

SCRANTON CITY COUNCIL MEETING

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HELD:

Monday, February 5, 2018

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:

PATRICK ROGAN, PRESIDENT

TIM PERRY, VICE PRESIDENT  
(Not present)

WAYNE EVANS

WILLIAM GAUGHAN

KYLE DONAHUE

LORI REED, CITY CLERK

KATHY CARRERA, ASSISTANT CITY CLERK

AMIL MINORA, ESQUIRE - SOLICITOR

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

3 MR. ROGAN: Roll call, please.

4 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Perry. Mr.  
5 Donahue.

6 MR. DONAHUE: Here.

7 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

8 MR. EVANS: Here.

9 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

10 MR. GAUGHAN: Here.

11 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

12 MR. ROGAN: Here. Please let the  
13 record reflect that I did talk to Mr. Perry  
14 earlier. He is unable to attend tonight's  
15 meeting. Please dispense with the reading  
16 of the minutes.

17 MS. REED: THIRD ORDER. 3-A.  
18 MINUTES OF THE SCRANTON LACKAWANNA HEALTH &  
19 WELFARE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD OCTOBER 19,  
20 2017.

21 MR. ROGAN: Are there any comments?  
22 If not, received and filed. Do any council  
23 members have announcements at this time? I  
24 have just one. I did receive -- I was  
25 copies on letter from Mayor Courtright to

1 Governor Wolf asking the governor to look  
2 into naming Scranton as one of the zones for  
3 the economic opportunity -- an economic  
4 opportunities zone. This is part of the  
5 Federal Tax Cut and Jobs Act that passed  
6 last year in Washington. I will talk about  
7 this program a little bit more under  
8 motions, but I did want to mention it. This  
9 was -- I was copied on this last week and  
10 the mayor has sent correspondence to the  
11 state looking for this designation so it  
12 sounds like it would be a good program and  
13 definitely something good for the city.  
14 Anyone else?

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

17 (The following speakers offered  
18 public comment: BOB SHERIDAN. MARY ELLEN  
19 GARIGO. CAROL OSEWEGO. JOAN HODOWANITZ.  
20 Dave DOBRZYN. MARIE SCHUMACHER.)

21 MS. REED: FIFTH ORDER. 5-A.  
22 MOTIONS.

23 MR. ROGAN: Mr. Donahue, any motions  
24 or comments?

25 MR. DONAHUE: The only comments I

1           have tonight is that we are continuing to  
2           work with the school district to figure out  
3           how we are going to actually set up the  
4           shared services and I think that the main  
5           goal is to get everyone in a room to  
6           actually sit down and start talking about  
7           this, but besides that that's the only thing  
8           I have this evening.

9                       MR. ROGAN: Mr. Evans, any motions  
10           or comments?

11                      MR. EVANS: Very briefly. I want to  
12           comment on the public caucus, while we all  
13           appreciate the investment the utility  
14           companies invest in our infrastructure  
15           structure, we need the streets, we need the  
16           utilities to appreciate the frustration of  
17           our citizens as to what is happening on the  
18           surface of the streets and the neighborhoods  
19           so hopefully this is the beginning of a  
20           dialogue that we haven't before with  
21           utilities and the neighbors. They need to  
22           step up their game, they did a little bit  
23           tonight, but hopefully that will happen  
24           very, very soon.

25                      And my last comment is

1           congratulations to the Philadelphia Eagles,  
2           the 2018 Super Bowl champions. Go Eagles.

3           MR. ROGAN: Mr. Gaughan, any motions  
4           or comments?

5           MR. GAUGHAN: Yes. I received  
6           several complaints about a property in the  
7           800 block of Pittston Avenue, a storefront  
8           property. That backyard is filled with  
9           garbage and other debris. Residents have  
10          called several times about this property and  
11          nothing has been done to date so I did ask  
12          Mrs. Reed to look into that with the  
13          Licensing and Inspections Department.

14          Also, a property on Church Avenue.  
15          Residents are concerned about water pooling  
16          on the sidewalk when it rains. Neighbors  
17          are concerned that the catch basin is higher  
18          than the lowest point in the road so we did  
19          reach out to DPW on that.

20          Also, some concerns about the  
21          intersection of South Washington Avenue and  
22          Birch Street.

23          And my last comment is about the  
24          public caucus that we had tonight. You  
25          know, the first thing I'd like to say is

1           that I think it's clear with this specific  
2           project, not with, you know, they are  
3           starting to do in the future, but the  
4           notification system is shoddy at best. You  
5           know, having somebody go around and knocking  
6           on the door and somebody is not there and  
7           just leave a letter on the porch that's not  
8           good enough when you have these big Bobcats  
9           and you are drilling trenches in people's  
10          yards and that's not enough.

11                        I think if the utility company  
12          should -- especially with the neighbors who  
13          are here tonight, should personally sit down  
14          in their homes with them and explain the  
15          project. You know, this woman that is here  
16          tonight, and this gentleman, can't even get  
17          had their driveway. So it doesn't seem that  
18          there is enough concern on the part of the  
19          utility companies with the, you know,  
20          degradation of the quality of life for these  
21          residents and, you know, no regard really  
22          for the people that live in that area.

23                        I also think that these residents,  
24          especially the woman that got up, should be  
25          compensated monetarily for the issues that

1           they have to go through. I understand the  
2           project has to be done, but I wouldn't want  
3           to live there, you wouldn't want to live  
4           there, anybody up here wouldn't want to live  
5           there. So there has to be something else  
6           whether it's a reduction in taxes or, you  
7           know, Mr. Hoover from the water company said  
8           that they spent, I don't know 15 or 16  
9           million dollars and then they had a couple  
10          of extra dollars to spend, they told them to  
11          spend more money, how about giving some of  
12          that money to the residents here that's  
13          effected by that. So they are doing  
14          something but they are not doing enough. So  
15          I will look forward to meeting with you and  
16          going out and taking a tour of the site.  
17          And that's all I have tonight. Thank you.

18                   MR. ROGAN: Thank you. Just  
19                   following up on those comments regarding our  
20                   public caucus, I would like to thank  
21                   everyone that did attend the caucus from the  
22                   neighborhoods, and I do want to apologize to  
23                   Mr. Sheridan and his association for not  
24                   getting the invite. Thank you for coming  
25                   and glad to you have you at the table



1           tonight.

2                         It's a very frustrating situation  
3           because, obviously, everyone knows that  
4           these water lines have to be done to deliver  
5           water to our city, there is no question, but  
6           the communication between utilities company  
7           and the residents needs to be much better.  
8           You know, as Councilman Gaughan mentioned,  
9           some of the items that were mentioned to us  
10          on how people are notified certainly isn't  
11          acceptable and the cost of sending a letter  
12          or doing an automated phone call to  
13          residents is minimal. That's very the very  
14          least that these utilities should be doing  
15          well in advance of the projects, not days  
16          before, I'm talking months prior.

17                        And I also agree that going out into  
18          the neighborhood associations is the right  
19          place for these meetings because, you know,  
20          each neighborhood in Scranton is effected  
21          differently by utility work. Just last  
22          year, last winter, my neighborhood was cut  
23          up the entire winter. You probably heard me  
24          complain about it at council meetings a  
25          number of time, by a utility, all winter.

1 That effected west side. This project is  
2 effecting South Side. So I think it would  
3 be wise for the utility companies to take  
4 these type of meetings right into those  
5 neighborhoods, into the neighborhood  
6 associations and just do an automated call  
7 to let people know that the meeting is going  
8 on and to invite them to the meeting. I  
9 think that will help alleviate a lot of  
10 these problems if communication is made  
11 better.

12 One other item that I wanted to  
13 mention, I did mention this as an  
14 announcement, my Courtright did send a  
15 letter on February 2 to Governor Wolf asking  
16 that Scranton becomes part of the EOZ  
17 program, which is the economic opportunities  
18 zone. This was part of the Federal Tax Cut  
19 and Jobs Act that passed just last year by  
20 President Trump in Washington. I'm not  
21 going to go into a ton of detail on the  
22 program, but the goal is, and this is right  
23 from the mayor's letter, "We are interested  
24 in working with you to think through the  
25 possibilities presented in the investment

1 side of the program, and our reading of the  
2 program the opportunity funds invested in  
3 the EOZ could be tailored towards particular  
4 policy goals. For example, an opportunity  
5 fund that invests in advanced manufacturing,  
6 infrastructure or women and/or  
7 minority-owned businesses in Pennsylvania."

8 This is a program that until  
9 discussing it with the mayor over the last  
10 few weeks was very little known, and in  
11 doing some research the New York Times did a  
12 very good article on this, for anyone who is  
13 interested, the headline is "Tucked Into the  
14 Tax Bill a Plan to Help Distressed America."  
15 And it goes onto say, "A little notice  
16 section in the 1.5 trillion tax cut that  
17 President Trump signed into law late last  
18 month is drawing attention to many venture  
19 capitalists, state government and mayors all  
20 across America."

21 The core to this program is  
22 providing tax breaks to those who invest  
23 within certain parts of these communities.  
24 Now, the communities have to be selected by  
25 the state so it is up to Governor Wolf to

1           decide whether Scranton can anticipate in  
2           this tax incentive or not.   Sense Scranton  
3           has not received a CRIZ designation as of  
4           yet, I think this is something that we all  
5           should get behind and it really is a true  
6           public private partnership leveraging those  
7           dollars to try and help create economic  
8           development within our city and particularly  
9           within the distressed neighborhoods.

10                        So this is something I will  
11           hopefully be talking about more in the  
12           coming weeks, but it sounds to be a very  
13           good idea and something in the tax bill that  
14           I think very few of use knew about.   That is  
15           all.

16                        MS. REED:   5-B. FOR INTRODUCTION – A  
17           RESOLUTION – A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF A  
18           CITIZENS COMMISSION FOR LEGISLATIVE AND  
19           CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING.

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

23                        MR. EVANS:   So moved.

24                        MR. DONAHUE:   Second.

25                        MR. ROGAN:   On the question?

1 MR. EVANS: On the question, anyone  
2 who has followed my comments these past  
3 several years will realize that I have been  
4 a major proponent of reform in/PH  
5 Harrisburg, that is why I most definitely am  
6 opposed to the practice of gerrymandering  
7 and supportive of an independent initiative  
8 to look at this issue, but I also view this  
9 as part of a larger conversation and real  
10 reform in Harrisburg, but if I could I'd  
11 like to take a brief minute to discuss  
12 reforms that I think also are important on  
13 this just to get some of them out there and  
14 get real reform in Harrisburg.

15 Number one, reduce the size of the  
16 state legislature. Two, eliminate  
17 gerrymandering. Three, institute term  
18 limits for the State Senate and State House.  
19 Four, offer real municipal pension reform.  
20 Five, address the taxing discrepancy with  
21 cities like ours that have an overabundance  
22 of nonprofit properties. And, six, either  
23 mandate reassessments or help pay for them  
24 or both or change the rules and allow for  
25 progressive rolling reassessments, a

1 strategy that is used statewide in many  
2 other states outside of Pennsylvania.  
3 That's six ideas in 60 seconds.

4 But I also know that government can  
5 only expect a change to occur at a glacial  
6 pace and not at the pace that all of us can  
7 see it happen in, but tonight I think we  
8 have an opportunity to address at least one  
9 of those issues I mentioned, an issue that  
10 as time has come should be consistent with  
11 the resolutions intent, so I would like to  
12 offer the following friendly amendment that  
13 would make another statement on where we  
14 stand on reform in Harrisburg.

15 Paragraph six in the resolution  
16 reads: Now, therefore, be it resolved that  
17 Scranton City Council does hereby support  
18 legislative efforts to amend the  
19 Pennsylvania constitution to assign the  
20 decennial task of both legislative and  
21 congressional redistrict to Independent  
22 Citizens Redistricting Commission. That's  
23 easy to say.

24 At this point, I would like to add  
25 the following, and that Scranton City

1 Council also hereby support legislative  
2 efforts to amend the Pennsylvania  
3 constitution to reduce the size and number  
4 of state representatives and the state house  
5 from 203 members to 151 members. Is there a  
6 second?

7 MR. DONAHUE: Second.

8 MR. ROGAN: On the question? This  
9 vote is on the amendment. I would agree  
10 with what Councilman Evans just mentioned,  
11 and, obviously, gerrymandering is a problem  
12 but this is another issues that are facing  
13 the state and I think term limits and I  
14 believe most of local representatives have  
15 signed on in favor of -- not of term limits  
16 but of reducing the size of the state  
17 legislature and I think term limits are  
18 appropriate as well, so I certainly will  
19 support the amendment.

20 MR. DONAHUE: On the question,  
21 Wayne, I believe there is a bill that's  
22 currently in front of the state legislature  
23 that needs to be passed through a second  
24 session for a constitutional amendment so  
25 would we be able to include that bill in

1           that bill number into the resolution because  
2           I believe do we have a -- is there -- I  
3           thought I saw, there is something in our  
4           current resolution about that.

5                   MR. EVANS: That references that?

6                   MR. DONAHUE: That references the  
7           gerrymandering resolution.

8                   MR. EVANS: Yeah. Yeah, we can do  
9           that. We can do that after the fact if you  
10          want.

11                   MR. DONAHUE: Okay, well, I just  
12          have it here. I know it's House Bill 153.

13                   MR. EVANS: All right, well, we can  
14          add that language to the amendment. HB  
15          what?

16                   MR. DONAHUE: 153.

17                   MR. EVANS: 153.

18                   MR. DONAHUE: And that's the  
19          constitutional amendment to decrease the  
20          size of the legislature.

21                   MR. EVANS: We could make it after  
22          the state house from 203 members to 153  
23          members per HB --

24                   MR. DONAHUE: 153.

25                   MR. EVANS: 153.



1 MR. ROGAN: Anyone else on the  
2 question on the amendment? All those in  
3 favor signify by saying aye.

4 MR. DONAHUE: Aye.

5 MR. EVANS: Aye.

6 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

7 MR. ROGAN: Aye. Opposed? The ayes  
8 have it and so moved. So at this time I'll  
9 entertain that Item 5-B, as amended, be  
10 introduced into it's proper committee.

11 MR. EVANS: So moved.

12 MR. DONAHUE: Second.

13 MR. ROGAN: On the question? All  
14 those in favor of introduction signify by  
15 saying aye?

16 MR. DONAHUE: Aye.

17 MR. EVANS: Aye.

18 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

19 MR. ROGAN: Aye. Opposed? The ayes  
20 have it and so moved.

21 MS. REED: SIXTH ORDER. 6-A.  
22 READING BY TITLE - FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO.  
23 2, 2018 - AN ORDINANCE - AMENDING FILE OF  
24 THE COUNCIL NO. 58, 2016, (AS AMENDED)  
25 ENTITLED "ESTABLISHING A REGISTRATION

1 PROGRAM FOR RESIDENTIAL RENTAL PROPERTIES;  
2 REQUIRING ALL OWNERS OF RESIDENTIAL RENTAL  
3 PROPERTIES TO DESIGNATE A PROPERTY MANAGER  
4 FOR SERVICE OF PROCESS AND PRESCRIBING  
5 DUTIES OF OWNERS, PROPERTY MANAGERS AND  
6 OCCUPANTS" BY AMENDING SECTION 3.  
7 DEFINITIONS, TENANT, TO ADD A DEFINITION  
8 UNDER THE LETTER (H).

9 MR. ROGAN: You've heard reading by  
10 title of Item 6-A, what is your pleasure?

11 MR. EVANS: I move that Item 6-A  
12 pass reading by title.

13 MR. DONAHUE: Second.

14 MR. ROGAN: On the question? All  
15 those in favor signify by saying aye.

16 MR. DONAHUE: Aye.

17 MR. EVANS: Aye.

18 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye.

19 MR. ROGAN: Aye. Opposed? The ayes  
20 have it and so moved.

21 MS. REED: SEVENTH ORDER. 7-A. FOR  
22 CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE -  
23 FOR ADOPTION - FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO. 1,  
24 2018 - CREATING AND ESTABLISHING SPECIAL  
25 CITY ACCOUNT NO. 02.229624 ENTITLED

1 "CONTRACT FOR RECOVERY PROGRAM" FOR THE  
2 RECEIPT AND DISTRIBUTION OF GRANT FUNDS FROM  
3 NEPA HEALTH CARE FOUNDATION AND ANY  
4 ADDITIONAL GRANT FUNDS APPLIED FOR AND  
5 RECEIVED THAT WOULD ALLOW THE SCRANTON  
6 POLICE DEPARTMENT TO IMPLEMENT AN EFFECTIVE  
7 PROGRAM IN THE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE TO  
8 DRUG OVERDOSE DEATHS.

9 MR. ROGAN: What is the  
10 recommendation of the Chair for the  
11 Committee on Finance?

12 MR. EVANS: As Chairperson for the  
13 Committee on Finance, I recommend final  
14 passage of Item 7-A.

15 MR. EVANS: Second.

16 MR. ROGAN: On the question? Roll  
17 call, please?

18 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Donahue.

19 MR. DONAHUE: Yes.

20 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

21 MR. EVANS: Yes.

22 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

23 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

24 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

25 MR. ROGAN: Yes. I hereby declare

1 Item 7-A legally and lawfully adopted.

2 MS. REED: 7-B. FOR CONSIDERATION  
3 BY THE COMMITTEE ON RULES - FOR ADOPTION -  
4 RESOLUTION NO. 8, 2018 - RE-APPOINTMENT OF  
5 ROBERT TIMLIN, 325 WARREN STREET, SCRANTON,  
6 PENNSYLVANIA, 18508, AS A MEMBER OF  
7 THE BOARD OF THE SCRANTON REDEVELOPMENT  
8 AUTHORITY FOR AN ADDITIONAL FIVE (5) YEAR  
9 TERM. MR. TIMLIN'S PRIOR TERM EXPIRED  
10 ON FEBRUARY 14, 2017 AND WAS HELD OVER TO  
11 JANUARY 16, 2018. MR. TIMLIN'S NEW TERM  
12 WILL BE EFFECTIVE JANUARY 16, 2018 AND  
13 WILL EXPIRE ON FEBRUARY 14, 2022.

14 MR. ROGAN: As Chair for the  
15 Committee on Rules, I recommend final  
16 passage of Item 7-B.

17 MR. DONAHUE: Second.

18 MR. ROGAN: On the question? Roll  
19 call, please?

20 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Donahue.

21 MR. DONAHUE: Yes.

22 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

23 MR. EVANS: Yes.

24 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

25 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

1 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

2 MR. ROGAN: Yes. I hereby declare  
3 Item 7-B legally and lawfully adopted.

4 MS. REED: 7-C. FOR CONSIDERATION  
5 BY THE COMMITTEE ON RULES - FOR ADOPTION -  
6 RESOLUTION NO. 9, 2018 - APPOINTMENT OF  
7 JOSEPH WECHSLER, 1315 CRONKEY AVENUE,  
8 SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA, 18505, AS A MEMBER  
9 OF THE BOARD OF THE SCRANTON PARKING  
10 AUTHORITY EFFECTIVE JANUARY 19, 2018. MR.  
11 WECHSLER WILL BE REPLACING MAUREEN MCNICHOLS  
12 WHO RESIGNED EFFECTIVE FEBRUARY 1, 2017.  
13 MR. WECHSLER WILL FULFILL THE UNEXPIRED TERM  
14 OF MRS. MCNICHOLS WHOSE TERM IS SCHEDULED TO  
15 EXPIRE ON JUNE 1, 2020.

16 MR. ROGAN: As Chair for the  
17 Committee on Rules, I recommend final  
18 passage of Item 7-C.

19 MR. EVANS: Second.

20 MR. ROGAN: On the question? Roll  
21 call, please?

22 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Donahue.

23 MR. DONAHUE: Yes.

24 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Evans.

25 MR. EVANS: Yes.

1 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

2 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes.

3 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

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

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

8 MR. EVANS: Motion to adjourn.

9 MR. ROGAN: Meeting is adjourned.

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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3 I hereby certify that the proceedings and  
4 evidence are contained fully and accurately in the  
5 notes of testimony taken by me at the hearing of the  
6 above-captioned matter and that the foregoing is a true  
7 and correct transcript of the same to the best of my  
8 ability.  
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12 \_\_\_\_\_  
13 CATHENE S. NARDOZZI, RPR  
14 OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER  
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