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SCRANTON CITY COUNCIL MEETING

HELD:

Thursday, April 7, 2016

LOCATION:

Council Chambers

Scranton City Hall

340 North Washington Avenue

Scranton, Pennsylvania

CATHENE S. NARDOZZI, RPR - OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER

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CITY OF SCRANTON COUNCIL:

JOSEPH WECHSLER, PRESIDENT

PATRICK ROGAN, VICE-PRESIDENT

WAYNE EVANS

WILLIAM GAUGHAN

TIM PERRY

LORI REED, CITY CLERK

KATHY CARRERA, ASSISTANT CITY CLERK

AMIL MINORA, SOLICITOR

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

3 MR. WECHSLER: Roll call, please.

4 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Perry.

5 MR. PERRY: Here.

6 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

7 MR. ROGAN: Here.

8 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

9 MR. EVANS: Here.

10 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

11 MR. GAUGHAN: Here.

12 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

13 MR. WECHSLER: Here.

14 MR. EVANS: I'd like to make a
15 motion to take from the table Resolution No.
16 13 of 2016.

17 MR. ROGAN: Second.

18 MR. WECHSLER: On the question?

19 This legislation pertains to the contract
20 for the City's streetlight improvement
21 project. This resolution will be placed in
22 Seventh Order for a final vote. Anyone who
23 wishes to speak on this particular piece of
24 legislation may do so during fourth order
25 citizens' participation. All those in favor

1 signify by saying aye.

2 MR. PERRY: Aye.

3 MR. EVANS: Aye.

4 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

5 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

6 MR. WECHSLER: Aye. Opposed? The
7 ayes have it and so moved.

8 Dispense with the reading of the
9 minutes.

10 MS. REED: THIRD ORDER. 3-A. SINGLE
11 TAX OFFICE CITY FUNDS DISTRIBUTED COMPARISON
12 REPORT 2015-2016 YEAR TO DATE 3-31-16.

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

15 Do any council members have
16 announcements at this time?

17 MR. GAUGHAN: I have one. In honor
18 or Earth Month and as way off preserving our
19 environment, the Lackawanna County Recycling
20 Center will be accepting electronic devices
21 free of charge during the month of April for
22 Lackawanna County residents and municipality
23 zoning. The \$1 per pound fee has been
24 waived for the drop off of electronics such
25 as televisions, computer monitors, towers,

1 mouse accessories and keyboards and cell
2 phones. To qualify for the tree drop off,
3 individuals must show center personnel a
4 photo ID for proof of residency and
5 municipalities have to call in advance if
6 they would like to drop off any electronics.
7 The \$1 per pound charge will be in effect
8 for all out-of-county electronics beginning
9 May 2. A fee schedule will be in effect for
10 all in and out-of-county residents and
11 municipalities. Thank you.

12 MR. ROGAN: Just as a follow-up to
13 the announcement that Mr. Gaughan made, the
14 city DPW is not allowed to pick up
15 televisions so it would be very good if you
16 do have televisions that you have to get rid
17 of and take advantage of this free recycling
18 program.

19 MR. WECHSLER: The third annual Half
20 Marathon will take place this Sunday, April
21 10, at 9 a.m. It begins and ends at the
22 Memorial Stadium on Providence Road.
23 Proceeds from the event benefit the
24 continued development of the Lackawanna
25 River Heritage trail. We wish all of the

1 runners good luck and thank the organizers
2 and volunteers in support of this great
3 event.

4 One other announcement, last week we
5 had a citizen come and explain to us some
6 concerns they have about the Meadow brook.
7 On Friday, we did contact city engineer John
8 Pocius and I also contacted Senator Blake
9 and his field representative Larry West. So
10 there was a meeting held on this matter and
11 representatives from the city, county and
12 Representative Flynn's office were present.
13 The Meadow brook project is being looked
14 into. This was the first of many meetings
15 that will occur to keep this moving forward.
16 The project is still on track and is up and
17 running again. The council office will
18 receive updates as more information becomes
19 available and things progress.

20 MS. REED: FOURTH ORDER. CITIZENS'
21 PARTICIPATION.

22 MR. WECHSLER: Joan Hodowanitz.

23 MS. HODOWANITZ: Joan Hodowanitz,
24 Scranton resident and taxpayer. Last week I
25 believe you were mentioning in the caucus

1 about the possibility of a public caucus for
2 the 2014 audit. Is that still on your
3 agenda?

4 MR. WECHSLER: No, it's not a caucus
5 it's a conference.

6 MS. HODOWANITZ: A conference?

7 MR. WECHSLER: A conference, yes.
8 It's still being scheduled.

9 MS. HODOWANITZ: I'm still seeking
10 information on the administration's response
11 to SB & Companies finance on the audit, I'm
12 just curious as to where the audit was
13 between March 4, the date of publication,
14 and March 15 when it appeared to be
15 received. As of 5:18 this afternoon it was
16 still not posted to the city's website,
17 which it should be, for the reviews of the
18 general public. And, also, does council
19 intend to publish a summary of the fiscal
20 activities in the local newspaper based on
21 the audit?

22 MR. WECHSLER: We are waiting for
23 the conference and then we'll go from there.

24 MS. HODOWANITZ: Okay. I'll be
25 waiting anxiously to see how those shows

1 drop. I needed some clarification on where
2 we stand with regard to this year's local
3 services tax, is the rate \$52 or \$156?

4 MR. WECHSLER: \$156.

5 MS. HODOWANITZ: So the governor's
6 veto of the fiscal code has been overcome?

7 MR. WECHSLER: The way that I
8 understood that was that veto would effect
9 us more after we are out of distressed
10 status --

11 MS. HODOWANITZ: Distressed status.

12 MR. WECHSLER: -- then that would
13 revert. We had anticipated that we would be
14 able to keep collecting that \$156, but under
15 this veto the way I understand it that would
16 revert back to the \$52.

17 MS. HODOWANITZ: Okay.

18 MR. WECHSLER: If we are out
19 distress.

20 MS. HODOWANITZ: But assuming we
21 don't come out of distress status this
22 fiscal year it will be \$156.

23 MR. WECHSLER: Yes.

24 MS. HODOWANITZ: Okay. And with
25 regard Items 5-B and C, the tax exemptions

1 on property, I looked at the backup and it
2 mostly focused on definitions and
3 authorizations, but what I have no idea of
4 is how much money are we talking about in
5 terms of tax reductions per year.

6 MR. WECHSLER: It depends on the
7 project. It could be a small project and
8 the tax savings would be smaller. If it's a
9 large project, it would be bigger.

10 MS. HODOWANITZ: I'm trying to think
11 citywide, if this gets passed in the next
12 three weeks how much do you think it's going
13 to impact the 2016 budget?

14 MR. EVANS: There are no reductions
15 unless someone actually constructs
16 something.

17 MS. HODOWANITZ: So it's only based
18 on future construction.

19 MR. EVANS: On new construction.
20 There are some -- there is some language
21 there that gives some apartment to
22 condominium conversions, but that would only
23 increase the tax base, but, yeah, there
24 would be no reduction in taxes unless
25 somebody actually builds something.

1 MS. HODOWANITZ: But it doesn't have
2 to be a stand alone structure it can be an
3 improvement.

4 MR. EVANS: Improvement, exactly,
5 and that's the part that would be abated,
6 the improvement part of the assessment.

7 MS. HODOWANITZ: So we really don't
8 have a warm and fuzzy for how much money we
9 are talking about in terms of tax
10 reductions?

11 MR. EVANS: Not --

12 MR. ROGAN: I think it's regarding
13 the budget it's zero because without the
14 improvements there are still paying on the
15 land, and if they own a --

16 MS. HODOWANITZ: I understand that,
17 but this should be an incentive for
18 improvements; correct?

19 MR. EVANS: Correct.

20 MR. ROGAN: Correct.

21 MS. HODOWANITZ: And just, you know,
22 it could be anything from zero to infinity.

23 MR. EVANS: Well, there is a maximum
24 \$500,000 in value as part of the ordinance
25 so --

1 MS. HODOWANITZ: That's for
2 improvement, not for tax reduction; right?

3 MR. EVANS: Right.

4 MR. WECHSLER: But it's abatement of
5 a new tax that would be placed on the new
6 construction so if there is no new
7 construction there is no tax.

8 MS. HODOWANITZ: Okay.

9 MR. WECHSLER: So it really is zero
10 and actually when the abatement is over it
11 becomes a plus because that tax would be an
12 assessment.

13 MS. HODOWANITZ: This is a little
14 strange, you know, that we have this because
15 it's a financial ordinance, but we won't
16 know until after the fact how much money,
17 you know, will be reduced.

