

1 SCRANTON CITY COUNCIL

2 PUBLIC HEARING

3
4 IN RE: AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND OTHER APPROPRIATE
5 OFFICIALS OF THE CITY OF SCRANTON TO TAKE ALL NECESSARY
6 ACTIONS TO IMPLEMENT THE CONSOLIDATED SUBMISSION FOR
7 COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS TO BE
8 FUNDED UNDER THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT
9 (CDBG) PROGRAM, HOME INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP (HOME)
10 PROGRAM AND EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS GRANTS (ESG) PROGRAM
11 FOR THE PERIOD BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2018.

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14 HELD:

15
16 Thursday, September 28, 2017

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18 LOCATION:

19 Council Chambers
20 Scranton City Hall
21 340 North Washington Avenue
22 Scranton, Pennsylvania

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25 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

TIM PERRY
(Not Present)

LORI REED, CITY CLERK

KATHY CARRERA, ASSISTANT CITY CLERK

JOSEPH COLBASSANI, SOLICITOR

1 MR. WECHSLER: I'd like to call this
2 public hearing to order. Roll call, please.

3 MR. WECHSLER: Roll call, please.

4 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Perry. Mr. Rogan.

5 MR. ROGAN: Here.

6 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

7 MR. EVANS: Here.

8 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

9 MR. GAUGHAN: Here.

10 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

11 MR. WECHSLER: Here.

12 MS. REED: The purpose of said
13 public hearing is to hear testimony and
14 discuss the follow: AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR
15 AND OTHER APPROPRIATE OFFICIALS OF THE CITY
16 OF SCRANTON TO TAKE ALL NECESSARY ACTIONS
17 TO IMPLEMENT THE CONSOLIDATED SUBMISSION FOR
18 COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS
19 TO BE FUNDED UNDER THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
20 BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) PROGRAM, HOME INVESTMENT
21 PARTNERSHIP (HOME) PROGRAM AND EMERGENCY
22 SOLUTIONS GRANTS (ESG) PROGRAM FOR THE
23 PERIOD BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2018.

24 MR. WECHSLER: I'd like to thank
25 OECD members for attending this evenings

1 public hearing. Linda Aebli, Tom Preambo
2 and Attorney Sean Gallagher. Mrs. Aebli
3 will present OECD's 2018 Action Plan.

4 Linda?

5 MS. AEBLI: Thank you. Thank, city
6 council, for having us this evening. It's
7 very difficult -- we received \$5.4 million
8 in applications and we are only getting
9 estimating -- I'm sorry, we are only
10 estimating that we probably will get \$2.2
11 million so there is a lot of hard decisions
12 to make and we had to look at what our high
13 priority needs were in our five-year
14 consolidated plan.

15 I provided city council with an
16 explanation of why we funded certain items
17 and, of course, the neighborhood police
18 patrol is always a hot item. Everybody
19 loves the neighborhood police patrol. The
20 West Side West Scranton reconstruction of
21 roads we are joining with the West Side
22 Revitalization. They received \$2.5 million
23 to redevelop a portion of west -- Main
24 Avenue in West Side, so when that job is
25 completed the city will go in, it's a

1 low-mod area and we will do the roads and
2 the sidewalks. We felt that was a good
3 project to do. Of course, our
4 reconstruction of roads with handicap curb
5 cuts is always popular.

6 The fire engine. We are been
7 funding the fire engine for the last --
8 since 2015 and the Fire Department
9 accidently put \$150,000 in and the last
10 payment is only \$50,000 so that's why we
11 just funded it for \$50,000.

12 The McLain Park, we funded that and
13 that's also a high priority. In 2017 it was
14 awarded \$150,000 and this year they
15 requested 200, so with the 150 and another
16 \$100,000 we thought we could do a good
17 project for \$250,000. The Owner Occupied
18 Housing Rehab Program, we usually fund this
19 under the HOME program, however, what we are
20 finding a lot of people need emergency
21 housing, new furnaces, you know, new
22 chimneys, like, emergency work to do right
23 away, but under the HOME program you cannot
24 do emergency work, you have to bring the
25 whole home up to code, so that's why we

1 thought we would fund \$75,000 for the
2 emergency housing.

3 Demolition we still have
4 approximately \$80,000 from last year so we
5 funded that for 25 so that would give them
6 \$100,000.

7 The Arc is a new application, they
8 own a property and they want to make I
9 believe it's a handicapped porch. Wasn't it
10 a handicapped porch?

11 MR. PREAMBO: Yes.

12 MS. AEBLI: NEPA Shelters also is a
13 new application, and we like to get new
14 applications that we are not funding
15 everybody the same years. They want to put
16 ADA compliant on a property on Wyoming
17 Avenue.

18 Center for Independent Living is
19 also a new project that we fund and that's
20 also a public service. We can't go over,
21 and I believe I have it marked. No, I
22 don't. I think \$350,000 for the public
23 service cap. Any questions do you have?

24 MR. ROGAN: A few here. A few that
25 we talked about already, Mr. Preambo and Ms.

1 Aebli, to start one that you mentioned is
2 one the most popular items on this list it's
3 the paving. Could you talk a little bit
4 more about the paving. The paving list, how
5 much has been done over the years?

