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02 SCRANTON CITY COUNCIL MEETING
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08 Held:
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09 Thursday, January 6, 2005
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11 Time:
12 7:00 p.m.
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14 Location:
15 Council chambers
15 Scranton City Hall
16 340 North Washington Avenue
16 Scranton, Pennsylvania
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23 Lisa M. Graff, RPR

24 Court Reporter

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01 CITY OF SCRANTON COUNCIL:

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03 MR. GARY DIBILEO, COUNCIL PRESIDENT

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05 MS. JANET E. EVANS, VICE-PRESIDENT

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07 MR. WILLIAM COURTRIGHT

08

09 MR. JOHN POCIUS

10

11 MR. ROBERT McTIERNAN

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13 MARK WALSH, ESQUIRE, SOLICITOR

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15 MR. JAY SAUNDERS, CITY CLERK

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17 MS. KAY GARVEY, ASSISTANT CITY CLERK

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01 MR. DIBILEO: Please stand for the

02 Pledge of Allegiance. Please remain standing for a

03 short prayer. Kay, can we have a roll call, please?

04 MS. GARVEY: Mr. McTiernan.

05 MR. McTIERNAN: Here.

06 MS. GARVEY: Mrs. Evans.

07 MS. EVANS: Here.

08 MS. GARVEY: Mr. Pocius.

09 MR. POCIUS: Here.

10 MS. GARVEY: Mr. Courtright.

11 MR. COURTRIGHT: Here.

12 MS. GARVEY: Mr. DiBileo.

13 MR. DIBILEO: Here. Before we

14 dispense with the reading of the minutes,

15 I just wanted to take a moment and welcome everyone

16 back from our brief year-end break, and I would like to

17 wish everyone a happy and healthy new year.

18 I hope this is another year that

19 City Council could continue to move the city forward.
20 And in our prayer just a moment ago, I mentioned the
21 devastation that was experienced in Southeast Asia from
22 the Tsunami with loss of life and property which is,
23 you know, beyond comprehension, and I wanted to at this
24 time ask that we take a moment or two of silence for
25 those that lost their life in Southeast Asia. Thank
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01 you. Thank you very much.

02 Now if we can dispense with the
03 reading of the minutes, Mr. Walsh, please.

04 MR. WALSH: Third order, 3-A,

05 MINUTES OF THE FIREMEN'S PENSION COMMISSION MEETING
06 HELD ON WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2004.

07 MR. DIBILEO: Are there any
08 comments on 3-A? If not, received and filed.

09 MR. WALSH: 3-B, MINUTES OF THE
10 SCRANTON POLICE PENSION COMMISSION MEETING HELD ON
11 WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2004.

12 MR. DIBILEO: Are there any
13 comments on 3-B? If not, received and filed.

14 MR. WALSH: 3-C, MINUTES OF THE
15 NON-UNIFORM PENSION BOARD MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY,
16 DECEMBER 15, 2004.

17 MR. DIBILEO: Are there any
18 comments on 3-C? If not, received and filed.

19 MR. WALSH: 3-D, MINUTES OF THE
20 COMPOSITE PENSION BOARD MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY,
21 NOVEMBER 17, 2004.

22 MR. DIBILEO: Are there any
23 comments on 3-D? If not, received and filed.

24 MR. WALSH: 3-E, MINUTES OF THE
25 VACANT PROPERTY REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON
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01 TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2004.

02 MR. DIBILEO: Are there any
03 comments on 3-E? If not, received and filed.

04 MR. WALSH: 3-F, MINUTES OF THE
05 SCRANTON/LACKAWANNA HEALTH AND WELFARE AUTHORITY
06 MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2004.

07 MR. DIBILEO: Are there any
08 comments on 3-F? If not, received and filed.

09 MR. WALSH: 3-G, MINUTES OF THE
10 SCRANTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY SPECIAL MEETING HELD
11 ON WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2004.

12 MR. DIBILEO: Are there any
13 comments on 3-G? If not, received and filed.

14 MR. WALSH: 3-H, MINUTES OF THE

15 SCRANTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY REGULAR MEETING HELD
16 ON WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2004.

17 MR. DIBILEO: Are there any
18 comments on 3-H? If not, received and filed.

19 MR. WALSH: 3-I, MINUTES OF THE
20 SCRANTON PARKING AUTHORITY MEETINGS HELD ON WEDNESDAY,
21 SEPTEMBER 15, OCTOBER 20, AND NOVEMBER 17, 2004.

22 MR. DIBILEO: Are there any
23 comments on 3-I? If not, received and filed.

24 MR. WALSH: 3-J, Clerk's notes.

25 MR. DIBILEO: Mr. Saunders,
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01 please.

02 MR. SAUNDERS: I'll be very brief
03 tonight, Mr. President. I talked to Ralph Pappas
04 today. I think he's trying to give us all a little
05 heads-up here on the bridge situation in the
06 Plot Section.

07 Ralph said today that the Albright
08 Avenue Bridge, he said that bridge will be closed until
09 March for their flood project work.

10 The Sanderson Avenue bridge which
11 was scheduled to open last week, they had some
12 problems, but that will be open, I believe, at the end
13 of this week or at the end of this month with the gates
14 up and everything fully.

15 They were going to open it and
16 then close it again, but they decided to keep it closed
17 until the end of the month. The gates will be up by
18 the end of the month.

19 Councilwoman Evans asked about the
20 demo list. I got an update on him about the demo down
21 in -- the demolition down in the Plot Section, they --
22 the contracts were awarded, as we spoke last time at
23 the Council meeting, and they should be starting late
24 this week, early next week of the demolition. That's
25 all I have, Mr. President.

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01 MR. DIBILEO: Thank you,
02 Mr. Saunders. Appreciate that.

03 MR. WALSH: Fourth order. Citizen
04 participation.

05 MR. DIBILEO: And our first person
06 on the sign-in sheet is Andy Sbaraglia.

07 MR. SBARAGLIA: Andy Sbaraglia,
08 citizen of Scranton. Fellow Scrantonians, the first
09 thing is Merry Christmas to our Russian friends, as
10 they're going to have their Christmas pretty soon.

11 Now, a long time ago I asked about
12 the street lighting. We were supposed to purchase the
13 street lamps that sits on the polls throughout the
14 city. Where are we on this? Now, we borrowed this
15 money two years ago. Does anybody know the status of
16 them?

17 MR. DIBILEO: Mr. Saunders, can I
18 ask you to tell us where we're at?

19 MR. SAUNDERS: The last time that
20 I checked with Len Kresefski and MEM about the status
21 of the lighting, it's in the same state that it was in,
22 there's some legal issues that are being tied up with
23 PP&L right now, and this is not an overnight process.
24 There's a lot of money involved and a lot of street
25 lights involved. So, as a lot of things like that
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01 happen, it takes more take than we expected.

02 MR. SBARAGLIA: Do you remember,
03 well, maybe you don't, Mr. Saunders, but, Gary, you
04 should remember, when this thing was passed by Council,
05 they said this was going to save us money to purchase
06 these fixtures.

07 I can see in this budget now, we
08 went from \$100,000 to \$400,000 being transferred to
09 this debt service. I remember a while back there was
10 \$180,000 for lawyers fees.

11 Gentlemen, by the time this comes
12 up to purchase these things, we won't have the money to
13 do it. Nobody ever checked into how much money is
14 being paid to the company that's supposed to do this,
15 how much money is being paid to lawyer fees, other than
16 the \$180,000 that was already stated. Gentlemen, this
17 is serious.

18 MR. DIBILEO: Andy, we have
19 actually discussed this issue a couple of times, and
20 we've discussed this issue as possibly being a topic
21 for a citizen Council public participation where we ask
22 members of the company involved in the purchase to come
23 in and explain to us where we're at so that people can
24 understand the process.

25 I think this is an issue that
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01 people really are confused over, including members of
02 Council.

03 MR. SBARAGLIA: This account
04 number that's listed on this, if we were to ask how
05 much money is in that account, would that be the
06 original account that this money was transferred into

07 when they passed the ordinance?
08 MR. DIBILEO: I'm not certain,
09 Andy. Yeah. Why don't we make this a topic for public
10 caucus and let's see over the next couple of weeks if
11 we can ask them, all members that are involved in this
12 process to come in so we can ask questions, and you can
13 give us some of your questions and we'll ask them for
14 you, Andy.
15 MR. SBARAGLIA: Well, really the
16 only thing I'm interested in is how much money has been
17 expended and how much is left.
18 MR. DIBILEO: Well, that will be a
19 good question to ask that evening.
20 MR. SBARAGLIA: And if we're
21 getting interest on it and how much interest. That's
22 the only thing I'm really interested in is the money
23 factor in it.
24 Okay. Let's get back to our DPW
25 site. Now that \$150,000 that's listed in this, I
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01 assume that's interest, it can't be the principal or
02 anything on the principal, so I guess that's the
03 interest for the year, I would assume that, because
04 according to the notice that Mr. Saunders put in the
05 paper, we can go from \$480,000 on a low to \$676,600 on
06 the high, depending on what the bank is doing.
07 That's something you have to look
08 into, too. This three and a half million garage I bet
09 is going to cost us \$12 million by the time you pay off
10 the loans, the interest and everything else that's
11 involved in this deal.
12 Now, of course, I know the deal is
13 terrible, it's terrible to the taxpayers. In fact,
14 most of these deals are terrible to the taxpayers.
15 Now, there was another article in
16 the paper about a lot of property being reassessed that
17 may affect -- probably does affect our budget here.
18 Does anybody believe that this is
19 a true budget, actually believe that we're going to
20 come out with what he says and what he did, all these
21 figures, that they're right? You believe that right,
22 Mr. Pocius? Mr. McTiernan, you voted for it, so you
23 must think it's right, too.
24 Well, I hope you're both right.
25 Of course, if you're wrong, it will fall on you,
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01 because somewhere along the line I read articles in the
02 paper where they're going to be up to \$9 million in the

03 hole. I thank you and Happy New Year.
04 MR. DIBILEO: Thank you, Andy.
05 Happy New Year. So, Jay, if you would, over the next
06 meeting or two, let's see if we can get members of MEM.
07 MR. SAUNDERS: MEM and Len
08 Kresefski from -- do we want to see the city side of
09 the --
10 MR. DIBILEO: Yeah, I think that
11 would be appropriate.
12 MR. SAUNDERS: Okay. I can
13 schedule that for next week or the week after.
14 MR. DIBILEO: Okay. Thank you.
15 Jim Stucker.
16 MR. STUCKER: Yeah. I live on
17 Moosic Street. Okay. I got a couple problems. Okay.
18 On Moosic Street, there's only one drain. Is there a
19 way we can get another one on that? That's a state
20 highway. We got one drain, we need another one.
21 MR. DIBILEO: Where exactly are
22 you talking about, Jim?
23 MR. STUCKER: Right at the bottom
24 of the hill by the gas station. I went -- I found --
25 MR. DIBILEO: That could be
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01 something that's pretty difficult --
02 MR. STUCKER: I found one.
03 MR. DIBILEO: -- to do.
04 MR. STUCKER: I found one with the
05 shovel today. Okay. What about my scooter?
06 MR. COURTRIGHT: Jim, I --
07 MR. STUCKER: Some guy --
08 MR. COURTRIGHT: -- think your
09 scooter is gone. I don't think we're going to be able
10 to get it for you. I think it's over. I'm sorry to
11 tell you that, but I just don't think we're going to be
12 able to get that scooter for you.
13 MR. STUCKER: Can't you get me
14 another one?
15 MR. COURTRIGHT: Do you want me to
16 buy you another one?
17 MR. STUCKER: Yeah.
18 MR. DIBILEO: Jim, the way I
19 understand it, the problem would be, if you got
20 yourself another scooter, that I understand that
21 they're illegal to drive on the street, according to
22 what Mr. Courtright explained to me.
23 And when you had your scooter, the
24 police were continually pulling you over because you

25 can't drive on the sidewalks, so these scooters that
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01 you see on the street are really all illegal.
02 Many kids have them and maybe you
03 can take them on private property somewhere, like a
04 parking lot, if you had the approval to do that, but I
05 guess you really can't use them on the street.
06 So, if you were to get one, Jim, I
07 think you'll have the same problem of being stopped all
08 the time. And isn't that why you sold the last one?
09 Well, you tried to sell it.
10 MR. STUCKER: They stole it. It
11 was stolen from a lady, a lady stole it.
12 MR. DIBILEO: Just so people
13 understand, a woman was going to buy Jim's scooter, and
14 she took the scooter and said she would be coming back
15 to you with the money and she never came back. That
16 was awful that that happened to you, Jim.
17 MR. STUCKER: Okay. Are you
18 friends with -- I just want to know, are you friends
19 with Doherty?
20 MR. DIBILEO: Yeah, we have a
21 business relationship.
22 MR. STUCKER: Okay. Why can't he
23 pay me what he owes me? Can't you see about it for me?
24 MR. DIBILEO: No, I can't. That's
25 a personal matter, Jim. We can't even talk about that
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01 here unfortunately. You know, outside the meeting,
02 that's another story, maybe you can ask him, but we
03 can't talk about that this evening unfortunately.
04 MR. STUCKER: Well, what would you
05 do if you go and buy a car? Say you went and bought a
06 car, would you have the money for that car?
07 MR. DIBILEO: What is that, Jim?
08 I'm sorry.
09 MR. STUCKER: Just say you went
10 and bought a brand new car, would you have the money,
11 would you get it, would you have that car?
12 MR. DIBILEO: Possibly. I guess
13 that's a decision that you have to make if you want
14 to --
15 MR. STUCKER: Well, Mayor Doherty
16 owes me money. Just say, like, you went and bought a
17 car, would Doherty pay you, say you was at a garage?
18 MR. DIBILEO: Jim, I have to stop
19 you there, though, okay? We are going to have to take
20 this up outside the meeting, and if we can help you, we

21 will, but unfortunately we can't talk about that now.