18 MR. WECHSLER: It won't be reduced,
19 it's how money will be added in three years.

20 MS. HODOWANITZ: Added in three
21 years?

22 MR. WECHSLER: If someone builds a
23 building, their taxes will be abated for the
24 first three years.

25 MS. HODOWANITZ: Right.

1 MR. WECHSLER: Then when that's over
2 that --

3 MS. HODOWANITZ: Yeah, I understood
4 the reduction in the first three years.

5 MR. WECHSLER: There is no
6 reduction, there is just no charge for that.

7 MS. HODOWANITZ: It's like a KOZ?

8 MR. ROGAN: No, it's nothing like a
9 KOZ.

10 MR. WECHSLER: It's not because it's
11 an existing -- the existing property would
12 not have been improved if this abatement
13 didn't come.

14 MS. HODOWANITZ: Okay. So now the
15 property is being improved, a three-year
16 period, had they been taxed if we had not
17 had this ordinance?

18 MR. WECHSLER: Currently right now
19 if they made the investment they would have
20 been taxed.

21 MS. HODOWANITZ: Okay. So we don't
22 know --

23 MR. WECHSLER: But our goal is to
24 get someone to do the investment. I don't
25 believe in 2015 there was -- not one home

1 built in the City of Scranton.

2 MS. HODOWANITZ: Okay. All right.

3 Thank you.

4 MR. WECHSLER: So all we would like
5 to see is people build homes in the City of
6 Scranton, not pay taxes on that improvement
7 for three years and then start paying taxes
8 at the end of the third year.

9 MS. HODOWANITZ: Don't hold your
10 breath.

11 MR. WECHSLER: Les Spindler.

12 MR. SPINDLER: Good evening,
13 Council. Les Spindler, city resident and
14 homeowner, taxpayer. First off, I was here
15 two weeks ago, we talked about the unions
16 and getting their money and Councilman Evans
17 made a comment that he thought they should
18 have made more concessions. Well, as I
19 stated once before, Councilman Evans, you
20 probably weren't paying attention, the
21 original Supreme Court judgment as ruled
22 approximately \$42 million. The unions
23 agreed to take half of it. That was a huge
24 concession right there, so I think you
25 should get your facts in order before you --

1 MR. EVANS: So I'm not allowed to
2 ask for more concessions because of that?
3 We're not allowed to ask for any more
4 concessions?

5 MR. SPINDLER: That's a huge
6 concession taking half.

7 MR. EVANS: And I appreciate it.

8 MR. SPINDLER: Would you take half a
9 paycheck?

10 MR. EVANS: And I appreciate that
11 they gave us that concession.

12 MR. SPINDLER: Would you take half a
13 paycheck in your business? I don't think.

14 MR. EVANS: Well, I'm not paid by
15 the taxpayers.

16 MR. SPINDLER: That's a huge
17 concession. They saved the city some twenty
18 some million dollars.

19 MR. EVANS: And I appreciate that.

20 MR. SPINDLER: Well, I don't think
21 they have -- they didn't have to do that. I
22 don't think they had to take any more
23 concessions.

24 Moving on, a quote that we read from
25 Councilman Gaughan in last week's paper

1 about the same subject. "This agreement is
2 just another example of the mayor following
3 rather than leading and caving to the
4 demands of the police and a fire unions
5 instead of negotiating on behalf of the
6 taxpayers."

7 Well, Councilman Gaughan, maybe if
8 Chris Doherty negotiated on the tax -- on
9 behalf of the taxpayers 14 years ago this
10 wouldn't have happened. The mayor did what
11 he had it do. It was a Supreme Court award.
12 This had to be paid by the city. We
13 couldn't keep paying \$100,000 in interest
14 every month. There was no negotiating. The
15 Supreme Court said we have to pay so I don't
16 know what your beef is with the mayor but
17 you are wrong. We couldn't keep paying
18 \$100,000 a month in interest.

19 Next, I brought it up last year, we
20 had the Sandone tire fire, Firefighter
21 Rivers saving three fellow firefighters, and
22 I thought he should get a proclamation and
23 so far nothing has been done. This man was
24 a hero. We have people brought in from a
25 church here and we had a proclamation. What

1 lives have they saved? Firefighter Rivers
2 to this day still has yet to get a
3 proclamation. He is a hero, he saved three
4 firefighters, if it wasn't for him those
5 firefighters would have lost their lives. I
6 think the city should give him a
7 proclamation.

8 Next thing, the Sewer Authority,
9 Councilman Rogan, you told me awhile back
10 that the city doesn't get any money from
11 that?

12 MR. ROGAN: No, we don't get any
13 revenue from the Sewer Authority.

14 MR. SPINDLER: Well, then how do
15 people keep coming to this podium and saying
16 it's an asset. An asset is something of
17 value. If we didn't get anything from it
18 how is anything of value to us? So if we
19 are going to get \$95 million and that will
20 get us out of distressed status, which we
21 have been under for 22 or 23 years I say go
22 for it.

23 And lastly, good news to read in the
24 paper and hear on the news that the
25 Steamtown Mall is continuing to make a

1 Dunmore, Pittston and Wilkes-Barre have
2 lengthy relamped with LEDs and lot of people
3 are concerned about the intensity of the
4 lights that had replaced the sodium lights
5 that had previously been in the
6 municipalities and they seem to have gone
7 about it with a one size fits all approach.
8 I believe they have only used something
9 along the lines of a 53 watt LED fixture and
10 it doesn't seem to adequately light the
11 larger arterial roads and leaves dark
12 patches mid-block in a lot of areas and they
13 haven't really concentrated on the beam
14 spread of the fixtures themselves, I was
15 wondering if you had any further information
16 on that from the entity interested in doing
17 the light projects?

18 MR. GAUGHAN: Yeah, that's actually
19 addressed in the proposal, they do take into
20 account that depending on what kind of lamp
21 you are looking at it lights the street
22 differently so they were going to take the
23 approach to look at whether you are talking
24 about a neighborhood or downtown if you want
25 to use different types of the lamps so that

1 is addressed in the proposal and I believe
2 our business administrator was just in our
3 caucus and they are having a meeting next
4 week to discuss matters like that, but that
5 is addressed. That is a good point.

6 MR. VALE: Very well.

7 MR. WECHSLER: Also, there is a
8 possibility that the lights maybe able to be
9 dimmed or controlled from a central
10 location. That was another part of the
11 proposal from last week as well.

12 MR. ROGAN: I asked that exact same
13 question that you brought up in last week's
14 caucus because I noticed that in some
15 surrounding cities, and especially one of my
16 concerns was also sometimes the streetlights
17 also light the sidewalks, it's not what they
18 are for, but, you know, just for safety
19 purposes that was also a concern that I had
20 as well.

21 MR. VALE: Very well. As far as
22 downtown is concerned, I have noticed that
23 there is no less than five different types
24 of luminaires that are currently in use, and
25 I'll use the courthouse, for instance. When

1 they did the renovations, "they" being the
2 commissioners several years ago, the square
3 side of the streets have a newer metal light
4 fixture with a historic lamp post, and the
5 perimeter on the outer line portion of the
6 streets I believe are posts that come from
7 the Scranton street railway, they used to be
8 parallel to one other and they had the
9 catenary overhead, I was wondering if they
10 could be reused or if you had new fixtures
11 in mind because there seems to be a lack of
12 cohesion in town.

13 MR. WECHSLER: The way they
14 understand it, I'm not sure who owns those
15 lights, but the lights standard and polls
16 that the city owns downtown the metal polls
17 are all going to be refurbished, but I'm not
18 sure if we own those or not or if the county
19 does.

20 MR. VALE: Okay, very well. Is the
21 meeting next week open to the public out of
22 curiosity?

23 MR. WECHSLER: I'm not sure.

24 MR. GAUGHAN: Oh, the meeting
25 between the administration and the company?

1 MR. VALE: Yes.

2 MR. GAUGHAN: No, I don't believe it
3 is.

4 MR. VALE: Okay. One other thing, I
5 know that sometime within the past year
6 there was some kind of mention, I know I
7 read it in the Scranton Times regarding the
8 exterior conditions of city hall itself, had
9 any progress been made on finding someone or
10 a firm or entity to take a closer look at
11 the building?

12 MR. WECHSLER: This is really one of
13 these things that as we progress with the
14 possible sale of the Scranton Sewer
15 Authority that will put us in a better
16 position. This whole building needs to be
17 done over so that's kind of what we are
18 looking at and using some of the proceeds
19 from the sale for that.

