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SCRANTON CITY COUNCIL MEETING

HELD:

Thursday, February 20, 2014

LOCATION:

Council Chambers

Scranton City Hall

340 North Washington Avenue

Scranton, Pennsylvania

CATHENE S. NARDOZZI, RPR - OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER

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CITY OF SCRANTON COUNCIL:

- ROBERT MCGOFF, PRESIDENT
- PATRICK ROGAN, VICE-PRESIDENT
- JOHN LOSCOMBE
- JOSEPH WECHSLER
- WILLIAM GAUGHAN
  
- LORI REED, CITY CLERK
- JAMIE MARCIANO, ASSISTANT CITY CLERK
- PATRICK SCANLON, SOLICITOR

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

3 MR. MCGOFF: Roll call, please.

4 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Wechsler.

5 MR. WECHSLER: Here.

6 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Rogan.

7 MR. ROGAN: Here.

8 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Loscombe.

9 MR. LOSCOMBE: Here.

10 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Gaughan.

11 MR. GAUGHAN: Here.

12 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. McGoff.

13 MR. MCGOFF: Here. Dispense with  
14 the reading of the minutes.

15 MS. REED: THIRD ORDER. 3-A.

16 LACKAWANNA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION  
17 SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION  
18 REPORT RECEIVED JANUARY 24, 2014.

19 MR. MCGOFF: Are there any comments?  
20 If not, received and filed. Clerk's notes?

21 MS. REED: Nothing at this time,  
22 Mr. McGoff.

23 MR. MCGOFF: Do any council members  
24 have announcements at this time?

25 I would just like to make note that

1 Attorney Pat Scanlon is present in the  
2 absence of Attorney Minora and will be  
3 serving as the interim solicitor at this  
4 time.

5 MR. SCANLON: Thank you.

6 MR. MCGOFF: On tonight's agenda,  
7 the new ordinances, 5-B is an ordinance that  
8 would be a zoning change for Audobon School  
9 which has been -- Audobon School has been  
10 closed, it's across from Geisinger Hospital.  
11 The zoning change would allow for the  
12 purchase of Audobon School by Geisinger  
13 Hospital and for that use. We'll speak more  
14 of it when it is presented.

15 Also, there are two appointments  
16 that for two different reasons, 7-B and 7-C,  
17 the intent is to table both of those. One  
18 because of the death of Bill Connell, who is  
19 being appointed to the Scranton Parking  
20 Authority, and the other the appointment of  
21 Paul McGloin who withdrew his name from  
22 consideration. And that is all.

23 MR. LOSCOMBE: Also, Mr. McGoff, I'm  
24 sorry, I did have one announcement.

25 MR. MCGOFF: Please.

1 MR. LOSCOMBE: Geisinger Blood  
2 Center in cooperation with the Scranton Fire  
3 Department will be conducting a blood drive  
4 on Tuesday, March 11, 2014, from 8 a.m. to 4  
5 p.m. and that will be in Engine 7 at 1917  
6 Luzerne Street and it will be Geisinger's  
7 donor coach they call it, it's like a bus,  
8 where they take the donations. To schedule  
9 an appointment please visit their website at  
10 [www.Geisingerbloodcenter.org](http://www.Geisingerbloodcenter.org) and click on  
11 make an appointment, but as always, walk-ins  
12 are more than welcome. And that's all I  
13 have. Thank you.

14 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you.

15 MS. REED: FOURTH ORDER. CITIZENS'  
16 PARTICIPATION.

17 MR. MCGOFF: First speaker on the  
18 list is Fay Franus.

19 MS. FRANUS: Fay Franus, Scranton.

20 MR. LOSCOMBE: Good evening.

21 MS. FRANUS: Good evening. I have a  
22 couple of items I want to discuss tonight.  
23 First of all, the garbage, my garbage hasn't  
24 been picked up in two weeks, and I called  
25 DPW the other day and the man that answered

1           said that, you know, they will get to it  
2           when they get it, and hopefully it will be  
3           this week. So I told him that everybody  
4           that had their garbage piled up way above  
5           their garbage cans, and he didn't believe  
6           that. And I said not just that, but the  
7           animals are getting in there and they are  
8           ripping things apart and I said, "What do  
9           you say to that?"

10                   And he said, "Buy more garbage  
11                   cans."

12                   That was his response. So I think  
13                   there is no excuse for this. We are paying  
14                   a \$300 garbage fee. I do not think -- my  
15                   next door neighbor has bags today when I  
16                   pulled in, her whole bag was ripped to  
17                   shreds with the animals. Meat wrappers,  
18                   peanut buttercup wrappers all over the  
19                   street because of this, and that's just one  
20                   house.

21                   Another thing, Mr. Gaughan, I don't  
22                   agree with what you stated last week, I  
23                   believe, or about the amnesty for the taxes.  
24                   Let's put it this way, what I should do and  
25                   every person in this city should do is like

1 right now I put money away every week for my  
2 taxes, okay, every month, and then at the  
3 end of the year I have it. So I think what  
4 I'll do is and everybody else should do is  
5 we should put money aside from our taxes, so  
6 we'll have it, and then don't pay the taxes.  
7 Let it go for like three or four years and  
8 then maybe you could come up with this plan  
9 again and then they could say, "Okay, "Just  
10 pay your taxes for the last two years and  
11 we'll forget the other three."

12 It's not right. I'm paying my taxes  
13 and so are many others. Why should other  
14 people that maybe owe taxes for five or four  
15 six years only have to pay two and we'll  
16 just forget about the last four? That is  
17 not fair to everybody else that pays taxes  
18 because if that's the case then I won't pay  
19 my taxes and then I'll come back and say,  
20 "If you can do it for them, you can do it  
21 for me. I want amnesty, too, for the last  
22 five years."

23 So that's not right. What you  
24 should is just take the penalties and the  
25 fines off them, but make them still pay all

1 of their taxes. If you want to take the  
2 penalties and fines that's one thing.

3 MR. GAUGHAN: Can I respond?

4 MS. FRANUS: Stop the time here.

5 MR. GAUGHAN: Just I want to say  
6 that is what they do. They don't -- you  
7 don't -- they don't forgive all of your  
8 taxes. It's generally only the interest and  
9 the penalty.

10 MS. FRANUS: It didn't say that in  
11 the paper, it said you were going to forgive  
12 the past years. That's what it said.

13 MR. GAUGHAN: Well, that's not what  
14 I meant. That's not what --

15 MS. FANUCCI: Well, believe me, it  
16 didn't say penalty and interest, it said  
17 previous years will be forgiven and just pay  
18 like the last two.

19 MR. LOSCOMBE: Fay, in all honesty  
20 we discussed this and that's exactly what he  
21 said, he was just looking at the penalties  
22 and stuff.

23 MS. FRANUS: Well, that's wonderful  
24 if that's the case, but the paper didn't put  
25 that, they put past years, okay.



1                   Now, another thing, I just heard on  
2                   the way over here Steve Corbett was saying  
3                   that the city now when you want a  
4                   Right-to-Know you have to fill out a form;  
5                   is that true? A city form or something for  
6                   the Right-to-Know?

7                   MR. MCGOFF: Yes. I believe so.

8                   MS. FRANUS: There's a city form you  
9                   have to fill out.

10                  MR. MCGOFF: I believe so.

11                  MS. FRANUS: Pardon me?

12                  MR. MCGOFF: I believe there is  
13                  a form that you have to fill out.

14                  MS. FRANUS: But that's the only way  
15                  you can get a Right-to-Know request in?

16                  MR. MCGOFF: I'm sorry?

17                  MS. FRANUS: Is that the only way  
18                  you can get a Right-to-Know request in?

19                  MR. MCGOFF: I believe so.

20                  MS. FRANUS: Well --

21                  MR. MCGOFF: I don't know.

22                  MS. FRANUS: Steve Corbett was  
23                  talking to the head of this in Harrisburg at  
24                  the time on the radio on the way over and  
25                  the law, state law in Harrisburg, says that

1           you can send a Right-to-Know by e-mail, you  
2           can call, it's right in the law that you can  
3           e-mail the request in. You do not have to  
4           go and use city forms. They said that  
5           Harrisburg -- the state law supersedes the  
6           city law that might change that.

7                     MR. MCGOFF: Okay.

8                     MS. FRANUS: So if anybody wants a  
9           Right-to-Know just e-mail or call in or  
10          whatever you want, but you don't have to  
11          fill out a state form.