6 MS. AEBLI: Tom could probably
7 answer that better than me.

8 MR. PREAMBO: Sure. That's a very
9 good question, Councilman Rogan. Actually,
10 the City of Scranton and the OECD Office
11 spends a substantial amount of it's money
12 each year on reconstruction of roads which
13 includes handicapped accessible curb cuts.
14 I actually have the information, some of
15 it's in my head so just bear with me if I
16 have to look at my paper, but in the last
17 seven years we have spent approximately \$7.6
18 million on road construction and that
19 includes 415 city blocks and 137 new
20 handicap ADA accessible curb cuts. The \$7.6
21 million does not include the administration
22 and engineering services. That would also
23 be an additional cost, okay?

24 MR. ROGAN: I think for all of us up
25 here one of the biggest complaints we always

1 receive is the conditions of the road in the
2 city and they have been improving so it's
3 out there so the public knows how much has
4 been spent for block grant money in low to
5 moderate income areas on these programs.

6 Secondly is the \$261,000 for four
7 police officers, and I know the answer to
8 the question but just so the public knows as
9 well, because we do get questions on why
10 these officers can only go on certain areas
11 the city. So could you address that more
12 for the public than for the council?

13 MS. AEBLI: Yeah, the national
14 objective they only can go into low and mod
15 income areas with a census track of 51
16 percent low-mod so, I mean, that's how it's
17 eligible.

18 MR. ROGAN: Two more questions then
19 I'm done. I lost my place here, I
20 apologize. And, again, this one we have
21 spoken about this, but again just for the
22 public I already have some individuals that
23 mentioned this to us, Post 25 VFW there was
24 an application put in for Phase II of a
25 memorial park and it wasn't funded. Can you

1 explain, again, for the public why that
2 wasn't.

3 MS. AEBLI: Yeah, this was the most
4 difficult and agonizing one that we had. We
5 looked at it very closely and the number one
6 reason, as you know every five years we do
7 our five-year consolidated plan and we have
8 to report to HUD what activities we are
9 going to do for the next five years. This
10 activity, and I don't mean the exact
11 activity, like, the overall. Like, we
12 include paving, homeless, you know, items
13 like that, but a memorial park is not
14 included in our consolidated plan, so it
15 would not be eligible.

16 MR. ROGAN: So if council wanted to
17 fund this project in the future we first
18 have to go out to the consolidated plan --

19 MS. AEBLI: Correct, and then HUD
20 would have to approve it. However, you have
21 to be careful of monument parks because
22 monuments are statutes, monuments they are
23 only eligible as an ornamental, like, just a
24 piece of the project not the whole think.

25 MR. ROGAN: So we can't use -- and,

1 again, this is little off topic, but myself
2 and Councilman Wechsler were speaking about
3 during the week we couldn't use these funds
4 for the Duffy monument as well when the
5 Duffy park reopens.

6 MS. AEBLI: I don't know if that's
7 low income.

8 MR. ROGAN: Again, yeah, same thing.

9 MS. AEBLI: I'd have to see the --
10 no, just to do that, no.

11 MR. ROGAN: Right. And then the
12 last question, I do see that there is still
13 \$80,000 left in demolition of hazardous
14 structures, is there anything that needs to
15 be done on council's end to get that money
16 moving because there is certainly not a lack
17 of properties that need to be demolished in
18 the city.

19 MR. PREAMBO: Councilman Rogan, I
20 don't mean to interrupt you, for reference
21 point the \$80,000 is from last year 2016's
22 allocation, 2017 is for \$200,000 and it
23 hasn't arrived yet.

24 MR. ROGAN: Okay.

25 MR. WECHSLER: Yeah, I would like to

1 touch base on that, the fact that we went
2 through this last year and we have not
3 received any money if you could just go that
4 little bit.

5 MS. AEBLI: Yes, I went to the HUD's
6 annual meeting last week in Philadelphia and
7 that was the hot topic, where is our money?
8 And it's just not the City of Scranton and
9 HUD has not received it yet. Congress has
10 not appropriated the money. They told us
11 what we are going to get, but they have not
12 signed off on it and we have not received
13 even our contracts yet.

14 MR. WECHSLER: So everything that
15 was approved last year nothing has happened
16 with that because of money?

17 MS. AEBLI: Yeah, and it sort of
18 feels silly here I'm going forward with the
19 2018 and we didn't get the 2017 yet. And
20 the one other question that was asked when I
21 was at HUD, you have heard me talk about our
22 timeliness, November 2 is our timeliness
23 deadline, if we get our allocation say the
24 third week of October we won't be timely, so
25 I can't see us getting it before November 2.

1 I could be wrong, but --

2 MR. WECHSLER: So the biggest impact
3 on that right now is the paving that was --

4 MS. AEBLI: The paving right.

5 MR. WECHSLER: -- unlikely to occur.

6 MS. AEBLI: We bid it out, the
7 contracts were ready, but we cannot move
8 forward until we get the money.

9 MR. WECHSLER: And the holdup is in
10 Congress, is that where the hold up is?

11 MS. AEBLI: And many of the cities
12 reach out to their congressmen and senators
13 and they just haven't signed off on it yet.

14 MR. ROGAN: And that's something I
15 am going to mention in the regular meeting
16 that we send a letter to Senator Casey,
17 Senator Toomey and Congressman Cartright,
18 and for the public watching it's important
19 to contact your congressmen and senators and
20 urge them to continue to support CDBG
21 funding.