22 MR. STUCKER: That man owes me

23 money. Why can't he pay me?

24 MR. DIBILEO: All right. Well,

25 we'll discuss it outside the meeting. Okay, Jim?

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01 MR. STUCKER: All right.

02 MR. DIBILEO: All right. Happy

03 New Year.

04 MR. STUCKER: Okay.

05 MR. DIBILEO: Thank you.

06 MS. YETKOWSKAS: My name is Regina

07 Yetkowskas, I am a resident and taxpayer of Scranton

08 and consider myself one of the silent majority. Please

09 excuse my nervousness, because this is my first address

10 to City Council. I am not involved in politics, but I

11 do try to keep current on Scranton's progress or lack

12 of progress with the passage of time.

13 I come before this Council

14 to voice my observations based on what I read in the

15 local newspaper and what I see on television. I saw in

16 1992, Scranton was declared a distressed city, I saw

17 that the Pennsylvania Economy League developed a

18 recovery plan which was adopted by City Council, but

19 later news reported Mayor Connors refused to put the

20 plan into effect and PEL failed to enforce the plan.

21 As a result, Scranton remains a

22 distressed city to this day. In 2002, Mayor Doherty

23 took over for Mr. Connors. Before he became mayor,

24 Mr. Doherty was chairman of City Council's finance

25 committee.

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01 In that position, I believe

02 Mr. Doherty knew Scranton's financial problems, its

03 debt and sources of revenue in order to put Scranton

04 back on track to a sound financial recovery.

05 When Mr. Doherty became mayor, it

06 is known that he assumed a \$2 and one half million

07 surplus. I now see a mayor whose actions show he is

08 committed to a spend and borrow program which will

09 cause Scranton to sink into an unmanageable debt.

10 I see from 2002, to the present,

11 Mr. Doherty spent the \$2 and one half million surplus

12 and caused the largest debt in Scranton's history.

13 Mayor Doherty borrowed large sums of money and sold

14 city revenue-producing assets to pay Scranton's debts

15 that he created.

16 Unfortunately whatever money the

17 mayor borrows must be paid back with interest. I see
18 while Mayor Doherty continues to spend and borrow,
19 Scranton's population continues to go down.
20 This will surely cause Scranton's
21 revenue to go down making it harder to truthfully
22 balance the budget.
23 I see more and more taxable land
24 and taxable improvements on the land being removed from
25 the tax rolls because they are bought or taken over by
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01 the non-profit corporations in Scranton.
02 I see more and more prime taxable
03 land in Scranton bought by persons who are excused from
04 paying taxes for many years. Because of this, the city
05 has less money to pay its bills.
06 I see Mayor Doherty increased the
07 cost of Scranton's government operations by employing
08 many new administrative employees at high salaries and
09 similar fringe benefits. I see the mayor also increase
10 the cost of government by hiring consultants to assist
11 the additional administrative employees.
12 It is difficult for me to
13 understand, when Mayor Doherty says he pays high
14 salaries to new administrators because he wants the
15 best, and then he hires consultants to help the best
16 administrators to run their departments.
17 I saw the mayor sell city assets
18 for a one-time fill of current budget gaps. I saw the
19 mayor do this by acting directly or indirectly through
20 different local authorities in order to keep the sales
21 from City Council's oversight control.
22 Some of the city's assets the
23 mayor sold to cover his spending were always good for
24 the city because they brought substantial income to the
25 city. An example is the golf course.

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01 I saw and see the mayor spend
02 million of dollars not to ease the financial burden of
03 the citizens in Scranton, but rather to rehabilitate
04 the park system.
05 I don't suggest the parks should
06 be -- I'm sorry. I don't suggest the parks should not
07 be improved at all, but there should be at least a fair
08 balance between the two, like making some reduction in
09 Scranton's crushing wage tax for those who live in
10 Scranton, while improving the park system.
11 I can foresee there will be large
12 annual budgets deficits at least for the next few years

13 because the mayor requested City Council's approval for
14 a line of credit, more borrowing, which will be at
15 least 3 to 4 million a year for 2004, and the next two
16 years.

17 According to Mayor Doherty's 2005
18 operating budget, the debt service is \$5,534,000. This
19 consumes 8.4 percent of the city's total budgeted
20 revenue. If the revenue is inflated or if the actual
21 income is less than the budgeted amount, then the debt
22 service can increase to 16 percent of Scranton's
23 revenues.

24 I see little or nothing available
25 for Scranton's future capital budgets which will
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01 eventually lead to more of a structural imbalance in
02 our finances.

03 On top of all this, I see a
04 legislative stalemate between City Council and the
05 administration which will surely stop progress on all
06 future important issues for the good and welfare of
07 Scranton's citizens, like reducing taxes and our debt.

08 MR. DIBILEO: Regina, can you wrap
09 it up?

10 MS. YETKOWSKAS: Yes. I'll
11 continue next week. Thank you.

12 MR. DIBILEO: Thank you. Thank
13 you. Mike Dudek.

14 MR. DUDEK: Good evening. My name
15 is Mike Dudek, 608 Depot Street, Scranton.

16 MR. DIBILEO: Good evening, Mike.

17 MR. DUDEK: Good evening. Happy
18 New Year.

19 MR. DIBILEO: Happy New Year.

20 MR. DUDEK: This is going to come
21 like a bolt out of the blue, but with all of the news
22 about the Tsunami dominating the news, something that
23 has been almost totally ignored has been the virtual
24 collapse of the U.S. dollar, as opposed to the euro.
25 And because of it, some unusual

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01 things are beginning to happen in this country, and I
02 think the best one happened in Allentown, where the Mac
03 Truck Corporation entered into an agreement with Volvo
04 to build the newest line of trucks in Allentown in
05 vacant space that used to be used for the making of Mac
06 Trucks.

07 Now, normally something like this
08 just doesn't happen. The only thing that made it

09 happen was the fact that the dollar literally has gone
10 into a freefall.

11 The process began last summer, and
12 without getting into all of the economic details that
13 I'm privy to because I work at the Union News, let me
14 just come to the conclusion that if Allentown was able
15 to do something like this, perhaps we should start
16 looking in a similar direction.

17 I think that what City Council and
18 the mayor, a committee ought to be created, some
19 Council, perhaps the mayor himself would want to be on
20 it, private citizens, the chairman of the economics
21 department of the University of Scranton, and also the
22 history department of the same school, a committee to
23 try to see what European companies might be ripe to
24 bring to our area to expand into this area, given the
25 fact that the economic between the euro and the dollar
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01 is going to be there for at least ten years.

02 It may be something that we can
03 look into. Involving University graduate students in
04 the process, I think would also help expedite the
05 search. We have a number of firms in this city, stock
06 market firms, like AG Edwards and others, that may be
07 of assistance here.

08 Identify those European companies
09 that may be interested in relocating here or bringing
10 some of their operations here, and then put together a
11 package like we did back, I believe it was around 1982,
12 when we tried to get the Saturn plant, when GM wanted
13 to build the Saturn automobile, we came in second on
14 that one obviously to Tennessee, but it was a very good
15 community effort, but I think it is something we have
16 to take a look at. There is one very scary reason why
17 we should, too.

18 The one area, if you may have
19 heard, that really got hurt economically over the last
20 month was retail sales for Christmas. Retail sales got
21 hurt essentially because Internet sales rose over
22 20 percent just in the last two years, from 4 percent
23 to 8 percent to 20 percent of all Christmas buying this
24 past year was done on the Internet.

25 What do we have around here?

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01 Stores. What are we going to face? An economic
02 shake-out. In other words, I don't think it looks good
03 for our area with the collapse of the dollar. If the
04 dollar keeps going down, our retail sales in this area

05 are going to go down and we are going to get hit with a
06 new wave of unemployment.

07 I think now is the time to look,
08 and I'm asking City Council, sit down with the mayor,
09 see if a committee of citizens, of interested citizens,
10 could be formed, work with the assets that we have, the
11 University, our stock brokerages here in the city which
12 also have their own huge research facilities.

13 For instance, AG Edwards has a
14 huge research facility in St. Louis where we can look
15 for these companies, identify these companies, target
16 one or two of these companies and work like hell to
17 bring them here. Thank you.

18 MR. DIBILEO: Thank you, Mike.

19 MR. DIBILEO: Mike, I'll contact
20 the Chamber of Commerce this week and I'll see if
21 they're making any strides in that area of trying to
22 entice companies from out of the United States to come
23 here. Thank you. Erik Johnson.

24 MR. JOHNSON: Good evening, City
25 Council, and Happy New Year.

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01 MR. DIBILEO: Good evening.

02 MR. JOHNSON: And Lisa and the
03 staff here. Positive and negative events at the latter
04 part of the year 2004. Oh, I'm Erik Johnson,
05 taxpayer. No. 1, Businessman Bob Bolus sponsored a
06 Christmas dinner on Christmas Day, all day, which was a
07 huge success of generosity and unselfish giving of
08 himself and the help of his volunteers which made the
09 only possible way for anyone rich or poor who were
10 alone on Christmas Day who possibly would have been
11 without a cooked Christmas dinner with all its
12 trimmings and plus take-outs without questions asked.

13 My opinion, this has to be one of
14 the most commanding deserving recognition for a
15 businessman with class for feeding 2,000 people on
16 Christmas Day. Let's give this unselfish generous man
17 an ovation and applause right now. Thank you.

18 Let's not forget the Friends of
19 the Poor on Thanksgiving, the dinner prior to the
20 holiday, was a usual success with the possibility made
21 by Sister Adrian and her volunteers to help those who
22 would not have a Thanksgiving dinner.

23 No. 3, Todd O'Malley and Joe
24 Garvey, school directors, along with others worked
25 incredibly hard to spare Scranton taxpayers a rate

0024

01 increase in property tax from the school budget.
02 Scranton School President -- the
03 Scranton School President says the recent 48 percent
04 county tax increase is a reason for holding the line of
05 an increased tax.
06 Todd O'Malley says the taxpayers
07 could not afford a nickel more. He also says the
08 county tax relief given away by the Lackawanna County
09 Board of Assessment in the amount of \$2,205,000
10 property county tax of ten large commercial business
11 companies loss in county revenue have been costly
12 painful for the Scranton School District, which
13 recently struggled to put together its 2005 budget
14 without raising school taxes.
15 Attorney Todd O'Malley, you have
16 been a huge asset for the small taxpayers and the
17 school district. If those county reductions of taxes
18 were not made for the ten commercial property owners,
19 it also could have saved the taxpayers some of the 48
20 percent county tax increase.
21 Also, since the worse had
22 happened, the 48 percent could have been made in a
23 three year tax raise, 16 percent each year, instead of
24 48 percent in one year, which is the largest increase
25 in county history as taxes have been raised two other
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01 times since 1997.
02 In seven years, county taxes have
03 raised incredibly close to 88 percent, not far from 100
04 percent. The bottom line is, we all know who is for
05 the average property taxpayer and who is for the big
06 commercial property owners.
07 No. 4, I'm glad that eight cops
08 will not lose their jobs who were federally funded.
09 They will be incorporated with the regularly city
10 funded police force. I do think it's painful for the
11 two officers excluded because they didn't pass the
12 civil exam.
13 No. 5, it's a shame the city
14 hasn't had the commuter tax amended in its budget.
15 \$1,600,000 annually makes a big difference. Imagine if
16 we had the commuter tax three years ago, we would have
17 an extra \$4,800,000 for the city budget and would not
18 need to excerpt for a \$4,500,000 loan to meet the
19 budget deficit.
20 God Bless the victims of Southeast
21 Asia and God Bless Scranton and the U.S.A. and the good
22 politicians who are for the common people. Thank you

23 for allowing me to speak.

24 MR. COURTRIGHT: Erik, if I can

25 just explain one thing to you, those two officers

0026

01 didn't lose their jobs because they didn't pass a test,

02 they lost their jobs because there was people coming

03 from a fast cops that had to be moved into the CommD,

04 and that's why they lost their jobs, not because --

05 MR. JOHNSON: It was in the paper

06 that way.

07 MR. COURTRIGHT: Yeah, I

08 understand that about their test scores, but that

09 wasn't the reason for them losing their jobs, though.

10 I don't want people to think these officers were let go

11 because they didn't pass a test.

12 MR. JOHNSON: So, those

13 two officers were let go --

14 MR. COURTRIGHT: They were let go

15 because there's officers coming from what they call

16 fast cops, it's another program, and their grants were

17 running out and they pushed them back into these two

18 positions that these two officers held. It might be a

19 little bit complicated, but it --

20 MR. JOHNSON: But couldn't these

21 two go into the fast cops program?

22 MR. COURTRIGHT: Well, this

23 administration didn't go for any of those type of

24 grants, my understanding is.

25 MR. JOHNSON: All right.

0027

01 MR. COURTRIGHT: I just didn't

02 want people to think that these officers lost their

03 jobs because they didn't pass a test.

04 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you for cluing

05 me into that, and also the other people that are

06 reading the papers, because they think --

07 MR. COURTRIGHT: Right. It's a

08 little bit complicated, and that might be misconstrued

09 that way, and I didn't want those people to be

10 labelled --

11 MR. JOHNSON: It could have been

12 worse, right?

13 MR. COURTRIGHT: Well, I guess.

14 Not for them it couldn't have been any worse, they're

15 out of a job.