12                    Another thing, I came to this  
13          meeting tonight into the caucus, I was here  
14          like five to six, and I was told that I  
15          could not go into the back room until the  
16          caucus started at 6:00 and in the back room  
17          before 6:00 there was four councilmen, which  
18          is a quorum. Now, I may be wrong, but I  
19          will definitely check into this and I will  
20          get back to you on this, as will Marie  
21          Schumacher, because we were told that it's  
22          against the Sunshine Law any time there is  
23          more than two council members to meet it's a  
24          quorum. Mr. McGoff told me outright it is  
25          not true. They have a right to meet with

1 more than two people and we are not allowed  
2 back in there until after 6:00 when the  
3 caucus started, and I don't agree with that.  
4 For all we knew there could have been a  
5 meeting back there, we don't know what's  
6 going on. They were sequestered in there.  
7 The public was not allowed in there and  
8 there was more than two council members,  
9 there was four of them. The only one  
10 missing was Mr. Rogan, so I do not think  
11 it's right.

12 And I also think the people from  
13 Geisinger were there discussing the tearing  
14 down the Audobon School. I think the people  
15 in the city that watch this council meeting  
16 should have had a right to see this here.  
17 Why is there no caucuses out here in the  
18 chambers anymore so people could see it?  
19 Why no transparency? Why the hidden agenda  
20 here? It doesn't make sense, and I think  
21 that should be changed because we got along  
22 much better when we had caucuses out here  
23 for everyone to see, not just three or four  
24 people.

25 MR. LOSCOMBE: Thank you.

1 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you, Ms. Franus.

2 MS. HODOWANITZ: Joan Hodowantiz,  
3 city taxpayer.

4 MR. LOSCOMBE: Good evening.

5 MS. HODOWANITZ: Good evening. With  
6 regard to the appointments that the mayor  
7 makes to various authorities, it is my  
8 understanding that the mayor makes these  
9 appointments and he does not require  
10 approval by council; is that correct?

11 MR. MCGOFF: I'm not sure -- in the  
12 past all appointments come before council.

13 MR. HODOWANITZ: I understand they  
14 come before council, but if you didn't --

15 MR. MCGOFF: If we vote "no" it  
16 seems as though those appointments still  
17 stand.

18 MS. HODOWANITZ: Okay, that was my  
19 understanding.

20 MR. MCGOFF: That ours is a --

21 MS. HODOWANITZ: Endorsement.

22 MR. GAUGHAN: Concurrence.

23 MR. MCGOFF: Yeah, I guess that  
24 might be the best word.

25 MS. HODOWANITZ: When these

1           nominations come before you, is there any  
2           indication from the administration that  
3           these individuals have been vetted in any  
4           way? You know, criminal background check,  
5           they have paid their taxes, they have paid  
6           all of their fees to the city or is it  
7           simply you have received a letter of intent  
8           that, you know, they want to be on the  
9           board. What did you get?

10           MR. MCGOFF: We get a name.

11           MS. HODOWANITZ: Okay. You got no  
12           assurance though from the administration  
13           that they have been vetted?

14           MR. MCGOFF: Other than the fact  
15           that we have asked for a resume from those  
16           who have been appointed, no there is no  
17           assurance, and I do not believe that by law  
18           the mayor needs to do that.

19           MS. HODOWANITZ: I understand that.

20           MR. MCGOFF: I'm just saying that  
21           everybody seems procedurally what they  
22           should do, I think what are you suggesting  
23           is there may be a better way of --

24           MS. HODOWANITZ: Yes.

25           MR. MCGOFF: Of doing it.

1 MS. HODOWANITZ: The administration  
2 honestly has only been, you know, in for a  
3 month or so they are new, but having had  
4 this one embarrassing incident in the last  
5 week I think it would be behoove the  
6 administration to do that bit of homework so  
7 there is no public embarrassment to the  
8 administration or to the individuals being  
9 nominated, because I will tell you there is  
10 going to be people like me and other people,  
11 you know, who might inadvertently catch  
12 something and there be an embarrassment, and  
13 that's unfortunate. It shouldn't become a  
14 public issue that way. Hopefully the  
15 administration won't do that a second time.

16 And also these people do represent  
17 me as a taxpayer whether they are a sitting  
18 on the board and getting paid or it's an  
19 unpaid position. They are representing me,  
20 they are in a position of public trust and I  
21 think that's appropriate. When I went to  
22 work for Mose Taylor they did a criminal  
23 background check and a drug test, you know?  
24 It's just common sense.

25 And the second thing is yesterday

1           there was an article to the paper, "City to  
2           Hire Fiscal Expert." I guess this is an  
3           addition to Mr. Amaroso was hired by the  
4           Chamber of Commerce. Has the administration  
5           contacted any of the council members about  
6           this RFP so we can all work off one sheet of  
7           music and hopefully there will be no  
8           duplication of that or working of cross  
9           purposes. It may be necessary to have a  
10          fiscal expert to help with, you know,  
11          planning on preparing the city's  
12          creditworthiness and secure loans, but I'm  
13          kind of surprised, you know. I mean, how  
14          many financial consultants do we need? We  
15          are only into month number two.

16                   Hopefully they are talking to you  
17                   about this initiative because I suspect this  
18                   is coming before council in the near future.

19                   MR. MCGOFF: I don't want to take  
20                   your time up, the hiring of the fiscal  
21                   expert would be -- my understanding from  
22                   communicating with the administration is  
23                   that this person would be more long-term.  
24                   Mr. Amaroso was hired I believe for a  
25                   six-month period.

1 MS. HODOWANITZ: Six-month period by  
2 the Chamber.

3 MR. MCGOFF: The relief idea that  
4 the fiscal expert would be the one that  
5 would be more long-term in dealing more with  
6 how we would -- or negotiating payments for  
7 the awards and that type of thing.

8 MS. HODOWANITZ: Well, hopefully  
9 down the road they will also continue with  
10 the budget process since Mr. Amaro is only  
11 here for six months and the budget is going  
12 to go on forever. Thank you.

13 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you. Mr.  
14 Sbaraglia.

15 MR. SBARAGLIA: Andy Sbaraglia,  
16 citizen of Scranton. Fellow Scrantonians.

17 MR. LOSCOMBE: Good evening.

18 MR. SBARAGLIA: You are right. We  
19 do need some type of a fiscal expert, but we  
20 all know what the problems is, we don't need  
21 somebody to state this is the problem. The  
22 problem is with the city workers and the  
23 nonprofits, both of them are the problems.  
24 So there is no way out of that.

25 Now, what you can do with it -- you



1 can't do nothing with the city workers for  
2 about three years. Usually the solution has  
3 been sell assets and raise taxes and you  
4 have done that very good, 100 percent raise  
5 in taxes. You saw what happened to our city  
6 assets. You did sell like the golf course,  
7 South Side Complex, that money was poured  
8 into a bucket, and I don't think you are  
9 going to do nothing unless you attack what  
10 we can do with the city employees or the  
11 nonprofits we're in line for more taxes,  
12 there is no way out of it. Whether you want  
13 to raise the wage tax, whether you want to  
14 go around and get all of this that you have  
15 been doing \$10 to put a sign up in front of  
16 your house that you are a handicapped  
17 knowing that state law says that anybody can  
18 park at that sign that's handicap.

19 This is what the city has been doing  
20 and you haven't you have been -- you have  
21 sitting there for four, some even seven  
22 years. You haven't solved one problem from  
23 the city. All you did was sit there and say  
24 this or that, but you didn't solve any  
25 problems. You have not gotten the

1           nonprofits to do much, and you are not going  
2           to get the nonprofits to do much until you  
3           look at something to attack them. They'll  
4           only respond if it's cheaper to pay you than  
5           pay somebody else and that's what you got to  
6           do. You can't sit there and keep raising  
7           the people's taxes thinking this is the way  
8           to go or selling Sewer Authority, parking  
9           garages or whatever. Ask them at one time  
10          we already did that and where it got you,  
11          deeper in debt.

12                    I remember when they sold the golf  
13          course that money was supposed to go in a  
14          trust fund for the parks. Well, you know,  
15          Mr. McGoff, where it went because you took  
16          it out of there and put in into the budget  
17          so these things you have done but you  
18          haven't solve one problem. The problems are  
19          still there and will continue to be there  
20          until you find some way to get the  
21          nonprofits to kick up more money, and unless  
22          you do that, we are in line for selling more  
23          assets. I wish they sold city hall or raise  
24          the taxes or send out the amusement taxes  
25          that you seem to be pushing now. No wonder

1           why you are getting complaints from  
2           everybody. We are taxed enough.

