And it
25 could be argued that it really is not due

1 them, although legally it probably is.
2 There's more than enough money in accrued
3 interest to be put into some pensions. And
4 maybe the rest actually could be put towards
5 the improvements in some of these buildings
6 that we're going to be studying sometime
7 next year. So, I will actually be voting
8 for this amendment.

9 MR. ROGAN: Councilman Wechsler?

10 MR. WECHSLER: Yes, I share the same
11 concerns. As we discussed, we saw this
12 amount of money that was set aside for the
13 repairs of the firehouses, it also included
14 the one in East Scranton that we're not sure
15 what we're going to do there yet. So I
16 think this money perhaps should wait till
17 the following year to see where we need this
18 money or not.

19 MR. ROGAN: I would say while
20 there's certainly a debate to be made
21 regarding the infrastructure improvements
22 and how to fund them, any borrowing that
23 would have to be approved by City Council at
24 that time, that might be a better time to
25 have that debate. There's no question that

1 the infrastructure in the City of Scranton
2 has been neglected for many, many decades
3 and many of our firehouses are falling apart
4 and are in desperate need of repair. So for
5 that reason, I will be opposing the
6 amendment.

7 MR. GAUGHAN: And that's all I have.

8 MR. ROGAN: All those in favor
9 signify by saying eighty?

10 MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

11 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

12 MR. EVANS: Aye.

13 MR. ROGAN: No. The ayes have it
14 and the amendment passes. What is the
15 recommendation from the Chair for the
16 Committee on Finance?

17 MR. EVANS: As chairperson for the
18 Committee on Finance, I recommend final
19 passage of Item 7B as amended.

20 MR. WECHSLER: Second.

21 MR. ROGAN: On the question?

22 MR. WECHSLER: Yes, on the question,
23 Councilman Gaughan had made several proposed
24 amendments. And I agree that we should
25 discuss all of them. And I'd like to say

1 the reasons why I did not vote for those--or
2 second those particular amendments. As I
3 take a look at the business administrator,
4 we're going to have difficulty replacing Mr.
5 Bulzoni as it is. I don't believe that
6 lowering the pay for the business
7 administrator would serve to--for us to
8 attract a candidate. It won't guarantee
9 that we will get an attractive candidate,
10 but lowering the salary won't help our
11 search. In terms of the other positions
12 that are being added in the budget, each one
13 of these positions is something that all of
14 us as council people have asked for
15 improvement in those departments. We're
16 looking for improvements in Workman's Comp.
17 We're looking for improvements on how we
18 perform services on our website. We get
19 constant complaints about the service from
20 the LIPs Department, that phone calls aren't
21 returned and certain properties aren't
22 inspected. We still have some difficulties
23 in getting information from the Law
24 Department. We also are trying to improve
25 the recycling, our recycling. So I take a

1 look at each of these positions. And
2 actually, it's going to--hopefully go to
3 some of the issues that we have been
4 bringing up. But I also want to suggest
5 that, once again, the government that the
6 city has--the Mayor, a strong Mayor form of
7 government--the Mayor is responsible for the
8 day-to-day operations of the city. And the
9 day-to-day operations of the city, just like
10 in my job, I have to make sure that the
11 people that are working for me are
12 performing the jobs that they're assigned.
13 So as we look at each of these added
14 positions and as we look at them as we move
15 to 2016, I think we are going to have to see
16 where there was a significant improvement in
17 services or significant improvement in
18 increased revenues to the city. And as we
19 look at these going into 2017, I'd like to
20 say that if we don't see the return on
21 these, then we actually should eliminate
22 them the next time around or two years from
23 now. Also, when questions were asked about
24 these positions, the business administrator,
25 the Personnel Department supplied us with

1 job criteria and definitions for each of
2 these new employees. And I think for me,
3 that's the first I've ever seen them
4 detailed the way that they are. And
5 actually, they are prepared so well, I think
6 they're almost ready to go out to be posted
7 somewhere so we can increase the pool of
8 qualified candidates for these positions.
9 I'm not sure if it's something that we do on
10 our website or if it's something that we
11 actually advertise in the local media.
12 These positions are going to be very
13 important to the success of the city in
14 delivering services and increasing revenue
15 as we move into 2016. So I think we should
16 take advantage of the hard work that's been
17 done in organizing these positions.

18 MR. ROGAN: Thank you, anyone else?

19 MR. EVANS: On the question. On the
20 jobs, first of all, we did receive the
21 requested job descriptions yesterday. I had
22 requested them on November 12th. I think
23 Councilman Gaughan requested them as well.
24 So we wanted them received by November 19th
25 prior to the public hearing, so I'm not

1 really happy about that. That's not the way
2 to run a 132 million dollar corporation. We
3 asked for documentation, we asked for back
4 up, we should receive it in a timely manner.
5 And by the time we finally got them, they
6 were professionally done, I appreciate that.
7 But we asked them, we want it for a certain
8 date, we should get them. I think council
9 deserves a little more respect than that.
10 On the budget, while the tax increase is 5.7
11 percent within the guidelines of the Amoroso
12 plan that I, of course, have steadfastly
13 supported in an effort to get our financial
14 house in order; it does meet the minimum
15 requirements that I suggested we support for
16 the 2016 budget when we passed the 2015
17 budget last year. I said last year that I
18 would not vote for a budget that had a tax
19 increase more than 6 percent. So it's no
20 coincidence that the tax increase is just
21 below that number. However, there's no
22 celebration from this Councilman. There's
23 certainly no victory dance. In fact, I
24 apologize for not finding new ways to move
25 the administration to bolder, broader

1 decisions in 2015. While our taxpayers,
2 particularly our property owners, continue
3 to take the brunt of these increases. 2016
4 must be the year where we finally change the
5 way we do business. We have to find a way
6 to grow our city, to be prosperous, to
7 expand our tax base. We can't continue to
8 be a city that no one wants to do business
9 with. We're small business owners to large
10 corporations. We have to remove the
11 restrictions, unleash our potential and get
12 back to being a user friendly city with a
13 vision for the future. Continuing tax
14 increases and just being average should not
15 be our goal. Growing our economy, reducing
16 taxes and excellence should be our goal. We
17 are the technology, educational, medical and
18 cultural center of Northeastern
19 Pennsylvania. We should be acting like it.
20 Let's stop being defensive, stop lowering
21 our expectations and diminishing our value.
22 It's time to act like a city that welcomes
23 new businesses, that welcomes new residents,
24 that welcomes new homeowners. Let's act
25 like a city that expects growth and expects

1 prosperity. So while I have to hold my nose
2 again and vote for this budget because it
3 met my minimum standards for 2016, this
4 cannot be repeated next year. I have seen
5 first-hand the impact of these continuing
6 tax increases on real estate values in our
7 city. And we cannot sustain this path and
8 still be a viable city. While I will
9 continue to work for changes in 2016 and be
10 as vocal as I can where I think I can affect
11 those changes, we have to show we are
12 capable of doing more than one thing at a
13 time. So for the record, my new minimum
14 goal and standards for the 2017 budgets are
15 a zero percent tax increase in 2017, a real
16 reduction in what seniors pay in the refuse
17 bill, the beginning of the elimination of
18 the mercantile and business privilege taxes
19 and the reduction and elimination of all
20 unnecessary fees. We have no choice but to
21 turn it around. Everyone needs to
22 understand that 2016 is a make or break
23 year. If it means that we have to become a
24 leaner, more efficient and effective
25 government to make that happen, then count

1 me in. All in. So that's all I have on the
2 budget for now.

3 MR. ROGAN: Go ahead.

4 MR. GAUGHAN: Sure, over the last
5 two meetings, I've raised several questions
6 and concerns regarding Mayor Courtright's
7 2016 budget. In particular, I'm concerned
8 we haven't received a straight answer from
9 the Mayor on exactly how much we've saved
10 from the re-negotiated police and fire
11 contracts. The Mayor told us we'd see
12 almost a million dollar savings from both.
13 The Mayor said we'd receive \$375,000 of new
14 revenue from the parking enforcement
15 program. And we've fallen well short of
16 that. The Mayor is budgeting over \$200,000
17 in revenue next year for the program.
18 Again, well short of the original
19 anticipated amount of \$375,000. We will
20 also most likely fall short of our
21 projection of collecting over 4 million
22 dollars from the LST Tax. I have serious
23 concerns about the additional positions
24 which I've made several amendment to take
25 them out, increases in discretionary

1 salaries and expenditures in additional debt
2 included in Mayor Courtright's 2016 budget.
3 Mayor Courtright has significantly increased
4 departmental expenditures and
5 non-departmental expenditures by 25.7
6 percent. This is a continuation of last
7 year when over a million dollars was added
8 to the budget. It's my firm belief that a
9 city in a dire financial position that we
10 are in, we should not increase the budget.
11 We should find a way to hold the line or
12 decrease expenditures. As we continue to
13 ask our residents to pay more and do more
14 with less, we should practice what we
15 preach. We have the highest rate of
16 employees receiving disability pensions in
17 the state, over 50 percent. Mayor
18 Courtright vowed to make changes to the
19 pension ordinances, yet nothing has been
20 done. The city owes a 27 million dollar
21 award to the police and fire union with
22 daily interest piling on. The 27 million
23 dollars accounts for over 25 percent of the
24 city's revenues. Mayor Courtright's budget
25 is balanced using the 5.7 tax increase as

1 well as a 29.1 million dollar loan to cover
2 capital improvement and a union award, a
3 loan that is anticipated, but far from
4 guaranteed. The Mayor has failed to achieve
5 the most important part of his own plan, a
6 much needed restructuring of city
7 government. It seems that we're content
8 with running the city like we have a
9 population of 140,000 people and industry is
10 booming. Times have changed. And we need
11 to change with them. My fear is that Mayor
12 Courtright and this administration want to
13 continue to do things the way that they've
14 always been done. It's for these reasons
15 that I cannot vote in favor of this budget.
16 Thank you.

17 MR. ROGAN: Thank you. Roll call,
18 please?

19 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler?

20 MR. WECHSLER: Yes.

21 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans?

22 MR. EVANS: Yes.

23 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan?

24 MR. GAUGHAN: No.

25 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan?

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MR. ROGAN: Yes. I hereby declare
Item 7B legally and lawfully adopted.

MS. CARRERA: As amended?

MR. ROGAN: As amended, legally and
lawfully adopted. If there is no further
business, I'll entertain a motion to
adjourn?

MR. WECHSLER: Motion to adjourn.

MR. ROGAN: Meeting adjourned.

(WHEREUPON, the proceedings
concluded.)

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COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

COUNTY OF LACKAWANNA

I, Elizabeth V Kedrick, Notary Public, in and for the County of Wayne, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, do hereby certify:

That said testimony was taken pursuant to notice at the time and place as herein set forth; that said testimony was taken down by me and thereafter transcribed into typewriting, and I hereby certify the foregoing testimony is a full, true and correct transcription of my shorthand notes so taken.

I further certify that I am neither counsel for nor related to any party to said action, nor in anyway interested in the outcome thereof.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto subscribed my name and affixed my seal this _____ day of _____, 2015.

Elizabeth V Kedrick,
Notary Public,
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania,
Honesdale Borough, Wayne County
My commission expires 11/14/19

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