16 MR. JOHNSON: I mean for the eight

17 others it could have been worse. We could have lost

18 eight more police.

19 MR. COURTRIGHT: Well, people
20 retired and they took their spots and they went out on
21 disability or whatever the case may be, yes.

22 MR. JOHNSON: All right. Thank
23 you.

24 MR. DIBILEO: Thank you, Erik. Is
25 that an overall reduction in the police on the street?
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01 MR. COURTRIGHT: Oh, yeah. We
02 lost two officers definitely.

03 MR. DIBILEO: Okay. And, Erik,
04 you had mentioned Mr. Bolus' Christmas Day dinner,
05 which I understand -- I wasn't there, I understand it
06 was quite an event, and I'd like to recognize
07 Janet Evans for being there and working that day to
08 help Mr. Bolus out. I don't know who else was there,
09 but I heard Janet was there, and good for you, Janet.
10 Larry McAndrew.

11 MR. McANDREW: Larry McAndrew,
12 Scranton resident and taxpayer. As we begin a new
13 year, I want to reach out to all the citizens,
14 especially the voters and all the others in the City of
15 Scranton.

16 We need to focus this year on our
17 city government to get more involved. As you are all
18 aware, a younger generation is presently overseas
19 fighting in a foreign land for freedom to give these
20 people a choice, a right to vote. This privilege is
21 granted here -- it's taken for granted here, is what I
22 mean.

23 We need to get more involved. I
24 compliment this lady tonight for her first time to
25 stand up here. It's not easy to stand up here and try
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01 to express yourself, but to make changes in our
02 government, to make this city better, we all have to
03 get involved.

04 If you're camera shy, I suggest
05 write editorials to your newspaper, if you're not happy
06 with doing that, get on the telephone, call your mayor,
07 call your city Council, voice your opinions, speak out,
08 let's make changes, let's make this community better.
09 It can be better. Let's do the right thing.

10 Now, for Mayor Doherty and for
11 City Council, a lesson has to be learned from our
12 sister city Wilkes-Barre and their Council.
13 My hat goes off to them for taking
14 the initiative to pass legislation on the job tax. My

15 understanding it will create over \$500,000 next year.
16 It's additional new revenue. This is what we need.
17 And the mayor's plan, he already
18 has a suggestion for it, put that money into the police
19 department, put it into the fire department, where it
20 belongs.
21 We had a chance here to override a
22 budget, and we let it go. I will not forget this, the
23 action that was done on this budget, and I hope that
24 all citizens and all voters of the Scranton area
25 remember this come re-election time. Thank you.
0030

01 MR. DIBILEO: Thank you,
02 Mr. McAndrew. Charlie Newcomb, Jr.
03 MR. NEWCOMB, JR.: Good evening,
04 Council. I hope everybody had a very good holiday.
05 The last meeting of the year was one to reason, to say
06 the least.
07 This past Christmas I, myself,
08 went over to Mr. Bolus' dinner and volunteered for a
09 while in the morning, and I got to experience probably
10 for the first time in my life the true meaning of
11 Christmas, what it's all about.
12 There was people of all walks of
13 life that were there, whether you were homeless or you
14 lived in a mansion, it really didn't matter, and many
15 people talked to me throughout the day and encouraged
16 us to continue to do what we're doing, coming to this
17 podium, and I really met a lot of good people and
18 learned a lot. And I really have to say that
19 Mr. Bolus needs to be commended on a job well done, to
20 say the least.
21 There was a woman that was there
22 that was sitting at the table that told me that she has
23 been trying to get a hold of the mayor for many months
24 with some problems that she had in her neighborhood,
25 and she said she was going to wait there to talk to the
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01 mayor himself, and he never came, and she can't get a
02 hold of him, and she was really upset that the mayor
03 doesn't show his face in public. And I have to agree
04 with her there.
05 I have asked the following
06 question since November of 2003, since that time I have
07 submitted in writing seven letters to the law
08 department, to the business administrator, to get
09 nothing in response.
10 The question is, How much money

11 have we paid to the Gibbons Firm since the beginning of
12 this administration? Fifteen months, seven letters,
13 eight times at this podium, no answer. What is wrong
14 with that picture? Can somebody explain to me why I
15 can't get an answer?
16 I would also like to know the
17 following, How many cars went through Nay Aug Park? How
18 much money in donations were collected? What account
19 the money is in? And what is the intended use of the
20 money from these donations?
21 Like I have stated many times
22 before, I started coming to these meetings in 1998.
23 The first meeting that I attended, there was
24 approximately five people in the audience, none of
25 which are at these meeting today.

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01 The lack of respect that was shown
02 to the citizens was appalling. It was at that time
03 when a councilman told a resident to shut up and sit
04 down, he was getting annoying.
05 I looked at the Council and I
06 thought to myself, I pay these people. And, of course
07 at that time, Channel 61 wasn't here. Since then, I
08 have made it a personal mission to educate the voters
09 of Scranton.
10 I have met many great people and
11 even made wonderful friends from this meeting. I am
12 getting married in March, which will keep me away
13 somewhat from these meetings until the spring; however,
14 I am not one to lay down or to be put out to pasture,
15 like some people want me to.
16 Some people in this administration
17 and people close to them have called the speakers that
18 come to this podium here, quote, peons, loud-mouths,
19 complainers, and we have nothing else better to do,
20 etc.
21 It is amazing, truly amazing, the
22 power that we have, how many people of power want us to
23 be silenced.

24 America was founded by our
25 forefathers who faught for the freedom of speech and
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01 expression. I have come to this podium always with
02 facts and documentation to back up everything that I
03 say. I have expressed my opinions vocally. Why?
04 Because I can.
05 I have come to the conclusion that
06 there is only a handful of us that come to these

07 meetings because people are afraid of what will happen
08 if they speak out.

09 Anybody whose knows me personally

10 knows that I don't scare very easily and intimidations

11 don't go over well with me.

12 I have family and close friends

13 who are unfortunately going to suffer from the powers

14 that be if I continue to come to this podium and voice

15 facts and opinions.

16 My family and friends come first

17 in my life; however, I will not lie down. These

18 quote/unquote people, I will not lie down from these

19 quote/unquote people, but unfortunately I'm going to

20 have to tone it down a couple notches, because these

21 people are very important to me.

22 I will continue to come here and

23 ask questions so people can be informed, but that is

24 all I can do for now.

25 If I am not here within the next

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01 couple of months, it is not because the powers that be

02 silenced me, it is because I am tending to personal

03 business in the spring.

04 I say the following to the

05 taxpayers and the voters of Scranton, and I'll sum

06 everything up, this May and November will be vital to

07 the future of this city.

08 I personally believe we will have

09 this mayor for another term, and we, the people, cannot

10 control him; however, we have the opportunity to

11 control City Council.

12 Any, any candidate who has the

13 approval of this mayor or anybody close to him, please,

14 please, bypass their name in the voting booth. We have

15 seen what happened last year. He controls this city

16 through two councilmen.

17 Please do me a favor and stop this

18 behavior. Continue listening and learning from these

19 meetings. And like Abraham Lincoln once said, Fail,

20 fail, fail, but then there is persistence. Thank you.

21 MR. DIBILEO: Thank you.

22 Lee Morgan.

23 MR. MORGAN: Good evening,

24 Council. The first thing I'd like to do at this podium

25 is thank the Martin Nottenberg Family, because just

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01 before Christmas, they gave me a gift from their

02 tragedy fund because of the loss of my daughter, and I

03 want to acknowledge that and thank them, and it was
04 really a nice gesture on their part.
05 I think, also, that maybe -- I
06 don't know if Council would entertain this thought, but
07 maybe the city itself could start a fund for the
08 Tsunami victims and maybe the school district could
09 join on board.
10 I remember when I was a kid Nay
11 Aug Park bought an elephant because all the kids came
12 to school and gave a nickel, and that was a long time
13 ago when a nickel was probably worth something, but,
14 you know, maybe the president has asked two former
15 presidents to come forward and try to raise money, so
16 maybe that will be an idea that Council could look at,
17 and it wouldn't have to necessarily be a large sum of
18 money, but it would be a gesture, and all gestures are
19 definitely appreciated.
20 I'd like to talk about the city in
21 some fashion here. You know, I think we have to take a
22 look at what is actually happening in this city in
23 regards to the mayor borrowing money instead of using
24 grant money. I think it's time to recognize that with
25 grant monies there's strings attached, and with borrow
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01 money, it's loose and free.
02 I think that we also have to look
03 at the agenda today and see that most of our problems
04 are right here. I mean, you look at the 2.4 tax, you
05 look at the transfer tax. I mean, it's tax upon tax
06 upon tax upon tax, and the city is just spending and
07 spending, but there's really -- I haven't seen any
08 controls by any Council at this point to try to do
09 something with the problem we have as far as spending
10 is concerned.
11 I'd like to see this Council in
12 the coming year try to face the problems this city
13 faces and try to control spending to some degree. I
14 don't think it has anything to do with browbeating the
15 mayor. I mean, the mayor should be part of the team
16 and he should come forward also and try to find ways to
17 save money.
18 I'd also like to see the Scranton
19 School District and the Council and the mayor come up
20 with a feasible plan for an enhanced summer program for
21 the children in this community.
22 There's so many good ideas that
23 can take place here, and I think we've got to make sure
24 that it's not individuals butting heads together to see

25 who can look the best. Because in all honesty, the
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01 Scranton Times is going to decide what is fact and what
02 is not fact.
03 And just because the Scranton
04 Times says something is fact doesn't necessarily make
05 it true. I mean, we've watched a lot of the opinions
06 they've had. They've changed over a course of time.
07 In the beginning they were against
08 the new school, then they were for the new school, then
09 they weren't sure where they were.
10 And you look even now at the
11 mismanagement of the city, and it's not just this
12 mayor, it's been previous mayors. And when you watch
13 what happens to where previous mayors go to when they
14 leave office, you can see what is going on.
15 Mr. Dudek got up and spoke about
16 the EU, the Euro. If you know anything about the Euro
17 and about the EU, you find out that that's a new nation
18 being built in Europe. They're looking for a national
19 anthem, they're one nation, and in order to join the
20 EU, you have to have your borrowing in control.
21 Now, there's a lot of countries in
22 Europe that still want to join the EU, but they can't
23 get in because they've just borrowed too much money.
24 And when you look at the decline
25 of the dollar, you have to realize that almost every
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01 level of American government is bankrupt.
02 You take a look at, just for maybe
03 people's personal knowledge, the eighth largest killer
04 in America is malpractice, and believe me, I, you know,
05 that touches a cord with me, and I just think that it's
06 important for everybody to realize that the way to
07 solve that is if they decide that if you're a victim of
08 malpractice, that they should cap your award, instead
09 of going out and holding doctors liable.
10 Now, I've started talking to
11 Congressmen and senators, and most of them don't want
12 to hear what anybody has to say, because somebody has
13 already bought them.
14 I mean, it's a terrible thing to
15 say, but it's the truth. And you look at every bracket
16 of government. And we, the people, have been locked
17 out of our own government.
18 We have spending out of control,
19 we have borrowing out of control, nobody is held
20 accountable. You go into the courts, and even the

21 courts have been held by -- I really don't know how to
22 explain how somebody can control the courts in America,
23 but it happens. I mean, it's a terrible thing.

24 You know, people have to get
25 involved. I agree with what some other speakers here
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01 said. We, the people, have to get involved. We have
02 to take control of our government off of everyone and
03 anyone.

04 As I've said here before, we can
05 never surrender this podium, we can never stop being
06 what are. We're Americans, just the same as you are.
07 When you feel passionate about something, you'll get
08 involved. Thank you.

09 MR. DIBILEO: Thank you,
10 Mr. Morgan. That's it for the sign-in sheet. Are
11 there any other speakers?

12 MS. PILOSI: Good evening,
13 Council. Violet Pilosi, resident and taxpayer.

14 MR. DIBILEO: Good evening.

15 MS. PILOSI: In 1723, Katherine
16 The Great paved the road to citizens participation
17 throughout the world. There were revolts and
18 revolutions through the decades before we got to where
19 we are now.

20 Within the last year and the prior
21 year, we have heard from several citizen participants
22 who came to this podium to speak facts and their
23 opinion.

24 We have also heard from some of
25 these people who no longer come as to why they no
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01 longer come. We cannot allow top administration to
02 silence these people and threaten their livelihood, the
03 food and the roofs over their heads because they do
04 come to this podium and speak their mind.

05 This is Scranton. This city is
06 part of America, it's a democracy by the people for the
07 people, and this administration is demonstrating their
08 attempts to make this a fascist form of government,
09 and we cannot allow that.

10 We cannot allow the top
11 administration to turn back the hands of time and the
12 progress that's been made in citizen participation in
13 this government, and I hope you will do something about
14 it. Thank you.