3                       I mean, when you always talked about  
4           the real estate tax, but the Scrantonians  
5           pay more than that. They pay a wage tax on  
6           top of that real estate tax. They also pay  
7           for the refuse another amount of money. All  
8           of these things you are playing on the  
9           taxpayers and the truth is the taxpayers'  
10          average salary is about \$27,000 they said.  
11          The average work energy in this city makes  
12          about \$27,000. The average public employee  
13          is probably up to about 37 or 40.

14                     You got all kinds of the things  
15          written into them contracts. You can't do  
16          nothing about them now because they are in  
17          stone, but there is no reason for somebody  
18          to get a raise because they work a job for  
19          five years. They get a raise when they go  
20          up in rank, just like we did in the service.  
21          When a man gets a promotion he gets a raise.  
22          You give a person a raise just because they  
23          have been sitting on their -- in the  
24          services for five years or so, longevity,  
25          this, that, whatever. You have too many

1 perks.

2 When them people were making \$1.10  
3 an hour they needed them perks, but they are  
4 no longer there. They are making more than  
5 the average worker that's paying for them.  
6 That's where the problem is and unless you  
7 get there and start working on these  
8 problems you are just going to just sit  
9 there and raise our taxes each year. That's  
10 all you can do because the money isn't there  
11 and isn't going to be there and what you do  
12 with the nonprofits, I don't know.

13 I told you one thing you should  
14 start charging for fire services, police  
15 service and whatever and break it down like  
16 we are for refuse, and I still don't know if  
17 every citizen that wishes to go through a  
18 private hauler can do it because University  
19 has their own hauler and if the individual  
20 taxpayer wants to hire their own hauler they  
21 should be allowed to do it. Thank you.

22 MR. LOSCOMBE: Thank you.

23 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you,  
24 Mr. Sbaraglia. Mr. Tobin.

25 MR. TOBIN: Good evening, gentlemen.

1 MR. MCGOFF: Good evening.

2 MR. TOBIN: Yeah, I'm back. Pretty  
3 mad. Very disgusted. I thought maybe  
4 things would change this year in January  
5 when we got a new administration, it hasn't.  
6 I was going down the street the other day  
7 and right over here on Mulberry Street a  
8 lady was trying to get across the cutout  
9 with a walker. Thank God she had somebody  
10 with her, because the walker went one way  
11 and she went the other because of snow, ice,  
12 that thick.

13 When I came back up down from  
14 downtown and tried to go across that street  
15 I gave my cart a little extra gas, the next  
16 thing I knew spun right around and was right  
17 back in the middle of Mulberry Street. I  
18 have complained twice to the mayor. The  
19 second answer I got from him is, "Well, I  
20 had them out twice cleaning it."

21 In other words, two times should be  
22 enough. I went to go on the bus the other  
23 day. You have ordinance I would like to  
24 read in case you haven't -- you have forgot  
25 what it says. I'd like you to pay close

1 attention because I'm going to ask some  
2 questions.

3 "The City of Scranton Code, Article  
4 745 pertaining to sidewalks is hereby  
5 repealed. Regulation sidewalk is to cover  
6 exclusively by BOCA Property Maintenance  
7 Code. Section II, if any section clause or  
8 portion of this ordinance shall be held  
9 unconstitutional by the Courts, such  
10 decision shall not effect any other  
11 sections, clause, provisions or so forth.

12 Section III. The ordinance shall  
13 become effective immediately upon approval.

14 Section IV. The ordinance is  
15 enacted by the Council of Scranton on the  
16 authority of legislators April 13, 1972 known  
17 as a Home Rule Charter Option Plan and other  
18 acceptable divisions under the law."

19 Now, I'll want you to pay close  
20 attention to this: "Whereas, by ordinance,  
21 the City of Scranton adopted the BOCA  
22 Property Maintenance Code whereas from time  
23 to time the City of Scranton has amended the  
24 code to tailor it's provision to the needs  
25 of the City of Scranton.

1                   Whereas, the BOC Property  
2                   Maintenance Code needs to be clarified as it  
3                   pertains to the removal of hazardous  
4                   substances from sidewalks.

5                   Now, therefore, be it ordained by  
6                   the Council of City of Scranton, the Section  
7                   PM 303 of the BOC Property Maintenance Code  
8                   as adopted by the City of Scranton is hereby  
9                   amended to meet in it's entirety as follows:

10                   All sidewalks, walkways, stairways,  
11                   driveways, parking spaces, similar areas  
12                   shall be kept in a proper state of repair,  
13                   maintenance free from hazardous conditions.  
14                   Stairs shall comply with the requirements of  
15                   Section PM 304 and PM 702 for the purposes  
16                   of this section the hazardous conditions  
17                   shall include snow, ice and debris.  
18                   Driveways, parking ways, parking spaces and  
19                   similar areas.

20                   Such hazardous substance must be  
21                   removed within 24 hours after the appearance  
22                   of such hazardous substance on the walkway,  
23                   on the sidewalk, walkways, stairs, driveway,  
24                   parking spaces and similar areas."

25                   Down in front of what you used to be

1 the Globe Store, which is Diversity  
2 Diversified Company now, they cleared the  
3 sidewalk in front of their building I would  
4 say maybe 10 feet. That sidewalk is a hell  
5 of a lot bigger than 10 feet.

6 I tried to get on the bus, I  
7 couldn't get up to the ramp to get onto the  
8 bus because of the ice and snow. The driver  
9 finally moved down onto Lackawanna Avenue,  
10 stopped traffic to let me on.

11 Each one of you gentleman have taken  
12 an oath to uphold the constitution of the  
13 United States, the laws of the State of  
14 Pennsylvania; isn't this a law?

15 MR. MCGOFF: Yes, Mr. Tobin, it is.

16 MR. TOBIN: Then why aren't we  
17 talking care it?

18 MR. MCGOFF: We are.

19 MR. TOBIN: We are?

20 MR. MCGOFF: Yes.

21 MR. TOBIN: Well, how come it's  
22 only --

23 MR. MCGOFF: And your time is up.

24 MR. TOBIN: Let me finish, please.

25 MR. MCGOFF: We are trying to.



1 MR. TOBIN: How come it's only last  
2 two days that people have been able to get  
3 on the bus with one of these things down  
4 on -- how come in front of the old Banshee--

5 MR. MCGOFF: Mr. Tobin --

6 MR. TOBIN: -- you can't get on the  
7 sidewalk?

8 MR. MCGOFF: I can't answer those  
9 questions for you. All I can tell you is  
10 that the DPW makes attempts to comply with  
11 all of the regulations.

12 MR. TOBIN: Well, they are not. Who  
13 is responsible for these laws are passed or  
14 obeyed? How much is a fine if you don't  
15 obey it? Go over in West Side.

16 MR. MCGOFF: Mr. Tobin, thank you.

17 MR. TOBIN: Go around the West Side,  
18 the sidewalks over there are worse. Right,  
19 Mr. Rogan?

20 MR. MCGOFF: Mr. Tobin, thank you.  
21 We understand the situation.

22 MR. TOBIN: I am going to say that  
23 you shall be turned into the federal  
24 government for an investigation because we  
25 should not have to put up with this. I

1 can't walk very far.

2 MR. MCGOFF: Mr. Morgan.

3 MR. TOBIN: And I think it's about  
4 time -- this isn't the first year I have  
5 complained of this issue. Mr. Loscombe  
6 tried to help me last year. We got nowhere.  
7 It's about time somebody starts doing what  
8 they are supposed to do. That they hold up  
9 their hand, "I solemnly swear."

10 Thank you.

11 MR. LOSCOMBE: Thank you.

12 MR. MCGOFF: Mr. Morgan.

13 MR. MORGAN: Good evening, counsel.

14 MR. LOSCOMBE: Good evening.

15 MR. MORGAN: And I want to discuss a  
16 couple of things here tonight. I have an  
17 analysis of the proposed -- well, House Bill  
18 76 and Senate Bill 76, it's right here. The  
19 taxpayers had a meeting, there was a little  
20 discussion about that. I would hope that  
21 all legislators would vote against this  
22 Bill, and to be honest with you, the reason  
23 I think that needs to happen the school  
24 taxes aren't the only problem.