20 MR. VALE: Very well. In the event
21 you need a lead on a firm that handles
22 operations and such, I had some experience.
23 I spent a summer in Tennessee working with a
24 company, writing contracts and doing some
25 consulting regarding materials on the

1 exterior of high rise buildings and they
2 seem to specialize in things like this, they
3 have done a lot of work in cities like
4 Knoxville, Tennessee, Ashville and North
5 Carolina that have stocks of historic
6 buildings, and if you are interested I do
7 have material with me today that I could
8 leave with you gentlemen.

9 MR. EVANS: Thank you.

10 MR. WECHSLER: You can leave it with
11 Kathy. If you do come up with any questions
12 that you would like asked if you could get
13 them to us before the meeting if there is
14 anything that we can't answer we'll submit
15 it to the proposed firm and see if they
16 answer your question.

17 MR. VALE: Is there a specific
18 person or address that I should it attention
19 to?

20 MR. WECHSLER: You could address it
21 to City Clerk Lori Reed and Lori will get
22 them to us.

23 MR. VALE: Very well. Is there a
24 place I could drop it off during the day?

25 MR. WECHSLER: Second floor in the

1 office right here.

2 MR. VALE: Very well. Thank you,
3 Council. I appreciate it.

4 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you.

5 MR. MORGAN: Good evening, Council.
6 Lee Morgan. I'd just like to say first, for
7 the record, that I am opposed to 5-B and 5-C
8 and the reason for that is quite obvious,
9 the city itself has caused the blight in our
10 neighborhoods and I think to force the tax
11 burden on all of the rest of the taxpayers
12 is absolutely ridiculous and I really don't
13 know what anybody in their right mind is
14 going to come to this city because you can't
15 even sell houses here, so if you are going
16 to offer somebody three years of an
17 exemption on taxes to build a house here
18 they'd have to be out their mind for the
19 kind of rate they are paying for the taxes
20 here in the future.

21 But the thing I'd like to say here
22 today is, also, that I did a few more
23 Right-to-Knows, but I had an opportunity to
24 attend the North Scranton Neighborhood
25 Association the other day and I asked the

1 leadership of that group some questions and
2 I'm very troubled by the way the meeting was
3 run and, I don't know, it's been alleged
4 that spouses of city employees were there
5 and special interest was there and, you
6 know, it really wasn't the way a
7 neighborhood association meeting in my
8 opinion should be run. I asked them some
9 questions that had to do with the
10 neighborhood itself, but everything they
11 said was that everything was political
12 except the grant money they were looking for
13 and they had no real stand on anything that
14 was taking place in the city. It really is
15 troubling. So what I did was after he left
16 that meeting I started to form a new North
17 Scranton Neighborhood association. I think
18 I have that right as a resident to try to
19 create new neighborhood associations with
20 people who live in the city in try to put a
21 stop to the politics that's in play here
22 with these neighborhood associations.

23 I think it's really troubling
24 because it stifles any real change in the
25 city because you bring elected officials

1 there, former elected officials there, you
2 know, the chief of police, the chief of the
3 fire department basically, you know,
4 nonprofits there. Look it, you are not
5 getting any answers from them people. They
6 are protecting their own interest in my
7 opinion and they are entitled to do that.

8 But, you know the way the city has
9 been looted over an extended period of time
10 is the neighborhoods sat and really did very
11 little. I intend to go to -- well, I really
12 intend to reach out and tend to and I'm
13 going to reach out to every neighborhood
14 group, but I've got find a place for the new
15 group for the North Scranton Neighborhood
16 Association to meet because I have formed
17 that group already and I'm going form other
18 groups and it's not that I seek power but I
19 seek change and we just can't seem to get
20 any.

21 I mean, we just -- I respect things
22 that people say from this podium but, you
23 know, the Scranton Sewer Authority was put
24 therefore a reason, okay? It had to do with
25 the general welfare of the residents of this

1 city in regards to sanitation and it's
2 really the health and welfare of the
3 residents, and the ratepayers when the bonds
4 were floated paid all those bonds off, and
5 it's my opinion that even when the American
6 Anglican deal went down the ratepayers paid
7 those -- the monies that were owed to
8 American Anglican to escape that deal, and
9 as we look and we see what the city is going
10 to do with this money it's ridiculous.

11 Really. I mean, what benefit is that to the
12 ordinary Scrantonian, and when you look at
13 what the rates are going to be in the
14 future, and people talk about the general
15 state of the authority. Well, you kept
16 appointing political hacks to run it and,
17 you know, nothing against the employees, but
18 how many employees did the Scranton Sewer
19 Authority actually need to function and is
20 that payroll padded? And is everybody in
21 the city that is hooked up to the Scranton
22 Sewer Authority paying a fee? Even former
23 elected officials and people that are
24 connected? That's a great question to ask.

25 And I just think that when you tell

1 the residents of this city you are going to
2 sell an asset because you couldn't run it,
3 just like every other asset we seem to be
4 shedding ourselves of, whether it's the
5 parking meters or the parking garages or
6 everything else, that's not the resident's
7 fault, that's this councils's fault, and
8 when you look at where the pension fund is
9 didn't council have an oversight to make
10 sure that those funds were deposited in that
11 pension fund? And I thank you for your
12 time.

13 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you. Anyone
14 else?

15 MS. WATKINS: My name is Murph
16 Watkins and I'm a resident of Scranton and a
17 taxpayer and I live in the 2100 block of --
18 sorry, 2200 block of Wyoming Avenue, and I
19 was reading in the paper about the
20 streetlights, they are putting new
21 streetlights in, well, I have been there ten
22 years and they don't have one light on the
23 street, and the next block, the 2100 block,
24 also doesn't have any lights. It's so dark
25 over there. I have been trying for ten

1 years to get a light put in one, at least
2 one. People come to visit me, three people
3 fell coming out of my house on the sidewalk
4 because it's so dark even with my porch
5 light and my spotlight, but I'm hoping that
6 I could get something to -- somebody to help
7 me.

8 MR. GAUGHAN: There is actually a
9 process to request a streetlight, in fact,
10 we just went through it with the resident
11 over in Minooka. You have to, and we can
12 give you this document, you have to get your
13 neighbors to sign a petition and then you
14 have to present it to city council and then
15 we have to send correspondence to the city
16 engineer. He comes out, assesses the area
17 and then he will make a recommendation of
18 whether or not a streetlight is warranted,
19 which obviously from what you are telling us
20 it looks like there definitely is one.

21 MS. WATKINS: It's terrible. Well,
22 there is nobody across the street now,
23 people moved out and they've been out for
24 years. There is two people on the street,
25 me and my brother.

1 MR. GAUGHAN: Can you leave your
2 information with Kathy and I'll take you
3 through the process and we'll work with Mrs.
4 Red and our city engineer and we'll get you
5 -- try to help you.

6 MS. WATKINS: Thank you.

7 MR. GAUGHAN: You're welcome.

8 MS. SCHUMACHER: Good evening.
9 Marie Schumacher.

10 MR. GAUGHAN: Good evening.

11 MS. SCHUMACHER: In regard to
12 Seventh Order business, I don't believe you
13 should vote for 7-D until we find out how
14 that will be financed. Those liquid fuel
15 funds are the only way streets can get paved
16 outside of the low and moderate income areas
17 other than to have the utility tear your
18 street up or, you know, and so we are going
19 to have for as long as this goes on we are
20 going to have no money to pave or streets
21 and I think that is the wrong use of the
22 liquid fuels funds and I hope you would,
23 again, table it until we know whether that
24 can be accomplished.

25 On 7-A, I came in and bought a copy

1 of that and there is so many things a matter
2 with this. Some our -- some are just, I
3 guess, sort of sloppy. For instance, the
4 last thing says, "Any person who shall
5 violate any provisions of this exhibit may
6 be cited and fined pursuant to Section 9
7 above," but I couldn't find a Section 9
8 above any place.

9 The definitions are just so
10 confusing. I think we could do certainly a
11 better job, and I question the \$200 annual,
12 annual that is, registration fee. Remember,
13 for a fee you are supposed to providing some
14 kind of a service. I don't know --
15 hopefully this list won't even get used at
16 all, but why should it annual? This is just
17 a grab for money the way I see it. Think
18 the intent started off properly, but what
19 are you going to give these people for their
20 -- in return for that fee?

21 Also, I think -- I know that you can
22 go down, use the Prothonotary's website,
23 just go down on a daily basis and find out
24 when a lis pendens has been filed or any of
25 these other items so that's something that

1 could be done inhouse instead of spending
2 money we really don't have. So, again, he
3 think in the current way it's written is not
4 good.

5 And then next have any of you, if I
6 may ask, reviewed the asset purchase
7 agreement with the Scranton Sewer Authority?