15 MR. DIBILEO: Thank you.

16 MR. DAVIS: I'd like to start off

17 by saying Happy Kuwanza to all of you. It embodies a
18 lot more than Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. It
19 talks about unity and it talks about a lot of things,
20 and I'm quite sure you've heard all the stories about
21 what is Kwanza. But I think my prayers are being
22 answered.
23 On New Year's Eve, I didn't go
24 downtown. We had a church meeting, it was like a
25 revival, both Bethel and Shiloh got together. It was
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01 packed.
02 And all we did was we thanked God
03 for what he had given us in the last year and whatever
04 he brought upon us for this year. We're very -- we're
05 basically a very, very solid group of people and we
06 love our children immensely. We've been blessed.
07 They brought in a minister to
08 Bethel AME, and his name is Reverend Andrew Newberry.
09 He's from Akron, Ohio. His specialty is working with
10 youth groups. Principal, you've got to talk to this
11 guy, he is fantastic. You should bring him down and
12 put him in your auditorium and let him speak to all of
13 the kids, because he can do something with them. He's
14 that good.
15 I listened to him twice. I
16 listened to him on New Year's Eve evening and I
17 listened to him before that when he was talking about
18 his program that he had in Akron, Ohio and how he
19 wanted to do the very same thing here, and it's
20 something we need so very badly.
21 We have two dynamic ministers,
22 like the Reverend McLane down at Shiloh who is a
23 builder, he's building us a church, and this Reverend
24 Newberry who is going to help us with our young.
25 We hope that the school board and
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01 the school directors and the principals will utilize
02 him instead of throwing our kids out or having them
03 dispelled. Make one more step, talk to this man, have
04 the kids talk to this man, have the parents talk to
05 this man, because I think he has the answers.
06 I'm impressed by him, and it's not
07 easy to impress me. Now, I also left with each of the
08 members of the City Council a -- this is a flyer from
09 the Progressive Center. It's in honor of Reverend
10 Dr. Martin Luther King, the United Neighborhood Center
11 presents Keeping The Idol Real. Facilitated by
12 Robert W. Hoffman, Jr., hosted by UNC, Progressive

13 Center, 414 Olive Street.
14 Now, we're going to have a
15 program that we want the kids to actually enjoy, we
16 want the adults to enjoy, we want them to take
17 something home with them that makes Martin Luther King
18 more than just one day out of school. We want it to be
19 a start in our whole process of teaching them unity.
20 Now, this is for the diversified
21 population, but we're inviting everyone. You have now
22 your only personal invitation to this.
23 James Williams came to me and he
24 said, Jim, if you're going to City Council, give each
25 one of them a personal invitation to this. You're
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01 important to us, you're important to our community.
02 So, on this day, on the 17th of
03 January, which is a Monday, if you can come there, we
04 would love to have you. This program will be highly
05 interactive. It will consist of small group
06 activities, handouts, brief lectures, when appropriate.
07 All are welcomed.
08 If you are interested in
09 attending, please contact James D. Williams at
10 570-343-8835, Extension 113. I hope to hear from you.
11 This is our method of unifying our
12 community. It is very important to us. We don't want
13 to take anything from you, but we want to unify our
14 community so we know where our kids are, we know where
15 our adults are being taken care of properly, and the
16 senior citizens that need, we are going to be able to
17 satisfy their needs.
18 I thank you for your time, and --
19 oh, for the kids, excuse me, Reverend Newberry has a
20 meeting every Tuesday at 5 p.m. Youth parents who are
21 having problems with your young adults, make sure you
22 go with them, call him, make appointments to see him,
23 let him help you. This man can help. He's dynamic. I
24 really like him. I like what I've heard so far, and I
25 think he's going to do nothing else but help this city
0044
01 grow. And I thank you.
02 MR. DIBILEO: Thank you, Jim.
03 MR. McTIERNAN: Mr. President, may
04 I have a moment, please?
05 MR. DIBILEO: Sure, of course.
06 MR. McTIERNAN: Mr. Davis, just a
07 comment regarding a school district program, it's
08 slightly off the topic, but since you're asking about

09 it, through the governor's office and through the
10 department of education, the school board directors,
11 the superintendent and Scranton High School are all
12 part of a program called the Page 1 initiative, and the
13 focus of the program is to reduce the achievement gap
14 between minority students and non-minority students,
15 and part of that program entails us to form a committee
16 which we're in the process of where we can examine ways
17 to reduce the achievement gap between minority students
18 and non-minority students.

19 Part of my plan as one of the
20 leaders of that program is to reach out to members of
21 the minority community, so I appreciate your
22 information there, and to let you know that there is a
23 movement supported by the school district to address
24 many of the things you're talking about tonight.

25 MR. DAVIS: It's also supported by
0045

01 the federal government and the Department of Education
02 and the federal government and the state government.

03 We also have -- we're not doing anything --

04 MR. McTIERNAN: Well, this is a
05 program that six high schools in Pennsylvania are a
06 part of one, we're one of six in the state that are
07 involved in it, so we're excited about hopefully being
08 part of that program and being successful.

09 MR. DAVIS: Thank you. Thank you
10 very much.

11 MR. DIBILEO: Thank you, Jim, and
12 thank you, Mr. McTiernan.

13 MR. GERVASI: Good evening, City
14 Council. My name is David Gervasi, I am a city
15 resident, and I'm the spokesman for the firefighters'
16 union.

17 MR. DIBILEO: Good evening.

18 MR. GERVASI: Just a couple
19 comments I want to make tonight. I was going to talk
20 about one little thing about the budget, but I had an
21 opportunity to talk to a few people tonight here, and
22 there seems to be a pattern running of intimidation in
23 the city, and I'm really getting disgusted with it.
24 I know as at the time the

25 president of the union, I can be intimidated, but, you
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01 know, I'm in the position to be intimidated, because
02 I'm a target. Like any other public official, I'm a
03 target, and that's fine. They ridiculed my family for
04 weeks and weeks on the front page, but, you know, it's

05 the position I chose to take.
06 There's citizens here. Now, this
07 is the fourth time I've heard something about this.
08 And I know as a fact that a public official was
09 threatened to shut his mouth or he would be removed
10 from his job, I know another person who used to come
11 here and speak and they were threatened. I think,
12 Mr. Pocius, you know who that one is.
13 MR. POCIUS: I don't know.
14 MR. GERVASI: No? Okay. I'll
15 remind you later on. Phone calls were made to his --
16 I'll talk to you later about it, I'll mention it to
17 you.
18 MR. POCIUS: That's all right.
19 MR. GERVASI: Oh, okay. Then I
20 won't. Two different phone calls were made to this
21 person's place of employment and told that, you know,
22 it's not good for you to be talking at Council
23 meetings, and, you know, we're kind of -- another
24 person here a few weeks ago, threats were made, and now
25 this next time, I don't think Charlie got into it too
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01 much, but I know the story.
02 There seems to be a pattern, and
03 it really disgusts me, and the reason why it disgusts
04 me, and this has been happening for a long time now.
05 I don't know if you remember
06 people, you know, the last Council when the recovery
07 plan was going around, we told people about the
08 problems we had with the recovery plan, illegalities in
09 the recovery plan, things that it's impossible to
10 operate under certain aspects of the recovery plan, the
11 fear that we had for our own safety and the safety of
12 the citizens under this recovery plan, and it all fell
13 on deaf ears.
14 We started coming here and voicing
15 our opinions and trying to educate people, and it was
16 too late at that point, but trying to educate people on
17 what was actually in the recovery plan.
18 And I think if people remember,
19 they said they had to paint City Council chambers and
20 it was delayed and it was delayed and it was delayed,
21 and then finally Mr. Fiorini said, Oh, it will be done
22 in November, toward the end of November, which was
23 after the vote, and then after that they tried to keep
24 Channel 61 out of here until this Council
25 re-established it, and, Mr. DiBileo, you were
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01 responsible for getting Channel 61 back in here,
02 because if that old Council won re-election or the
03 mayor's majority won re-election, you wouldn't be
04 watching me on TV right now.
05 But these are the type of things
06 that were happening. And if you didn't vote for my
07 recovery plan, I was going to raise your taxes. And
08 the latest one was there was going to be payless
09 paydays if you didn't give the mayor \$4 million. Did
10 anybody find out if they used that \$4 million for
11 payroll last week? Does anybody know?

12 MR. DIBILEO: No.

13 MR. DAVIS: I don't know. Maybe
14 you should look into that to find out that maybe that
15 was another idle threat if somebody didn't get their
16 own way. It's disgusting. They can threaten me all
17 they want, I don't care, I'll be here, too.

18 Getting back to what I was going
19 to say briefly, the operating budget, we received
20 really nice color pictures of it today, there's one
21 item in here that is -- they use it over and over in
22 the newspaper, this administration does, and it says,
23 Until the recovery plan is completely implemented, the
24 city will see no cost savings in the areas of salary,
25 overtime and health care.

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01 Now, I just briefly want to say
02 that in the beginning we had no type of -- we didn't
03 have any type of hostile attitude towards this
04 administration. We sat down with the mayor before he
05 took office and we offered our ideas to him to make our
06 department more efficient, and I know the other unions
07 did the same.

08 Immediately after he took office,
09 we met and we started talking about things, and it was
10 very nice conversations. A little while later, we
11 started negotiating. Then at the time we were deceived
12 about the recovery plan, and that's when everything
13 sort of fell apart.

14 But even after that point, we made
15 a lot of suggestions to the administration on how to
16 make things more efficient and how to save money on
17 overtime. We negotiated those things. We had a little
18 problem with health care. But, you know, the city is
19 going to be forced at this point to do what we were
20 doing in the past, which we were very successful at,
21 have our health care costs containment committee
22 meetings are going to start up again, which is some

23 positive news.

24 We're going to put all -- bury the
25 hatchet, but everything aside, because health care is
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01 the biggest problem that the city is facing and all the
02 increases, and I think maybe we are going to be on the
03 same page, and I think you are going to see a lot of
04 good things coming from that.

05 But to put in their budget opening
06 that until the recovery plan is fully implemented,
07 there's not going to be any cost savings in salary,
08 overtime and health care.

09 We could have been doing this in
10 health care for the last year and a half, but they
11 chose to take us to arbitration over our health care,
12 the actual violation of an arbitration award, a
13 violation of our contract and health care agreement we
14 had.

15 That's coming back now after all
16 the legal fees are spent. We negotiated almost two
17 years ago on how to reduce overtime in our department
18 and not really cut any safety to the public or safety
19 to ourselves, but I guess we need to implement the
20 recovery plan before we can do that, even though we
21 already gave them the way to do that.

22 And the interesting part was areas
23 of salary. One thing we never spoke of and the mayor
24 never said to me that he's looking for bodies, he's
25 looking forward to reduce the amount of firefighters.
0051

01 It was never mentioned. All of a sudden we're talking
02 about areas of salary. I don't know what that means.
03 I don't know if that means he's
04 going to cut our salary or he's going to lay people
05 off. What I've been hearing, there may be massive
06 layoffs in the fire department. Just rumor. I don't
07 know for sure.

08 All I'm saying is in closing is
09 that this has been a pattern of intimidation for the
10 last three years. We tried to be nice. And if anybody
11 knows, the mayor knows. He knows how I treated him and
12 what I tried to do to work together with him, and not
13 only myself, the people on our negotiating committee.
14 And it's a shame that they still want to shove this
15 recovery plan down our throat, and they know full well
16 there's illegalities in it and there's things that are
17 unworkable. And it's just a shame we can't work this
18 thing out.

19 And I, for one, and the entire
20 executive body and my president, we are willing at any
21 time to bury the hatchet and do the right thing. It's
22 a shame we had to spend a million dollars so far
23 fighting with each other. We could have done this two
24 years ago, but we're willing at any time to bury the
25 hatchet and hopefully that will happen.

0052

01 Maybe they'll gain some trust when
02 we start working together on the health care problems
03 we have, and maybe we'll build trust with each other at
04 that point, and then maybe we can do a contract. I
05 don't know, but that's all I have to say. Thank you.

06 MR. DIBILEO: Thank you.

07 MS. KRAKE: Nancy Krake. Good
08 evening, Council. My name is Nancy Krake.

09 MR. DIBILEO: Good.

10 MS. KRAKE: I have one question
11 about tonight's agenda, first of all, under 5-J. It's
12 for a consultant firm for OECD, and I was wondering if
13 you can explain to me either this evening, and if not,
14 since it's just the first reading, in the future before
15 you vote on it for final passage, exactly what this
16 consulting firm's functions will be and what they
17 provided to us in the past.

18 MR. DIBILEO: Jay, we've talked
19 about that prior to the meeting. Would somebody want
20 to --

21 MR. WALSH: Which number was it?

22 MS. KRAKE: 5-J.

23 MR. WALSH: We have follow-up
24 connected to the actual resolution itself, so perhaps I
25 can answer your question by reading what we have from
0053

01 the legal department.

02 MS. KRAKE: May I ask, though,
03 Councilman DiBileo, that I did need to make some other
04 remarks, and if those things would be explained during
05 the meeting, I would prefer that not to come from my
06 time at the podium, if that's okay.

07 MR. WALSH: What I can do is I can
08 give you the follow-up so that you can read it also and
09 then, if you'd like to do it that way or --

10 MS. KRAKE: I usually don't go
11 beyond my time, but if it lengthy, I didn't want to --

12 MR. DIBILEO: You can give us the
13 shorter version. It won't take time from
14 Mrs. Krake.

15 MS. KRAKE: Thank you kindly.

16 MR. WALSH: No problem. With all

17 that's listed here, I don't know that I can give you

18 too short a version, but I will attempt to give you the

19 shortest version, if that's okay.

20 Basically what they have is

21 reviewing and evaluating projects being considered by

22 the city OECD for housing and economic development

23 assistance, and I said that this might include

24 evaluating, sponsor, developer, experience and

25 capacity, financial review and deal structuring, review

0054

01 of appraisals, cost assumptions, capital budgets,

02 operating statements, marketing data and other funding

03 commitments, advisement on tax credit equity, sources,

04 requirement and structuring, reviewing the city OECD's

05 established community, housing and economic development

06 programs, including program goals, eligibility,

07 criteria, underwriting guidelines, program documents

08 and several other things, organize and expanding the

09 city's OECD economic and development and housing

10 activities by making recommendations as to the

11 feasibility of potential project programs and the best

12 financing techniques to carry out any development

13 project in the City of Scranton, and it goes on. I'm

14 only on No. 3.