25 Recently, I have a sister who lives

1 in the city, I went out, I dug her car out  
2 of the snow, and I have numerous residents,  
3 not just seniors, but every day people like  
4 myself and probably even people close to the  
5 age of Mr. Rogan they pay anymore property  
6 tax. It's not just a problem on the school  
7 district level, it's a broad spectrum  
8 problem that includes city tax and county  
9 tax. There are a lot of people in this city  
10 that are totally disgusted on the situation  
11 in the city in regard to the massive  
12 property tax increase, but, you know, they  
13 better be ready for the next one that's  
14 going to come.

15 And the thing that's really got me  
16 troubled is all of the fighting over the  
17 Sewer Authority board members and Parking  
18 Authority, that's not our problem. I mean,  
19 unless we are trying to change these boards  
20 so we can sell these assets, and then my  
21 point is, you know, people ran for office, a  
22 nice gentleman just sat here and talked  
23 about when are we going to follow the laws  
24 that have been found that have been enacted  
25 by the government, I'm going to tell you

1           it's probably never going to be never unless  
2           it has to do with taxation. There is still  
3           fights going on in this country over the  
4           right to vote. I just think that when you  
5           create a class of people who get elected to  
6           an office with such a low voter turnout and  
7           when you have such a lack of the faith of  
8           the residents not just in the city but  
9           across this whole nation that have no faith  
10          in the people they elect, that this is what  
11          happens because we enact laws, they are  
12          never followed.

13                         We have massive poverty in this  
14          country and we have a president trying to do  
15          a Pacific Rim trade agreement and fast track  
16          it. Here is the solution to our problem.  
17          This is only just a very small sliver. This  
18          is the walking list for Scranton, just a  
19          real small part. If every resident in this  
20          city went out and they voted, we could clean  
21          the judges out, the Lackawanna County  
22          courthouse, the ones that shouldn't be there  
23          that the Feds didn't come and take, instead  
24          they went after somebody who had no power.  
25          We could clean out the council, we could

1 clean out the governor, we could get rid of  
2 all the dead weight in government because,  
3 you know, the truth of the matter is this,  
4 just when you look at the City of Scranton  
5 we have made no are progress under the  
6 distressed status and, instead, we have gone  
7 further in and we have let people like the  
8 PEL tell us how great these plans are they  
9 have for us.

10 Now we are talking, I mean, not to  
11 single out Mr. Rogan, but I think I read in  
12 the paper where you thought it might be a  
13 good idea to sell the parking garages?

14 MR. ROGAN: Absolutely.

15 MR. MORGAN: That's the most  
16 ridiculous statement I have heard in my life  
17 because they are worth massively more than  
18 that. Why would you sell an asset like  
19 that?

20 MR. ROGAN: We are losing around \$2  
21 million a year.

22 MR. MORGAN: How much did they cost  
23 to build?

24 MR. ROGAN: We borrowed around \$48  
25 million to build them.

1 MR. MORGAN: All right, so we have a  
2 \$48 million investment in the parking garage  
3 so we should just take what, somebody said  
4 they are worth \$21 million so the city  
5 should walk away from all of that?

6 MR. ROGAN: We are paying -- for  
7 every dollar in principle we are paying a  
8 dollar in interest. If we continue on the  
9 payment schedule we are currently on, that  
10 \$50 million is going to cost the taxpayers  
11 \$101 million.

12 MR. MORGAN: Didn't the council know  
13 that when he voted to build these garages  
14 and didn't the mayor know that?

15 MR. ROGAN: Well, I didn't vote for  
16 building the garages.

17 MR. MORGAN: I'm not saying you did,  
18 I'm not singling you out, but this  
19 government knew that those were the long  
20 range projection because I sat here and  
21 watched them discuss it and they knew the  
22 Parking Authority couldn't handle the debt  
23 that was going to have, so it's not a big  
24 surprise what's going on here.

25 We have a total lack of leadership

1 in this country from the very top to the  
2 very bottom, all right? We are exploiting  
3 seniors and forcing them out of their homes  
4 into high rises. We are going to talk about  
5 nonprofits and all of the other silliness  
6 that's taking place in this country.

7 We have massive unemployment in this  
8 country, and you know something, we are the  
9 laughing stock of the world. Not just here  
10 but across the world. When I was a child  
11 America was number one in everything.  
12 Everything. I can't think of one thing that  
13 we are number one in except our military so  
14 we have the ability to send our military  
15 somewhere and project massive power, but  
16 infant mortality, health care, poverty, it's  
17 ridiculous. Thank you.

18 MR. LOSCOMBE: Thank you.

19 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you, Mr. Morgan.  
20 Anyone else who wishes to speak?

21 MS. SCHUMACHER: Good evening,  
22 council. Marie Schumacher, taxpayer.

23 MR. LOSCOMBE: Good evening.

24 MR. GAUGHAN: Good evening.

25 MS. SCHUMACHER: I know that I

1 delinquent in getting my questions in from  
2 last Saturday's meeting because my computer  
3 and I are having a few issues, but I will  
4 get them in. Mr. Rogan, quite some time ago  
5 you promised us a loan status and when are  
6 we going to get that?

7 MR. ROGAN: I actually did meet with  
8 -- and I reported on this I believe right at  
9 the beginning -- the first meeting of the  
10 new council.

11 MS. SCHUMACHER: That's six weeks  
12 ago.

13 MR. ROGAN: I did receive a  
14 portfolio of the loans, but they were marked  
15 not for public release, but we are  
16 continuing to work on a plan to get some of  
17 the loans that are delinquent back paying  
18 again, whether it be through different  
19 incentives or through legal action.

20 MS. SCHUMACHER: Thank you, I don't  
21 mean to cut you off, but it's my time and  
22 that's not -- I mean, that's fine, that's  
23 the job of the office to do, but we have a  
24 right to know how much they borrowed and how  
25 much they are delinquent, and I would like



1           that.

2                       For instance, did Boscov's pay the  
3           payment they had due last July?

4                       MR. ROGAN: I was asked by Ms. Aebli  
5           not to release the information until these  
6           issues are resolved.

7                       MS. SCHUMACHER: That's public  
8           information. I mean, we are going the wrong  
9           direction here on visibility and  
10          transparency.

11                      Also, there was legislation pending  
12          and was tabled because we were waiting for a  
13          caucus from the Steamtown Partnership. When  
14          is that issue going to be come back to the  
15          forefront? I know you don't have the answer  
16          now, but I would certainly like that one.

17                      MR. MCGOFF: There is no scheduled  
18          for a meeting with Boscov's at this time.

19                      MS. SCHUMACHER: What happened to  
20          the legislation that was tabled then? Did  
21          it just go through automatically or --

22                      MR. MCGOFF: That was in 2013;  
23          correct? I'm not sure where that  
24          legislation is.

25                      MR. ROGAN: It would have to be

1 reintroduced at this point.

2 MR. MCGOFF: I believe so.

3 MS. SCHUMACHER: And then for those  
4 people who I'm sure all property owners by  
5 now have received the dollar and cents  
6 impact of the percentage versions of the  
7 budget from last year, and I would just like  
8 to encourage anybody who is having a problem  
9 paying their taxes to call Mr. Blake's  
10 office. Almost everybody, all of the  
11 legislators in this area have gotten behind  
12 some form of -- not just some form, but HBSB  
13 76, and I don't ask them to lobby that, but  
14 if you are having a problem our legislators  
15 need to know that so please call Mr. Blake.

16 The RFP in today's paper for the  
17 city engineer with questions going to the  
18 Department of Public Works? When was this  
19 changed made? I thought the city engineer  
20 worked for the LIPS Department?

21 Okay, what line item is the  
22 financial expert -- the budget, where is the  
23 budget for the financial expert that's been  
24 advertised?

25 MR. MCGOFF: I would assume it comes

1 under professional services, but I'm not  
2 sure.

3 MS. SCHUMACHER: But which  
4 department and which is there a budget there  
5 for it. I mean, that's one of the issues I  
6 have is from the get-go we have been  
7 circumventing the duly passed budget. The  
8 current mayor had the opportunity to submit  
9 a revised budget but he didn't, and now we  
10 are doing all of these things and for that  
11 reason this grant, the PEL grant last year,  
12 again, back to Mr. Rogan, he said he had  
13 this letter from PEL and it was quoted,  
14 "Based on our analysis we make the following  
15 recommendations to the staffing and  
16 structure of the Office of Business  
17 Administrator: Establish the salary level  
18 of the Business Administrator at a level  
19 that will attract a qualified candidate,  
20 raise the salary level of the finance  
21 manager in order to recruit a qualified  
22 candidate."