8 MR. GAUGHAN: I requested it, but we
9 didn't receive a copy of it yet.

10 MS. SCHUMACHER: Okay. Well, I
11 would like to know, for example, before you
12 vote on this, serious -- does the 1.9
13 percent increase per year apply only to the
14 current customer and consumption charge
15 thereby allowing for the immediate
16 application of an additional buyers
17 prevailing wastewater tariff? What about
18 the clause that the buyer shall not propose
19 or implement a distribution improvement
20 system charge for the service area
21 wastewater customer before January 1, 2019?
22 Is this above the 1.9 percent ten-year cap?
23 And when you consider how the proceeds are
24 going to be spent there is also a section on
25 the ten-year -- it's called a variance

1 adjustment, after the ten-year period and I
2 believe the way it's read it appears that
3 it's something that might need an escrow
4 account because we may-- we as a seller may
5 owe them something and the buyer and the end
6 of the ten-year period, so I hope that you
7 all read it, I hope you have an attorney
8 read it, and be prepared to answer these
9 questions.

10 MR. GAUGHAN: Solicitor Minora can
11 answer this when you are done, I don't
12 believe we vote on the agreement, we will
13 just vote to dissolve the authority when
14 that decision --

15 MR. MINORA: That's correct. We do
16 not vote on the agreement.

17 MR. EVANS: But we should read it.

18 MR. WECHSLER: We are updating
19 ourselves on the details of the agreement,
20 but we don't have a voice in the agreement.
21 The agreement is between the Scranton Sewer
22 Authority --

23 MS. SCHUMACHER: If you are selling
24 a city asset --

25 MR. WECHSLER: We aren't. It's the

1 Scranton Sewer Authority being sold to
2 Pennsylvania -- they are voting to sell it.

3 MS. SCHUMACHER: The mayor said it's
4 the city who is selling it.

5 MR. EVANS: No, it's not.

6 MS. SCHUMACHER: I read it in the
7 paper, it's to be true.

8 MR. EVANS: No, that's false. It's
9 not true.

10 MS. SCHUMACHER: The other thing is
11 Section --

12 MR. WECHSLER: Mr. Lockwood would
13 like that to be true.

14 MS. SCHUMACHER: -- 708 of the asset
15 purchase agreement addresses the City's MS4
16 system, as I stated before. I would like to
17 see that schedule and know precisely what it
18 is we are signing up to with them and an
19 estimate of what we are going to be charged
20 in addition to our waste water.

21 MR. WECHSLER: We are also asking
22 that same question.

23 MS. SCHUMACHER: Well, let's get
24 some answers.

25 MR. WECHSLER: Like I said, we are

1 not the voting -- we are not voting on the
2 sale of the Sewer Authority.

3 MR. EVANS: We still want those
4 answers, I agree.

5 MR. WECHSLER: But council does not
6 have one -- doesn't have input on the sale
7 of the Sewer Authority. You don't have a
8 vote.

9 MS. SCHUMACHER: You can certainly
10 take a position and make that known to the
11 administration.

12 MR. EVANS: Yes, absolutely.

13 MR. WECHSLER: It's been ongoing.

14 MS. SCHUMACHER: I'll be back with
15 the rest next week, good Lord willing.

16 MR. WECHSLER: We hope he
17 cooperates.

18 MR. DOBRZYN: Good evening, Council.
19 Dave Dobrzyn, resident, some of my taxes
20 paid. This year it looks like I'm going to
21 have make payments because they keep going
22 up and up and up. Last week we passed a
23 bond issue and I'm a little lacking in
24 understanding here when we were pushing the
25 Sewer Authority sale we were told that that

1 was going to take care of the unions
2 settlement, and I agree they waited a long
3 time and I appreciate the fact that they
4 foregone \$20 million in punitive damages
5 which was largely precipitated by the state.
6 I thought when we voted for Mayor Courtright
7 that we would have a little labor peace and
8 someone seems to be getting awfully
9 cantankerous in pushing other things like
10 this bond issue. That's going to cost, as
11 Andy pointed out, \$60 million over years or
12 maybe 70 depending on the interest rate and
13 then there is all kinds of fees involved,
14 finder's fees and so forth. So then this
15 even gets worse and I feel I'm being lead
16 but not represented at times here.

17 Mayor Doherty, as per I talked to
18 people that were representing the union in
19 the work force and every time they arrived
20 at an agreement with Mayor Doherty he would
21 go back to PEL and they would say, "No way.
22 No way."

23 So basically the whole situation or
24 most of it was precipitated by the State of
25 Pennsylvania and our crummy economy, that

1 phony paper chase economy that we seem to
2 have.

3 And I'm really getting concerned
4 about the spending now with this streetlight
5 deal, I don't want to see a whole lot of --
6 I want to see the money spent to put us on a
7 level playing field with debt and not spent
8 on -- to me a ten-year warranty I bought
9 lifetime warrantee windows for my house and
10 the company changed hands and every time I
11 call up I get a sob story about how they
12 have to fix the other company's windows that
13 they bought out and agreed to honor the
14 warrantee and, I mean, in other words, my
15 warranty is worthy of use up in the bathroom
16 or something. I mean, it just isn't a
17 warranty and these companies can go out of
18 business, they can find hundreds of ways to
19 just sidestep their warrantees, so I'm
20 really, really concerned about going into
21 any additional spending.

22 I have a question on 7-C, I know a
23 lot of the people are for it, but I wonder
24 if we didn't spend similar money if we
25 couldn't have the pools fixed and that would

1 be something for everybody and there is one
2 way to look at that, you would have kids all
3 in the same place where they would be
4 watched that nothing is going on instead of
5 a handful of kids. When we had the swimming
6 up at Nay Aug Park with the taxpayers and
7 Andy and the Kids Swim Free, I mean, it was
8 apparent that they made more money that day
9 and it probably didn't -- still didn't pay
10 the wages of the staff but they made more
11 money that day when we brought those kids up
12 and we got a really sour attitude out of
13 there.

14 And, once again, I'd like to bring
15 up the smoking in parks. I feel like silly
16 defending cigarette smoking, but these
17 people -- everybody pays taxes, number one.
18 Number two, if we keep it to the
19 playgrounds, we keep to the pool, keep it
20 from the eating areas, that would be just
21 dynamite, I would be totally in support of
22 it, but if we are going to have
23 self-righteous, unprofessional people
24 running around yelling at somebody else
25 about smoking that's kind of off limits.

1 And one thing I'd like to say about
2 the litter in the park, I used to take my
3 doggy bag, I'll make it quick, and I
4 figured, well, I got this big doggy bag I'll
5 pick up some litter, be a good Boy Scout.
6 Well, one day I found a dirty diaper in the
7 one of the buggies up there at the mine
8 museum or the mine thing, the rail thing.
9 So, you know, some people should pull out
10 their own -- there is plenty of bottles,
11 cans, papers and dirty diapers in a bag in
12 the mine buggy. Thank you and have a good
13 night.

14 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you.

15 MS. FOSTER: Hello, Council. Karin
16 Foster, West Scranton/Hyde Park Neighborhood
17 Watch. First, I want to apologize for not
18 attending last meeting. Circumstances
19 beyond my control I wasn't able to attend,
20 but I did want to come to speak to the
21 public meeting that we hosted for the
22 Novembrino Park as well as the other parks
23 in our community center.

24 The attendance was approximately 40
25 people. The folks that were there were

1 individuals that lived in Jackson Terrace
2 and on 10th Avenue as well as other parts of
3 West Scranton. We did have an exit survey
4 for an interest of what the individuals
5 would like to have in the park and in our
6 community center and one of the items was
7 having somewhere for the children to have a
8 water recreation. So given the past history
9 prior to closing at Novembrino, the general
10 consensus was that having something that was
11 designated more towards a smaller age group
12 of children encouraging small families to
13 come would be the proper way to address that
14 property so to be able to control who is
15 coming in and out of their.

16 Now, a splash pad can cool off an
17 adult as well as a teenager, but there is
18 less opportunity for them to do mischief
19 with this type of format and as to we did
20 have a nice meeting with Dave Bulzoni, and
21 in the future of Novembrino Park as far as
22 how it was going to run.

23 And as many of know, we were the
24 recipients of a Scranton area park
25 collaborative that had our planting grants

1 last year in that study we found that our
2 organization felt that we had to take onus
3 of being able to provide programs in the
4 park with supervision, and although at the
5 time Novembrino was not under our auspices
6 because it was the Parks and Rec Department
7 we are willing to help advocate for
8 programming in the park and they did
9 indicate that they would help funding so
10 there is someone to be supervising at that
11 park through that time.