15 MS. KRAKE: Well, that's fine,

16 because pretty much it sounds to me exactly like what

17 the director of OECD should be doing, and perhaps many

18 of the additional staff that have been hired over the

19 past two years. Thank you.

20 MR. WALSH: No problem.

21 MS. KRAKE: I would hope Council

22 would seriously think about this before it was passed.

23 I would also like to make a few comments. I would like

24 to suggest to Council that since your budget didn't

25 pass, that you return to the process of approving

0055

01 interdepartmental budget transfers.

02 The past Council had no problem

03 with changing this process because they always agreed

04 with the administration on everything.

05 We rely on this Council to do the

06 best you can with the votes that you have to monitor

07 where and how our monies are spent. So, I think it's,

08 you know, to maintain your vigilance, you might look

09 into going back to that process, because I know,

10 especially at the end of the year, a lot of very

11 curious things were going on interdepartmentally.
12 I'm sure some of them were
13 innocent, but others may have led you to realize where
14 they inappropriately spent money.
15 Now, my last remark is for me a
16 little painful, it's how very sad that this
17 administration and its benefactors feel the need to
18 threaten certain persons who chose to exercise their
19 right to freedom of speech at this podium.
20 They should have learned that in
21 the past when they tried to stifle the truth, the
22 people spoke even louder.
23 A prime example is the present
24 Council majority that was elected by them. The next
25 election hopefully may bring four independent Council
0056
01 votes. The balance of power will then be a reality,
02 not just a dream. Thank you.
03 MR. DIBILEO: Thank you,
04 Mrs. Krake. Are there any other speakers?
05 MR. WALSH: 5-A, Motions.
06 MR. DIBILEO: Mr. McTiernan, any
07 motions or comments?
08 MR. McTIERNAN: Nothing at this
09 time, Mr. President.
10 MR. DIBILEO: Thank you.
11 Mrs. Evans, do you have any motions or comments?
12 MS. EVANS: First, though, Jay,
13 before I forget, with regard to what
14 Mrs. Krake said, could you pull the ordinance that
15 established the interdepartmental budgetary transfers
16 so that Council can take a look at amending that, and
17 if we can have that for next week's caucus, please, I'd
18 appreciate it.
19 I'd like to wish everyone a happy,
20 healthy new year. A new year offers an opportunity for
21 a new beginning, and every Councilperson and the mayor
22 work tirelessly for the betterment of our city.
23 We may all have different
24 objectives and strategies, but we all share the same
25 goal. It's my fervent hope that Council and the mayor
0057
01 will work together successfully in 2005, for the
02 benefit of the people; for example, Council intends to
03 pursue a fair and uniform system of payments in lieu of
04 taxes from non-profits.
05 Unless the mayor vigorously
06 supports and joins our efforts, I'm concerned that we

07 may not meet with the same degree of success. And just
08 as Council supports the vast majority of the mayor's
09 initiatives and his agenda, I'm asking him to support
10 Council initiatives to stop the city's financial
11 bleeding.

12 Also as was mentioned earlier,
13 Mr. Bolus conducted for the ninth consecutive year his
14 Christmas dinner, and it was a tremendous success. And
15 I think that, you know, City Council and the people of
16 this city, if everyone can just set aside political
17 points of view and personalities and thank this man for
18 what he does, because I don't see that occurring often
19 enough in this city.

20 And maybe, too, City Council would
21 like to consider a proclamation for Mr. Bolus honoring
22 his generosity and his humanitarianism by sponsoring
23 these annual Christmas dinners at his own cost.

24 Mr. Courtright, residents have
25 reported speeding in the 13 and 1400 blocks of
0058

01 Olive Street. Could you have the police address this,
02 please?

03 MR. COURTRIGHT: Sure.

04 MS. EVANS: Thank you. I
05 understand the police department responded to
06 approximately 62,600 calls in 2004, and made over 6,300
07 arrests.

08 They are in desperate need of
09 police cars, since there are not enough cars for the
10 number of police officers scheduled on each shift. So,
11 Mr. Courtright, I was hoping that perhaps you and I in
12 the new year could sit down and try to find a way to
13 help with the situation, try to examine every possible
14 source of funding or grants that may be available so
15 that we can offer this assistance to our police force,
16 but I think it's also going to benefit the citizens of
17 this city obviously, because with this shortage of
18 police cars, we're looking at a delayed response time;
19 isn't that true?

20 MR. COURTRIGHT: Yes. I mean,
21 it's painfully obvious that we need police cars. I
22 think more so now than ever in the history of the city,
23 and when it's my turn to speak, I have quite a bit of
24 literature here on some things that hopefully are going
25 to bring money into this city that's not going to cost
0059

01 us any money, and I'll explain that later on when it's
02 my turn to speak.

03 MS. EVANS: Thank you. I'd also
04 like to recognize Officer Gary McPhillips and Inspector
05 Jack Liptai. Both have targeted abandoned vehicles in
06 North Scranton and Green Ridge, and their hard work has
07 cleared a great deal of the problem.
08 I would ask all Scrantonians to be
09 sure your vehicles have the proper inspection,
10 registration and plates, since inspectors are
11 continuing to be vigorously address the problem of
12 abandoned vehicles through the entire city.
13 Also, the area of Woodlawn Street
14 and Boulevard Avenue will be monitored for parking on
15 curbs and grass, and residents can contact me if the
16 problem is not addressed properly. And you can reach
17 me at www.janettomkoevans.com.
18 I'd also like to recognize another
19 police officer, Mr. Tobin, I believe it is, Pat Tobin,
20 thank you, Mr. Courtright, for the excellent work that
21 he put in on New Year's Eve under some very trying
22 circumstances, but I've been told by a number of
23 individuals he was very amiable, very compassionate,
24 very concerned, and so he has my commendation for
25 that.

0060

01 I'd also like to recognize
02 Officers Tom McDonald and Ed Kowalick, who are
03 currently stationed in Iraq, but they are due happily
04 to return home in February, and I know you most likely
05 can't see these, but I have pictures of these gentlemen
06 as they serve in Iraq over Christmas with some fellow
07 soldiers and officers, and I want them to know that
08 they are in my thoughts and prayers, as are all the
09 servicemen and women, and we want them all to come home
10 safely and soon.
11 And finally, I have just a few
12 requests that I'm going to actually give to you, Kay,
13 so you don't need to write any of this down.
14 There's a deep hole near the curb
15 on Seventh Avenue across from Scranton High School;
16 potholes on DeSales Street; water runoff and ponding at
17 Watson Street and Main Avenue.
18 Jay, I did have a question,
19 though, that I'd like you to take care of, please. Did
20 the city provide free health inspection and licenses
21 for the kitchen at the Lackawanna County Prison?
22 MR. SAUNDERS: Okay.
23 MS. EVANS: And, also, is the city
24 charging for the same services, health inspection, and

25 any required licenses for eating and drinking in the
0061
01 school district kitchens? And if so, why?
02 I'd also like a report of the
03 revenue for 2002 through 2004 for the milk licenses and
04 eating and drinking licenses for the City of Scranton.
05 A problem with birds at
06 Lake Scranton and Lutherwood; water runoff on
07 Monroe Avenue onto Myrtle Avenue; a report of the CDBG
08 funding for the North Scranton Providence Square
09 Project, and a garbage problem at Amelia Avenue and
10 Race Street. And I'll give that to you now, Kay, as
11 well as a letter I just received in my mail this
12 evening about the 1500 block of Cherry Street and a
13 terrible water runoff problem they're experiencing.
14 Thank you.
15 MR. DIBILEO: Thank you,
16 Mrs. Evans. Appreciate that. Mr. Pocius, any motions
17 or comments?
18 MR. POCIUS: Just again to wish
19 everyone the healthiest and the happiest new year, all
20 the constituents in the City of Scranton, and I, too,
21 cannot wait personally until the military is released
22 from this terrible situation in Iraq.
23 I have a personal interest over
24 there, I have a nephew that's serving, and it's just,
25 again, my heart and prayers go out to these people
0062
01 every day. That's all.
02 MR. DIBILEO: Thank you,
03 Mr. Pocius. And we're 100 behind you on that. They
04 can't get home fast enough. Mr. Courtright, motions or
05 comments?
06 MR. COURTRIGHT: Yes. You know,
07 everybody has so far brought up Bob Bolus, and I wasn't
08 able to make it there this year, I was there one year
09 prior, and I said to him out in the hallway, you know,
10 I don't always agree with everything he says and I
11 don't always disagree, but agree or disagree, it is a
12 great thing that he does, and I think he should be
13 recognized for it.
14 If you haven't seen it, you should
15 go down and see it. It's quite the site on Christmas.
16 It makes you really thankful for what you have.
17 Over the Christmas break here, I
18 had an individual stop me on the street and ask if I
19 would bring up these three police officers' names, he
20 had a problem in the West Scranton area, what he told

21 me to be a severe drug problem in his neighborhood, and
22 on the day shift he said the gentleman that helped him
23 was Officer Raymond Kelly, and on the second shift were
24 Jason Todd and Mike Marino, and he's very grateful to
25 them for the help that they've given him, and we hope
0063

01 continued help. Unfortunately the latter two gentlemen
02 are the two that were laid off.

03 As I said when Mrs. Evans was
04 speaking before, I think many of you are aware, I'm on
05 a commission that oversees the police officers in the
06 State of Pennsylvania, and I recently went to a meeting
07 in Reading, and, you know, at nighttime we sit around
08 talking, and there's 20 of us on this commission, head
09 of the state police and many prestigious people that
10 have spent a lot of time in law enforcement, whether
11 directly or indirectly.

12 And, you know, the conversation
13 one night after dinner, one officer, former officer, I
14 believe he was, he was talking about a program called
15 Weed and Seed, and everybody there, with the exception
16 of me seem to know what that was, and I thought maybe
17 because I wasn't a police officer, but, you know,
18 there's people on the commission, I think there's a
19 senator a, there's a guy from the House of
20 Representative, but everybody seemed to know about it,
21 and I said, well, could you explain to me a little bit
22 about it? And they went on and they told me, and I'll
23 try to be brief, but I think this is pretty important
24 for this city.

25 And they explained it to me, and I
0064

01 asked if they could send me the literature, and I think
02 I was home two days from the meeting and it came in the
03 mail, so I thank them for that, but this, in my
04 opinion, is geared specifically for Scranton.

05 There's a potential that we can
06 receive \$225,000 in aid from government agencies to
07 help in our problems. And I just highlighted some
08 thing. It's lengthy, but what I plan to do is turn
09 this over to Director Hayes, and if he or the police
10 chief could look into this, I think this is going to be
11 a big help to the city.

12 Again, it's called Weed and Seed,
13 and what it does is it aims to prevent, control or
14 reduce violent crime, drug abuse and gang activity in
15 doctor go ahead high crime neighbors across the
16 country.

17 And Weed and Seed sites, they
18 range anywhere from several neighborhood blocks to a
19 15-mile radius. And, again, I'm trying to break it
20 down as simply as possible.
21 The weeding out part where they
22 got the name weed and seed, the weeding out part is
23 they weed out criminals who participate in violent
24 crimes, drug abuse, and attempting to prevent their
25 return to the targeted area once they clear them out of
0065
01 there.
02 And the seeding part is they bring
03 human services into the area after this is
04 accomplished, and it encompasses prevention,
05 intervention, treatment and neighborhood
06 revitalization. Some of these
07 monies, I don't know, I'm not saying we're going to get
08 the \$225,000, but anything we can get, I think, is
09 sorely needed. And if they
10 look into it, I think some of these monies can be used
11 for equipment, some of these monies could possible be
12 used for cars, which we desperately, desperately need,
13 as Mrs. Evans said, and possible even for officers for
14 that targeted area.
15 So, I'm going to turn this over to Director Hayes and
16 hopefully they could get us some of these funds.
17 Another thing they sent me an
18 entire book on, I don't -- I hope I come back with just
19 as much information next time I go, but this is called
20 Technology Transfer Program, and, again, briefly I'll
21 explain it, the Technology Transfer Program was
22 established to transfer counter-drug systems and
23 devices directed to state and local law enforcement
24 agencies, and this is the part where Scranton comes in,
25 in my opinion, that may otherwise be unable to benefit
0066
01 from new equipment due to limited budgets.
02 Well, it's obvious our public
03 safety has limited budgets, and there's a whole book of
04 equipment and things that city could potentially get if
05 we look into it. So, again, I will turn it over to
06 Director Hayes and hopefully that he will run with
07 this.
08 And one last thing, I personally
09 could help the city with this, being I sit on this
10 commission, the Governor has just turned over \$500,000
11 to our commission, and part of that money is used for,
12 and I'm not very, very well versed, and I just got on

13 the commission, but I think it's obvious to everybody
14 in the City of Scranton that we have a larger Spanish
15 speaking population than we ever had before, and it's
16 growing, and police work, it could be a big plus.

17 I think in the comm center, a lot
18 of times you'll hear them make a call and they'll say,
19 we're having a language barrier problem here.

20 Well, I'm pretty sure that I can
21 help the city get a grant that we can have Spanish
22 classes for our police officers at absolutely no charge
23 to the city, that the grant would come from the
24 Mopek Commission.

25 So, if, again, if Director Hayes
0067

01 and the police chief are interested in that, I would
02 help them with that. I just thought it'd be nice to
03 come here and say something positive, so maybe we can
04 get something for once. And that's all I have. Thank
05 you.

06 MS. EVANS: Mr. Courtright, just
07 one question, would the recovery plan perhaps prevent
08 our obtaining any of these funds or grants?

09 MR. COURTRIGHT: I don't know.
10 I would hope not. I can't answer that question. I
11 don't have the answer to that, to be honest with you.

12 MS. EVANS: That would be not only
13 unfortunate, but very foolish.

14 MR. COURTRIGHT: Well, let's hope
15 that's not the case.

16 MS. EVANS: Thank you.

17 MR. DIBILEO: Thank you,
18 Mr. Courtright. I'm sorry I had to leave the room
19 there for a minute.

20 MR. COURTRIGHT: That's all
21 right.

22 MR. DIBILEO: On our agenda
23 tonight are taxes to begin to entertain again this
24 year. And, you know, it's never an easy job to sit
25 here and vote in favor of the same taxes that we
0068

01 currently have.

02 And there's one tax that's on our
03 agenda tonight that's especially hard, I think, to vote
04 in favor of, and that is our infamous wage tax.

05 Everybody knows that, you know,
06 the number one reason that Scranton has lost population
07 over the years is because Scranton's wage tax currently
08 being a total of 3.4 percent is more than double the

09 typical wage tax that are our neighboring communities
10 charge, which is 1 percent.

11 So, it's no secret that to live
12 outside of Scranton, it can save you 2.4 percent, and I
13 think that's the reason why many people have decided to
14 leave Scranton. Many people have chosen to live just
15 outside our borders, which is a benefit actually to our
16 neighboring communities.

17 Our neighboring communities have
18 actually reaped the benefits of Scranton's high wage
19 taxes. And the thing is, though, in the long-run, you
20 know, a high Scranton wage tax is bad, not only for
21 Scranton, but it's actually bad for our neighboring
22 communities, because with Scranton struggling the way
23 it is, should Scranton financially go downhill further
24 than it is currently, our neighboring communities are
25 going to suffer as a result, also.

0069

01 So, I want to say that prior to
02 voting on that wage tax, I think we're in a position to
03 possibly do something about it, possibly do something
04 about it, and I want to say that I'd like to find out
05 this week, if it's possible.

06 Last week, actually three weeks
07 ago our last meeting, I should say, the amended
08 City Council budget was overridden by a veto vote. We
09 didn't have four votes here to pass the amended budget,
10 but I think there was something that every member of
11 Council actually agreed with in that amended budget,
12 and that was the formerly called occupational privilege
13 tax.

14 Since 1965, the occupational
15 privilege tax for non-residents that work in the city
16 of Scranton is \$10. For that same tax for people that
17 live in the city and work in the city, it's \$15, and
18 that hasn't changed.

19 And if you go back to 1965, and
20 add the rate of inflation on that occupational
21 privilege tax, that \$10 and \$15 charge, I think it's
22 even documented by somebody at the Pennsylvania Economy
23 League, would literally be in excess of, I think, \$60
24 now, so it hasn't kept up with inflation at all, it's
25 remained the same.

0070

01 Governor Rendell last month
02 actually threw a life preserver to many communities,
03 and the communities that benefit the most are the
04 communities that have most of the jobs in a particular

05 region. In our region, Scranton generates most of the
06 jobs.
07 I'd like to see, if it's at all
08 possible, to open up the budget between now and next
09 week and investigate whether or not we could increase
10 the now -- the occupational privilege tax is now called
11 the emergency and municipal services tax, and it allows
12 cities like Scranton to increase those fees of \$10 and
13 \$15, up to \$52.
14 Our amended budget three weeks ago
15 included \$1 million generated from that tax. And I'll
16 tell you why that figure was \$1 million. Some of us
17 were under the impression, just like the Scranton
18 Times, that this tax can be imposed on only
19 non-residents.
20 Well, the fact of the matter is,
21 that's not the case. The tax would literally need to
22 be imposed on non-residents and Scranton residents.
23 So, that changes things. The total projected revenue
24 from the new tax now is \$1.6 million. So, there's
25 another \$600,000 that would be generated from residents
0071
01 of Scranton that work in Scranton.
02 But I just don't think that we can
03 impose any more pressure on Scranton residents by any
04 new taxes. I think that in conjunction with the
05 possible implementation of Governor Rendell's new
06 emergency and municipal services tax, I would like to
07 see if we can't in conjunction with that, lower the
08 Scranton wage tax by one or two tenths of 1 percent.
09 According to my calculations,
10 one-tenth of 1 percent of the Scranton wage tax, our
11 number one nemesis, is in the neighborhood of
12 \$800,000 to a million dollars.
13 If we literally dropped our wage
14 tax by two-tenths of 1 percent, the revenue lost would
15 be about equal to the revenue generated from the
16 emergency and municipal services tax. It would
17 basically be a wash.
18 Now, I understand that there's
19 limitations on how that money must be spent. It must
20 be spent on, and let me read this to you once again,
21 because I did this three weeks ago, it must be spent on
22 police, fire, or emergency services, road construction,
23 and/or maintenance of roads, or reduction of property
24 taxes.
25 We certainly can use a lot of road
0072

01 maintenance in Scranton, so why can't we take that \$1.6
02 million that this tax would generate and fix up all of
03 our roads, not just some of them?
04 Why can't we add new police
05 officers on the street instead of reducing the number?
06 Lord knows if we need anything extra, it's extra police
07 officers in Scranton, especially South Scranton.
08 South Side can use them, maybe more than any section of
09 town.
10 But I would like to say that I'd
11 like to see if we can table the voting on the wage tax
12 this evening and table the voting on the formerly
13 occupational privilege tax, now the emergency and
14 municipal services tax, and find out if we can't make
15 those two changes, possibly implement that emergency
16 and services tax, but in conjunction with that, lower
17 the wage tax by one or two-tenths of 1 percent, our
18 number one nemesis.
19 That would actually save the
20 taxpayers of Scranton money. And let me give you a
21 quick example. If a family earning \$50,000 a year,
22 family now, let's say many people have two working --
23 two people working in a family, and let's say combined
24 a husband and wife make \$50,000 a year, two-tenths of 1
25 percent drop in the wage tax is going to save that
0073
01 family \$100 a year.
02 Well, the emergency and municipal
03 services tax, it's a mouthful, would actually cause
04 that Scranton resident to pay \$37 more. Their \$15
05 occupational privilege tax would be raised to \$52.
06 The net savings to that family is
07 \$63 in their pocket. So, that would save Scranton
08 taxpayers money. It would be a complete wash for
09 somebody earning very little, and this tax, by the way,
10 is exempt to wagger earners under \$12,000 a year.
11 So, I'd like to say that if we can
12 temporarily table that tax, get the Pennsylvania League
13 of Cities on the phone, find out if we can possibly
14 make this happen, I believe, if I'm not mistaken, that
15 all five Council members were in agreement on having
16 this tax be part of the amended budget, so that's what
17 I'd like to see happen -- I can't, I can't, Erik, right
18 now - so, that's what I'd like to see happen this
19 evening when it comes to those two pieces of
20 legislation, if we can hold them just for one week and
21 investigate whether or not we can make that become a
22 reality.

23 MS. EVANS: I'm very glad. I
24 agree with you. And as you said, I think we all pretty
25 much agreed back in December, but I'm particularly
0074
01 grateful that you provided such a detailed explanation,
02 because since that meeting a number of people have said
03 to me, Mrs. Evans, you know, on the one hand you wanted
04 to increase the occupational privilege tax, and then on
05 the other hand you're telling me you're going to
06 decrease taxes, and I don't understand what you're
07 saying, and it almost sounds as if you're talking out
08 of both sides of your mouth.
09 So, I'm glad the explanation was
10 there, and hopefully now everyone can understand the
11 benefit to increasing the occupational privilege tax
12 while simultaneously decreasing the wage tax.
13 And in fact, I was thinking just
14 as you were, because I cut out the article the Scranton
15 Times had published listing those boroughs and
16 townships who are enacting this legislation, and the
17 headlines alone, Moscow considers increasing job tax
18 and South Abington raises the job tax, and they also
19 provided a list of municipalities which include Avoca,
20 Carbondale, Clarks Summit, Dunmore, Elmhurst Township,
21 Honesdale, Moosic, Moscow, Old Forge, South Abington,
22 and, of course, two of which have action planned this
23 month.
24 So, certainly, as Mr. DiBileo
25 said, we're a much larger municipality, and probably
0075
01 the life force of the area, and I admire what all of
02 these townships and boroughs are doing, but it's even
03 more essential for us to be doing the same.
04 MR. DIBILEO: Thank you,
05 Mrs. Evans. And let me say, too, because I'm going to
06 make a motion regarding this, and that is to make a
07 motion to determine whether or not this can actually
08 become a reality between now and next week.
09 But prior to making that motion,
10 I'd like to say that, you know, our neighboring
11 communities are our partners. You know, we're all in
12 this together. We're going to sink or swim as a
13 region, not as a city.
14 There's no way that Old Forge and
15 Moscow and Clarks Summit could flourish if Scranton
16 goes bankrupt, it just can't happen. So, we all have
17 to stay afloat together.
18 And with that said, I'd like to

19 make that motion that we investigate the feasibility of
20 reducing Scranton's wage tax in conjunction with
21 implement the emergency and municipal services tax from
22 the current levels of \$10 and \$15, to \$52.

23 MR. McTIERNAN: Second.

24 MR. DIBILEO: Thank you. There's
25 a motion on the floor and a second. On the question,
0076

01 please?

02 MR. POCIUS: Just on the question,

03 Mr. DiBileo. I don't think they should be tabled, but,
04 I mean, obviously it's going to pass, so I will reserve
05 most of my thoughts until we find out the results of
06 this, but at first glance, it sounds like something
07 that may be something that's most desirous to do, but
08 if the monies that have to be used for a specific
09 items, and we're talking of adding a whole bunch of
10 things and we're deleting a revenue source that can be
11 used across the board to pay everyday expenses of the
12 city, including health care, so on and so forth, then
13 basically I believe that we may be possibly building
14 another deficit into the budget by earmarking funds
15 from this new tax that cannot be -- that does not
16 actually replace the revenue from the other tax.

17 So, if this is -- can be studied

18 in a week and brought back where it's clear in my mind,
19 then I'm willing to keep an open mind, so I won't vote
20 against your motion to table, but I think time is of
21 the essence, because, like you said, one week there's
22 no longer, because these things have to be enacted,
23 because payroll deductions have to be made and so on
24 and so forth, you know, from even the 2.2 or, excuse
25 me, the 2.4, you know, from the various businesses in
0077

01 the city, so I'll go along with this for tonight, but
02 basically I'll save judgement on a final vote until we
03 get the findings.

04 MR. WALSH: My only concern,

05 Mr. DiBileo, also s along those lines, but also I
06 believe that the Home Rule Charter and the
07 Administrative Code says we have to immediately adopt
08 those taxes.

09 MR. POCIUS: That's what I was

10 saying, Mark. I'm not sure.

11 MR. WALSH: Yeah. That's where I
12 have some concern with the tabling of the tax things
13 that we're going to be introducing.

14 MR. POCIUS: Let them be

15 introduced and amended.

16 MR. WALSH: Yeah, that's possible.

17 MR. POCIUS: In a better world if

18 it's --

19 MR. WALSH: I just have a concern

20 about that. I don't know, because I haven't researched

21 it, and it's a complicated issue, what effect it would

22 have --

23 MR. POCIUS: You could amend it.

24 MR. WALSH: -- what effect it

25 would have by not introducing it. Again, that's a

0078

01 concern that I have.

02 MR. DIBILEO: My motion didn't

03 include tabling the legislation, so, yeah, I might

04 recommend that we introduce it tonight and hopefully

05 then would be able to in a week to amend it to the

06 possibility of lower wage taxes, our ultimate goal.

07 MR. POCIUS: That seems like a

08 more -- maybe Mark can look at the Home Rule issue.

09 MR. WALSH: I would be happy to

10 look at those. My only concern is, I, you know, it's a

11 complicated issue and I haven't had the opportunity to

12 really research the issue of whether they have to be

13 put forth this evening or they don't, and really what

14 effect it would have if you had to table it.

15 I think under this new

16 legislation, and it used to be called the occupational

17 privilege tax, and I know you used the new legal name

18 there for it, but I think to implement that tax, you

19 have to advertise it in the newspaper for three weeks

20 and there's some other requirements to specify what

21 you're doing with it.

22 I do know based upon my knowledge

23 of that tax that you wouldn't be able to substitute the

24 income or the revenue from that tax for the wage tax, I

25 don't believe so. I don't think that's encompassed in

0079

01 the act. But, again, I think you had described it a

02 little bit differently.

03 MR. DIBILEO: Well, we are going

04 to take this week to make that determination, to see if

05 the numbers can't be worked out where the revenue from

06 the tax would be placed into our roads, road

07 maintenance, and police, fire, and anything else it has

08 to be spent on.

09 Also, even it turns out that only

10 one-tenth of 1 percent is taken off our wage tax, I

11 think it still provides hope. It's a step in the right
12 direction, because we just can't let it sit there year
13 after year with no action. So, I think this gives us a
14 better chance at making positive changes than we've had
15 in a long time. Anyone else on the question?

16 MR. POCIUS: Just on the question, again, I
17 think Mr. Walsh brought up a very good point that once
18 a budget is passed with various taxing things in it,
19 according to the Home Rule, I mean, it's almost set in
20 stone. I'm willing to look at it, but I just think
21 time is of the essence again, and maybe a more prudent
22 thing to do would be introduce them and you can always
23 amend them at a later date, so not to require another
24 meeting or another reading or whatever, another
25 reading, excuse me, that's what I'm trying to get at
0080

01 here, another reading of the -- like, you'd have to
02 carry it out an extra week.