23 I think we have proved, because we  
24 hired people at the beginning of the year  
25 without these increases. These increases

1 are not free except for this year. As the  
2 paper stated, I think, I don't know what the  
3 word they used was, but again, the  
4 transparency of being able to attend the  
5 caucuses, is one-third. We get 100 percent  
6 the first year, it goes down by a third by  
7 the second year, down by another third, we  
8 are going in the wrong direction people. We  
9 keep adding these chunks of money to our  
10 budget and where is the money to pay for  
11 them? Where are the offsets?

12 You know, it's very -- it's very  
13 discouraging to see what's happening. I'll  
14 bring the rest back next week, but thank  
15 you.

16 MR. LOSCOMBE: Thank you.

17 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you, Mrs.  
18 Schumacher.

19 MR. DOBRZYN: Good evening, Council.  
20 Dave Dobrzyn.

21 MR. LOSCOMBE: Good evening.

22 MR. DOBRZYN: Back from a rather  
23 nasty illness. I'll bet you all missed me.  
24 I heard Jack was crying because I wasn't  
25 here. Now, a point of interest, and I keep

1 hearing more and more about it and how  
2 financial advisors that have been hired are  
3 in favor of it, we have here an article  
4 about water policy and the sewer plant, and  
5 on the right-hand side there is a letter  
6 from Food and Water Watch in Philadelphia  
7 all on how in Coatsville they sold their  
8 sewer plant and it resulted in a 400 percent  
9 hike in fees and these people are paying  
10 about over \$900 a year currently and I'm  
11 paying about \$400 a year or somewhere around  
12 there, give or take a few.

13 And I keep pointing this out and if  
14 they do purchase the sewer plant or  
15 privatize it, they can stall, they can  
16 wannabee, they can go along, we are talking  
17 \$140 million, well, that's over 25 years and  
18 there were activists for the river who I  
19 know worked tirelessly to get that extended  
20 out to 25 years, so that's a little more  
21 than five or six million dollars a year that  
22 we very to put in the sewer plant in order  
23 to comply.

24 And if we took the sewer plant back  
25 like we did the last time we would basically

1 be responsible for anything they failed to  
2 do with their lobbying and stalling and  
3 taking the money and putting it into their  
4 corporate coffers. So, please, please,  
5 really consider this. It may not be the  
6 wonder drug of the year.

7 And on trash I gave you another one  
8 of those, I'd like to point out that that's  
9 only going to save on tipping fees, and what  
10 we need to do is get people, the DPW  
11 workers, to start watching the trash and  
12 possibly have a situation where they could  
13 leave a note that these people -- that they  
14 certainly are not complying with trash  
15 removal properly.

16 And I heard something about bags  
17 when I was at home and paper bags and I  
18 certainly hope that that some day doesn't  
19 result in someone tossing their bags on my  
20 lawn. Personally, I think it should be per  
21 can if anything because bags get torn and  
22 they go all over the neighborhood. Jack and  
23 I have a mutual acquaintance cancer and a  
24 heart condition I seen him out there huffing  
25 and puffing away last spring cleaning up

1           that lady's garbage, and it's all over the  
2           court. She takes it out, tosses the bag  
3           whenever she feels like it, 15 minutes after  
4           the garbage is hauled out she is tossing  
5           another bag there and the cats, feral cats,  
6           skunks, you name it are into it, it gets  
7           torn, it's all over the neighborhood. If  
8           that isn't blight I don't know what it is.

9                         Now, Comcast, I heard it mentioned  
10           on Comcast getting a contract, my current  
11           Comcast bill for triple play, phone,  
12           internet and television is \$176. I don't  
13           know if they deserve a contract. I don't  
14           know what they deserve. They deserve a  
15           price cut. In France it's regulated. You  
16           can't even get a job anymore nowadays  
17           without internet service. You cannot apply  
18           for a job. So the point being, that it's  
19           \$40 a month for similar services in France  
20           under utility regulation, and here we are  
21           talking about a \$400 -- and I just got a  
22           note in with my bill that they may be  
23           raising the price again because certain  
24           stations want more money.

25                         How about letting me choose what

1           stations I want? I don't want the 700 Club.  
2           I don't want Duck Dynasty, you know? And  
3           I'm a old mountain man Anthracite hillbilly  
4           from way back, but I don't care for people  
5           that make disgusting remarks about other  
6           people. I wouldn't watch it.

7                         On these funds for experts,  
8           especially the one through the greater  
9           Scranton Chamber of Commerce, I have a  
10          question, it's became real concern of mine  
11          over the last about 50, 60 years ago, I'll  
12          make it quick, President Eisenhower's  
13          secretary/treasurer or IRS honcho changed  
14          the wording for a 501 (4) (c) from  
15          exclusively for nonprofit, must exclusively  
16          spend their money on public welfare to  
17          primarily, and that's what's all of  
18          this that you hear about the tea party  
19          wanting a break on their taxes, if I come to  
20          one of your rallies I have to earn 25 bucks,  
21          come up with 25 bucks to give you 20, they  
22          don't. You have massive corporate interest  
23          donating them money and putting it on their  
24          tax deductions on top of it.

25                         So I'm really curious, it's to a



1 point where I'm starting to see so much  
2 maybe some of these so-called tax exempts  
3 should have their exemption lifted and it's  
4 time they start to pay.

5 Tonight there was some church  
6 complaining that there was snow wasn't  
7 removed. Sorry, Jamie, but what are they  
8 paying the city to remove it? Nothing. You  
9 know, we removed a lot of the snow with our  
10 giant snow blower. Thank you and have a  
11 good night.

12 MR. LOSCOMBE: Thank you.

13 MR. MCGOFF: Anyone else care to  
14 address council?

15 MR. CASEY: Good evening. My name  
16 is Paul Casey. I'm a resident of the 1500  
17 block of South Irving Avenue. I want to  
18 thank Mr. Gaughan and Mr. Rogan for  
19 responding and following up, I appreciate  
20 that.

21 The issue is in the winter we barely  
22 get a plow on our side of the street. It's  
23 a double street, there is a topside and a  
24 bottom side. I'm just looking for a plow  
25 when it snows. The area that I'd like

1 plowed is 9 feet wide. I'm sure plows are a  
2 lot smaller. The excuse I get all of the  
3 time is we can't fit a plow up there. They  
4 put a plow up there this weekend after I  
5 complained often enough, so that would seem  
6 to take away that excuse.

7 The hill has two different angled  
8 grades, there is a flatter side and a more  
9 steep side. The Palm Street side is a  
10 little bit flatter than the Fig Street side  
11 so any runoff during the day will freeze at  
12 night making it more difficult to come down  
13 on the Fig Street side. I have come down it  
14 sideways hoping that traffic wasn't coming  
15 down figure street, so I'd ask for salt more  
16 often than is given at least on that side.

17 The mayor and Director Gallagher  
18 have every reason to be embarrassed about  
19 the way they these past two storms were  
20 cleaned up. The weather is not an effective  
21 snow removal tool. There are much better  
22 ways to take care of the snow. Looking at  
23 some of the comment section ideas in the  
24 newspaper there is dedicated zones, assign  
25 drivers to certain areas in the city. Work

1           them on staggered shifts. Tow cars that are  
2           buried in there. If they don't have time to  
3           shovel their car out take them off the  
4           street into make it easier for the crews to  
5           do their jobs.

6                     People have asked for curb-to-curb  
7           plowing, I can't expect one lane on my  
8           street to get plowed, I'm not expecting  
9           curb-to-curb. I mean, I can handle digging  
10          out my own parking spots if the city would  
11          do their part.

12                    Do the job right the first time  
13          rather than piling it up over time doing it  
14          over and over again. There is a cost  
15          savings right there. Don't let snow go  
16          unplowed until it becomes unmanageable.  
17          Check your intersections and your hills and  
18          make sure they are done and safe to get  
19          around.

20                    If this director can't or won't do  
21          his job or direct his staff, perhaps we need  
22          another DPW director.

23                    I talked to Mayor Courtright over  
24          the weekend, he claimed that there were a  
25          lot of calls about my block. I called

1 twice. If there is more calls than that,  
2 that's indicative of a larger problem  
3 affecting a lot more people. That should be  
4 taken into consideration.

5 Finally, unrelated to the snow  
6 storm, I had a couch sitting curb side since  
7 November. Right now it's buried under snow,  
8 but the crews know it's there. They took  
9 the love seat, they took all of the couch  
10 cushions and they are leaving the couch  
11 there. This couch now reeks of cat urine.  
12 I'm sure I don't even know what other  
13 animals are living in it. I have e-mailed  
14 about it, my e-mails have gone unanswered.