12 And if you would allow me, I just
13 wanted to share some other updates that are
14 happening within the next two to five years
15 for West Scranton. We have had a lot of
16 action happening at Washburn Street. 1621,
17 which is the former LA Lewis building that
18 we have purchased for a community center.
19 We are having a groundbreaking ceremony
20 tomorrow at 9 a.m., and this weekend we will
21 be having Army Reserve Unit 412, it's an
22 engineer company, and they are coming for
23 their community relations and training
24 weekend and what they will be doing for us
25 is the front end of the building had office

1 partitions and they will be basically
2 gutting it for us so that we have a clean
3 slate and doing some repair to subfloor so
4 if they -- they would love the public to
5 come and visit them so if you are around
6 over the weekend and want to stop in and
7 thank them for their good work we would
8 appreciate that.

9 Also, we have a contractor, KT Tire,
10 who has donated their services to prep and
11 paint the exterior of the building and we
12 will provide the paint and that should be
13 completed by May.

14 We also have a mural contest and
15 there is information both on neighborworks
16 website as well as our own, which is
17 HydeParkWatch.org for the application to
18 apply for a mural on the west end of the
19 building. The theme of the mural is what
20 makes West Side home. So if anyone is
21 interested, they can go to the sites and get
22 the RFP application.

23 Other things that are happening is
24 that we will be having a skateboard day camp
25 at the skate park this year and we will also

1 have a concert series, matinee performances,
2 two concerts a month rotating at Fellows,
3 Alan and Jackson Street Parks. The slate
4 has been set and we will posted very
5 shortly. The concerts will be from 2 to 4.

6 And those are the things that are
7 coming up as far as for West Scranton and I
8 would like to thank Mr. Wechsler for coming
9 to our public meeting.

10 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you.

11 MS. FOSTER: And just for the
12 record, our organization is non-political.
13 Always had been, always will be, but we will
14 reach out to our representatives to help our
15 community. Thank you.

16 MR. PERRY: Thank you.

17 MR. WECHSLER: Thanks, Karin.

18 Anyone else?

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

20 MOTIONS.

21 MR. WECHSLER: Mr. Perry?

22 MR. PERRY: I have no motions and I
23 will hold all my comments for the individual
24 legislation.

25 MR. WECHSLER: Mr. Rogan?

1 MR. ROGAN: Yes, just a couple of
2 very brief items, very positive items, too.
3 The first one is I'm sure most of you have
4 seen it reported in the Scranton Times that
5 the Steamtown Mall is doing very, very well
6 and one of the ideas that was floated around
7 on the social media for a few years, the
8 idea of a mall marketplace is actually
9 coming to fruition and I think we are all
10 very anxious to see that take place. The
11 owner of the mall, John Basalyga, certainly
12 deserves a ton of credit for doing a great
13 job thus far getting the mall from where
14 it's been to where it's going, but also a
15 lot of the credit belongs to the residents
16 of Scranton who have pushed and advocated
17 for the idea of a mall marketplace similar
18 to the Reading terminal in Philadelphia, and
19 I know for myself I am very anxious to see
20 that marketplace and I know my wife is even
21 more than me, she is the shopper of the
22 family, so we are definitely looking forward
23 to that.

24 The second piece of good news, and
25 this one flies a little bit under the radar

1 unless you read Bond Buyer, which is a
2 financial publication you would have missed
3 this one and the headline, this was from
4 March 31, the headline is "Scranton Eyes
5 Distressed City Exit After Waste Water
6 Sale." And it goes on about the potential
7 sale of the Sewer Authority, which if you
8 have been following council meetings, since
9 the first day I sat in this seat I have been
10 advocating for the sale of the Sewer
11 Authority in addition to the privatization
12 of the garbage refuse department.

13 The quote that I want to read is,
14 it's actually from the Auditor General. It
15 says, "In an interview of last week at
16 Widner University Commonwealth School of Law
17 conference in Harrisburg, State Auditor
18 General Eugene D. Pasquale said he saw signs
19 of progress in Scranton. They are taking
20 the issue very seriously and I think they
21 are in a better place than they were a year
22 ago he said."

23 So that is definitely something
24 that, you know, we could -- it's nice to
25 hear when somebody is in a higher position

1 such as a state auditor general who has been
2 very critical of the City's past practices
3 comes out and says that we are on the right
4 path and we are doing a good job. So with
5 that I will keep it very positive tonight
6 and that will be it. Thank you.

7 MR. WECHSLER: Mr. Evans?

8 MR. EVANS: Thank you. I'm going to
9 go down a different path for a change. I
10 got my garbage bill the other day and I have
11 to tell you I don't like opening the garbage
12 bill, not because there shouldn't be a fee,
13 but because we really don't know what the
14 true cost of the collection and disposal of
15 our garbage is and we don't know what the
16 fee should be set at if we don't know the
17 accurate cost. We have to continue to put
18 pressure on the administration for a
19 comprehensive study of the garbage
20 collection to finely get an accurate
21 accounting of what the costs for collection
22 really is as well as determining if a flat
23 fee is the correct way to charge for the
24 collection or a hybrid or even a per bag fee
25 might be the right way to go.

1 Additionally, since we have a
2 dedicated recycling coordinator now I would
3 like to see a report on how we can increase
4 not only commercial recycling but
5 residential recycling. I know this is only
6 an anecdotal and based on a cursory review
7 of some of the neighborhoods I have walked
8 through, but the eye test tells me what we
9 are probably collecting about 50 percent on
10 the residential recycling side. I hope
11 that's not true, but either way any increase
12 in recycling reduces landfill costs to the
13 city which in turn would reduce the cost of
14 the fee to property owners, but I since that
15 the current fee is based on the premise that
16 like so many other fees in the city where
17 few are paying more because of those that
18 don't pay at all. In this case, also
19 because of those that don't recycle.

20 This philosophy of charging less
21 property owners more through higher fees has
22 come a way of doing things for far too long.
23 It's the easy way and it has to stop. So if
24 it's okay with my colleagues, I would like
25 to ask Lori if she would send a letter to

1 the mayor's office asking when they will be
2 putting an RFP out for that disposal fee
3 study.

4 Secondly, on a positive side, as
5 Councilman Rogan noted, I'd like to comment
6 on the Scranton Public Market at Steamtown
7 Mall. First, I'd like to congratulate Mr.
8 Basalyga and his staff for his continuing
9 efforts to turn the mall around. The call
10 for an a public market was a classic
11 grassroots efforts by many citizens in this
12 city and they should be both congratulated
13 as well as Mr. Basalyga. He took their
14 suggestions, he did his due diligence on the
15 idea and came to the conclusion that it
16 would work and now he is doing it. That is
17 how a responsive and visionary business
18 owner is supposed to act.

19 I was also struck by a comment Mr.
20 Basalyga made in today's news article, I
21 don't even think about the negative, I only
22 see the good. That, my friends, is a
23 refreshing statement. That's all I have for
24 now. Thank you.

25 MR. WECHSLER: Mr. Gaughan.

1 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you. Just a
2 couple of comments. First of all, I believe
3 it was Mrs. Schumacher who mentioned that we
4 shouldn't go forward with the lighting
5 project because then we wouldn't have any
6 money to pave the streets. That's not true.
7 We will receive this year over \$2 million in
8 the liquid fuels allocation so if the money
9 from the streetlight project, if the lease
10 is \$400,000 and that comes out of liquid
11 fuels we will still have if the city decided
12 to go forward with another paving project we
13 will have the money to invest in upgrading
14 our streets and our infrastructure so I just
15 want to make that point because I have heard
16 that from other people if you are going to
17 fix the lights you should focus on fixing
18 the streets, I believe that we can do both.

19 Second of all, Mrs. Watkins, if are
20 you are going to stay towards the end of the
21 meeting I can get you that -- I was just
22 thinking about that as everybody else was
23 talking, I can get that you that petition
24 and get you started on that.

25 Mrs. Reed, if we can send something

1 down to the administration asking them if
2 they will publish the audit on the website.
3 Mrs. Hodowanitz is correct that I believe
4 this is important.

5 The comment on Mr. Evans' point
6 about the garbage fee, I do agree with him.
7 I hear more complaints about the \$300
8 garbage fee than almost anything else. I
9 actually have been going back and forth with
10 a gentleman from Massachusetts who was in
11 charge of the pay as you throw program and I
12 mentioned this I believe a month or two ago
13 and he actually ran some numbers and I'm
14 still reviewing them and I will share them
15 with my colleagues hopefully by next week
16 for a hybrid fee so you would pay a per bag
17 fee and then you would have a lower base
18 fee. So there is a lot of things we can do,
19 there are a number of the different
20 communities who approach trash in a
21 different way than the City of Scranton
22 does, so I do think that we need as a city
23 to look at it in a different way, to study
24 it and I agree with Mr. Evans that we need
25 to move forward on that in the next year or

1 so.