22 MS. AEBLI: Right.

23 MR. ROGAN: Because, as you can see,
24 this is money that really goes right back
25 into the neighborhoods to help the

1 residents, whether it's police patrols,
2 paying, a number of these organizations, so
3 it's very important, it's something that the
4 city really depends on. Thank you.

5 MR. PREAMBO: Excuse me one second,
6 just a correction to what I said, it's not
7 \$200,000. We submitted \$200,000 and council
8 adjusted it to 150,000, so there is 150 for
9 the 2017. I just remembered that as we were
10 talking.

11 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, I have a few
12 questions, thank you. First question is
13 about the Scranton Veteran's Memorial Park
14 that you just mentioned we won't be able to
15 fund. Did anyone from OECD have any
16 conversations or consult with anyone from
17 the VFW prior to them submitting their
18 applications.

19 MS. AEBLI: Yes. I talked to Paul
20 Ahern, he came into my office and he said
21 \$289,000. Well, we only get \$2.2 million.
22 I told him most likely he would not get that
23 amount of money. I also asked him how much
24 the school district, because it is on school
25 district land, they did not submit an

1 agreement between the school district and
2 them in their application. They were not --
3 the school district was not going to put any
4 one dollar.

5 MR. GAUGHAN: Were they made aware
6 that their activity wasn't going to be
7 consistent with the five-year plan?

8 MS. AEBLI: No, not at the time
9 because I didn't know until they got their
10 application. I did tell them to submit it
11 and we would have to look at the whole
12 picture.

13 MR. GAUGHAN: The demolition
14 application I was just reviewing it earlier,
15 is there a list of potential properties that
16 are supposed to be demolished because I
17 didn't see it in the application?

18 MS. AEBLI: They are not in t he
19 application. We just -- when they submit
20 the application -- when Licensing and
21 Permits submits the application they just
22 submit for the funding.

23 MR. GAUGHAN: Okay.

24 MS. AEBLI: And the Licensing and
25 Permits have to do their -- all of their

1 legal on each property to see if they are
2 eligible.

3 MR. GAUGHAN: Right. What I'm --

4 MS. AEBLI: They may have a
5 potential list, but I do not have that.

6 MR. GAUGHAN: Okay, what I was
7 trying to understand is if they submit the
8 application, and they are asking for \$25,000
9 how do you know what to fund them for
10 exactly if you don't have a list of
11 properties and any like backup
12 documentation?

13 MS. AEBLI: We usually fund maybe --
14 we usually bid out ten properties at a time
15 and then they bid on each individual
16 property and then if we don't have enough
17 money we knock the amount -- you know,
18 certain properties off.

19 MR. GAUGHAN: Okay, so the \$25,000
20 they are asking for that's just based on a
21 list that they have or proposed list but
22 they don't include it in the application?

23 MS. AEBLI: Go ahead, Tom.

24 MR. PREAMBO: Just as an accurate
25 reference, they asked for \$800,000, Linda

1 allocated \$25,000 extra --

2 MR. GAUGHAN: Right.

3 MR. PREAMBO: -- because there is
4 \$150,000 that's left, but, yes, to answer
5 your question we don't know the properties,
6 they don't provide that.

7 MR. GAUGHAN: Okay. Thank you. The
8 Rental Rehab Program that you have funded
9 here for \$97,500 can you just explain the
10 basis for creating it, because this is a new
11 program apparently, can you explain the
12 basis for creating that program and what
13 data did you use to determine the need for
14 that specific amount of funding?

15 MS. AEBLI: In 2017 -- did we fund
16 it in 2017? No, '16. We have \$50,000 from
17 a previous year and we are still looking for
18 a good landlord to be our pilot program, and
19 the rental rehab program was very popular
20 back in the 90's when I first started with
21 OECD and then they discontinued it, HUD
22 discontinued the funding, but I thought it
23 was a very good program because the
24 landlords are putting some of their money
25 into it. We do up to four units right now

1 until we get it all started. We will match
2 the property owners \$10,000, ten and ten in
3 each unit. If there is lead base paint in
4 there we will provide them another \$2,500.
5 They have to rent it to income eligible
6 people under the 60 percent median income
7 and also there is rent controls. We felt --
8 I felt it was a good program because I feel
9 like there is lot of rental properties that
10 have lead base paint, number one, and they
11 need fixing up just like the single family
12 homes.

13 MR. GAUGHAN: Okay. If someone
14 participates in this program and the project
15 is complete and then later the owner of the
16 property converts it to a single residential
17 use, how is that monitored by your staff and
18 what effect does that have with the program
19 funds?

20 MS. AEBLI: We have to -- well,
21 number one, there will be a lean on the
22 property. It will either be probably a ten
23 or 15 year lean. We have to monitor every
24 one or two years who -- all of the tenant's
25 incomes, so we monitor the whole project for

1 the life of the lien.

2 MR. GAUGHAN: Okay, so they will
3 have to submit documentation every so often?

4 MS. AEBLI: Um-hum. It's just like
5 when we did Skyview apartments. I still
6 have to get the annual housing reports from
7 them and all of their incomes.

8 MR. GAUGHAN: So the tenant has to
9 be low to moderate income.

10 MS. AEBLI: At 60 percent; correct.

11 MR. GAUGHAN: Okay. If a tenant
12 moves, who is going to be -- who is going to
13 check to see if the new tenant coming is a
14 low to moderate income?

15 MS. AEBLI: We monitor it. That
16 will be in our agreement.

17 MR. GAUGHAN: So will have to submit
18 something?

19 MS. AEBLI: Um-hum.

20 MR. GAUGHAN: And one last question,
21 the Center for Independent Living is getting
22 \$5,000. In the description it says that
23 OECD must be very cautious with his activity
24 that we are only serving Scranton residents.
25 Can you explain this and how do you monitor

1 that?

2 MS. AEBLI: Do you want to answer
3 that one?

4 MR. PREAMBO: You might want to.

5 MS. AEBLI: We funded the Friendship
6 House and we learned from there a lot of
7 families are from outside of the area, so we
8 only can fund, even though they are in this
9 program and the building is located in
10 Scranton, we only could fund the portion
11 that are Scranton residents. Does that make
12 sense to you?

13 MR. GAUGHAN: That makes sense. I'm
14 just curious how you do that?

15 MS. AEBLI: Well, we are going to
16 have to work with them very carefully. We
17 didn't get to that point yet.

18 MR. GAUGHAN: All right. That's all
19 I have. Thank you very much.

20 MR. EVANS: A couple of questions.
21 The First Time Homebuyers Program is funded
22 at \$75,000 this year. Is there carry over
23 from last year as far as money that was
24 unspent?

25 MS. AEBLI: I'm sorry, what?

1 MR. EVANS: Was there a carryover
2 from last year, any money that was unspent?

3 MS. AEBLI: I don't even know the
4 number off the top of my head.

5 MR. EVANS: Do you know how many
6 applications there were last year, I should
7 say 2016 and 2017 year-to-date.

8 MS. AEBLI: I can get that
9 information for you.

10 MR. EVANS: Can you explain a little
11 bit of the rehab program for the homeowners?

12 MS. AEBLI: For the HOME program.

13 MR. EVANS: The Homeowner Housing
14 Rehab Program.

15 MS. AEBLI: Yes, single family only
16 under the HOME program. They have to be
17 under the 80 percent median income, their
18 taxes have to be paid, their garbage, all of
19 their utilities. Then we go in and the one
20 thing we are finding very hard under the
21 HOME program, and this is one of the reasons
22 I created the rental rehab is it has to be
23 brought up to code, and these homes I feel
24 we're putting too much money into. \$70,000,
25 but we have to -- but how do you turn them

1 away? We have to bring the house up to code
2 or it's not eligible for HOME funding. So
3 we are finding it very difficult that
4 program.

5 MR. EVANS: So somebody is eligible
6 if they are up to 80 of the median income,
7 why is only 50 percent in the rental rehab
8 then? Is there a reason for that?

9 MS. AEBLI: The rentals are
10 different. Rental rehab is different.

11 MR. EVANS: I know it's a different
12 program, but is that a HUD initiative --

13 MS. AEBLI: Yes.

14 MR. EVANS: -- that says 80 percent?
15 It's not policy of the office?

16 MS. AEBLI: No, that's a HUD reg.

17 MR. EVANS: One quick question on --
18 there was a proposed for half a million
19 dollars for the Economic Development
20 Activities, what was funded was \$75,000, is
21 there a rationale why that was reduced to
22 that amount because had I think is the only
23 location -- the only application is to hire
24 a program that addresses economic
25 development.

1 MS. AEBLI: Probably the main reason
2 is because when you -- you get \$5.5 million
3 we have to reduce it.

4 MR. EVANS: I understand that but, I
5 mean, we have \$2.2 million and we are only
6 allocating \$75,000 for economic development,
7 I think that's certainly on the low end.

8 MR. PREAMBO: Are you ready for a
9 zinger?

10 MR. EVANS: Yeah, give it to me.

11 MR. PREAMBO: I actually have -- we
12 actually have a little over \$1 million
13 available.

14 MR. EVANS: Seriously?

15 MR. PREAMBO: Yes.

16 MR. EVANS: Okay. Good to know.

17 MR. PREAMBO: \$300,000 is only a 4
18 percent loan.

19 MR. EVANS: All right.

20 MR. PREAMBO: The balance could be a
21 loan to grant through our Business and
22 Industry Loan and Grant Program, so that was
23 the rationale to answer your question,
24 Councilman Evans.

25 MR. EVANS: Which is certainly

1 justified and it's a great program so I
2 think we need to do a better job, all of us,
3 to beat the bushes and get people applying
4 for the grant to loan program -- the loan to
5 grant program.

6 MR. PREAMBO: We have quite a bit of
7 interest. We have quite a bit in the boiler
8 room right now that we are working on. Over
9 the past couple of years, we have actually
10 done quite a substantial amount of money.
11 We have actually spent in the last three
12 years \$514,000s in a loan to grant program
13 and that was to assist five local businesses
14 in the city, two of which -- actually three
15 of which are new businesses to Scranton that
16 came from a existing location outside of
17 Scranton and they came into Scranton, and
18 one of the biggest attractions was the loan
19 to grant program.

20 MR. EVANS: Exactly.

21 MR. PREAMBO: So there is quite of
22 bit of success. It was \$514,000 and that
23 secured by commitment 18 full-time
24 equivalent jobs plus there was a fallout to
25 that, we actually got a few more.

1 MR. EVANS: All right. Very good.
2 That's all I have for now.

3 MR. GAUGHAN: I just have one
4 additional question, and I think you did
5 address this last year, but I just want to
6 revisit this for a moment, you're scoring
7 these applications, so you have a process in
8 place where you go through and you score
9 each one of them according to some criteria,
10 so the Licensing and Inspections Department
11 submits the application for demolition of
12 the hazardous structures. It says that the
13 OECD score is 70 percent. Why is that?

14 MS. AEBLI: Well, we funded it,
15 number one, because it's a high priority.
16 Some of the applications aren't filled out
17 like we would like them.

18 MR. GAUGHAN: I have to be honest
19 with you, I have this application form in
20 front of me right now and I don't
21 understand, there is no backup to it. I
22 mean, it's -- I don't know, I don't get it
23 and it's a city department so how can they
24 fill the application out and get 100 percent
25 on it. That's what I don't get.

1 MS. AEBLI: I didn't get them 100
2 percent.

3 MR. GAUGHAN: No, I know.

4 MS. AEBLI; that's why they didn't
5 get 100 percent.

6 MR. GAUGHAN: Right.

7 MS. AEBLI: But it is a high
8 priority need.

9 MR. GAUGHAN: Well, what I would
10 like to see personally is when they are
11 going to submit an application it says,
12 "Location of proposed project? Throughout
13 the city."

14 Well, they have to be a little more
15 specific, I think, with what properties are
16 going to be demolished and what -- and they
17 intend to this money to demolish properties
18 and you said they have a proposed list.

19 MS. AEBLI: But legally they don't
20 know which ones they are -- that are going
21 to be ready to go.

22 MR. GAUGHAN: Right.

23 MS. AEBLI: Because we do title
24 searches. We have to contact all of the
25 property owners. After we get the title

1 searches we have to contact -- write letters
2 to everyone that has a lien on the property,
3 so at the time of the application we don't
4 have all of that.

5 MR. GAUGHAN: All right. Thank you.

6 MS. AEBLI: So that's why you are
7 just funding the funds for now and then we
8 do all of the legal after.

9 MR. GAUGHAN: Okay, thank you.

10 MS. AEBLI: The one thing I want to
11 go back to is the economic development, as
12 Tom said we have over a million dollars. We
13 met with the Economic Development
14 Administration about a month ago?

15 MR. PREAMBO: Yes.

16 MS. AEBLI: And their program, and
17 their program and we asked them -- I asked
18 them about six months ago if we could turn
19 it into a loan to grant program and they
20 said no, we have to keep it at 4 percent
21 interest. What would you do, go with the
22 loan to grant program or the 4 percent? So
23 what we are doing is, I am in the process I
24 did it yesterday, I'm writing to all of the
25 banks and the ones that have like they could

1 get the loan at the bank but they might have
2 just a little squeak there, like, more
3 something wrong with their credit or
4 anything, EDA said they are the ones that
5 they like to fund, more a high risk. So
6 that's why we are looking at that. That's
7 why we have I think \$300,000 in that.

8 MR. EVANS: Is HUD saying that on a
9 going forward basis?

10 MS. AEBLI: That's EDA.

11 MS. EVANS: It's what?

12 MS. AEBLI: It's Economic
13 Development Administration.

14 MR. EVANS: Okay. Now, the money
15 that you mentioned before, the million
16 dollars plus --

17 MS. AEBLI: That's HUD.

18 MR. EVANS: That could still be used
19 for the loan to grant; right?

20 MS. PREAMBO: The \$300,000 EDA funds
21 is included in that.

22 MR. EVANS: Included in that.

23 MS. AEBLI: Right.

24 MR. WECHSLER: We do have a few
25 people who signed in. If you are not signed

1 in you can still speak once we completed the
2 sign-in list, so I'll just go through this
3 as they signed in. First name on here is
4 Patrick Ahern.

5 MR. AHERN: Good evening, city
6 council, and ladies and gentlemen, good
7 evening. My name is Patrick Ahern, I'm a
8 volunteer with the VFW Post 25. I'm here in
9 support of their application. This a Dave
10 Roman, a member of Post 25, a volunteer on
11 our Veteran's Committee, also. I have some
12 handouts for city council, if I may? I have
13 a few talking points, if I may.

14 Two years ago myself and other
15 veterans got together because we noticed
16 that there are actually hundreds of Scranton
17 veterans who died in a war, died in defense
18 of freedom who have never been named on a
19 local monument. It's hard to believe
20 really, but I'll repeat that. Hundreds of
21 Scranton veterans who died in defense of
22 freedom, okay, and have never been named on
23 a local monument. We are going to make that
24 right. We going to make it right with or
25 without council's help. Now, of course, we

1 are here to ask for your help. We are not
2 going to quit on this. There is no way
3 possible us veterans are going to quit on
4 this project, okay?

5 Now, we have a beautiful site, the
6 site that was given to us by the school
7 district is perfect. We love it. It's
8 right in the middle of low moderate income
9 areas. There is all kinds of young people,
10 old people, everybody, okay, walking around
11 that area, not just from Scranton but from
12 outside of the city because of the football
13 stadium and the trail, the running trail and
14 the riverfront and so forth, so it's a
15 perfect spot. They gave us a great
16 arrangement. I really have to thank the
17 school district and it's all in writing,
18 it's good forever.

19 Now, it's such a good spot because
20 really this is an educational park. That's
21 what this park ultimately is going to be all
22 about, educating our young people, our
23 people from Scranton and outside of the area
24 on what these men and women who are going to
25 be named on the monument, there will be over

1 900 names. As I said, around 400 have never
2 been named, but there will be 900 total
3 because there are other beautiful monuments
4 in the city that have some of the veteran's
5 name on them.

6 Now, the site, I can't say enough
7 about that. Phase I, if you look at the
8 site map there, it's color coded, you see
9 Phase I, that's already funded. We received
10 a \$100,000 through the LSA program. Senator
11 John Blake was very helpful in getting that
12 grant and we thank him for that. Phase I,
13 as we already had the survey and it's right
14 now it's with the architect who did this
15 here drawing for us and they are working on
16 the specs to put out for bid in January so
17 Phase I will be completed in the spring,
18 there is no question about that. As you can
19 see, that's color coded and it's really
20 nice. We have a walkway coming in from the
21 stadium gate there. We are going to call
22 that Veteran's Way. We feel that's an
23 appropriate name for that walkway.

24 Now, if you look at the
25 orange-colored markings here that's --

1 MR. WECHSLER: Mr. Ahern, we have a
2 time limit so I'll give you another couple
3 of minutes, but we have other people and we
4 have to hurry along.

5 MR. AHERN: Okay, I'll move it
6 along.

7 MR. WECHSLER: And we have to done
8 for our meeting at 6:30.

9 MR. AHERN: I'm sorry, I didn't
10 realize that. I don't have that much more
11 to go, but I think that what I have is
12 important, if I may. The orange markings on
13 here are Phase II. That's what we are
14 asking specifically for the city to fund.
15 Now, we don't see everything on here because
16 there is also included in the city funding
17 would be a request for lighting, security,
18 and the actual design costs, okay? So there
19 is few other things that are not on there in
20 the orange that were asking for the city's
21 help on.

22 Now, as you can see, this is a big
23 project for a group of veterans to raise
24 funds on our own with fundraising. We need
25 the city's help and the step we are asking

1 you to help us with, Phase II, that's a big
2 step. That will really interject some, you
3 know -- a good positive momentum for this
4 project. We are going to complete it, we
5 can't not do this. It's too important and
6 we feel that the -- the only other thing I
7 can say about the city is these men and
8 women were from the city. They were
9 residents. They didn't actually die for the
10 City of Scranton they died for America, but
11 I think it's our responsibility, most of
12 them are from World War II, there is no
13 question about it. Most of these names that
14 have never been named before are going to be
15 from World War II and that has the most
16 names in total, and we just think it's time
17 that we as a city do something that could
18 recognize that, okay? I thank you for your
19 time.

20 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you. Ms. Aebli,
21 I have a quick question for you on this
22 project, would there be any way that we
23 could -- the city could seek a special
24 exception from HUD to alter the consolidated
25 plan to maybe include something like this?

1 Would we be able to request that from HUD?

2 MS. AEBLI: Well, we can --

3 MR. GAUGHAN: And I ask that
4 question because I agree with what Mr. Ahern
5 said that this -- I think this is a great
6 project, number one. And, number two, from
7 an educational perspective the fact that
8 these students can see and understand the
9 sacrifice of these men and women I think is
10 particularly important.

11 MS. AEBLI: And I agree with you. I
12 don't want you to think I don't like this
13 project, but, yes, you can change a
14 consolidated plan, it's a lot of work on our
15 part. However, we still have a concern at
16 that there is caps on the monumental part.
17 It's all monuments.

18 MR. GAUGHAN: Can we get a specific
19 answer from HUD if it would be possible? I
20 know I think the next time this has to come
21 up is in November so we have little bit of
22 time to check into that at least.

23 MS. AEBLI: I could ask. I don't
24 know if I'll have an answer for you by
25 November.

1 MR. GAUGHAN: I would appreciate
2 that because if there is any way that we
3 could at least fund this if not in whole at
4 least for a portion of it like Mr. Ahern
5 said to, you know, put some activity into it
6 and get some --

7 MR. AHERN: Well, the only thing I
8 can say to add to that is in the beginning
9 when we first decided that we would seek
10 grants for this we did read as much as we
11 could and research and, you know, it was our
12 feeling that it's not just a monument,
13 although, the monument is the center piece,
14 of course, but it's an educational park.
15 There is a lot to this with the American
16 flag station and all of the other flags
17 going up, we feel that this should qualify.
18 I mean, I just think we have a case here
19 that being in low-mod area and you could see
20 from the monument that it's going to be an
21 educational park I'm just hoping that that's
22 not there is not a technicality that's going
23 to stop us from --

24 MR. GAUGHAN: No, I agree. I think
25 it's important, if we could, Ms. Aebli, if

1 it's possible at least get a definite answer
2 from HUD to see if there is an ability to
3 get a special exception to the consolidated
4 plan and then if that would be able to be
5 funded.

6 MS. AEBLI: And just think about
7 this now, and when you came to my office I
8 told you, you wanted \$295,000 and my first
9 reaction was wow, you probably would not get
10 that amount of money, but if city council
11 wanted to fund 295 you have to think who are
12 you going to take away from here. You
13 remember me telling you that?

14 MR. AHERN: Yeah. No, I understand
15 there are other projects, you know.

16 MS. AEBLI: And say we funded it,
17 I'm just using a number \$75,000, and you
18 need \$200,000 more, what timeframe, we have
19 a timeliness thing we have to deal with HUD,
20 how long would it take for you to get
21 \$220,000 more to complete the project?

22 MR. AHERN: I don't understand the
23 question.

24 MS. AEBLI: If we only funded the
25 project say for \$75,000 and you are asking

1 for 295, that's a \$220,000 gap, where would
2 you get the other additional money?

3 MR. AHERN: Well, the way --

4 MS. AEBLI: -- not holding our money
5 up?

6 MR. AHERN: The way we would
7 approach that is if city council were to
8 give us "X" amount of money we would spend
9 that money on something. That phase doesn't
10 have to be done all in one.

11 MS. AEBLI: We have to --

12 MR. AHERN: The American flag
13 station just by itself maybe \$40,000,
14 benches are, you know, so much for a bench,
15 so that the park itself does not have to be
16 done Phase I, Phase II-

17 MS. AEBLI: We have to -- if we
18 funded Phase II we have to see the whole
19 project in budget. You just can't just --

20 MR. AHERN: Well, I think we can try
21 to -- the whole project is right on here you
22 know --

23 MR. WECHSLER: Mr. Ahern,
24 unfortunately --

25 MR. AHERN: But if you only gave us

1 a certain amount of money and told us we had
2 to spend that in a certain amount of time
3 then we could do that.

4 MS. AEBLI: We have to see the whole
5 project.

6 MR. ROGAN: I think we are getting
7 ahead of ourselves.

8 MR. WECHSLER: Yeah, right now Ms.
9 Aebli is going to check into what
10 possibilities are from some adjustments to
11 the federal guidelines. We are not going to
12 accomplish that this evening, and I hate to
13 rush you along but we do have other
14 applications that we have to hear from,
15 also.

16 MR. ROGAN: One comment before you
17 leave, and I agree completely with
18 Councilman Gaughan's suggestion and your
19 suggestion, if HUD will grant that waiver,
20 you know, I think all of us up here would
21 like to find money and I think there is some
22 we can find for this project, but as was
23 mentioned step one is see if we can get the
24 waiver from HUD.

25 I completely support the idea of

1 sending that letter to see is there is
2 something we could do to get an exception.
3 So once that goes out and this isn't going
4 to be finalized tonight, there is a comment
5 period, so this will be tabled tonight,
6 there will be a comment period and, you
7 know, it takes -- we all know how the
8 federal government runs, if it takes longer
9 to get a response I am okay with waiting
10 until we get that response to make a final
11 decision on our allocations so you have a
12 commitment from us.

13 MR. AHERN: Well, we'll cooperate
14 with whatever way we can, of course. You
15 know, so I thank you.

16 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you. Peg
17 Ruddy.

18 MS. RUDDY: Good evening. My name
19 is Peg Ruddy, I'm the executive director of
20 the Women's Resource Center here in
21 Scranton. The Women's Resource Center is
22 celebrating our 40th year of service to
23 Scranton and all of Lackawanna County this
24 November and to date we have served 59,036
25 women and children and men, the majority of

1 those Scranton residents over the past 40
2 years in our program. I consider us to be
3 part of a public safety movement.

4 I'm here tonight to advocate on
5 behalf of all of the survivors of domestic
6 violence and sexual assault in Scranton. We
7 have actually two applications in to OECD.
8 One is a request for \$46,000 to fund our
9 Safe Housing Program to provide rapid
10 rehousing and homeless prevention services
11 for victims of domestic violence. And just
12 to highlight the need last year in all three
13 of those programs the Women's Resource
14 Center provided 11,000 nights. The majority
15 of those 76 percent of those were in
16 Scranton. So I'm hoping that we can
17 continue that good work and that we are
18 successful at receiving \$46,000 -- actually,
19 \$46,018 for those housing programs.

20 In addition, Women's Resource Center
21 is requesting an additional \$10,000 through
22 the Community Development Block Grant
23 funding and when I hear some of the larger
24 figures I'm just hoping there is way that a
25 couple of those projects might be able to

1 shave a couple thousand dollars here and
2 there to provide 11,000 nights of safe
3 house, you know, really stretches us and so
4 we are really looking to diversify our
5 funding, get more funding in so that we can
6 really keep our fellow Scranton residents
7 safe. Pick up the paper any morning in
8 Scranton and you will read about a woman or
9 a child being battered. We are the only
10 game in town. We are the only service
11 provider that can provide this service, so I
12 respectfully request that both of our
13 applications are funded. Thank you. Yes?

14 MR. GAUGHAN: I just have one quick
15 question, you said 11,000 --

16 MS. RUDDY: Nights.

17 MR. GAUGHAN: -- nights. Do you have
18 an idea of how many victims you serve?

19 MS. RUDDY: Yes, we just did our
20 annual report and last year it was 1,968
21 victims, and again, a majority of those --
22 we have to collect zip codes as part of our
23 reporting for all of our funders and most of
24 our funders, and so we are able to track
25 where they are coming from and the majority

1 of our clients are from Scranton.

2 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you very much.

3 MR. WECHSLER: Is there anyone else?

4 MS. GRAY: Good evening. My name is
5 Maureen Gray. I'm a resident of the city of
6 Scranton. I'm also the executive director
7 of the new NEPA youth shelter. We were just
8 established last summer. The mission of our
9 shelter is to provide quality emergency
10 shelter and related services to
11 unaccompanied youth ages 14 through high
12 school graduation. Our shelter will provide
13 essentials such as food, clothing, bathrooms
14 as well as services such as educational
15 support, counseling, family reunification
16 and/or preparation for independent living.

17 With a focus on social justice and
18 advocacy, the shelter will be welcoming to
19 youth from all backgrounds and especially
20 affirming to lesbian, gay, bisexual,
21 transgender and queer youth.

22 Here is some startling national
23 statistics about homeless youth. There are
24 over 1.3 million youth in our country who
25 are considered homeless without adult

1 supervision. They are at higher risk for
2 physical abuse, mental health problems,
3 substance abuse, assault, illness, and
4 sexual exploitation or suicide. 75 percent
5 of runaways are female. Approximately 30
6 percent of runaways identifies as LGBT. 75
7 percent of all homeless youth are at risk
8 for dropping out of school, and I find those
9 statistics alarming.

10 In the Scranton area at the end of
11 2016 there were 32 identified homeless
12 students in 9 through 12. People connected
13 to the youth population in our city estimate
14 that there are probably about the same
15 number of additional homeless students who
16 are living in the shadows. Our organization
17 is seeking to do something constructive to
18 address this problem. We realize our
19 mission is a huge undertaking, especially
20 without concrete data on these teens living
21 in the shadows. We decided to start an
22 after school teen drop in center. The
23 center will be open to all teens in our area
24 and we expect that when homeless students
25 who are not in the foster care program learn

1 about us they will come to our center and
2 use the amenities we are providing.

3 We were able to secure a location
4 just four blocks from Scranton High School
5 at 541 Wyoming Avenue and we will be
6 welcoming all teens to our center but we are
7 going to keep a close eye out for teens who
8 may have housing issues.

9 While we are refurbishing over 6,000
10 square feet of space into a teen center, we
11 have one glaring problem. One of the
12 bathrooms is a holdover from a Head Start
13 program and it was built for toddlers. The
14 toilets are on platforms and, frankly,
15 couldn't accommodate a teenager or a person
16 in a wheelchair. We are seeking funds
17 through the Community Development Block
18 Grant Program to completely gut this
19 bathroom and replace it with an ADA
20 compliant bathroom with a full shower, an
21 extra powder room and laundry facilities.
22 The estimate to get the existing bathroom
23 completely replumbed, two toilet and two
24 sinks and a shower and replumbing for
25 laundry facilities, updating the electrical

1 needs and add a driver vent duct, paint and
2 tile the whole space will cost approximately
3 \$29,000. I think the money is worth it when
4 we will be serving a diverse and nearly
5 invisible population.

6 I would like to invite you also to
7 an open house we are having this Friday
8 evening, tomorrow night, from 5 to 8 p.m. so
9 you can get a preview of our location and
10 see we are going to be offering. I hope you
11 see the value and what we are going to
12 accomplish and I hope you will vote for our
13 CDBG application. Thank you. May I give
14 you our brochure just so you have some more
15 information?

16 MR. WECHSLER: Yes. Is there anyone
17 else?

18 MS. HODOWANITZ: Joan Hodowanitz,
19 Scranton. Before you leave, I'm curious as
20 to how your new organization interfaces or
21 duplicates services from the county level?
22 I believe the county has Youth and Family
23 Services and perhaps you could explain?

24 MS. GRAY: Sure. We are not
25 providing overnight shelter yet, what we are

1 providing is an after school program.
2 Children and Youth Services does not have an
3 after care program.

4 MR. WECHSLER: Joan, this is really
5 your comment period. I was just curious
6 since she was up here. I just want to say
7 of all of programs listed, especially under
8 Community Development Block Grant Program
9 how impressed I am with the neighborhood
10 police patrol. I was robbed in 2015, so I
11 don't have particularly a lot of sympathy
12 with the criminal element. That being said,
13 I think the best way to approach crime in
14 the City of Scranton is whatever we can do
15 to prevent it because once the crime is
16 committed you have a victim with all of
17 those costs that are entailed, we have
18 police costs with chasing the culprit and
19 affiant and all of that good garbage, and
20 you got court costs and you got prison
21 costs. So I see the neighborhood police
22 patrol as a great return on investment for
23 any money that we invest into it because I
24 think you get a big bang for your buck, as
25 you do on all of these programs, but the

1 police have been doing a very good effort on
2 this and I think the spin off on this is the
3 positive publicity and relationships that
4 are built between the Police Department and
5 the community and this element of trust that
6 goes down to the youngest children all the
7 way up to the elderly. So I just want to
8 put my two cents in and say I would like to
9 say I would like to see this program
10 continue and if you ever get more money
11 expand it. Thank you.

12 MR. WECHSLER: Anyone else? If not,
13 this will concluded this public hearing.

14
15 (Public hearing concluded.)
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C E R T I F I C A T E

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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
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