15 It's just -- I just want to get my  
16 two cents worth in and this current DPW  
17 director, and I know it's not the staff,  
18 they are doing what they can, but the  
19 director is not managing his staff very well  
20 at all.

21 I appreciate you guys following up  
22 with me and making calls on my behalf.  
23 Thanks.

24 MR. MCGOFF: Mr. Casey, just a very  
25 quick question, does the bottom portion of

1 Irving Avenue get paved or do they ignore  
2 that as well.

3 MR. CASEY: They get plowed  
4 frequently. Not frequently, but they get  
5 plowed every so --

6 MR. MCGOFF: Not paved, plowed.

7 MR. CASEY: Yeah, they get plowed  
8 quite often. We are just asking for one  
9 pass on top.

10 MR. MCGOFF: But they won't go up to  
11 the upper --

12 MR. CASEY: That's right.

13 MR. MCGOFF: Okay.

14 MR. CASEY: And the 1400 block is  
15 similar. It's equally narrow, but plows  
16 have gone up in the past, I don't see why  
17 they can't continue to go up. Thanks.

18 MR. MCGOFF: Anyone else who wishes  
19 to address council?

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

21 MOTIONS.

22 MR. MCGOFF: Mr. Wechsler.

23 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you,  
24 Mr. McGoff. Besides sitting here tonight  
25 hearing these complaints we have all gotten

1 the same calls and e-mails on these phones  
2 as well. Right now we discussed this in  
3 caucus and we will get into it a little  
4 more, Mr. Gaughan will get into it a little  
5 bit more, but we are considering coming up  
6 with a new plan for next winter. It's not  
7 going to help us this year, but it is going  
8 to take input from the council, the  
9 administration, neighborhood groups, and  
10 just to come up with a general plan of what  
11 would be the best way to alleviate the  
12 situation that we are facing.

13 This is the snowiest February since  
14 1910, and I know that's not an excuse, but  
15 it is a reality. Some of the complaints  
16 that we are heard tonight there is also some  
17 responsibility for business owners and  
18 homeowners to take care of their properties  
19 as well, so this is a going to be a group  
20 effort from the city. The council doesn't  
21 make it snow, the mayor doesn't make it  
22 snow, so it's everybody's responsibility and  
23 I think if we get together after this year  
24 we can come up with a better plan because  
25 once the snow is gone then the next issue

1 will be the potholes and that will be the  
2 next situation.

3 And another thing, on Saturday night  
4 I attended the North Scranton Vikings  
5 fundraiser for the Lebron family who  
6 suffered the terrible tragedy. It was a  
7 great outpouring from the community and  
8 anything we can do for that family would be  
9 greatly appreciated.

10 And I'd also like to mention the  
11 passing of the Bill Connell. Bill Connell  
12 was a friend of mine for the past eight  
13 years. The best thing about Bill Connell  
14 was his optimism. Tonight we heard a lot of  
15 problems with the City of Scranton, and Bill  
16 Connell knew those problems as well, but he  
17 decided to become part of the solution and  
18 work hard to fix these problems.

19 The city is not a good place after  
20 losing Bill Connell, I can tell you that,  
21 and if anybody wants to serve the city they  
22 can use Bill as an example of bringing a  
23 positive attitude to serve our problems.  
24 Thank you, Mr. McGoff.

25 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you,

1 Mr. Wechsler. Mr. Rogan?

2 MR. ROGAN: Yes, a number of issues.  
3 First, I would like to second what Mr.  
4 Wechsler said about Mr. Connell. He was a  
5 great guy, I'm proud to call him a friend.  
6 Just last year we became very close  
7 neighbors, we actually live on the same  
8 block. He was a great guy and he will be  
9 missed by everyone in the city.

10 A couple of other issues that were  
11 brought up tonight, one is the potholes, and  
12 I know Main Avenue has been brought up over  
13 and over again. PennDOT did issue a release  
14 yesterday that those potholes on many of the  
15 state roads in our area were to begin being  
16 filled today pending weather. I drove much  
17 of Main Avenue today and they were not fixed  
18 as of yet, but from speaking to PennDOT that  
19 is the next thing on their list. Hopefully  
20 the weather in the next couple of days get  
21 better. And we are hopeful that --  
22 unfortunately, the hot patch isn't available  
23 yet because of the weather, but PennDOT does  
24 have, I'm not sure what they call it, but  
25 it's kind of a hybrid between the hot and



1 cold. They take the cold patch and they  
2 basically put in a little transportable oven  
3 before they put it in. It does give a  
4 little bit of a better hold so we are  
5 hopeful that those repairs will last through  
6 until the plants open up in the spring.

7           Regarding the snow, I think, you  
8 know, we have all heard from many people  
9 regarding the many problems with snow and  
10 sometimes it's the fault of the DPW, other  
11 times it's not, and I think one of the  
12 things people need to stop doing through the  
13 city is throwing snow on the roads after the  
14 roads are plowed. On my block I know, and  
15 luckily we have had pretty good snow removal  
16 in parts of my neighborhood this year, the  
17 plow would go by and you drive and then you  
18 drive back maybe an hour later and you will  
19 see three parking spots shoveled out and the  
20 snow in the middle of the road and then when  
21 the cars come by they drag it, so we all  
22 have to do our part.

23           The roads being clear are a matter  
24 of public safety and nobody should have a  
25 situation like Mr. Casey did, and I know he

1           showed us all pictures, and just because he  
2           is on a road that's kind of off to the side  
3           a little more difficult doesn't mean his  
4           shouldn't be cleaned and at the same time we  
5           don't want our DPW to have to keep going  
6           down streets again and again because  
7           neighbors are throwing snow on the road.  
8           It's a hazard and it creates more work and  
9           it costs the city more money.

10                        So hopefully people will try and do  
11           their best to pile up the snow on their  
12           yards or even in piles on the sides of the  
13           road and please don't throw it in the road.

14                        A couple of other issues that were  
15           brought up tonight, one is Senate Bill 76.  
16           I know it's something I talk about every  
17           week. We actually are having a public  
18           caucus on Senate Bill 76 for those who are  
19           interested on March 6 at 5:30 in council  
20           chambers. In attendance will be Kim  
21           Skumanick, the newly elected president of  
22           the Pennsylvania Realtors Association.  
23           Wayne Evans, the president of the Scranton  
24           Realtors Association, and Chuck Liediki, who  
25           is in charge of the Real Reform 76 Group

1 that is out educating people regarding this  
2 bill and it's affects on their property  
3 taxes.

4 And as was mentioned by a speaker,  
5 our representatives in our area with the  
6 exception of Senator Blake are all in  
7 support of Senate Bill 76 in one form or  
8 another. Senator Blake is the only member  
9 currently that represents Scranton that has  
10 refused to sign onto for property tax relief  
11 for those who live in the city, so hopefully  
12 pressure will be put on him from residents  
13 calling to eliminate school property taxes.

14 The sale of the garages was brought  
15 up. As I mentioned, if we continue on our  
16 current course of payments with the garages  
17 we will pay \$1 of interest for every dollar  
18 of principal that we currently have. Much  
19 like if you have a credit card when you are  
20 paying the minimums it takes a very long  
21 time to get it paid off.

22 The garages are already being  
23 subsidized by taxpayers, approximately \$2  
24 million a year and that figure is only going  
25 to increase unless something drastic is

1 done. There are millions of dollars in  
2 repairs that need to be performed on these  
3 garages that haven't been made so the city  
4 is really in a catch 22 where we would have  
5 to invest money that we don't have to repair  
6 the garages when they are already not  
7 solvent, so we would be throwing good money  
8 after bad.

9 And the other option is to sell  
10 them, and I know it's been mentioned that  
11 the debt owed on the garages is greater than  
12 the total value, which is true, but even at  
13 taking a loss of say we received \$30 million  
14 and paid off the principal, that saves us an  
15 additional \$30 million in interest and then  
16 the city doesn't have to worry about  
17 repairs. It doesn't have to worry about  
18 subsidizing yearly because they are taking a  
19 loss. Once that debt is paid off it's off  
20 the city's back.

21 Also, having a private company in  
22 there running I believe firmly would do a  
23 much better job than the city. I don't  
24 believe the city should be in the business  
25 of parking garages, and on top of that it

1 would bring in revenue. We would receive  
2 revenue in mercantile tax, and other taxes  
3 from a successful privately run parking  
4 garage.