2 Also, I was very happy to hear that
3 the Mall at Steamtown will be opening the
4 Scranton Public Market by midsummer. This
5 is just another exciting development in the
6 resurgence of the mall and the area around
7 the mall and I think that Mr. Basalyga has
8 proven to be a great asset to the City of
9 Scranton and I'm sure that there will be
10 more exciting developments to come.

11 I would also ask Mrs. Reed if you
12 could send a letter to the mayor and our DPW
13 Director Gallagher asking for an update on
14 what the City's plan to deal with the MS4
15 permit requirements for storm water
16 management in the city. Mrs. Schumacher has
17 mentioned this, I have heard it from other
18 residents, this is something that is coming
19 down the pike very soon and it's something
20 that we have to face and it is going to be a
21 major issue so I would like also in the
22 letter to request a meeting with both
23 gentlemen so that we can discuss it, I can
24 get an update on where we are with the MS4
25 permit requirement and I can update -- give

1 an update to my colleagues.

2 Councilmen Wechsler mentioned in the
3 beginning of the meeting about the Scranton
4 half-marathon this Sunday, April 10. I
5 would just like to say that this is truly a
6 great event and represents everything that's
7 great about this city and I would urge
8 everyone to come out and support the city
9 and the runners this Sunday at 9:00 at
10 Scranton High School. And that is all I
11 have this week. Thank you.

12 MR. WECHSLER: Thank you,
13 Mr. Gaughan. Just to echo some of the
14 comments that have been made this evening,
15 first of all about the Scranton Marketplace,
16 I think the Scranton Marketplace the idea
17 was finally grasped by Mr. Basalyga when
18 they had the Christmas market -- in the old
19 Bon-Ton and also last Sunday I attended
20 another marketplace that was full of
21 shoppers and entrepreneurs that had a
22 vibrant energy to it and I'm so happy that
23 Mr. Basalyga is going to take this
24 opportunity to take these craftsmen and
25 other entrepreneurs into the Steamtown Mall,

1 I think it's an awesome idea.

2 And, also, on Friday night I
3 attended the First Night downtown, First
4 Friday, and once again it was just -- it's
5 an effort of people that don't come to city
6 council chambers, they don't -- the best I
7 can tell they are not really involved in
8 Scranton politics, but they are people that
9 love their city and they love the idea of
10 downtown Scranton being a vibrant place and
11 I would just like to congratulate all of
12 them and express my happiness that they are
13 down there.

14 And also one other comment about the
15 marketplace, when the Facebook group was
16 formed I'm sure all of us quickly looked and
17 became friends of that page and I actually
18 reached out to some of the organizers of
19 that and they graciously told me that we
20 didn't want politicians involved and I
21 thought that was a great idea. This was a
22 great grassroots organization and they
23 kindly told us when we need you will come
24 and get you so so far they haven't needed
25 us, but we would offer our support to

1 whatever Mr. Basalyga needs over there.

2 Just to touch on the garbage fee, I
3 got the friendly message in the mail
4 yesterday, also, and as Mr. Evans alluded to
5 there are a lot of people who do not pay
6 their garbage fee and we still are trying to
7 determine the information about what liens
8 -- where we are in the lien process with the
9 city. We contacted Treasurer Beck again
10 this week, he is in contact with City
11 Solicitor Shrive to see the status of the
12 liens which is a considerable amount of
13 money there for us possibly to recoup.
14 That's all I have for right now.

15 MS. REED: 5-B. FOR INTRODUCTION -
16 AN ORDINANCE - DEFINING AND AUTHORIZING TAX
17 EXEMPTIONS FROM REAL PROPERTY TAX IN ORDER
18 TO IMPROVE DETERIORATING REAL PROPERTY IN
19 CERTAIN AREAS IN THE CITY OF SCRANTON,
20 ESTABLISHING AN EXEMPTION SCHEDULE AND
21 PROCEDURES FOR OBTAINING EXEMPTIONS, AND
22 PROVIDING FOR NON-PERMISSIBLE EXEMPTIONS AND
23 LIMITING AMENDMENT THERETO.

24 MR. WECHSLER: At this time, I'll
25 entertain a motion that Item 5-B be

1 introduced into its proper committee.

2 MR. ROGAN: So moved.

3 MR. EVANS: Second.

4 MR. WECHSLER: On the question?

5 MR. ROGAN: On the question, I would
6 just like to thank Councilman Evans for his
7 work on this and also the mayor for
8 submitting the original legislation that
9 brought about some tax forgiveness for
10 people who build new homes in the City of
11 Scranton and especially a special thanks to
12 Councilman Evans who took that extra step to
13 make good legislation great so I'm very
14 hopeful that this will help spur some
15 economic development within the city.

16 MR. WECHSLER: I would just also
17 like to thank the work that council did on
18 this ordinance, and I also I would like to
19 thank the Scranton School District and
20 Lackawanna County for becoming partners with
21 us on this program. We contacted the school
22 district very earlier when this legislation
23 first came down to us, they were very
24 receptive becoming involved. We also
25 contacted Lackawanna County and they also

1 expressed their interest in working with us
2 so from my viewpoint a few weeks ago we had
3 a speaker say that the city doesn't invest
4 any money because we don't have any money so
5 we don't invest in anything, but this is the
6 type of investments that we can make. We
7 can wave taxes for three years and that's
8 our investment, and then when the project is
9 completed and the time has gone by these
10 properties would become part of the tax
11 rolls, and it does not cost us -- really it
12 does not cost us anything because I don't
13 think a lot of these projects would have
14 moved forward if this abatement program was
15 not in place.

16 MR. EVANS: On the question, the
17 legislation that we are introducing tonight
18 is calling for a three-year tax abatement
19 program for new construction in the city.
20 It is time to be proactive. It's time to
21 pro-growth. It's time to rethink how we do
22 business in the city. During the last eight
23 years, which happened to coincide with the
24 last financial collapse, there has been very
25 little new construction or growth in

1 Scranton, and we could stand by and watch
2 this pattern continue or we could step up
3 and do something about it. That is what
4 this program is about. Spurring economic
5 development, increasing residential and
6 commercial construction, increasing and
7 stabilizing our tax base for the future.

8 There is a long held business axiom,
9 if you don't grow you die. I have
10 repeatedly said we must grow ourselves out
11 of our longstanding financial situation. It
12 should not be beyond anyone's comprehension
13 that we can no longer tax our way out. If
14 this legislation doesn't increase growth at
15 the level needed then we tweak it, then we
16 change it or we come up with another idea or
17 another idea, but we can no longer sit by
18 and wait for others to act. It's on us.

19 With that said, I hope you will see
20 the city council continue to act and
21 continue to lead when necessary. The
22 dialogue with the school district and the
23 county on this tax abatement proposal
24 started with us as well as several vital
25 changes in addition to the legislation. It

1 is my hope that this is just the beginning
2 of even more initiatives that we will
3 promote real growth in our city, and I would
4 be remiss if I didn't thank the
5 administration because they responded to all
6 of our requests on this, got the legislation
7 back quickly and made changes and I
8 appreciate their efforts as well. That's
9 all I have for now.

10 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, on the question.
11 I will be voting to introduce both pieces of
12 legislation that deal with the tax
13 abatement. It's no secret, as Mr. Evans
14 mentioned, that Scranton, like many cities,
15 suffered from a housing market collapse a
16 few years ago. Along with rising taxes and
17 budget issues perspective homebuilders are
18 leery of the city, which is understandable.
19 In working with my colleagues in discussing
20 all of these issues, it was clear that we
21 needed to provide an incentive for residents
22 and businesses within the city. Tax
23 abatements can be tool to help stimulate
24 economic activity in the city. The tax
25 abatements will help encourage home

1 rehabilitation, new construction and
2 redevelopment in our business districts.
3 It's clear if you look at what other cities
4 have done that have participated in similar
5 programs that tax abatements can incentivize
6 home building and home improvement projects
7 that can then lead to increased construction
8 jobs and consumer spending and ease the tax
9 burden for homeowners, so that is why I will
10 be voting for both pieces of legislation.
11 Thank you.

12 MR. PERRY: Yeah, finally on the
13 question, a lot of fellow councilmen said
14 everything that I was about to say, but I
15 think that just really sets the stage for
16 how strongly we all feel about it and this
17 is absolutely the right thing going forward.
18 You know, legislation 5-B and C was created
19 to promote the growth of property tax within
20 the city by spurring new construction.
21 Instead of just raising the taxes on the few
22 time after time after time after time. We
23 need to begin to turn that tide around and
24 start making changes to grow our tax base
25 and I believe this legislation does that and

1 I believe the process of growing our way out
2 of what we are in starts with legislation
3 5-B and 5-C so I'll be obviously be
4 introducing this today. That's all I have.