03 MR. WALSH: I know there is some
04 literature out there that says Section 5 of Act 511,
05 and that's the old act, I believe, or the act that's
06 been amended permits any municipality Imposing a tax
07 under Act 511 to revise its budget during any fiscal
08 year by increasing or making additional appropriations
09 from funds to be provided from an Act 511 tax, such as
10 this EMS tax.

11 But, again, you know, these are
12 some complicated issues that haven't been looked at by
13 me before this, and that's one of the problems I have.

14 MR. DIBILEO: Well, we will have
15 to get right to work on it tomorrow, Mr. Saunders --

16 MR. WALSH: Maybe tonight.

17 MR. DIBILEO: -- if you can get
18 with Leonard Kresefski first thing tomorrow morning and
19 let's see if we can make it work possibly. And if we
20 can't, well, at least we tried.

21 MS. EVANS: And evidently, you
22 know, granted they started sooner, but it can be done,
23 because the reorganization meeting occurred Monday
24 night in South Abington Township, and that's the date
25 on which they raised the job tax; whereas, their budget
0081

01 was passed in late December, and January 23, the
02 article indicates, they will amend their \$3.8 million
03 budget that was approved for 2005 in late December
04 decreasing property taxes.

05 MR. WALSH: And I don't know what
06 impact it would have, but they aren't a AA city, and

07 we're a Home Rule Charter city, as well, so there are
08 some subtle differences there that would probably have
09 to be looked at.

10 And, again, I think you're
11 bringing up some issues that probably have never been
12 brought up before, because this act or this amendment
13 to the act just happened, so the EMS tax was the old
14 occupational tax, but there's a lot of new issues there
15 are there, and my only concern is to try and decide
16 what's right or wrong without having the ability to go
17 back and really look at it, which I'm going to do, by
18 the way, starting this evening. I just told Jay we
19 have to stay late tonight and work on this.

20 MS. EVANS: I can't believe the
21 intent, though, of the Home Rule Charter would ever be
22 to prevent revenue or to prevent a tax increase, and if
23 it does, then perhaps it needs amending.

24 MR. WALSH: I understand.

25 MR. POCIUS: But, again, we have
0082

01 to look at building in a possibly \$1.6 million deficit
02 immediately into the budget if these money have be to
03 be earmarked for something that cannot be covered by
04 the new tax, but actually would be deleted from the
05 powers of the wage tax that cover the same items,
06 because the wage tax can be used for, you know, general
07 revenue, any expenditure in the budget. That's the
08 point I have.

09 Again on the question, I think the
10 more prudent thing to do is not to table it, but maybe
11 introduce them as such, and then, again, you don't have
12 to suspend rules or do anything later on if it had to
13 stay the same or pass the same way, and just find out
14 in a week what our options are.

15 MR. DIBILEO: Let's just introduce
16 them as is.

17 MR. POCIUS: Well, we'd have to
18 withdraw the motions, right, Mark, and the second?

19 MR. DIBILEO: No. That wasn't
20 part of my motion, it was not part of my motion.

21 MR. COURTRIGHT: He didn't make a
22 motion to table, he just made a motion for us to look
23 into it.

24 MR. POCIUS: I thought it was to
25 table. No, just to look at it, Gary? Excuse me.

0083

01 MR. DIBILEO: Not to look into it,
02 not to table the legislation.

03 MR. POCIUS: Okay. That makes
04 sense. And if there's no further questions, all those
05 in favor, signify by saying aye.
06 MR. McTIERNAN: Aye.
07 MS. EVANS: Aye.
08 MR. POCIUS: Aye.
09 MR. COURTRIGHT: Aye.
10 MR. DIBILEO: Aye. Opposed? By a
11 5-0 vote, motion passes. And I appreciate that, and
12 we'll get right to work on that.
13 MR. WALSH: Yes.
14 MR. DIBILEO: Now, two other quick
15 things, I don't want to hold up the meeting here, but I
16 spoke to the county tax assessor today, Todd Roche, and
17 I spoke to him regarding the state Homeowner Tax Relief
18 Act, also known as the Homestead Act, you may have read
19 about that in the paper today, in order to be eligible
20 for property tax relief on owner-occupied dwellings,
21 okay, owners who did not complete the application which
22 was mass mailed back in October will get a second
23 chance and actually a final chance at applying by
24 around mid-February, okay?
25 There's a March 1 deadline to have
0084
01 that application, which you should receive by
02 mid-February, to get it implemented with the county,
03 okay? Now, 50 percent of your school district taxes
04 would go down for Scranton residents. Now, that's
05 assuming that \$1 billion of new slot machine revenue is
06 generated for Scranton taxpayers.
07 Now, I looked at my own tax bill
08 that I just paid last year, and I did some
09 calculations, and if my particular tax bill was reduced
10 by 50 percent on the school district amount, my overall
11 property tax bill would have decreased by 30 percent.
12 We're talking about a lot of money here, okay?
13 So watch for it, watch for the
14 application. If you didn't get the application in when
15 the October mailing came out, get the application,
16 submit it to the county, and if you have any questions,
17 Todd Roche told me, call 963-6728, 963-6728, if you
18 don't see the application by mid-February, okay? So,
19 let's look into that.
20 And lastly, City Council's amended
21 budget also included something else which happened to
22 be vetoed as a package, and that was an increase in
23 revenue from our non-profits, something that Mrs. Evans
24 talked about tonight.

25 Now, I feel that we should pursue
0085

01 some greater participation from our non-profits similar
02 to that of the City of Pittsburgh.

03 I looked into the City of

04 Pittsburgh and some great things are happening there.

05 They're in the middle of trying to recover, just as

06 Scranton is, and approximately one-third of the land in

07 Pittsburgh is actually owned by non-profits. So, a lot

08 of the tax which they generally would be able to be

09 receiving revenue from, they're not, because so much

10 land in Pittsburgh is owned by non-profits.

11 Now, I have no idea how much land

12 in Scranton is owned by non-profits, I would assume

13 it's quite a bit less than 30 percent, but I really

14 don't know. You know, I do know that the University of

15 Scranton through the years is sprawling and it's

16 terrific for the University and for the city that the

17 University of Scranton is successful, but at the same

18 time, we're losing tax revenue from the

19 University expanding.

20 So, I spoke to Jean Bovarde, who's

21 the president of the Scranton Plan, which is a group of

22 all the non-profits in the city, and we talked about

23 what is happening in Pittsburgh, and we decided -- she

24 decided that she would look into whether or not what's

25 happening in Pittsburgh could be happening here.

0086

01 And we just want to partner with

02 our non-profits. A Great city has to include great

03 non-profits like hospitals and universities, but

04 non-profits need a great city.

05 So, again, you know, we're in this

06 thing together. And I want to take just a moment and

07 thank some of the non-profits who in the past two years

08 contributed to the coffers of the city.

09 In 2003, the University of

10 Scranton donated \$110,000; Scranton Housing Authority,

11 \$17,707; The Covenant Presbyterian Church donated

12 \$1,000; Harrison House, \$250, and then in 2004, the

13 University of Scranton again, \$110,000, and Lutherwood,

14 \$6,000.

15 So, I just want to thank those

16 non-profits for caring enough to try to help the city

17 they live in, and I think that we hopefully will try to

18 pursue more participation in the future. And that's

19 all I have on under fifth order.

20 MR. POCIUS: Can I make a

21 suggestion, the Council can do this by motion, because
22 they're all taxing ordinances, we've already talked
23 about some of them, could we read, because they're only
24 for introduction, 5-B through 5-G, just do one motion
25 and introduce them all in the committee, because, you
0087

01 know, if there was any comment on any particular one,
02 it would save some time.

03 MR. WALSH: Are you making a
04 motion to suspend the rules?

05 MR. POCIUS: I'll make a motion,
06 if we have to that, that we allow Council to read 5-B
07 through 5-G with one -- to put them all under one
08 motion tonight because they're all dealing with acting
09 taxes?

10 MR. DIBILEO: Mark, if it's okay
11 with you, it's all right with me and if it's okay with
12 everyone else. We'll make one vote on all of these
13 taxing legislations.

14 MR. WALSH: 5-B, FOR INTRODUCTION
15 - AN ORDINANCE - AMENDING FILE OF COUNCIL NO. 6, 1976
16 ENTITLED AN ORDINANCE (AS AMENDED) IMPOSING A TAX FOR
17 GENERAL REVENUE PURPOSES ON THE TRANSFER OF REAL
18 PROPERTY SITUATE WITHIN THE CITY OF SCRANTON;
19 PRESCRIBING AND REGULATING THE METHOD OF EVIDENCING THE
20 PAYMENT OF SUCH TAX; CONFERRING POWERS AND IMPOSING
21 DUTIES UPON CERTAIN PERSONS, AND PROVIDING PENALTIES,
22 BY IMPOSING THE RATE OF THE REALTY TRANSFER TAX AT 2.2%
23 FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2005.

24 5-C, FOR INTRODUCTION - AN
25 ORDINANCE - AMENDING FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO. 7, 1976,
0088

01 ENTITLED AN ORDINANCE (AS AMENDED) IMPOSING A
02 MERCANTILE LICENSE TAX OF 2 MILLS FOR THE YEAR 1976 AND
03 ANNUALLY THEREAFTER UPON PERSONS ENGAGING IN CERTAIN
04 OCCUPATIONS AND BUSINESSES THEREIN; PROVIDING FOR ITS
05 LEVY AND COLLECTION AND FOR THE ISSUANCE OF MERCANTILE
06 LICENSES; CONFERRING AND IMPOSING POWERS AND DUTIES
07 UPON THE TAX COLLECTOR OF THE CITY OF SCRANTON; AND
08 IMPOSING PENALTIES, BY IMPOSING THE MERCANTILE LICENSE
09 TAX AT 1 MILL FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2005.

10 5-D, FOR INTRODUCTION - AN
11 ORDINANCE - AMENDING FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO. 8, 1976,
12 ENTITLED AN ORDINANCE (AS AMENDED) PROVIDING FOR THE
13 GENERAL REVENUE BY IMPOSING A TAX AT THE RATE OF 2 MILL
14 UPON THE PRIVILEGE OF OPERATING OR CONDUCTING BUSINESS
15 IN THE CITY OF SCRANTON AS MEASURED BY THE GROSS
16 RECEIPTS THEREFROM; REQUIRING REGISTRATION AND PAYMENT

17 OF THE TAX AS CONDITION TO THE CONDUCTING OF SUCH
18 BUSINESS; PROVIDING FOR THE LEVY AND COLLECTION OF SUCH
19 TAX; PRESCRIBING SUCH REQUIREMENTS FOR RETURNS AND
20 RECORDS; CONFERRING POWERS AND DUTIES UPON THE TAX
21 COLLECTOR; AND IMPOSING PENALTIES, BY IMPOSING THE
22 BUSINESS PRIVILEGE TAX AT THE RATE OF 1 MILL FOR
23 CALENDAR YEAR 2005.

24 5-E, FOR INTRODUCTION - AN

25 ORDINANCE - AMENDING FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO. 9, 1976,
0089

01 ENTITLED "AN ORDINANCE (AS AMENDED) ENACTING AND
02 IMPOSING A TAX FOR GENERAL REVENUE PURPOSES ON
03 INDIVIDUALS FOR THE PRIVILEGE OF ENGAGING IN AN
04 OCCUPATION WITHIN THE CORPORATE LIMITS OF THE CITY OF
05 SCRANTON, BY IMPOSING THE OCCUPATIONAL PRIVILEGE TAX OF
06 FIFTEEN (\$15.00) DOLLARS FOR RESIDENTS AND TEN (\$10.00)
07 DOLLARS FOR NON-RESIDENTS FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2005.

08 5-F, FOR INTRODUCTION - AN

09 ORDINANCE - AMENDING FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO. 11, 1976,
10 ENTITLED AN ORDINANCE (AS AMENDED) ENACTING, IMPOSING A
11 TAX FOR GENERAL REVENUE PURPOSES IN THE AMOUNT OF 2% ON
12 EARNED INCOME AND NET PROFITS ON PERSONS, INDIVIDUALS,
13 ASSOCIATIONS AND BUSINESSES WHO ARE RESIDENTS OF THE
14 CITY OF SCRANTON, OR NON-RESIDENTS OF THE CITY OF
15 SCRANTON, FOR WORK DONE, SERVICES PERFORMED OR BUSINESS
16 CONDUCTED WITHIN THE CITY OF SCRANTON, REQUIRING THE
17 FILING OF RETURNS BY TAXPAYERS SUBJECT TO THE TAX;
18 REQUIRING EMPLOYERS TO COLLECT THE TAX AT SOURCE;
19 PROVIDING FOR THE ADMINISTRATION, COLLECTION AND
20 ENFORCEMENT OF THE SAID TAX; AND IMPOSING PENALTIES FOR
21 THE VIOLATIONS, BY IMPOSING THE WAGE TAX AT 2.4% ON
22 EARNED INCOME FOR THE YEAR 2005 FOR RESIDENTS.

23 5-G, FOR INTRODUCTION - AN

24 ORDINANCE - AMENDING FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO. 17, 1994
25 ENTITLED AN ORDINANCE (AS AMENDED) AUTHORIZING THE
0090

01 GOVERNING BODY OF THE CITY OF SCRANTON TO ENACT A WASTE
02 DISPOSAL AND COLLECTION FEE FOR THE PURPOSE OF RAISING
03 REVENUE TO COVER THE WASTE DISPOSAL AND COLLECTION
04 COSTS INCURRED BY THE CITY OF SCRANTON FOR THE DISPOSAL
05 AND COLLECTION COSTS INCURRED BY THE CITY OF SCRANTON
06 FOR THE DISPOSAL OF REFUSE, BY IMPOSING A WASTE
07 DISPOSAL AND COLLECTION FEE OF \$178.00 FOR CALENDAR
08 YEAR 2005.

09 5-H, FOR INTRODUCTION - AN

10 ORDINANCE - AMENDING FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO. 100, 1976,
11 ENTITLED AN ORDINANCE (AS AMENDED) LEVYING GENERAL AND
12 SPECIAL TAXES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 1977, BY SETTING THE

13 MILLAGE FOR THE YEAR 2005.

14 MR. DIBILEO: At this time I'll

15 entertain a motion that Item 5-B, 5-C, 5-D, 5-E, 5-F,

16 5-G and 5-H be introduced into their proper committee.

17 MR. POCIUS: So moved.

18 MR. COURTRIGHT: Second.

19 MR. DIBILEO: On the question? All

20 those in favor of introduction, signify by saying aye.

21 MR. McTIERNAN: Aye.

22 MS. EVANS: Aye.

23 MR. POCIUS: Aye.

24 MR. COURTRIGHT: Aye.

25 MR. DIBILEO: Aye. Opposed? The ayes

0091

01 have it and so moved.

02 MR. WALSH: 5-I, FOR INTRODUCTION

03 - AN ORDINANCE - SALE OF TAX DELINQUENT PROPERTY AT

04 2609 JACKSON STREET, SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA, TO

05 ARTHUR WILLIAMS, 1522 N. KEYSER AVENUE, SCRANTON,

06 PENNSYLVANIA, 18504, FOR THE SUM OF \$6,800.00.

07 MR. DIBILEO: At this time I'll

08 entertain a motion that Item 5-I be introduced into its

09 proper committee.

10 MR. POCIUS: So moved.

11 MR. COURTRIGHT: Second.

12 MR. DIBILEO: On the question? All

13 those in favor, signify by saying aye.

14 MR. McTIERNAN: Aye.

15 MS. EVANS: Aye.

16 MR. POCIUS: Aye.

17 MR. COURTRIGHT: Aye.

18 MR. DIBILEO: Aye. Opposed? The ayes

19 have it and so moved.

20 MR. WALSH: 5-J, FOR INTRODUCTION

21 - A RESOLUTION - APPROVING THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF

22 THE CONTRACT BETWEEN THE CITY OF SCRANTON AND THE

23 NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (NDC) AND AUTHORIZING THE

24 MAYOR AND OTHER APPROPRIATE CITY OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE

25 AND ENTER INTO THE CONTRACT TO RETAIN NATIONAL

0092

01 DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL FOR PROFESSIONAL CONSULTING

02 SERVICES FOR THE OFFICE OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY

03 DEVELOPMENT (OECD) FOR A COST OF \$5,000.00 PER MONTH,

04 NOT TO EXCEED \$60,000.00 PAYMENT OF WHICH WILL COME

05 FROM OECD. CONTRACT TO EXPIRE ON JANUARY 31, 2006.

06 MR. DIBILEO: At this time I'll

07 entertain a motion that Item 5-J be introduced into its

08 proper committee.

09 MR. POCIUS: So moved.

10 MR. COURTRIGHT: Second.

11 MR. DIBILEO: On the question?

12 MS. EVANS: Yes. I'm not going to

13 be voting in favor of this consulting service because I

14 believe, first of all, that the city employs far too

15 many consultants, and more than that, I took a look at

16 the mayor's budget for 2005 under the department of --

17 or the Office of Economic And Community Development,

18 and there are 13 employees, and those salaries total

19 \$542,625.09, and those positions include executive

20 director, administrator, deputy director, director of

21 finance and compliance, finance data processing

22 manager, financial analyst, labor standard officer,

23 construction coordinator, ADA compliance, project

24 coordinator, economic development specialist, real

25 estate coordinator, KOZ coordinator, loan assistant,

0093

01 housing rehab management, housing rehab specialist in

02 finance, secretary, program manager, city planner,

03 director of permits and licenses and BOCA review,

04 enforcement officer, and their salaries are also split

05 with the Department of Inspections and Licenses,

06 Department 51.

07 Now, with that number of employees

08 in management, and those type of salaries, I frankly

09 cannot comprehend or justify the need for yet another

10 consultant.

11 MR. DIBILEO: Thank you. Anyone

12 else on the question?

13 MR. COURTRIGHT: Yes, Mr. DiBileo.

14 On the question, I'm going to vote in favor to

15 introduce it, but it's just for introduction right now,

16 but I'd like to ask the question, I don't know if I

17 need to make a motion or if we all have to agree on it

18 or not -- Jay, if you could just send a letter on my

19 behalf, this way I won't have to make a motion -- that

20 if they could specifically tell me why, and I know

21 there's backup here, just specifically tell me why they

22 need this consulting firm, and if in fact we did not

23 have this consulting firm, what catastrophe would that

24 cause?

25 MS. EVANS: Mr. Courtright, I

0094

01 spoke with Jay earlier in the week concerning tonight's

02 agenda, and I asked him to find out those questions.

03 MR. COURTRIGHT: All right. Well,

04 fine --

05 MS. EVANS: Do you have any
06 responses for us?

07 MR. SAUNDERS: The answers that I
08 got were in the back that Mark read earlier. This is a
09 renewal of a contract. That basically was all that was
10 to it.

11 MR. COURTRIGHT: My question would
12 be if we did not hire this company, what ill effect
13 would it have on us? I'm just not up to snuff on that.
14 Just if they can answer that question for me.

15 Like I said, I'm going to vote yes
16 to introduce it, but before I vote yes in sixth or
17 seventh order, I'd just like that answer, if I may.

18 MR. DIBILEO: Can I make a
19 recommendation, please? Can I recommend that we ask a
20 representative of this company to come and speak to us
21 and explain all that they do for the \$60,000, and
22 invite Sara Hailstone, because they work hand and hand
23 with the Office of Economic and Community Development,
24 and invite Sara Hailstone, the director of OECD, to
25 come along and tell us, you know, why she feels that
0095

01 she needs them.

02 And if we can do that before the
03 final vote, which would be in two weeks -- we won't
04 take a lot of their time, you know, we're not going to
05 take an hour talking about this, but hopefully a
06 \$60,000 contract is worth it to them to have somebody
07 come -- I don't even know where they're out of.

08 MR. POCIUS: New York City.

09 MR. DIBILEO: New York City.

10 Maybe if somebody can take a drive in, just spend a
11 little bit of time for us, and if not, maybe she can
12 handle that job solely.

13 MR. SAUNDERS: Okay. I'll talk to
14 her tomorrow on that.

15 MR. POCIUS: Jay, we did pass the
16 same contract last year, this Council.

17 MR. SAUNDERS: No. I believe it
18 was --

19 MR. POCIUS: Previously? Was it a
20 two-year contract or what?

21 MR. SAUNDERS: It was a one-year
22 contract passed late December of '03.

23 MR. POCIUS: Okay. I remember
24 they have been on board for some time now.

25 MR. DIBILEO: And if there's no
0096

01 further questions, all those in favor, signify by
02 saying aye.

03 MR. McTIERNAN: Aye.

04 MR. POCIUS: Aye.

05 MR. COURTRIGHT: Aye.

06 MR. DIBILEO: Aye. Opposed?

07 MS. EVANS: No.

08 MR. DIBILEO: By a 4-1 vote, the

09 ayes have it and so moved.

10 MR. WALSH: 5-K, FOR INTRODUCTION

11 - A RESOLUTION - APPROVING THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF
12 THE CONTRACT BETWEEN THE CITY OF SCRANTON AND WALLACE
13 ROBERTS & TODD, LLC A PLANNING AND DESIGN FIRM, AND
14 AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND OTHER APPROPRIATE CITY
15 OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE AND ENTER INTO THE CONTRACT TO
16 RETAIN WALLACE ROBERTS & TODD, LLC PLANNING AND DESIGN
17 FIRM, TO PREPARE A REDEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR THE CEDAR
18 AVENUE AREA OF SOUTH SCRANTON. TOTAL COST NO TO EXCEED
19 \$25,000.00.

20 MR. DIBILEO: At this time I'll

21 entertain a motion that Item 5-K be introduced into its
22 proper committee.

23 MR. POCIUS: So moved.

24 MR. COURTRIGHT: Second.

25 MR. DIBILEO: On the question?

0097

01 MS. EVANS: I think the plans for
02 lower South Side, particularly in the area of Cedar
03 Avenue are most commendable and absolutely essential,
04 but in light of what Mr. Courtright brought up tonight
05 about the Weed and Seed initiative, I'm quite certain
06 that I heard you read about redevelopment in high crime
07 areas and monies available for that and such, and I'd
08 like to see us maybe investigate that a bit more before
09 we entered into any further -- or any future
10 contracts.

11 And my other, you know my other
12 concern here is this, and actually it's not just my
13 concern, it's speaking for the people of Scranton,
14 who've contacted me, who, too, are in favor of
15 addressing the great problems experienced in South
16 Side, but, you know, it's very difficult to -- well,
17 let's say it's very difficult for a number of them to
18 become greatly excited, because they'll say to me, but,
19 you know what, Mrs. Evans, these are wonderful
20 projects, but my leaves are still not picked up, and
21 now they're frozen, you know, it's been snowed on, so
22 the leaves are out there, the potholes are out there,

23 and when is the city going to address these basic
24 needs?

25 We're always starting new
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01 projects, but when we going to solve what's essential?
02 Where is our basics?

03 So, you know, I'll introduce this,
04 but I'd like to see us looking into what Mr. Courtright
05 enumerated and delineated for us earlier, and I think
06 let's just be careful, too, you know, as much as we
07 want to do good things, you know, while we're working
08 on myriad projects, we're also being mindful that we
09 owe the citizens basic services.

10 MR. COURTRIGHT: Mr. President, if
11 I may, you know, I'm thrilled for the people of
12 South Side, they're going to get some work done over
13 there, I just wonder, and I'll ask Jay to ask this when
14 he -- after the meeting I'll ask him to ask, I was just
15 wondering, did we look within our own city and see if
16 there was a firm within our own city that possible
17 could have done this?

18 And nothing against this firm, but
19 my understanding is, I believe they're from
20 Philadelphia, was there a firm in Scranton that could
21 have handled this? We could have gave the business to
22 our own people. So, I'm just going to ask that
23 question and see maybe we could have gave it to
24 somebody here that lives and works in this city.

25 MS. EVANS: This is a professional
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01 service, yes? So, I assume this was not bid.

02 MR. COURTRIGHT: Well, yeah. I
03 just -- I would be curious if the administration would
04 let me know did they look within our own boundaries
05 first. I know they're not obligated to tell me that,
06 but maybe they would do me that courtesy.

07 MR. DIBILEO: Mark, could you make
08 that note for Mr. Saunders, see if he can get an answer
09 for Mr. Courtright by next week?

10 MR. WALSH: Yes.

11 MR. DIBILEO: Thank you.

12 If there's no further questions, all those in favor,
13 signify by saying aye.

14 MR. McTIERNAN: Aye.

15 MS. EVANS: Aye.

16 MR. POCIUS: Aye.

17 MR. COURTRIGHT: Aye.

18 MR. DIBILEO: Aye. Opposed? The ayes

19 have it and so moved.

20 MR. WALSH: 5-L, FOR INTRODUCTION

21 - A RESOLUTION - RE-APPOINTMENT OF MARY ELIZABETH

22 MOYLAN, 1421 PITTSTON AVENUE, SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA,

23 18505, AS A MEMBER OF THE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION.

24 MS. MOYLAN'S CURRENT TERM EXPIRES ON DECEMBER 31, 2004

25 AND HER NEW TERM WILL EXPIRE ON DECEMBER 31, 2008.

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01 MR. DIBILEO: At this time I'll

02 entertain a motion that Item 5-L be introduced into its

03 proper committee.

04 MR. POCIUS: So moved.

05 MR. COURTRIGHT: Second.

06 MR. DIBILEO: On the question? All

07 those in favor, signify by saying aye.

08 MR. McTIERNAN: Aye.

09 MS. EVANS: Aye.

10 MR. POCIUS: Aye.

11 MR. COURTRIGHT: Aye.

12 MR. DIBILEO: Aye. Opposed? The ayes

13 have it and so moved.

14 MR. WALSH: Sixth order. There is

15 no sixth order business at this time. Seventh order.

16 7-A, FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE

17 COMMITTEE ON RULES - FOR ADOPTION - RESOLUTION NO. 115,

18 2004 - APPOINTING REV. REGINALD MCCLAIN, 915 NORTH

19 WASHINGTON AVENUE, SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA, 18509, AS A

20 MEMBER OF THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION EFFECTIVE

21 JANUARY 1, 2005. REV. MCCLAIN WILL BE REPLACING

22 REV. HOWARD STRINGFELLOW WHO IS RESIGNING EFFECTIVE

23 DECEMBER 31, 2004 DUE TO HIS REASSIGNMENT. REV.

24 McCLAIN'S TERM WILL EXPIRE WITH THE TERM OF MAYOR

25 CHRISTOPHER A. DOHERTY.

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01 MR. DIBILEO: As chairperson for

02 the committee on rules, I recommend final passage of

03 Item 7-A.

04 MR. POCIUS: Seconded.

05 MR. DIBILEO: On the question?

06 Roll call, please, Kay.

07 MS. GARVEY: Mr. McTiernan.

08 MR. McTIERNAN: Yes.

09 MS. GARVEY: Ms. Evans.

10 MS. EVANS: Yes.

11 MS. GARVEY: Mr. Pocius.

12 MR. POCIUS: Yes.

13 MS. GARVEY: Mr. Courtright.

14 MR. COURTRIGHT: Yes.

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