5 Finally, one issue I wanted to talk  
6 about that I was speaking to many people  
7 about today is the amusement tax. It  
8 something that hasn't been mentioned in  
9 these chambers probably since it passed in  
10 2012. I was approached today by a number of  
11 musicians, small musicians, local bands and  
12 bar owners, tavern owners that have  
13 different acts at their place, and their  
14 concern is with the amusement tax being  
15 enacted that it is going negatively affect  
16 the small local band that may have 50, 100,  
17 200 people at their show on a Friday night  
18 at a local bar. The bar owners are afraid  
19 that that tax will have, you know, the acts  
20 won't come to Scranton, they will go to  
21 other towns that don't have this tax.

22 And I know when was passed, and I  
23 think I speak for all of us that voted on  
24 it, the intent was never to hurt a small  
25 local band. The intent of the amusement tax

1 was Montage Mountain, large venue that do  
2 cost money to run when, you know, their acts  
3 afterwards or our public safety has to  
4 respond and you are bringing large amounts  
5 of people in and there is a cost associated  
6 with it.

7 What I want to do, and I reached out  
8 to the mayor and spoke to him briefly about  
9 this today, and I also brought it up in the  
10 caucus, I want to look at a way to curb  
11 these undesired effects of this tax, whether  
12 it be an exemption on the first "X" amount  
13 of tickets sold, maybe 100 tickets, 200  
14 tickets or an exception on the first \$500 or  
15 \$1,000 that's taken in. The loss of tax  
16 dollars to the city would be minimal  
17 compared to what will be loss if these bands  
18 can't continue to operate in the city and  
19 these taverns lose a lot of revenue because  
20 of that, so that is something I am working  
21 on.

22 I actually asked the musicians to  
23 meet with some suggestions and then at that  
24 point I will report back to my colleagues  
25 and we will check with our solicitor to see

1           what amendments to that ordinance would  
2           actually be legal.

3                       That is it all I have for now. I  
4           will comment on agenda items as they come  
5           up. Thank you.

6                       MR. MCGOFF: Thank you, Mr. Rogan.  
7           Mr. Loscombe?

8                       MR. LOSCOMBE: Yes, thank you. The  
9           only thing I have I would like to concur  
10          with my fellow colleagues on Bill Connell  
11          and their sentiments, mine exactly. Bill  
12          was a friend, he was a gentleman, and was  
13          stated he had this infectious optimism about  
14          him and, you know, I hope that lives on  
15          through all of us who are his friends and I  
16          hope everybody remembers his family in their  
17          prayers. And that's all I have tonight.  
18          Thank you.

19                      MR. MCGOFF: Thank you. A couple of  
20          very quick items, well, until Mr. Gaughan  
21          comes back. A couple of -- a number of  
22          citizens have asked me, and I will look into  
23          what the situation is with the traffic light  
24          signalization, whether it's finished,  
25          whether it's on hold, whether it's -- you

1 know, what's going on. There are still, I  
2 believe, numerous problems with traffic  
3 lights in the downtown area. The timing of  
4 them is poor, the length of some of them is  
5 onerous, but something needs to be done and  
6 we need to get a finalization on this signal  
7 problem. It's going on for years and we  
8 just need to know when it's going to be  
9 finally resolved.

10 Mr. Gaughan?

11 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you. I just  
12 have a few things. The first thing is, and  
13 I mentioned it last week, about the snow,  
14 the problem with snow we have been having in  
15 the city, obviously everybody is aware of.  
16 A few possibilities and ideas, one of them I  
17 mentioned last week was alternate side of  
18 the street parking.

19 I looked at the City Code, Section  
20 412, and there is actually a procedure in  
21 place all we need to do is implement it. I  
22 would like to take a minute and read that.  
23 "That we shall designate as snow emergency  
24 routes streets which are heavily traveled  
25 and are necessary thoroughfares for the



1 movement of vehicular traffic through the  
2 city. Such designations shall take into  
3 consideration state highway routes, fire  
4 apparatus emergency routes and other  
5 commonly traveled streets.

6 Each of such routes shall be posted  
7 with suitable signs or markers not less  
8 frequently than once in each direction in  
9 one block. Such signs shall bear the words  
10 "Snow Route" and they may restrict parking  
11 in such block on alternate sides of such  
12 street. A map of such snow routes shall be  
13 filed with the city clerk and other copies  
14 thereof shall be available for public  
15 examination and the Departments of Public  
16 Works and the director of the Department of  
17 Public Works may change some map from time to  
18 time cognizant of such changes being entered  
19 as aforesaid."

20 So the procedure is in place. I  
21 think what we should do is take a look at  
22 implementing this procedure with alternate  
23 side of the street parking. Other cities  
24 like Allentown, Reading, what they do is  
25 during the snow emergency owners are

1 required to remove their vehicles from  
2 posted emergency snow routes or else they  
3 would be ticketed or towed. The Allentown  
4 Parking Authority offers free lots during  
5 snow emergency in Reading. Same thing, city  
6 parking garages are open and provide free  
7 parking. Residents may enter the parking  
8 garage two hours prior to declared  
9 emergency. Vehicles must be removed within  
10 two hours of the ban being lifted.

11 So I think it's definitely something  
12 to look at. I think it would be good for  
13 residents, good for the DPW if we had a plan  
14 in place, especially for the downtown.  
15 Whether or not we use alternate side of the  
16 street parking or completely block all  
17 traffic downtown for a certain amount of  
18 time when we do have a snow emergency.

19 Also, the City of Pittsburgh, I  
20 looked on their website, they have a winter  
21 weather emergency resource guide. Basically  
22 a guide for residents of what to do during a  
23 winter weather emergency in that city. They  
24 have a map, which I think would be good for  
25 the City of Scranton to post on their

1 website once hopefully we get this up and  
2 running of each area in the city and  
3 designate these emergency snow routes and  
4 what residents can do. So I think that's  
5 something that we should definitely take a  
6 look at.

7 The other thing that I brought it up  
8 in caucus, and I think it's a something that  
9 we should at least look at for next year's  
10 budget, is bringing back -- reinstating the  
11 casual workers for the Department of Public  
12 Works. As everybody knows, it was talked  
13 about last week that the DPW has some  
14 skeleton crews. That's part of the problem.  
15 There is not enough manpower. You know,  
16 they are dealing with what they have, so I  
17 think if we brought back the casual workers  
18 that might relieve some of those issues, so  
19 I think that we should definitely do that.

20 The other item is just to warn  
21 residents, I'm sure you have seen it in the  
22 paper, that there be some flooding. I know  
23 that I spoke to our DPW Director Dennis  
24 Gallagher, and the DPW has been out clearing  
25 storm water drains and basins so that water

1 can flow freely and hopefully there won't be  
2 any issues, but just to keep an eye on that.

3 Also, I attended the South Side  
4 Neighborhood Crime Watch last night. It's a  
5 great group. I encourage any residents of  
6 South Side to join. They meet every third  
7 Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. on Alder Street in  
8 the South Side Senior Center.

9 And that's I have for tonight.  
10 Thank you.

11 MR. MCGOFF: Very quickly a couple  
12 of items. There have been meetings with  
13 both NRS and with another group called  
14 Turnkey looking at the collection of  
15 delinquencies. Turnkey specializes in  
16 mercantile and EIT delinquencies and maybe a  
17 company that the city looks at for the  
18 collection of those. NRS, who we currently  
19 contract with, we may look at moving  
20 delinquencies for rental registration,  
21 parking and the amusement tax to NRS, but  
22 there are discussions for making attempts to  
23 maximize collection of all taxes and fees.

24 The one thing that I would just to  
25 piggyback some of the items with snow

1 removal, and again, I will reiterate them.  
2 One of the biggest problems I believe is the  
3 walkways and access to the downtown. These  
4 walkways should be maintained by the city.  
5 Snow should be removed from them by the city  
6 and we have never really done a good job of  
7 that. Again, it comes down to manpower and  
8 equipment and my father, who walked to work  
9 every day of his life, said this has been a  
10 problem for, you know, 50 years, but I think  
11 it's something that we really should  
12 consider at least having some type of policy  
13 in place for removal from the main walking  
14 arteries to the downtown.

15 Also, the last think I'll mention,  
16 somebody asked if DPW could please post a  
17 schedule of refuse and recyclable pickups on  
18 the website, on the city website. In case  
19 of emergencies or holidays, whatever, people  
20 would like to know when these pickups are  
21 occurring and it would be easy enough to  
22 post any delays or changes on the website so  
23 the people could access that and we will ask  
24 if that could be done.

25 And other than that, we will get to

1 Fifth Order.

2 MS. REED: 5-B. FOR INTRODUCTION -  
3 AN ORDINANCE - AMENDING FILE OF COUNCIL NO.  
4 74, 1993, AS AMENDED, ENTITLED "CITY OF  
5 SCRANTON ZONING ORDINANCE OF 1993", BY  
6 CHANGING THE ZONING MAP DESIGNATION OF THE  
7 JOHN J. AUDUBON SCHOOL FROM R-1A (MEDIUM  
8 LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL) TO INS-G (GENERAL  
9 INSTITUTIONAL) IN THE CENTRAL PLANNING AREA  
10 IN THE EASTERN PORTION OF THE CITY OF  
11 SCRANTON.

12 MR. MCGOFF: At this time I'll  
13 entertain a motion that Item 5-B be  
14 introduced into its proper committee.

15 MR. ROGAN: So moved.

16 MR. LOSCOMBE: Second.

17 MR. MCGOFF: On the question? I  
18 will say that in caucus there were  
19 representatives from Geisinger to explain  
20 what this resolution was or what this  
21 ordinance was and why it was being sent to  
22 us, I think that the biggest positive to  
23 this would be that should it be rezoned and  
24 the sale of the property take place that the  
25 site of Audobon School would then become a

1 taxable property and removed from the tax  
2 exempt. It would no longer be school  
3 property and it would no longer be under the  
4 tax exempt status. Anyone else?

5 All those in favor signify by saying  
6 aye.

7 MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

8 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

9 MR. LOSCOMBE: Aye.

10 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

11 MS. MCGOFF: Aye. Opposed? The  
12 ayes have it and so moved.

13 MS. REED: 5-C. FOR INTRODUCTION -  
14 A RESOLUTION - APPOINTMENT OF EMMANUEL  
15 JOHNSON, 1007 SCRANTON STREET, SCRANTON,  
16 PENNSYLVANIA, 18504 AS A MEMBER OF THE  
17 SCRANTON MUNICIPAL RECREATION AUTHORITY.  
18 MR. JOHNSON WILL BE REPLACING CAROL OLESKI  
19 WHOSE TERM EXPIRED DECEMBER 31, 2013. MR.  
20 JOHNSON'S TERM WILL EXPIRE DECEMBER 31,  
21 2018.

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

25 MR. ROGAN: So moved.

1 MR. LOSCOMBE: Second.

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

5 MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

6 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

7 MR. LOSCOMBE: Aye.

8 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

9 MS. MCGOFF: Aye. Opposed? The  
10 eyes have it and so moved.

11 MS. REED: 5-D. FOR INTRODUCTION -  
12 A RESOLUTION - APPOINTMENT OF TIMOTHY PERRY,  
13 2325 BIRNEY AVENUE, SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA,  
14 18505 AS A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF THE  
15 SCRANTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY. MR. PERRY  
16 WILL BE REPLACING PETER RIEBE WHOSE TERM  
17 EXPIRED ON FEBRUARY 4, 2010. MR. PERRY'S  
18 TERM WILL EXPIRE ON FEBRUARY 4, 2015.

19 MR. MCGOFF: At this time I'll  
20 entertain a motion that Item 5-D be  
21 introduced into its proper committee.

22 MR. ROGAN: So moved.

23 MR. LOSCOMBE: Second.

24 MR. MCGOFF: On the question?

25 MR. LOSCOMBE: Just on the question,



1           you mentioned it was asked in caucus if they  
2           submitted their resumes, we usually  
3           introduce if they have not and they will be  
4           notified to submit their resumes prior to  
5           the final votes.

6                   MR. MCGOFF: Yes. Anyone else? All  
7           those in favor of introduction signify by  
8           saying aye.

9                   MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

10                   MR. ROGAN: Aye.

11                   MR. LOSCOMBE: Aye.

12                   MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

13                   MS. MCGOFF: Aye. Opposed? The  
14           eyes have it and so moved.

15                   MS. REED: SIXTH ORDER. 6-A. NO  
16           BUSINESS AT THIS TIME.

17                   SEVENTH ORDER. 7-A. FOR  
18           CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMITTEE ON RULES -FOR  
19           ADOPTION - RESOLUTION NO. 25, 2014 -  
20           APPOINTMENT OF THOMAS BORTHWICK, 719 NORTH  
21           SUMNER AVENUE, SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA, 18504  
22           AS VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF THE  
23           SCRANTON PARKING AUTHORITY. MR. BORTHWICK  
24           WILL BE REPLACING WAYNE HILLER WHO RESIGNED  
25           EFFECTIVE FEBRUARY 3, 2014. MR. BORTHWICK'S

1 TERM WILL EXPIRE ON JUNE 1, 2016.

2 MR. MCGOFF: As Chair for the  
3 Committee on Rules, I recommend final  
4 passage of Item 7-A.

5 MR. ROGAN: Second.

6 MR. MCGOFF: On the question?

7 MR. ROGAN: Yes. I'd just like to  
8 congratulate Mr. Borthwick, he is a neighbor  
9 of mine, and I know he will do a great job  
10 on the board.

11 MR. MCGOFF: You've got a lot of  
12 neighbors, Mr. Rogan.

13 MR. ROGAN: I do have a lot of  
14 neighbors.

15 MR. MCGOFF: Anyone else? Roll  
16 call, please.

17 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Wechsler.

18 MR. MCGOFF: Yes.

19 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Rogan.

20 MR. ROGAN: Yes.

21 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Loscombe.

22 MR. LOSCOMBE: Yes.

23 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. Gaughan.

24 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

25 MS. MARCIANO: Mr. McGoff.

1 MR. MCGOFF: Yes. And I, too, would  
2 like to congratulate Mr. Borthwick. I  
3 hereby declare Item 7-A legally and lawfully  
4 adopted.

5 MS. REED: 7-B. FOR CONSIDERATION BY  
6 THE COMMITTEE ON RULES -FOR ADOPTION -  
7 RESOLUTION NO. 26, 2014 - APPOINTMENT OF  
8 WILLIAM CONNELL, 606 NORTH BROMLEY AVENUE,  
9 SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA, 18504 AS CHAIRMAN OF  
10 THE BOARD OF THE SCRANTON PARKING AUTHORITY.  
11 MR. CONNELL WILL BE REPLACING KATHLEEN  
12 STELLA WHO WAS REMOVED FROM THE BOARD BY  
13 LETTER DATED JANUARY 22, 2014. MR. CONNELL  
14 WILL FILL THE UNEXPIRED TERM OF KATHLEEN  
15 STELLA, WHOSE TERM IS SCHEDULED TO EXPIRE  
16 ON JUNE 1, 2015.

17 MR. MCGOFF: I'd like to make a  
18 motion to table Item 7-B.

19 MR. ROGAN: Second.

20 MR. MCGOFF: On the question? All  
21 those in favor of tabling signify by saying  
22 aye.

23 MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

24 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

25 MR. LOSCOMBE: Aye.

1 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

2 MS. MCGOFF: Aye. Opposed? The  
3 ayes have it and so moved.

4 MS. REED: 7-C. FOR CONSIDERATION  
5 BY THE COMMITTEE ON RULES - FOR ADOPTION -  
6 RESOLUTION NO. 27, 2014 - APPOINTMENT OF  
7 PAUL MCGLOIN, SR., 139 SOUTH MERRIFIELD  
8 AVENUE, SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA, 18504 AS A  
9 MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF THE SCRANTON PARKING  
10 AUTHORITY. MR. MCGLOIN WILL BE REPLACING  
11 FRANK J. TUNIS, JR. WHO WAS REMOVED FROM THE  
12 BOARD BY LETTER DATED JANUARY 22, 2014. MR.  
13 MCGLOIN WILL FILL THE UNEXPIRED TERM OF  
14 FRANK J. TUNIS, JR., WHOSE TERM IS SCHEDULED  
15 TO EXPIRE ON JUNE 1, 2017.

16 MR. MCGOFF: I would like to make a  
17 motion to table Item 7-C.

18 MR. ROGAN: Second.

19 MR. MCGOFF: On the question? All  
20 those in favor of tabling, please signify by  
21 saying aye.

22 MR. WECHSLER: Aye.

23 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

24 MR. LOSCOMBE: Aye.

25 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

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MS. MCGOFF: Aye. Opposed? The  
eyes have it and so moved.

Any other business? Motion to  
adjourn?

MR. LOSCOMBE: Motion to adjourn.

MR. MCGOFF: Meeting adjourned.

(Meeting adjourned.)