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

7 MR. PERRY: Aye.

8 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

9 MR. EVANS: Aye.

10 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

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

13 MS. REED: 5-C. FOR INTRODUCTION -
14 AN ORDINANCE - DEFINING AND AUTHORIZING TAX
15 EXEMPTIONS FROM REAL PROPERTY TAX IN ORDER
16 TO STIMULATE RESIDENTIAL, COMMERCIAL AND
17 OTHER BUSINESS ACTIVITY IN CERTAIN AREAS IN
18 THE CITY OF SCRANTON, ESTABLISHING AN
19 EXEMPTION SCHEDULE AND PROCEDURES FOR
20 OBTAINING EXEMPTIONS, PROVIDING FOR
21 NON-PERMISSIBLE EXEMPTIONS AND LIMITING
22 AMENDMENT THERETO.

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

1 MR. ROGAN: So moved.

2 MR. EVANS: Second.

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

6 MR. PERRY: Aye.

7 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

8 MR. EVANS: Aye.

9 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

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

12 MS. REED: 5-D. FOR INTRODUCTION - A
13 RESOLUTION - APPOINTMENT OF MARIO
14 PARLOPIANO, 202 WILBUR STREET, SCRANTON,
15 PENNSYLVANIA, 18508, AS A MEMBER OF THE
16 MUNICIPAL INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
17 (MIDAS), EFFECTIVE MARCH 30, 2016. MR.
18 PARLOPIANO IS BEING APPOINTED TO A FOUR (4)
19 YEAR TERM THAT WILL EXPIRE ON MARCH 30,
20 2020.

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

24 MR. ROGAN: So moved.

25 MR. EVANS: Second.

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

4 MR. PERRY: Aye.

5 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

6 MR. EVANS: Aye.

7 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

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

10 MS. REED: 5-E. FOR INTRODUCTION -
11 A RESOLUTION - AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND
12 OTHER APPROPRIATE CITY OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE
13 AND ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT BY AND BETWEEN
14 THE UNIVERSITY OF SCRANTON AND THE CITY OF
15 SCRANTON PERTAINING TO THE MAINTENANCE OF IN
16 PAVEMENT LED CROSSWALK WARNING LIGHTS ON
17 MULBERRY STREET.

18 MR. WECHSLER: At this time, I'll
19 entertain a motion that Item 5-E be
20 introduced into its proper committee.

21 MR. ROGAN: So moved.

22 MR. GAUGHAN: Second.

23 MR. EVANS: Second.

24 MR. WECHSLER: On the question?

25 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, on the request.

1 This legislation just saying that the
2 University of Scranton will assume all
3 future maintenance costs of the LED
4 crosswalk warning lights at the intersection
5 of the Mulberry and Monroe, Mulberry and
6 Quincy and Mulberry and Hitchcock Court.

7 MR. WECHSLER: All those in favor of
8 introduction signify by saying aye.

9 MR. PERRY: Aye.

10 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

11 MR. EVANS: Aye.

12 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

13 MR. WECHSLER: Aye. Opposed? The
14 ayes have it and so moved.

15 MS. REED: 5-F. FOR INTRODUCTION -
16 A RESOLUTION - AUTHORIZING THE DIRECTOR OF
17 THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS OF THE CITY
18 OF SCRANTON TO SIGN AND SUBMIT THE
19 PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
20 ("PENNDOT") APPLICATION FOR TRAFFIC SIGNAL
21 APPROVAL FOR THE IN PAVEMENT LED CROSSWALK
22 WARNING LIGHTS THE UNIVERSITY OF SCRANTON
23 HAD INSTALLED AS PART OF THEIR STREETScape
24 PROJECT ALONG MULBERRY STREET.

25 MR. WECHSLER: At this time, I'll

1 entertain a motion that Item 5-F be
2 introduced into its proper committee.

3 MR. ROGAN: So moved.

4 MR. EVANS: Second.

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

8 MR. PERRY: Aye.

9 MR. ROGAN: Aye.

10 MR. EVANS: Aye.

11 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

12 MR. WECHSLER: Aye. Opposed? The
13 ayes have it and so moved.

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

16 SEVENTH ORDER. 7-A. FOR
17 CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMITTEE ON RULES -
18 FOR ADOPTION - FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO. 19,
19 2016 CREATING AN ABANDONED PROPERTY REGISTRY
20 AND PROVIDING FOR THE REGISTRATION OF
21 ABANDONED REAL PROPERTY IN THE CITY OF
22 SCRANTON.

23 MR. WECHSLER: As Chairperson for
24 the Committee on Rules, I recommend final
25 passage of Item 7-A.

1 MR. ROGAN: Second.

2 MR. WECHSLER: On the question?

3 MR. ROGAN: Yes, I'd just like to
4 mention one item, there was a question
5 brought up about this and say, well, these
6 people are paying this, this fee is paid by
7 banks that owned foreclosed properties
8 within the City of Scranton. No Scranton
9 residents will be paying in fee and the goal
10 is to register the properties so there is a
11 database where we know when there is an
12 issue with the foreclosed properties, which
13 bank to contact to address that problem.

14 And as I mentioned last week, this
15 is another one of those items where a good
16 idea came and it was made better and
17 Councilman Evans and myself are continuing
18 to work with an outside group to develop a
19 grant program for first time homebuyers to
20 use the revenue generated from the
21 foreclosed properties to help first time
22 homebuyers to kind of bring it full circle.

23 MR. GAUGHAN: On the request, I'll
24 be voting "yes" for the final passage of
25 this legislation. I think this program will

1 be a major tool that the city can use to
2 fight against blight in our neighborhoods.
3 One of the most consistent complaints I have
4 gotten since being on council is about
5 vacant, abandoned foreclosed homes that fall
6 into disrepair. These homes cause headaches
7 for neighbors and it seems like there is at
8 least one in every neighborhood that all of
9 the neighbors talk about. High grass,
10 broken windows, rodents, unshoveled snow and
11 sidewalks are just some of the issues that
12 these neighbors have to deal with. The
13 problem is that it's almost impossible to
14 find someone that's responsible to maintain
15 the property while it's foreclosed.
16 Unmaintained foreclosed properties bring
17 down the value of the surrounding properties
18 and the morale of the neighborhood. This
19 program will increase the accountability of
20 the lending institution which temporarily
21 owns the property or keeping it up to code
22 until it is sold to a new owner. So.

23 I'll be voting for this, I think
24 it's going to be a great tool and I can't
25 wait to see it in action. Thank you.

1 MR. WECHSLER: Roll call, please?

2 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Perry.

3 MR. PERRY: Yes.

4 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

5 MR. ROGAN: Yes.

6 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

7 MR. EVANS: Yes.

8 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

9 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

10 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

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

14 MS. REED: 7-B. FOR CONSIDERATION
15 BY THE COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT -
16 FOR ADOPTION - FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO. 20,
17 2016 - CREATING AND ESTABLISHING A NEW BANK
18 ACCOUNT FOR THE CITY OF SCRANTON'S OFFICE OF
19 ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ("OECD")
20 TITLED EDA SEQUESTERED FUNDS AWARD
21 #013903140 ACCOUNT NO. 20A0101 FOR THE
22 DEPOSIT OF SEQUESTERED FUNDS AS REQUIRED BY
23 THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, ECONOMIC
24 DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION (EDA).

25 MR. WECHSLER: What is the

1 recommendation of the Chairperson for the
2 Committee on Community Development?

3 MR. ROGAN: As Chairperson for the
4 Committee on Community Development, I
5 recommend final passage of Item 7-B.

6 MR. EVANS: Second.

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

9 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Perry.

10 MR. PERRY: Yes.

11 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

12 MR. ROGAN: Yes.

13 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

14 MR. EVANS: Yes.

15 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

16 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

17 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

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

21 MS. REED: 7-C. FOR CONSIDERATION BY
22 THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS - FOR ADOPTION
23 - RESOLUTION NO. 19, 2016 - AUTHORIZING THE
24 MAYOR AND OTHER APPROPRIATE CITY OFFICIALS
25 TO EXECUTE AND APPLY FOR A GRANT THROUGH THE

1 COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, DEPARTMENT OF
2 CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES (DCNR) IN
3 THE AMOUNT OF \$295,035.00; IF THE
4 APPLICATION IS SUCCESSFUL, ACCEPTING AND
5 DISBURSING THE GRANT FUNDS FOR NOVEMBRINO
6 PARK REHABILITATION IN THE CITY OF SCRANTON.

7 MR. WECHSLER: What is the
8 recommendation of the Chairperson for the
9 Committee on Public Works?

10 MR. GAUGHAN: As Chairperson for the
11 Committee on Public Works, I recommend final
12 passage of Item 7-C.

13 MR. ROGAN: Second.

14 MR. WECHSLER: On the question?

15 MR. ROGAN: I'd just like to again
16 express my support for this project, as a
17 West sider and somebody who swam in this
18 pool as a kid, seeing it in disrepair and
19 driving by really breaks your heart.
20 Hopefully we will receive this grant and
21 with help with neighborhood organizations
22 like the neighborhood watch and everyone
23 coming together there will be a place for
24 young kids to cool off in the summer again.
25 And as I mentioned before, I think it could

1 really tie in with the Oxy and have an
2 entire recreational complex in West Scranton
3 that will be a gem of the city.

4 And, also, I know one of the
5 speakers mentioned about the neighborhood
6 groups, we have great neighborhood groups in
7 the city. I don't get to the meetings as
8 much as I would like because of my work
9 schedule but I know they are doing a great
10 job and they are out there working very hard
11 and I know, for instance, in the West
12 Scranton neighborhood there has never been
13 any politics involved, it's just been about
14 helping the community and there is certainly
15 a lot that needs to be done and this is a --
16 at least for my neighborhood in West Side
17 this is a great project.

18 MR. GAUGHAN: On the question, I
19 would agree that this is an outstanding
20 project. I hope that the city is awarded
21 these funds to complete the improvements to
22 Novembrino park. The improvement of this
23 park will revitalize this area of West Side,
24 raise surrounding property values and a
25 provide a place where children can play in a

1 safe and clean environment. Thank you.

2 MR. PERRY: Yes, on the question,
3 what else can we say? This has been a long
4 time coming for the Novembrino park and I
5 like, the rest of my council members, hope
6 this goes through and this is going to bring
7 West Side years if not decades and decades
8 of enjoyment for the citizens and the
9 children mostly to have a fun place to go
10 and they are going to be able to enjoy their
11 summers so, obviously, this is going to be a
12 "yes" vote for me.

13 MR. WECHSLER: I would like to thank
14 Karin Foster for her group putting the
15 information session on, that was really a
16 well-attended meeting because there was some
17 serious concerns about the future of
18 Novembrino pool, and as my colleagues said,
19 it is going to be a very nice improvement to
20 that neighborhood, and it is a good example
21 of what neighborhood associations do. I do
22 attend a lot of the meetings and most of
23 most people aren't interested in glory for
24 themselves or glory for the city, they are
25 only interested in protecting their

1 neighborhoods. They take time out of their
2 busy schedules to attend monthly meetings
3 and most of the events that the neighborhood
4 associations do are for the benefit of the
5 children and they are not political and
6 neighborhood groups should not be political,
7 but I do congratulate and thank them all for
8 everything that they do.

9 MR. EVANS: On the question, I will
10 actually piggyback on what Councilman
11 Wechsler said, this is an important part of
12 this. It was actually another grassroots
13 effort, another effort by the neighborhood
14 association and the neighbors and the city
15 listened to what they wanted and this is the
16 result and when you do that good things
17 happen so I fully endorse this project.

18 MR. WECHSLER: Roll call, please?

19 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Perry.

20 MR. PERRY: Yes.

21 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

22 MR. ROGAN: Yes.

23 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

24 MR. EVANS: Yes.

25 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

1 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

2 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

3 MR. WECHSLER: Yes. I hereby
4 declare Item 7-C legally and lawfully
5 adopted.

6 MS. REED: 7-D - PREVIOUSLY TABLED -
7 FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC
8 WORKS - FOR ADOPTION - RESOLUTION NO. 13,
9 2016 - AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND OTHER
10 APPROPRIATE CITY OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE AND
11 ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH THE EFFICIENCY
12 NETWORK, INCORPORATED, AS ENERGY SERVICES
13 COMPANY FOR THE CITY OF SCRANTON STREET
14 LIGHTING IMPROVEMENT PROJECT.

15 MR. WECHSLER: What is the
16 recommendation of the Chairperson for the
17 Committee on Public Works?

18 MR. GAUGHAN: As Chairperson for the
19 Committee on Public Works, I recommend final
20 passage of Item 7-D.

21 MR. ROGAN: Second.

22 MR. WECHSLER: On the question?

23 MR. PERRY: Yes, on the question.
24 As Chairperson of Public Safety, I'm elated,
25 illuminated, if you will, all lights in the

1 city after this is rolled out will be
2 operational. You know, when was the last
3 time that we can say there was not a
4 streetlight out in the City of Scranton. I
5 know we had that lady here today that said
6 it was dark, was it the 21 or 2200 block of
7 -- which street were you at?

8 MS. WATKINS: There is six polls,
9 not one light on this them.

10 MR. PERRY: That's right. And, you
11 know, that's not going to happen, but we are
12 going to take care of all of those issues
13 when this is over. The other thing that I'm
14 excited about is that these streetlights are
15 going to be self-reporting now when there is
16 an outage so there is not going to be an
17 need to call or e-mail city hall or inform
18 us when there is a streetlight out because
19 when that streetlight fails or goes dark or
20 burns out it is just going to -- it's just
21 going to report right to a central location
22 and we can dispatch them out and have that
23 taken care of and that's something that I
24 also think is a big part of this roll out.
25 That's all.

1 MR. WECHSLER: Anyone else?

2 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes, on the question,
3 I will be voting "yes" for this legislation
4 tonight for a number of different reasons.
5 First, and I believe most importantly, this
6 lighting project will save the city roughly
7 \$400,000 annually in energy and maintenance
8 costs. Since the city is contracting with
9 an energy savings company these savings will
10 be guaranteed. Over the past 20 years, we
11 have seen the cost of illuminating the city
12 rise continually. The cost associated with
13 maintaining the fixtures and lamp
14 replacement has also increased. This
15 project allows us not only to save a
16 substantial amount of money, but also helps
17 our environment by reducing carbon
18 emissions.

19 The financing of this project is
20 also positive because it will have no impact
21 on the general fund. We will be using a
22 portion of our liquid fuels allocation to
23 pay back the costs over a period of time.
24 With the savings from energy and maintenance
25 costs, this project almost pays for itself.

1 Aside the economic benefit,
2 conversion to LED lighting will allow for a
3 noticeable increase in lighting levels on
4 all city streets which will improve
5 visibility for drivers and pedestrians and
6 provide a clean, more inviting landscape for
7 our residents and our visitors. Increased
8 lighting will also have a major impact on
9 public safety. Increasing lighting levels
10 has been proven to decrease crime in cities
11 across the United States. A review by the
12 Campbell Collaboration of 13 studies of
13 street lighting interventions in the United
14 States spanning four decades finds that
15 crime decreased by 21 percent in areas that
16 experience street lighting improvements
17 compared to similar areas that did not.

18 This project, in my opinion, is a
19 major step in addressing our aging
20 infrastructure, saving money on energy and
21 maintenance and making our community an
22 inviting, safe place to live. Thank you.

23 MR. ROGAN: I certainly agree with
24 my colleagues regarding the project and the
25 benefits, my concern I think has also been

1 raised by other members of council isn't so
2 much with the project but with the company
3 that was selected and for that reason I will
4 be voting against this contract.

5 MR. WECHSLER: The fact that we are
6 voting on this contract I think does
7 illustrate one point though is we are going
8 to have be very proactive when this project
9 begins because we are hearing some concerns
10 about residents in terms of what type of
11 lighting and how bright or, you know, what
12 kind of lighting is provided, so I was very
13 optimistic last week during the
14 presentation, it seemed to me that the
15 company was going to be very responsive to
16 that participation of the community and what
17 type in terms of what type of lights, their
18 brightness and their locations so I am quite
19 optimistic that this is going to be a true
20 benefit for the city and also some of the
21 programs that are a possibility once the
22 lighting project is in place, and also are
23 going to offer Scranton an opportunity to
24 become a little bit more modern city. Roll
25 call, please?

1 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Perry.

2 MR. PERRY: Yes.

3 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

4 MR. ROGAN: No.

5 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

6 MR. EVANS: Yes.

7 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

8 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

9 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

10 MR. WECHSLER: Yes. I hereby
11 declare Item 7-D legally and lawfully
12 adopted.

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

15 MR. ROGAN: Motion to adjourn.

16 MR. WECHSLER: This meeting is
17 adjourned.

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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

CATHENE S. NARDOZZI, RPR
OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER