

SCRANTON CITY COUNCIL MEETING

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HELD:

Thursday, October 12, 2017

LOCATION:

Council Chambers

Scranton City Hall

340 North Washington Avenue

Scranton, Pennsylvania

CATHENE S. NARDOZZI, RPR - OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER

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CITY OF SCRANTON COUNCIL:

JOSEPH WECHSLER, PRESIDENT

PATRICK ROGAN, VICE-PRESIDENT

WAYNE EVANS

WILLIAM GAUGHAN
(Not present)

TIM PERRY

LORI REED, CITY CLERK

KATHY CARRERA, ASSISTANT CITY CLERK

AMIL MINORA, ESQUIRE - SOLICITOR

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

3 MR. WECHSLER: Roll call, please.

4 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Perry.

5 MR. PERRY: Here.

6 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

7 MR. ROGAN: Here.

8 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

9 MR. EVANS: Here.

10 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan. Mr.

11 Wechsler.

12 MR. WECHSLER: Here. Mr. Gaughan is
13 absent tonight due to illness.

14 MR. EVANS: I make a motion to
15 appoint Councilman Perry as temporary
16 Chairperson for the Committee on Public
17 Works.

18 MR. ROGAN: Second.

19 MR. WECHSLER: On the question? All
20 those in favor signify by saying aye.

21 MR. PERRY: Aye.

22 MR. EVANS: Aye.

23 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

24 MR. WECHSLER: Aye. Opposed? The
25 ayes have it and so moved.

1 Do any councilmen have announcements
2 at this time?

3 MR. EVANS: I have one. The seventh
4 annual bonfire at the furnaces will take
5 place next Saturday, October 21, from 6:00
6 p.m. to 10 p.m. at the historic iron furnace
7 located close to downtown at 159 Cedar
8 Avenue South Scranton right off the exit
9 from 81 and near Coney Island. The bonfire
10 will begin at 8 p.m. The bonfire festival is
11 fundraising for the Anthracite Heritage
12 Museum explores the roots of Halloween in
13 Celtic Culture and celebrates other culture
14 autumn festivals while highlighting
15 Northeastern Pennsylvania's cultural past.

16 MR. PERRY: Yes, and I also have an
17 announcement to make. The Scranton Police
18 Department Fighting for a Cure spaghetti
19 dinner is underway. It started on the 8th
20 and it's going to run through October 22.
21 It's 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily. It's at
22 Fratelli's restaurant on Providence Road.
23 Tickets are on sale for \$12. It's eat in,
24 take out, and as always, all the proceeds go
25 to the American Cancer Society.

1 MR. WECHSLER: And as a reminder, on
2 October 22 there will be a benefit for
3 Elaine Novembrino Hubb. She is the daughter
4 of City Controller Roseann Novembrino. The
5 benefit will be held and Kilcoyne's from 2
6 p.m. to 7 p.m.

7 Dispense with the reading of the
8 minutes.

9 MS. REED: THIRD ORDER. 3-A.
10 TAX ASSESSOR'S RESULTS REPORTS FOR HEARING
11 DATES HELD SEPTEMBER 27 AND SEPTEMBER 28,
12 2017.

13 MR. WECHSLER: Are there any
14 comments? If not, received and filed.

15 MS. REED: 3-B. MINUTES OF THE
16 REGULAR MEETING OF THE MEMBERS OF THE
17 SCRANTON HOUSING AUTHORITY HELD SEPTEMBER 6,
18 2017.

19 MR. WECHSLER: Are there any
20 comments? If not, received and filed.

21 MS. REED: 3-C. TAX ASSESSOR'S
22 REPORT FOR HEARING DATE TO BE HELD OCTOBER
23 19, 2017.

24 MR. WECHSLER: Are there any
25 comments? If not, received and filed.

1 MS. REED: 3-D. BREAKDOWN OF THE
2 ELIGIBLE SALARIES FOR THE LIQUID FUELS
3 ACCOUNT FOR THE MONTHS OF JULY, AUGUST AND
4 SEPTEMBER, 2017.

5 MR. WECHSLER: Are there any
6 comments? If not, received and filed. And
7 since we already did announcements.

8 MS. REED: FOURTH ORDER. CITIZENS'
9 PARTICIPATION.

10 MR. WECHSLER: Fay Franus.

11 MS. FRANUS: Fray Franus. Mayor
12 Bill Courtright's reelection campaign
13 includes billboards and mailers which claim
14 that he has created more progress in three
15 years than in the previous 20 years. Let's
16 take a closer look at the real progress of
17 Mayor Bill Courtright.

18 Tax increases. Since January 2014,
19 the date Bill Courtright took the oath of
20 office as mayor, our property taxes have
21 increased 82 percent. According to the
22 Scranton Times, Scranton now has the highest
23 taxes of all cities, boroughs and townships
24 in Lackawanna County. Three former and
25 current city council allies for

1 Mr. Courtright gifted him with a 46 percent
2 tax increase to kick off his first day in
3 office and together they kept that tax ball
4 rolling until reelection year 2017.

5 However, while slapping taxpayers with
6 annual increases, not once did he approach
7 wealthy Scranton nonprofits for payments in
8 lieu of taxes.

9 Fee hikes. In January 2014, our
10 garbage fee increased from \$178 to \$300
11 annually. Despite Scranton City Council
12 stating that this garbage fee increase is
13 excessively high and a study being
14 undertaken, Mayor Courtright has refused to
15 decrease it to a fair and justifiable dollar
16 amount. Sadly, citizens must sue the
17 Courtright administration, hire legal
18 representation and fight this mayor in Court
19 to pursue accurate decreases in garbage and
20 rental registration fees.

21 Asset giveaways. Bill Courtright
22 gifted a downtown parking garage to the
23 owner of the Steamtown Marketplace. In
24 addition, he gave profitable parking meters
25 to the nonprofit that soon controlled city

1 parking garages.

2 Sweetheart deals. Mayor Courtright
3 gave extended lucrative contracts to police
4 and fire unions assuring fat salaries and
5 comfortable benefits through 2021 on top of
6 their massive \$30 million court award, but
7 the biggest backroom deal of all time was
8 the sale of Scranton Sewer Authority. Mayor
9 Courtright states we have \$140 million in
10 required sewer upgrades yet he doesn't tell
11 us that the Sewer Authority completed \$26
12 million in upgrades before the sale. Thus,
13 the more accurate dollar amount is \$114 in
14 required upgrades not \$140. Mayor
15 Courtright hired a city attorney and
16 campaign contributor to represent our city
17 in the sewer sale with a wink and a
18 handshake rather than a legal contract.
19 Attorney's fees for this sale are
20 approximately \$3.1 million, yet the mayor
21 never accounted for these heavy payments
22 through the public.

23 Relatives of Mayor Bill Courtright,
24 City Council Solicitor Amil Minora, Judge
25 Carmen Minora, who will hear a

1 sewer-authority related case, and Dunmore
2 Council Solicitor Cummings, were employees
3 of Pennsylvania State agencies which had
4 been requested to investigate the sale of
5 the Scranton Sewer Authority by both
6 Scranton City and Dunmore Councils and to
7 this very day no one knows where the Sewer
8 Authority -- whether, rather, the Sewer
9 Authority continues to legally exist or was
10 dissolved in December of 2016.

11 The Courtright storm water fee.
12 Since Mayor Courtright didn't include the
13 storm water system in the sale of the Sewer
14 Authority, it became the city's
15 responsibility, which actually mean it
16 becomes the ratepayers' problem, but Bill
17 Courtright never talks about the new fee he
18 created and never includes it in his
19 campaign ads. He is hoping we will forget
20 about it until the November election. The
21 Courtright storm water fee will be his
22 legacy as mayor. This new fee will arrive
23 in the mail at some point following this
24 election year and will continue long after
25 Bill Courtright leaves office. The

1 Courtright storm water fee is a forever fee
2 that never should have happened to us.

3 This is Mayor Bill Courtright's real
4 progress, an 82 percent tax increase, a \$300
5 garbage fee, asset giveaways, sweetheart
6 deals and a Courtright storm water fee. Can
7 we afford four more years of Bill
8 Courtright? Thank you.

9 MR. WECHSLER: Joan Hodowanitz.

10 MS. HODOWANITZ: Joan Hodowanitz,
11 Scranton taxpayer and resident. 26 days to
12 November 7th's general election. I do hope
13 that all registered voters come out and
14 vote. I would also hope, I don't expect
15 this, but I would hope to see results of the
16 Arcadis study released. If not before the
17 election, soon thereafter. We need to know
18 what we are looking in terms of the cost.

19 If during Fifth Order you have the
20 information, I would be interested in
21 whether or not the Knowel's insurance list
22 is available yet, and I would also be
23 interested in knowing if the administration
24 has decided to accept Vocab, Vocational
25 Rehabilitation, Incorporated bid, to be the

1 independent medical examination coordinator
2 so that the money from the sewer sale can
3 flow into the pension funds if we any status
4 on that since that has to be done first.

5 Last Saturday I went to the
6 University of Scranton to attend one of the
7 informational sessions on reassessment and I
8 was extremely disappointed because there
9 were all of 20 people there, and I know
10 maybe people are getting tired of election
11 season already or they just throw up their
12 hands in dismay that, you know, it doesn't
13 make any difference what they think, but I
14 would remind people, you know, that we get
15 what we vote for and if we as voters do not
16 stand up and make our voices heard then we
17 deserve what we get.

18 On October 25, the University will
19 have a -- it's actually I think the League
20 of Women Voters that sponsor at the
21 University a mayoral debate between Mayor
22 Courtright and Attorney Mulligan. I do open
23 more than 20 people show up for it. These
24 things are very important.

25 It doesn't seem to be much

1 controversial matter on today's agenda so
2 I'm just going to end with an observation
3 that it's 26 days to the election, but I
4 assume that the budget process is well
5 underway for the city's 2018 budget, and
6 that should be landing somewhere in your
7 laps in the month of November I assume, and
8 what I'm concerned about is all of potential
9 land mines that the city faces that can
10 upset any budget plan or impact on the
11 city's credit rating not the least of which
12 is potential storm water management costs,
13 the fate of the Sewer Authority sale,
14 whether or not that would be challenged in
15 Court and made null and void, and a number
16 of other lawsuits that the city is facing.
17 The Act 511 tax lawsuit, the refuse fee, the
18 rental registration fee and even double
19 pension who are suing to maintain their
20 right to receive their double pensions for
21 the rest of their lives. On top of that, is
22 the hole that the Scranton School District
23 seems to find itself in and the real
24 possibility that their \$40 million hole may
25 grow to \$47 million by the end of the year.

1 So that's why I would really hope that the
2 voting public pays attention to these
3 issues, attends the debates, watches council
4 meetings, watches the school district
5 meetings and even the budget presentation
6 tomorrow for the county and then makes their
7 voices heard at the ballot box on November
8 7, you know, because I know that it's hard
9 to change the inertia of Scranton and city
10 hall, but shame on us if we simply give up
11 our right to cast a ballot. Thank you.

12 MR. WECHSLER: Lee Morgan.

13 MR. MORGAN: Good evening, council.

14 While I guess the first thing is I'd like to
15 thank anybody tonight who is watching this
16 meeting or will watch in the near future,
17 but it's my opinion that the city is going
18 to lose every single one these cases that
19 were just mentioned here today, not just
20 some of them, but every single one and the
21 sad part is, you know, that I'm sure that
22 Mr. Courtright has a role to play in some of
23 that but the reality of most of it is that
24 really city council has let us down for a
25 couple of decades and, you know, it's just

1 ashame that the residents in the city just
2 weren't smart enough to understand that this
3 wasn't a comedy show and this was real life
4 and the people who have been denied
5 everything are the residents in the
6 neighborhoods. The grant money is going
7 everywhere except to them basically and you
8 have to ask yourself what would lead the
9 people to have so little faith in their
10 elected government that they don't even
11 participate in elections, and I guess if you
12 were to take a look at the performance of
13 this council and even our government in
14 general it's not hard to understand why.

15 I'm just wondering, you know, how
16 much pain can a city endure because I don't
17 want to reach into a part of supposition
18 here in-between Mr. Mulligan or Mr.
19 Courtright because to me I'm not sure either
20 one of these gentlemen are leaders, and I
21 don't think that one of them has any clue
22 how to turn this city around and I don't
23 think that any of the five council members
24 do either because we have just played
25 politics in this city for so long that we

1 think it's a carnival sideshow and the
2 reality of it is all is being debated in the
3 courts, only that isn't so much of a
4 carnival side show, maybe the Court of
5 Common Pleas may be to a small degree, but
6 the upper Court when they reached that is
7 going to have to stand on case law and it's
8 not going to be pretty, and I really
9 appreciate the people that have challenged
10 the city in Court and I can tell you that
11 you are going to win. Everything that's
12 coming and that's gone into Court up to this
13 point you will win. You may not win it at
14 the Court of Common Pleas but on appeal you
15 will depending on the competency of your
16 attorney and his argument.

17 And, you know, the sad part is that
18 this council just voted for so many things
19 that were detrimental to the residents of
20 this city and they aren't going to yield any
21 kind of dividends to the residents because
22 if this America Water sale is overturned by
23 the Court I don't know where all of that
24 money is coming from, okay, to pay all of
25 that money back to the Authority.

1 And then you can't, after the
2 Authority is dissolved, move it out of there
3 and spend it wherever you want because it
4 has to go into the storm water collection
5 system somewhere. The Scranton times has
6 presented that argument, so I just don't
7 understand how the council, first of all,
8 introduced the legislation to divest the
9 residents of their asset of the Scranton
10 Sewer Authority and how the council didn't
11 understand what the law was and what the
12 ramifications of the law were, and I
13 wouldn't try to hide behind your council
14 because you have a larger obligation than
15 that.

16 And I just think that if the
17 residents are silly enough to retain any of
18 the city's councilmen in the next election
19 they are out of their mind, but then they
20 have been out of their mind for a long time
21 and I think it's time to ask why none of the
22 city pools that have been closed for years
23 have been fixed yet, and where is the
24 investment in the neighborhoods? Do the
25 residents in this city have any right to any

1 investment in their neighborhoods?

2 And, you know, the last thing that I
3 would like to see challenged in court is I
4 would like to the people that had their
5 homes condemned here to go into court and
6 challenge the city on the condemnations and
7 bring the condemnation book into the
8 courthouse and take the good hard look at
9 the reasons why their homes were condemned
10 and the homes that aren't even listed in the
11 book that were condemned and question the
12 whole thing and let's see if the city has
13 pockets deep enough to pay all of the money
14 that it's going to end up losing because
15 it's ultimately going to come out of the
16 residents and these are the councilmen that
17 ran publically to represent you and they
18 have done just a terrible job. Thank you.

19 MR. WECHSLER: Ron Ellman.

20 MR. ELLMAN: Good evening, council.
21 It's unusual I'm not prepared. Many years
22 ago my father told me people forget all of
23 the good things that you do and remember
24 that one regrettable mistake. I don't
25 remember, I done something stupid and he

1 told me -- called me a fool and he said one
2 of the worst things in the world is a fool.
3 Last week, Mr. Bolus stood before this
4 council and this whole city and the speakers
5 and made a spectacle of himself that was
6 completely unnecessary about bunch of
7 unsubstantiated nonsense complaining about a
8 double hospitalization, but one of his
9 complaints was the \$110 an hour Mr. Mulligan
10 received from the Sewer Authority for I
11 think he worked six, seven years, I don't
12 remember, but if you compare that to
13 Mr. Courtright's friend Abrahamsen they got
14 \$850 an hour for crying out loud, \$850 an
15 hour and look at what happened, look at
16 results the product of that \$850 an hour job
17 they did. If they tried to be make a mess
18 worse than they got they couldn't have done
19 any worse. The city would be years -- your
20 grandchildren would try to overcome what
21 happened with the Sewer Authority deal,
22 believe me. There have been a lot smarter
23 people than me. My friend in Little Rock
24 that sells stocks and bonds he told me
25 that -- he said this could go on for

1 people's lifetimes it was such a mess.

2 Mr. Bolus might reside in Scranton,

3 but he is definitely not a taxpayer. He

4 owes the City of Scranton, Dunmore and

5 Throop over \$300,000. I have been saying

6 for the last couple of weeks you owe such

7 great sums of money like all of these

8 property owners around the mall and downtown

9 there is dozens of them, all of these people

10 are on Cedar Avenue that were the bright

11 star in our mayor's eye they shouldn't be

12 allowed to have a vote in city politics

13 until they do something -- make some token

14 payments or something. Why should these

15 people out here and me, like I have said,

16 pay our taxes and somebody owes -- there is

17 quite a few of them owe more than 50,000,

18 100,000. Why does it just keep dragging on

19 year after year and nothing be done? One

20 reason nothing done these are the supporters

21 of our mayor. I guess he just relishes

22 people like this. Well, I have some -- let

23 me remind the mayor and all of this

24 unscrupulous administration and these no

25 taxpaying supporters of his that the FBI

1 people are still over there on Blueberry
2 Hill in Duryea very much alive. That's
3 their black Chevy Tahoe that goes downtown
4 and doesn't put money in the parking meters.
5 I know, I saw the car last year by the
6 annex, all of these guys in their black
7 suits and the sunglasses and I looked at
8 them and they looked at me, I don't know
9 which one of us was funnier on the street.

10 All that I can see to come out of
11 this election is it's going to be evil and
12 costly if Mr. Mulligan doesn't get in and
13 it's completely unknown if he does get in,
14 but my property values have sunk something
15 terrible because of this administration
16 allowing my neighborhood to completely just
17 go to pot. The zone opened and the most
18 undesirable bunch of human dung humanly
19 possible is hanging around Main and Market.
20 Nobody would want them in their
21 neighborhood. Nothing is done about them.
22 My house values are probably \$20,000 less
23 than they should be. Thank you very much.

24 MR. WECHSLER: Anyone else?

25 MS. SCHUMACHER: Good evening.

1 Marie Schumacher. Starting off, is it
2 accurate that you are keeping the building
3 -- the lot at Wyoming and Linden on the
4 table?

5 MR. WECHSLER: It's off the table
6 for right now.

7 MS. SCHUMACHER: It is off the
8 table?

9 MR. WECHSLER: It's on -- I'm sorry,
10 it's on the table. It's staying --

11 MR. WECHSLER: And it's going to
12 state there?

13 MR. WECHSLER: It's staying where it
14 is.

15 MS. SCHUMACHER: Okay. What is the
16 status of meeting with DEP? Has anybody met
17 with DEP?

18 MR. WECHSLER: I met with them this
19 week. I met with them this week.

20 MS. SCHUMACHER: And there is no
21 conclusion?

22 MR. WECHSLER: No, go ahead, I'll
23 mention it.

24 MS. SCHUMACHER: Okay. What about
25 the Parking Authority -- or the parking

1 garages, I notice in today's legal notices
2 there were requests for proposals and going
3 to Denman who did the affordability study
4 for the leasing, for upgrades and
5 modifications, it is my understanding that
6 we pay for that in the parking garages, we
7 pay for any maintenance?

8 MR. EVANS: No, they are doing that.

9 MS. SCHUMACHER: Pardon?

10 MR. EVANS: ABM is doing that with
11 NDC. In fact, they are in the process now
12 of changing out all of the ticket machines
13 and the gates at every garage and they are
14 paying for that.

15 MS. SCHUMACHER: So we have no
16 responsibility for any modifications to
17 those garages? I thought we did?

18 MR. EVANS: There is some things in
19 -- yeah, there is a couple of things written
20 in there. We have a grant that we have that
21 could be used for some of those repairs.

22 MS. SCHUMACHER: But how many of
23 what was in the legal notice today did you
24 see it?

25 MR. EVANS: No, I didn't see it.

1 MS. SCHUMACHER: No, I'd like to
2 know if there is an estimate of what that is
3 going to be in the budget this year. And,
4 also, Mr. Wechsler, when is that meeting?
5 We're almost through another month.

6 MR. WECHSLER: Yeah, I just got an
7 e-mail earlier this week that the day is
8 being firmed up so I will know something by
9 next week, we're just trying to get
10 everybody on the same page. I responded
11 that I was able to attend and there is some
12 people that they are still to waiting to
13 hear from so I'll have a better answer next
14 week. But there is a tentative date, but I
15 don't want to give out the tentative date.

16 MS. SCHUMACHER: Yeah, that's okay.
17 Okay, SAPA that included a lot on storm
18 water and regionalization, could we get
19 Mr. King in here to make a presentation to
20 us and update on what SAPA is doing with
21 respect to storm water?

22 MR. WECHSLER: I would think we are
23 going to be quite busy between now and the
24 end of the year getting the budget so it's
25 something that is probably going to have the

1 county come in with Mr. King, but I don't
2 see that happening between now and budget
3 time.

4 MS. SCHUMACHER: That's unfortunate.

5 MR. WECHSLER: I think the budget is
6 our main priority.

7 MS. SCHUMACHER: We're less than
8 five weeks away; right?

9 MR. WECHSLER: And speaking of the
10 budget, as you know, I track the property
11 sales and it was interesting, and I hope
12 that in his budget we will have -- we will
13 go to taxation or millage based on the total
14 assessment, there were two properties in
15 yesterday's -- I believe it was yesterday's
16 notices, total for both was \$16,000 and one
17 was 34 percent higher than the other
18 property because of the variations in the
19 land and the improvements. And, again, we
20 are the only municipality in the entire
21 county that splits. Every place I have ever
22 been when they did tax land differently it
23 was to induce people to develop it and so it
24 was worth doing but, you know, "A" nobody
25 really wants to develop very much here and

1 "B" there is not a lot of it out there, so I
2 would like a reason if it's not in the
3 budget why we are staying with the split.

4 MR. EVANS: I'll get a reason for
5 you because I have a discussed that
6 previously with the administration so I'll
7 definitely get that.

8 MS. SCHUMACHER: They -- what?

9 MR. EVANS: I'll get the reason for
10 you because I'm a proponent of doing exactly
11 that and I was told it could be more
12 difficult than we thought so I will find out
13 what the actual reasons are.

14 MS. SCHUMACHER: And have we waived
15 -- has the city waived the fees for the work
16 being done at Mr. Basalyga's establishment?
17 I go there every week and I have yet to see
18 a building permit posted.

19 MR. EVANS: I'm not aware of any
20 fees he paid.

21 MS. SCHUMACHER: I stopped in the
22 office and I asked if they had them there
23 and it was like no. So have they --

24 MR. WECHSLER: I'm not sure. In
25 fact, earlier on this year work was stopped

1 because there were no permits and they had
2 to get them so I don't know -- I know in the
3 spring or whenever, earlier this year, the
4 work was stopped and they had to get permits
5 I know that that happened.

6 MS. SCHUMACHER: Okay. I guess it's
7 a good place to stop. Thank you.

8 MR. WECHSLER: Anyone else?

9 MS. SEITZINGER: Good evening,
10 Council. Kara Seitzinger, City of Scranton
11 resident, member of the Greenridge
12 Neighborhood Association. I just want to
13 say we had a fabulous weekend in Greenridge.
14 I don't know, I didn't get to the festival
15 until like 3:00, my daughter came in from
16 college, I had to get her to the airport,
17 but we personally, the Neighborhood
18 Association last we got involved we didn't
19 do it for profit. We did it because it was
20 their first annual festival and we wanted to
21 be a presence there, so this year we wanted
22 something different to give the other
23 business owners to attract them to come and
24 maybe even invest in the city or in
25 Greenridge itself so he had a farmer who

1 just became a orchardist who made an apple
2 cider and it was unbelievable the amount of
3 money he made and he took that profit home.

4 We also last evening had many, many
5 people from the city, different parts of the
6 city, a lot from Greenridge, come out to the
7 meet the candidate night and I appreciate
8 very much the various neighborhood
9 presidents that came, the various residents
10 and the candidates who are running for
11 office and it was a good night and I think
12 it was a healthy exchange of ideas and
13 informative to everyone, but I don't think
14 that we should talk about politics at a
15 council meeting, so that's all I'm going to
16 say about that.

17 And then Tuesday came and I just --
18 I real briefly want to talk about Tuesday.
19 I think that you all could agree that I have
20 been here and I have talked both here at the
21 Scranton Sewer Authority town hall about
22 Glenn Street, about leachate, about
23 questions that we had about the Sewer
24 Authority deal. The Greenridge Neighborhood
25 Association in the past four years was

1 revived after Jim Dempsey died. We have
2 tried to help and cultivate a good exchange
3 of ideas and to help our neighbors and we
4 partnered with the business association and
5 Greenridge Little League to have an Easter
6 egg hunt, the Fall Fest, the Christmas event
7 and some people are saying that they didn't
8 know about contamination, and I'm going to
9 tell you that we did know about
10 contamination.

11 What we did know is that a neighbor,
12 young mother, brought her children to the
13 park on September 23. She sent me texts,
14 which she was standing on the top of the
15 mound of debris, it was pipes. I personally
16 showed them to Chief Graziano, he and Denny
17 Gallagher went there and they looked at it.

18 I'm going to take you back a month
19 to August when another member of the
20 Greenridge Neighborhood Association came to
21 my house on a Sunday morning and told me
22 that leachate ponds were being built on
23 Glenn Street. I didn't have the answers and
24 that's why I asked it both here and at the
25 Sewer Authority town hall, because we didn't

1 know it was being built at the time.

2 From that point, I took several
3 photos, I had looked at it, we don't know
4 what was dumped there. What we do know is
5 that Sewer Authority employee came to us and
6 told us that they personally on that site
7 with gloves going through contaminated land.
8 What we did is we handed it over to the DPW
9 and to the police chief. Mark Seitzinger is
10 not the mayor of the City of Scranton. I
11 think he made that clear. I'm not the mayor
12 of the City of Scranton. Jim Mulligan is
13 not the mayor of City of Scranton. It was
14 the former neighborhood association that
15 lead us into the leachate fight, we have
16 spent money and time and tirelessly we are
17 out there every day trying to make our city
18 better.

19 September 23 when we discovered the
20 dumping, September 24 we all went up there
21 and we cleaned that park, we didn't go near
22 the dumping because that was to be removed
23 by the Sewer Authority we were told on the
24 23rd. We went out and cut the bushes, did
25 the grass because as we have always said

1 good neighbors if you have a vacant lot
2 clean it up, it's help blight.

3 So I just wanted to just put it on
4 the record. We are not going to take the
5 wrap for this. We absolutely won't. And if
6 the city administration dropped the ball
7 that is not on the Greenridge Neighborhood
8 Association and I just would hope that you
9 gentlemen would look into it because we
10 welcome the park. We absolutely welcome it.
11 We are grateful for the money. We were a
12 little bit confused at the fact that there
13 was a press conference when we are holding
14 in our account, the Greenridge Neighborhood
15 account, a \$7,500 grant for that park from
16 the Lackawanna County commissioners and yet
17 we weren't told about the press conference,
18 and yet I received a phone call from a
19 Greenridge mother in my office around 11:30
20 saying, "Hey, come on out to Crowley Park,
21 there's a big announcement."

22 I asked her how she knew and she
23 told me a friend that I work with works for
24 Mayor Courtright and texted me, will I get
25 in trouble if I give her name? I said no,

1 and I will not give her name, but it's a
2 member of his cabinet. So that being said,
3 again, I just -- we really are not out to
4 hurt anybody, we are out to help people and
5 it takes a lot of time and lot of effort
6 that I certainly don't have. Thank you.

7 MR. WECHSLER: Anyone else?

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

9 MOTIONS.

10 MR. WECHSLER: Mr. Perry.

11 MR. PERRY: Yes, just a couple of
12 brief items. The Arcadis study was brought
13 up, I have haven't had a recent update on
14 that so if we can get something out to
15 Mr. Bulzoni and see if we have one or more
16 recent updates that we can share next time
17 it comes up, which I agree.

18 There were two issues that we were
19 working on last week, both we are waiting
20 for a resolution on, one was the Merrifield
21 situation, and the other one was the drain
22 grate that is on top of Elizabeth Street in
23 West Side by the Tripp Park area. And,
24 lastly, normally, I try not to get caught up
25 with he said/she said type of discussions

1 but this one seemed too serious and I just
2 didn't want to let it go, Mr. Ellman, I
3 think you actually touched on it today and
4 that was some of the speaker's claims last
5 week about Mr. Mulligan.

6 I don't agree that it was the right
7 forum to bring that up. It's definitely
8 not. This is about city business. He has
9 every right to defend himself if he wishes,
10 but he almost shouldn't have to, but it's
11 hard to defend yourself against something
12 that's already been said. Attorney Minora,
13 if you don't mind, I would just like your
14 help because Mr. Bolus last week said some
15 things and, you know, threw out some legal
16 codes and, you know, basically said
17 Mr. Mulligan did something illegal. I can't
18 say one way or the other, so if you could
19 just kind of help work with me with that
20 I'll get with you after and we'll just see
21 because I don't want this to go on any
22 further than it has to because I see it go
23 back and forth and, equally, if nothing
24 illegal was done then everyone needs to know
25 that as well. It should not go on week

1 after week because I can see this bubbling
2 up and I don't want it to.

3 MR. MINORA: Sure.

4 MR. PERRY: So normally I don't want
5 to get involved, like you said, Mr. Ellman,
6 I'm not sure, but it definitely wasn't the
7 right area for this, but if this is
8 something that's not going to be addressed
9 and put in bed there is something that's
10 going to go on and there is no need to, not
11 right now, not in this forum. And that's
12 all I have for tonight. Thank you.

13 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you, Mr. Perry.
14 Mr. Rogan?

15 MR. ROGAN: Yes, just two items
16 tonight. The first is, and we discussed
17 this a little bit in our caucus, the
18 property downtown that has been talked about
19 quite a bit, the city possibly may be
20 acquiring is still going to remain tabled,
21 as Councilman Wechsler mentioned, and I am
22 still looking into a way of putting that
23 property on the market to be developed with
24 the idea of the park being the last resort.
25 As I mentioned, I would really like to see

1 that land remain on the tax rolls and it is
2 a prime piece of downtown real estate that
3 hopefully can be developed, so that is
4 something I'm continuing to work on, as I
5 know Councilman Wechsler is working on the
6 DEP issues regarding that plot of land.

7 Secondly, regarding the Veterans
8 Memorial Park that was talked about the last
9 couple of weeks, we did receive
10 correspondence, two pieces of correspondence
11 on this actually, the first one was from Pat
12 Ahern just giving some additional
13 information about the project and I will
14 read that letter and then I will talk a
15 little bit more been the actions that the
16 city, OECD has taken on this as well, so
17 this was actually sent to the mayor's office
18 and they asked if city council was copied.

19 So it says, "The Veterans Committee
20 has been diligently working with Tom McLain,
21 our project architect, to get the best
22 design possible for the best cost, we have
23 made great progress. We have a great
24 desire, as you saw in our presentation. The
25 design, as it stands now, will be estimated

1 to cost in the \$450,000 range. McLain
2 Associates is working on a detailed cost and
3 spreadsheet for the plan. We already have
4 the land and the first \$100,000 to complete
5 Phase I so the total amount to finish the
6 project is around \$350,000. We could do
7 this in additional phases.

8 After Phase I, the park is ready for
9 visitors to enjoy the landscaping. Each
10 additional phase will add an educational
11 element to the park. We can add benches,
12 flag poles, pedestal leading station with
13 black granite plaques to educate the public.
14 We could have them monitored by security
15 cameras. We could add these one or more at
16 a time. While adding these items --" and
17 this is in bold -- "the park will continue
18 to be open. Many items in the phase depend
19 upon how much money is committed to spend.

20 All of these additional items we
21 refer to as the amenities of the park and
22 that would make it a true Veterans Memorial
23 Park. We appreciate your time and effort in
24 helping us complete this long, overdue
25 recognition of our brave men and women from

1 Scranton who sacrificed their lives in
2 defense of freedom."

3 Again, that was from Pat Ahern, who
4 was at our meeting a few weeks ago.

5 That was sent I believe it was
6 October 10. Also, the same day,
7 correspondence was drafted from the OECD
8 Office to HUD. As Linda Aebli mentioned at
9 our forum we had, there are a number of
10 regulations that there possibly need to be
11 some exceptions made to it in order to fund
12 this project. I'm not going to read through
13 this entire letter because it is about 10
14 pages long, but it does go through and asks
15 for that exemption. The letter from OECD
16 goes on and mentions that it was not in the
17 five-year consolidated plan, as Ms. Aebli
18 mentioned at our meeting, and it says in
19 good faith she agreed on council's request
20 to contact the HUD field office to discuss
21 and determine if there is something that our
22 office can do to assist with this activity.

23 Ms. Aebli does feel that this item
24 is not eligible, but it is going to HUD for
25 a review, so we will await to hear back from

1 HUD on this item and hopefully it is he will
2 begin and it can be funded. If not, I think
3 we should certainly be looking for other
4 ways of funding this project so it does
5 sound like it would be not only a great park
6 for the public to enjoy but something that
7 is educational as well. That is all for
8 tonight. Thank you.

9 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you, Mr. Rogan.
10 Mr. Evans?

11 MR. EVANS: Thank you, I'll be
12 brief, I promise. First of all, for the
13 record, this councilman found out about the
14 plans for Crowley Park when I read the news
15 story in the Scranton Times. That's the
16 first time I heard anything about it. Also,
17 it is my understanding that Mr. Chuck Volpe
18 will go to Court next week to challenge the
19 County's reassessment ballot question so
20 good luck to Mr. Volpe on that. In the
21 meantime, I'm going to continue to talk
22 about reassessment, but tonight I'm going to
23 talk about not the facts or the figures or
24 how much it's going to cost or not going to
25 cost you, I want to make appeal the voters

1 about this issue. Election Day is less than
2 four weeks away and the two days of
3 informational sessions are over. So here we
4 are at the crossroads of our decision making
5 process, and I want voters to know that the
6 despite a complicated ballot question
7 crafted to drive a "no" vote the question of
8 should the county do a reassessment really
9 isn't that complicated. If you vote "yes"
10 for reassessment, you are voting for tax
11 equity on every property and for every
12 property owner in Lackawanna County. It
13 can't get much simpler than that. If you
14 vote "no", you are voting for the status
15 quo, which is a broken system of tax
16 inequity. It is a system that for decades
17 favored the rich and the connected while the
18 not so rich, the senior citizens and the
19 less connected, just continue to do what
20 they have always done, not complain and pay
21 what they thought was there fair share,
22 never appealing an assessment that hadn't
23 changed in over 50 years.

24 I think we all know what the right
25 thing is, but by crafting this question and

1 placing that it on the ballot there are
2 those that are trying to divide the voters
3 in an attempt to avoid doing what is clearly
4 their responsibility, so when it comes time
5 to vote on reassessment don't vote your own
6 self-interest. Don't vote out of fear of
7 the unknown, and don't vote out of fear for
8 change because sometimes you just have to do
9 what you think is the right thing to do so
10 I'm asking you on Election Day, less than
11 four weeks ago away, to vote "yes" for
12 reassessment. That's all I have tonight.
13 Thank you.

14 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you, Mr. Evans.
15 Just to touch on the meeting that was held
16 yesterday, there was a meeting with Business
17 Administrator Bulzoni, George Kelly from the
18 County and representatives from DEP, Leslie
19 Collins from Scranton Tomorrow, Mrs. Reed,
20 and Denny Gallagher, and myself attended the
21 meeting. The meeting basically was to get
22 an understanding of the County's role in
23 establishing remediation efforts at the
24 Wyoming Avenue site. What we have learned
25 is that there is really to forms of

1 remediation, one would be to remediate the
2 property for residential use and the other
3 remediation would be anything else,
4 including the green space and earth
5 building.

6 The County has taken on the
7 responsibility of working with an
8 engineering firm who is in contact with the
9 Environmental Protection Agency and they are
10 determining what type of remediation has to
11 be done at that site. At the end of that
12 study, we will have a number that will say
13 remediation for a green space is "X" dollars
14 and remediation for a commercial site is "Y"
15 dollars. Somewhere in-between, we have will
16 those numbers so we can make a final
17 determination on to whether to proceed on a
18 green space for that area, or has been
19 suggested, do we keep considering it for
20 commercial property.

21 The feedback I got from the meeting
22 was that the state -- the state itself was
23 more invested in returning these brown
24 fields to green space. There is a demand
25 for green space in the area, but for us to

1 do our due diligence, as Councilman Rogan
2 has asked us to do, we are going to proceed
3 to make sure that we make a true
4 determination on the cost of the medication
5 that would make the decision for that
6 property.

7 While we were at that meeting, I
8 also discussed the PPL project on West
9 Mountain, there has been some questions
10 about that. After some conversations, what
11 we found out is that the County Conservation
12 District has been really responsible for
13 monitoring and the plans. Director
14 Gallagher was on site, he has seen the
15 system of retention ponds that have been
16 developed on the West Mountain according to
17 him. It's a quite sophisticated labyrinth
18 of retention ponds to keep the water on that
19 mountain so we will be in contact with the
20 County Conservation District to see what
21 input they have, but the feeling right now
22 that the PPL is proceeding with that project
23 in accordance with the county and federal
24 standards.

25 Yesterday we received a contract

1 that's going to be awarded to LaBella
2 Company, they are going to do an analysis on
3 the material that was found out on Crowley
4 Park. They are going to work on that for a
5 fee of \$1,950 and they are going to review
6 with different stakeholders to gather
7 information on how the material got there,
8 who put it there, what kind of material it
9 is and they will make a determination on
10 whether -- if it's hazardous or not then it
11 will be dealt with in a manner to correct
12 the condition that it's in, so that is
13 something that should give everyone ease,
14 hopefully it's not contaminated material,
15 hopefully it's just clean fill that was used
16 and the project can move on.

17 Just one more announcement. I'm not
18 a good reader of the legal notices as
19 Mr. Lockwood is and Ms. Schumacher is, but I
20 just want to read this. People that
21 interested in attending Sewer Authority
22 meetings, the notice was posted that the
23 remaining regular meetings of the Board of
24 the Scranton Sewer Authority of Scranton for
25 calendar year 2017 they have moved them from

1 Fridays. Currently right now they are going
2 to be held on the third Thursday of each
3 month that shall be held as follows:

4 Thursday, October 19, Thursday,
5 November 16, and Thursday, December 14, at 4
6 p.m. in the Governor's Room. So if you are
7 interested in attending Sewer Authority
8 meetings they are now going to be the third
9 Thursday at 4 p.m. in the Governor's Room.
10 That's all I have.

11 MS. REED: 5-B. FOR INTRODUCTION -
12 A RESOLUTION - APPOINTMENT OF REV. REBECCA
13 A. BARNES, 801 WHEELER AVENUE, SCRANTON,
14 PENNSYLVANIA, 18510, AS A MEMBER OF THE
15 HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION, EFFECTIVE
16 OCTOBER 3, 2017. REV. REBECCA A. BARNES
17 WILL BE REPLACING ROBERT JOHNS WHO RESIGNED
18 ON SEPTEMBER 7, 2017. REV. BARNES WILL FILL
19 THE UNEXPIRED TERM OF ROBERT JOHNS WHICH IS
20 SCHEDULED TO EXPIRE ON AUGUST 24, 2018.

21 MR. WECHSLER: At this time, I'll
22 entertain a motion that Item 5-B be
23 introduced into its proper committee.

24 MR. ROGAN: So moved.

25 MR. EVANS: Second.

1 MR. WECHSLER: On the question? I
2 have become quite good friends with Reverend
3 Barnes is an asset to our community and she
4 will be an asset to this committee.

5 All those in favor of introduction
6 signify by saying aye.

7 MR. PERRY: Aye.

8 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

9 MR. EVANS: Aye.

10 MR. WECHSLER: Aye. Opposed? The
11 ayes have it and so moved.

12 MS. REED: 5-C. FOR INTRODUCTION -
13 A RESOLUTION - AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND
14 OTHER APPROPRIATE CITY OFFICIALS FOR THE
15 CITY OF SCRANTON TO ENTER INTO A LOAN TO
16 GRANT AGREEMENT AND MAKE A LOAN/GRANT FROM
17 THE CITY OF SCRANTON BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY
18 LOAN/GRANT PROGRAM FOR PROJECT NO.150.41 IN
19 AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$25,000.00 TO THE
20 BHUTANESE CULTURAL FOUNDATION OF SCRANTON
21 ASSOCIATION (BCFSA) TO ASSIST AN ELIGIBLE
22 PROJECT.

23 MR. WECHSLER: At this time, I'll
24 entertain a motion that Item 5-C be
25 introduced into its proper committee.

1 MR. ROGAN: So moved.

2 MR. EVANS: Second.

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

6 MR. PERRY: Aye.

7 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

8 MR. WECHSLER: Aye. Opposed?

9 MR. EVANS: I abstain.

10 MR. WECHSLER: The ayes have it and
11 so moved.

12 MS. REED: 5-D. FOR INTRODUCTION – A
13 RESOLUTION – AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND
14 OTHER APPROPRIATE CITY OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE
15 AND ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT FOR THE
16 COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT BY AND
17 BETWEEN THE CITY OF SCRANTON (“CITY”), NDC,
18 ABM AND TEAMSTERS LOCAL 229 (“THE UNION”) IN
19 ACCORDANCE WITH THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS SET
20 FORTH IN THE AGREEMENT WITH AN EFFECTIVE
21 DATE OF JANUARY 1, 2017, AND RATIFIED BY THE
22 MEMBERSHIP.

23 MR. WECHSLER: At this time, I'll
24 entertain a motion that Item 5-D be
25 introduced into its proper committee.

1 MR. ROGAN: So moved.

2 MR. EVANS: Second.

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

6 MR. PERRY: Aye.

7 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

8 MR. EVANS: Aye.

9 MR. WECHSLER: Aye. Opposed? The
10 ayes have it and so moved.

11 MS. REED: SIXTH ORDER. 6-A. NO
12 BUSINESS AT THIS TIME.

13 SEVENTH ORDER. 7-A. FOR
14 CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC
15 WORKS - FOR ADOPTION - RESOLUTION NO. 197,
16 2017- AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND OTHER
17 APPROPRIATE CITY OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE AND
18 ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH MCCARTHY TIRE
19 SERVICE TO PROVIDE NEW TIRES FOR CITY OWNED
20 VEHICLES FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2018
21 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2018.

22 MR. WECHSLER: What is the
23 recommendation of the Chairperson for the
24 Committee on Public Works?

25 MR. PERRY: As temporary Chair for

1 the Committee on Public Works, I recommend
2 final passage of Item 7-A.

3 MR. ROGAN: Second.

4 MR. WECHSLER: On the question?
5 Roll call, please?

6 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Perry.

7 MR. PERRY: Yes.

8 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

9 MR. ROGAN: Yes.

10 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

11 MR. EVANS: Yes.

12 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

13 MR. WECHSLER: Yes. I hereby
14 declare Item 7-A legally and lawfully
15 adopted.

16 MS. REED: 7-B. FOR CONSIDERATION BY
17 THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS - FOR
18 ADOPTION - RESOLUTION NO. 198, 2017 -
19 AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND OTHER APPROPRIATE
20 CITY OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE AND ENTER INTO A
21 CONTRACT WITH DENAPLES TOWING, INC. TO
22 PROVIDE TOWING SERVICES FOR CITY OWNED
23 VEHICLES FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2018
24 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2018.

25 MR. WECHSLER: What is the

1 recommendation of the Chairperson for the
2 Committee on Public Works?

3 MR. PERRY: As temporary Chair for
4 the Committee on Public Works, I recommend
5 final passage of Item 7-B.

6 MR. ROGAN: Second.

7 MR. WECHSLER: On the question?
8 Roll call, please?

9 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Perry.

10 MR. PERRY: Yes.

11 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

12 MR. ROGAN: Yes.

13 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

14 MR. EVANS: Yes.

15 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

16 MR. WECHSLER: Yes. I hereby
17 declare Item 7-B legally and lawfully
18 adopted.

19 MS. REED: 7-C. FOR CONSIDERATION
20 BY THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS - FOR
21 ADOPTION - RESOLUTION NO. 199, 2017 -
22 AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND OTHER APPROPRIATE
23 CITY OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE AND ENTER INTO A
24 CONTRACT WITH THE GOODYEAR TIRE AND RUBBER
25 COMPANY TO PROVIDE RETREAD TIRES FOR CITY

1 OWNED VEHICLES FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1,
2 2018 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2018.

3 MR. WECHSLER: What is the
4 recommendation of the Chairperson for the
5 Committee on Public Works?

6 MR. PERRY: As temporary Chair for
7 the Committee on Public Works, I recommend
8 final passage of Item 7-C.

9 MR. ROGAN: Second.

10 MR. WECHSLER: On the question?
11 Roll call, please?

12 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Perry.

13 MR. PERRY: Yes.

14 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

15 MR. ROGAN: Yes.

16 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

17 MR. EVANS: Yes.

18 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

19 MR. WECHSLER: Yes. I hereby
20 declare Item 7-C legally and lawfully
21 adopted.

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

24 MR. ROGAN: Motion to adjourn.

25 MR. WECHSLER: Meeting adjourned.

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I hereby certify that the proceedings and evidence are contained fully and accurately in the notes of testimony taken by me at the hearing of the above-captioned matter and that the foregoing is a true and correct transcript of the same to the best of my ability.

CATHENE S. NARDOZZI, RPR
OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER