

COUNCIL FOR THE CITY OF SCRANTON

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HELD:

Monday, November 2nd, 2020

LOCATION:

VIA ZOOM

Maria McCool, RPR  
Official Court Reporter

1 C O U N C I L M E M B E R S :

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- WILLIAM GAUGHAN, PRESIDENT
- KYLE DONAHUE, VICE PRESIDENT
- MARK MCANDREW
- JESSICA ROTHCHILD
- THOMAS SCHUSTER
  
- LORI REED, CITY CLERK
- KATHY CARRERA, ASSISTANT CITY CLERK
- KEVIN HAYES, COUNCIL SOLICITOR

1 (Pledge of Allegiance.)

2  
3 MR. GAUGHAN: Please remain standing  
4 for a moment of silent reflection for our  
5 service men and women throughout the world and  
6 also for those who have passed away in our  
7 community.

8 Let us also take a special moment  
9 tonight of silence again tonight for people in  
10 our community, our country and world who have  
11 passed away from the coronavirus. This  
12 pandemic has turned our world upside down. But  
13 we must remain hopeful and strong.

14 We continue to pray for the  
15 doctors, nurses, researchers and all medical  
16 professionals who seek to heal and help those  
17 affected and who put themselves at risk in the  
18 process. May they have protection and peace.

19 Whether we are home or abroad,  
20 surrounded by many people suffering from this  
21 illness or only a few, let us stick together,  
22 endure together, mourn together and in place of  
23 our anxiety, let us have hope and peace.  
24 Thank you. Okay, Miss Carrera, roll call,  
25 please?

1 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Schuster.

2 MR. SCHUSTER: Present.

3 MS. CARRERA: Mr. McAndrew.

4 MR. MCANDREW: Present.

5 MS. CARRERA: Dr. Rothchild.

6 DR. ROTHCHILD: Here.

7 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Donahue.

8 MR. DONAHUE: Here.

9 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

10 MR. GAUGHAN: Here. Thank you, Miss

11 Carrera.

12 MR. DONAHUE: I'd like to make a  
13 motion to take from the table Resolution No.  
14 79 of 2020.

15 DR. ROTHCHILD: Second.

16 MR. GAUGHAN: On the question? On  
17 the question, this piece is being taken from  
18 the table and place in Seventh Order for a  
19 final vote. This is the contract with Willis  
20 Towers Watson for consultant benefits brokers  
21 services for the City.

22 And we received the disclosure  
23 statement as requested. All those in favor  
24 signify -- or anyone else on the question? I'm  
25 sorry. All those in favor signify by saying



1           Are there any comments on any of the Third  
2           Order items? I just have one comment on 3-D  
3           payroll overtime report that was submitted by  
4           Controller John Murray.

5                   As I mentioned in the caucus, there  
6           I think was in speaking with the Mayor and  
7           Controller Murray, there may have been a  
8           discrepancy in the bottom line number, the  
9           total amount of overtime listed in the report.

10                   So they are working to correct that.  
11           I am personally concerned that we are over  
12           budget with police and fire overtime. We  
13           budgeted \$700,000 overtime for the police  
14           department. We are overbudget about  
15           \$62,398.46. That's concerning.

16                   Fire is very concerning. We  
17           budgeted \$325,000 for overtime. We're already  
18           at \$443,825.63. So we're overbudget by  
19           \$118,825.63.

20                   The Law Department there was no  
21           overtime budgeted for 2020. It's not a large  
22           amount. But I still would like to know what,  
23           you know, how we -- why we had to spend  
24           overtime in the Law Department, \$1,161.74.

25                   So what I'd like to ask from the

1 administration is in writing an explanation as  
2 to why in November we're that much over in the  
3 fire department and in the police department.  
4 In years past in the police department there  
5 have been a certain amount of dollars that were  
6 reimbursable. This is most likely the case  
7 again this year.

8 So usually Chief Graziano would give  
9 us a breakdown on the costs to date that were  
10 reimbursable, whether a policeman were to cover  
11 an event or something like that. But,  
12 Mrs. Reed, if you could send something to the  
13 administration for an answer in writing as to  
14 the reasons why we're so over in these  
15 categories.

16 Anyone else on the question -- or  
17 not on the question. Anyone else on the Third  
18 Order items? If not, received and filed. Do  
19 any Council members have any announcements at  
20 this time?

21 MR. MCANDREW: I have a quick one.  
22 This Saturday, November 7th from 4 to 7 p.m.,  
23 there will be a pot roast dinner fundraiser  
24 hosted by God's Peace at Parker and Main, which  
25 is 2506 North Main Avenue, take out only \$12

1 each.

2 Advanced tickets need to be  
3 purchased. Tickets are available at the church  
4 office. And, you know, the Facebook page  
5 directs you to a website where you could  
6 actually purchase tickets. That's all I have.  
7 Thank you.

8 MR. DONAHUE: I have one quick one.  
9 Just a reminder about the fall leaf program.  
10 All leaves must be placed in biodegradable  
11 brown paper bags. There's bags available for  
12 pickup at the DPW complex on Popular Street and  
13 at the Weston Field house on Providence Road.

14 All collections are from the  
15 curbside of streets and avenues. No  
16 collections will be in courts or alleys. No  
17 loose piles, no plastic bags, no household  
18 trash in leaf bags. The following weeks are  
19 the remaining weeks of the program:

20 Next week, the week of November 9th;  
21 the week of November 24th; and the week of  
22 December 7th.

23 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you. Anyone  
24 else?

25 DR. ROTHCHILD: Yes, I have one



1            thing to add. So I know last week we had -- we  
2            had them in the Scranton Tomorrow. And they  
3            were talking about the rally for restaurants  
4            event that they host over at Lackawanna  
5            College.

6                            And I think there's one more event.  
7            It's going to be November 24th with  
8            reservations starting at 5:30 p.m. I think  
9            there is one also -- I'm sorry that one will be  
10           with Electronic City Bakehouse. And that's  
11           going to be a four course meal.

12                           And then there's another one  
13           Tuesday, November 10th. Reservations starting  
14           at 5:30. And that's going to be with Posh at  
15           the Scranton Club.

16                           So all the information about the  
17           rally for restaurant events are on the Facebook  
18           page of 409 on Adams at Lackawanna College.  
19           And it's just a great way to be able to support  
20           our local restaurant and businesses and get a  
21           great meal out of it. So I'd just encourage  
22           people to check it out.

23                           MR. GAUGHAN: Okay. Thank you. I  
24           have a few. Mary Mother of God Parish is going  
25           to have their annual roast beef dinner Sunday,

1 November 8th, 2020, 12 noon to 4 p.m., at  
2 Stirna's Restaurant on West Market Street in  
3 North Scranton.

4 This will be take out only due to  
5 the pandemic. Adults can pay \$10 in advance or  
6 \$12 at the door. We have a caucus scheduled  
7 with Herbert Rowland and Grubic for Tuesday,  
8 November 10th at 5:45 p.m., to discuss the  
9 City's approach to stormwater management and  
10 the progress that has occurred with this  
11 company working with the City on the pollution  
12 reduction plan and complying with the pollution  
13 reduction requirements by the EPA.

14 We're also going to get an update on  
15 what has been accomplished in terms of best  
16 management practices the City should implement  
17 to maintain the MS4 permit and the expiration  
18 of the feasibility and benefits of managing  
19 stormwater on a regional basis.

20 City Hall will be closed tomorrow  
21 Tuesday, November 3rd for Election Day holiday.  
22 The DPW will also be off tomorrow. Refuse and  
23 blue recycling will be one day behind starting  
24 on Wednesday of this week.

25 Next week, Thursday, November 12th

1 at 6 p.m., Council will hold the first of two  
2 work sessions with the Mayor and Business  
3 Administrator for the purpose of discussing  
4 2021 operating budget. This will be  
5 livestreamed and on ECTV for the public to  
6 view.

7 I gave kind of a breakdown of the  
8 budget timeline in the caucus. In addition to  
9 the work session that will be held on Thursday,  
10 November 12th, there will be another one held  
11 on Thursday, November 19th with the same  
12 format.

13 Similar to the last two weeks,  
14 OECD's Executive Director is asking that  
15 Council make an announcement regarding  
16 Wednesday, October 21st, 2020, applications  
17 will be available for the City of Scranton's  
18 Community Development Block Grant Program, Home  
19 Investment Partnership Program and the  
20 Emergency Solutions Grant administered by the  
21 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban  
22 Development.

23 Project activities must be  
24 consistent with the needs and objectives  
25 identified in the City of Scranton's Five Year

1 Consolidated Plan principally for extremely  
2 low, low, and moderate income families.

3 Eligible applicants must be  
4 incorporated for profit, nonprofit or public  
5 organizations or businesses able to undertake  
6 their approved activity within the boundaries  
7 of the City of Scranton.

8 Applications are available online at  
9 [www.scrantonworks.org](http://www.scrantonworks.org) and must be submitted  
10 electronically no later than 5 p.m., on Friday,  
11 November 20th, 2020.

12 Public Comment on the CDBG Home or  
13 ESG Programs will be accepted at the November  
14 10th, 2020 Council meeting scheduled at 6:30  
15 p.m.

16 To submit comment, e-mail  
17 [Lreedatscrantonpa.gov](mailto:Lreedatscrantonpa.gov) or by U.S. mail at the  
18 Scranton Municipal Building, 340 North  
19 Washington Avenue, Scranton, PA 18503,  
20 attention City Clerk's Office no later than  
21 3 p.m., on November 10th, 2020.

22 Public comment will also be  
23 received until November 20th, 2020 at  
24 [www.scrantonworks.org](http://www.scrantonworks.org) or by e-mailing Scranton  
25 311 at [www.scrantonpa.gov](http://www.scrantonpa.gov). Mrs. Reed?

1 MS. REED: FOURTH ORDER. CITIZENS  
2 PARTICIPATION.

3 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you, Mrs. Reed.  
4 At this time, would someone please make a  
5 motion to accept public comment from the  
6 following individuals, Abby Walsh, Marie  
7 Schumacher, and Fay Franus.

8 MR. DONAHUE: So moved.

9 DR. ROTHCHILD: Second.

10 MR. GAUGHAN: There's been a motion  
11 and a second to accept public comment.  
12 Mrs. Reed, would you please read the comments  
13 into the record?

14 MS. REED: Thank you. The first  
15 submission is from Abby Walsh as follows:

16 I was recently reading through the  
17 Act 47 legislation and had a question regarding  
18 our coordinator's powers. In subchapter B,  
19 Section 221, one of the coordinator's powers is  
20 as follows, to "investigate the tax-exempt  
21 status of any property. Within a distressed  
22 municipality. And advise the governing body of  
23 the municipality to appeal the assessment or  
24 exempt status of property within the distressed  
25 municipality."

1 I was not alive when we first  
2 entered distressed status, so I am unaware if  
3 this was ever done. I am wondering if our  
4 coordinator Gerald Cross ever used this power  
5 to look into tax-exempt properties within the  
6 city and perhaps advised the city to appeal the  
7 status of any of them.

8 If not, perhaps he could look into  
9 it now, or even if he has done it in the past,  
10 it may be worth investigating more properties  
11 in the near future so we can utilize his  
12 expertise and increase the tax base as we move  
13 to exit distressed status soon.

14 MS. REED: Again, that was from Abby  
15 Walsh.

16 The next submission is from Marie  
17 Schumacher as follows:

18 O What progress, if any, has been  
19 made to expedite the 2019 AUDIT?

20 O HR'S Internal Audit of employee's  
21 currency on taxes and fees is scheduled to  
22 begin at the beginning of December giving any  
23 delinquent employees about six weeks to get  
24 current. When will this Audit complete and  
25 what, if anything, will happen to any remaining

1 delinquent employees?

2 0 On October 20th the Capital  
3 Budget was taken from the table and placed in  
4 seventh order where it was approved with some  
5 change. The revised Budget was not included on  
6 the Agenda as it was taken from the table so my  
7 question is where on-line is the "official"  
8 Capital Budget available.

9 Also, I do not believe several of my  
10 Capital Budget questions were answered; those  
11 being:

12 - an asphalt Paving and small roller  
13 is requested but I see no request for equipment  
14 to tar around pave patches; without the tar  
15 water gets between the old and new asphalt and  
16 the pothole is back.

17 - brush tractor and mower new or  
18 replacement?. The roadside brush along East  
19 Mountain Road and Route 307 between Rt 81 and  
20 Lynwood Avenue was not trimmed back this year  
21 as it has been in years past. Also, Land Bank  
22 vacant properties need to be maintained.

23 - I see two (separate line items I  
24 might add and question) for Leaf Vacuum Trucks  
25 but no Street Sweepers. Is our street sweeper

1 inventory sufficient to keep sediment  
2 stormwater out of the stormwater drains.?

3 - The DPW vehicle narrative states  
4 vehicles in need of replacement and fleet  
5 additions and then provides a list but fails to  
6 distinguish between which are replacement and  
7 which are additions. This was answered but  
8 included an Excel sheet that I do not believe  
9 has been made available to the public.

10 - The Flood Control section states  
11 escrow accounts will be used for funding.  
12 Please identify the available escrow accounts  
13 and the balance in each.and answer why this  
14 available funding has not been used to fix the  
15 Dewey-Jackson St issue? The Dewey-Jackson St.  
16 Portion was answered but not the escrow account  
17 identification and balances.

18 0 Speaking of answers to questions;  
19 it's been a significant length of time since  
20 the questions not answered during the Meeting  
21 have been answered. I am especially interested  
22 in questions relative to that large-orange sign  
23 saying NO PARKING at River St. And Prospect  
24 Avenue.

25 0 Will there be a presentation



1 prior to receipt of the Budget that exposes the  
2 planned expenditures over the next five years  
3 at the former Serrenti building. It appears the  
4 concerns expressed by Council prior to  
5 permitting the acquisition are transitioning to  
6 reality at a time the City is financially  
7 distressed enough that the Act 47 exit had to  
8 be postponed for 18 months.

9 0 Finally, if you are still  
10 reluctant to use Council Chambers, may I  
11 suggest you hold the Public Hearing on the  
12 City's 2021 Budget at the Cultural Center and  
13 provide each speaker at least 10 minutes and  
14 accept any questions over the ten minutes in  
15 writing for timely answers.

16  
17 MS. REED: The third submission is  
18 from Fay Franus and it is as follows:  
19 Council,

20 You say you answer questions that  
21 the residents of Scranton ask. May I  
22 say--BARELY if at all--You make it sound like  
23 you do, but that is not true. Example Marie  
24 Schumacher has questions from weeks and weeks  
25 ago perhaps months that seriously needed

1           answers to.

2                       And were never answered. You are  
3           counting on people not remembering these  
4           questions so you can get away without answering  
5           them ON PURPOSE!

6                       I asked each council member directly  
7           last week to explain to the residents why they  
8           felt it was not good to fight for the 50  
9           million the city took out in LST taxes  
10          illegally-NOT a sound out of you. Which  
11          reaffirms you are NOT representing the people  
12          but only the administration.

13                      Now you will continue to tax the  
14          people right out of their homes. BUT you do not  
15          care! You wouldn't even fight for the people--  
16          you wanted to side with the administration.

17                      I've asked numerous time about the  
18          audit--why do you hire people that get paid  
19          lots pf money but yet never have it done on  
20          time. Time to find another company. Year after  
21          year we keep asking when is the audit going to  
22          be done. You never seem to correct your  
23          mistakes.

24                      Are the taxpayers going to have to  
25          pay \$300.00 again for their garbage fee when

1           25% of the people do not pay theirs-- So our  
2           \$300.00 pays for those who don't pay!. The  
3           people in Scranton should know this city has a  
4           law in place for the DPW not to pick up the  
5           garbage of those homes who do NOT pay their  
6           garbage fee. BUT the city and council will not  
7           abide by their won law.

8                         In the meantime, the people who do  
9           pay will have to continue to pay for those who  
10          do NOT! I know I keep quoting this city law but  
11          maybe it needs repeating. Maybe just maybe it  
12          might matter to you to follow laws that are in  
13          place to help the resident. God Forbid that  
14          should happen!

15                        Last question. What exactly do each  
16          of you do for the \$12,500.00 we pay you every  
17          year to help us.

18                        (This concludes letters as submitted  
19          to Council for public comment.)

20  
21                        MS. REED: That concludes the  
22          citizens participation.

23                        MR. GAUGHAN: Okay. Thank you, Mrs.  
24          Reed. I just want to on the question start off  
25          by reading Mr. Cross's response into the

1 record. Miss Walsh who posed a question about  
2 Act 47 legislation and regarding coordinator's  
3 powers in terms of investigating the tax exempt  
4 status of any property within a distressed  
5 municipality. It was a very good question.  
6 And I want to take a second to read the  
7 response that I received this afternoon from  
8 Mr. Cross.

9 Mr. Cross said: Miss Walsh is  
10 correct in that the coordinator can review the  
11 status of exempt from taxation properties. The  
12 various recovery plans included initiatives for  
13 the City to review the status of these  
14 properties on a regular basis.

15 The first review was conducted  
16 during the first recovery plan of 1992. More  
17 recently, the coordinator reviewed the status  
18 of various properties during preparation of the  
19 2015 recovery plan revision.

20 Also at that time a review was  
21 conducted as part of Amoroso plan at that same  
22 time. The City did attempt to review the  
23 properties as part of the 2015 recovery  
24 process. And I believe that some properties  
25 were identified at that time as subject to

1 review.

2 Additionally the disposition of  
3 several properties that were part of closed  
4 churches were also identified as potential  
5 change of use that could lead to a resumption  
6 of taxable status. The majority of exempt  
7 properties are owned by local government, city,  
8 county, and school district and educational and  
9 medical facilities.

10 The sale of the Scranton Sewer  
11 Authority also led to some properties being  
12 reclassified as taxable. Also, the sale of the  
13 not-for-profit to a for profit entity allowed  
14 that property to be returned to the tax rolls.

15 We believe that a regular review of  
16 the status of properties that are owned by  
17 not-for-profit entities but which uses are not  
18 directly related to their charitable function  
19 should occur to determine their taxable status.

20 While the coordinator does not  
21 actually perform the analysis, the City has had  
22 initiatives and recovery plans to perform such  
23 an analysis. Please let me know if there are  
24 any followup questions regarding exempt from  
25 taxation properties.

1 I do know for a fact that that is in  
2 our recovery plan. And it has been in several  
3 recovery plans since I've been on Council that  
4 initiative to analyze the tax exempt  
5 properties. And I have asked repeatedly,  
6 repeatedly for that to be done. And it has not  
7 yet been done.

8 So, Mrs. Reed, if we can send  
9 correspondence to the Mayor -- and I'll bring  
10 this up the next time I talk with the Mayor --  
11 on what their plans are or if they do have  
12 plans to perform that analysis.

13 Again, this is not something that  
14 Council would be able to undertake. That would  
15 have to be the administration. But I do  
16 support that. I think it makes sense.

17 As for Miss Schumacher's comments on  
18 the capital budget that she claims is taken  
19 from the table and placed in Seventh Order  
20 where it was approved with some change, the  
21 only change that was made there that I had  
22 requested was for the administration to show  
23 what funds they had already -- have already  
24 been allocated for capital programs and  
25 projects.

1                   And that -- they did include that.  
2                   I can't remember if that was included in Third  
3                   Order. If it wasn't, I will ask that that be  
4                   included in Third Order that updated  
5                   spreadsheet.

6                   But there was no material changes  
7                   made to the capital budget. Otherwise, we  
8                   would have had to make an amendment to that.  
9                   So we will get Miss Schumacher that capital  
10                  budget. And we'll put the revised spreadsheet  
11                  in there. That was my mistake. If that wasn't  
12                  included, I apologize for that.

13                  As for the DPW questions, I was  
14                  under the impression that all of them were  
15                  answered. There are some here that Miss  
16                  Schumacher is claiming weren't answered. We  
17                  will get those to the DPW and make sure that  
18                  those are answered.

19                  And let me see. Miss Schumacher  
20                  also mentioned that it's been a significant  
21                  length of -- since questions -- she had  
22                  questions that were not answered. I actually  
23                  did talk to Mrs. Reed today, our City Clerk  
24                  about that.

25                  And I asked her if she would reach

1 out to the Mayor's office to get an update on  
2 the status of those questions. Every time a  
3 member of the public issues a -- asks a  
4 question of this Council, I make sure if I  
5 don't have the answer right at my disposal and  
6 I don't know off the top of my head and it's  
7 not something that's on the agenda that we get  
8 those questions to the administration.

9 And we have asked them to answer  
10 those questions. So we are not in any way --  
11 and I am not in any way ignoring anybody's  
12 questions. I would not do that. That would be  
13 a dereliction of duty on my part. It would be  
14 ignorant as well.

15 We have not received a response yet  
16 from the administration. So again, we did ask  
17 or I did ask Mrs. Reed today to ask the  
18 administration for an update on when we can  
19 expect the answers to these questions and  
20 including the no parking sign at River Street  
21 and Prospect Avenue.

22 Miss Schumacher also asked a  
23 question about the Serrenti building. She  
24 asked for a -- planned expenditures over the  
25 next five years. We can ask for that. I



1           wasn't for that project a few years ago.

2                     I thought there was issues. I'm not  
3 going to rehash them all night. The problem is  
4 that, you know, you can't put toothpaste back  
5 in the tube. We have acquired that building.  
6 There's been significant amount of money that  
7 has been put in that building.

8                     We did receive a breakdown of how  
9 the money has been spent. Most of it has been  
10 grant money. But it just wouldn't make sense  
11 at this point since we already have acquired  
12 the building and we put money into it to just  
13 abandon the project.

14                    So while I didn't agree with it  
15 originally, at this point it would not make  
16 sense to abandon it and to scrap it. But I  
17 will ask what the plans are for expenditures  
18 over the next five years.

19                    And finally, about the use of  
20 Council Chambers and Miss Schumacher's  
21 suggestion about the 2021 budget at the  
22 Cultural Center, we are not going to do that.  
23 There would be a cost to that on using the  
24 Cultural Center, a user fee or host fee or  
25 whatever.

1                   So we're not going to do that.  
2                   Speakers have five minutes to -- they have five  
3                   minutes with their questions. They could put  
4                   those in writing. We will take them. We will  
5                   get them answered for the public when the  
6                   budget comes up on our agenda. But we are  
7                   going to continue to operate in Zoom due to the  
8                   pandemic.

9                   And just to address finally Miss  
10                  Franus's comment, I wasn't here last week about  
11                  the City's court case that they won with the  
12                  LST taxes. I said it before and I'll say it  
13                  again. If the City lost that, then we would  
14                  probably have gone bankrupt.

15                 So, you know, you're really -- I  
16                 appreciate Miss Franus's comments, but you're  
17                 cutting off your nose to spite your face. If  
18                 you are rooting for a victory there, then the  
19                 City is going to be in horrible financial  
20                 peril. And we'll probably end up going  
21                 bankrupt when you don't have tens of millions  
22                 of dollars of revenue to run the City. So  
23                 that's my answer to that.

24                 And I think that was it. And again,  
25                 if there is any -- any questions here that we

1 got like we do every week we will send those to  
2 the administration. And we'll ask them for an  
3 update and when we could expect the answers.  
4 Anyone else on the question? Okay. All those  
5 in favor signify by saying aye.

6 MR. SCHUSTER: Aye.

7 MR. MCANDREW: Aye.

8 MR. DONAHUE: Aye.

9 DR. ROTHCHILD: Aye.

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

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

13 MOTIONS.

14 MR. GAUGHAN: Councilman Schuster,  
15 do you have any motions or comments at this  
16 time?

17 MR. SCHUSTER: No, nothing at this  
18 time.

19 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you. Councilman  
20 McAndrew, any motions or comments?

21 MR. MCANDREW: I don't have a  
22 motion. But I have a quick comment. So a  
23 couple of weeks ago we talked about we passed  
24 some legislation we had some money to change  
25 out all the City signs and replace them which,

1           you know, was great.

2                   A citizen approached me about it.  
3           His name is Derek Rains. He's from the Hill  
4           Section, Monroe Avenue. He experienced this  
5           and something like this when he worked at  
6           Tobyhanna Depot. So his suggestion which was a  
7           pretty good idea, you know, I don't know what  
8           we're going to do with the signs -- the old  
9           signs; but maybe people might want to buy them.

10                   I mean, he said he would love to buy  
11           the Monroe sign. I'd take a St. Ann Street  
12           sign in a minute. So maybe we pose this to the  
13           City and say, hey, you know, before you get rid  
14           of the signs, maybe we could get a couple bucks  
15           in revenue, you know, let's maybe throw it out  
16           there.

17                   It might be a couple dollars to sort  
18           them or whatever, but it might be an idea to  
19           throw it out there to see if anybody would like  
20           to buy this as a memento or, you know, a street  
21           sign that's been on their street. So,  
22           Mrs. Reed, would you just send maybe that  
23           correspondence over to the administration to  
24           see, you know, if maybe we can incorporate that  
25           in there, you know, if it's feasible.

1 MS. REED: Of course.

2 MR. MCANDREW: All right. That is  
3 all I have. Thank you.

4 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you. Dr.  
5 Rothchild, any motions or comments?

6 DR. ROTHCHILD: No. I don't have  
7 any motions or comments right now. Thank you.

8 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you. Councilman  
9 Donahue, any motions or comments?

10 MR. DONAHUE: I have nothing at this  
11 time.

12 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you. I have a  
13 few comments. So a few weeks ago I had asked  
14 about questions about the intern program in the  
15 City. We did send another note to the Mayor's  
16 office. They did send us a breakdown which was  
17 in Third Order of the Pennsylvania State and  
18 Local Internship Program.

19 And I do believe that the City  
20 should be a part of this program. I think it's  
21 a good thing. But there was a note here from  
22 the HR Director that there were three people  
23 that did not qualify for the program dollars  
24 but they were also paid interns.

25 So I'm still waiting for an answer

1 as to how we paid those interns and out of what  
2 account we paid them. So we're waiting for  
3 that answer. And then there was another  
4 question as to -- there was multiple interns  
5 being offered permanent employment  
6 opportunities. So I had asked for a list of  
7 those interns who were hired full time.

8 Also in the caucus I had asked about  
9 the incident that occurred a few weeks ago with  
10 the police department and a political parade  
11 that was -- that the police department kind of  
12 chaperoned through the City.

13 I did speak with the Mayor and the  
14 Chief of Police and was told that there was an  
15 investigation going on about that. And then I  
16 have not heard anything in about two weeks. So  
17 I did ask Mrs. Reed if she would send something  
18 to get an update on that. I'd like to know who  
19 authorized it and the details. I think it's  
20 important.

21 I also asked in the caucus when the  
22 City will know how much we're going to be  
23 reimbursed from the county for the COVID-19  
24 expenditures and what the timeline looks like  
25 on that. I believe that we submitted at this

1 point nearly a million dollars. So I'm just  
2 not clear on what the process is and when we'll  
3 find out.

4 Also, there was a transfer that was  
5 received for the workers' comp account to  
6 unemployment insurance in the amount of  
7 \$179,000. Mrs. Reed, if you could find out  
8 what the total amount that the City has spent  
9 this year in unemployment insurance, I'd like  
10 to know that prior to the next meeting.

11 Also, we talked a little bit about  
12 and I brought up the audit. And I did have a  
13 chance this week to speak to the Business  
14 Administrator about it. I think we all  
15 expressed two weeks ago that it's just simply  
16 unacceptable to receive the audit in December  
17 of 2020 -- the 2019 audit in December of 2020.

18 Last year we received the 2018 audit  
19 in January of 2019, which was unacceptable as  
20 well. And at that time we had asked for  
21 regular updates on the audit. We were told  
22 that it was going to be done on time and  
23 everybody was going have their act together.

24 So I just want to go through really  
25 quick what Kelly Lindsey from the Kohanski

1           Company had sent us that they agree that the  
2           December 31st, 2019 audit of financial  
3           statements being received in midDecember, 2020  
4           is not acceptable.

5                       And at the conclusion of the  
6           December 31st, 2018 audit they discussed with  
7           Council at length and agreed that a September  
8           30th completion date was feasible and committed  
9           to adhering to this date as long as they  
10          received all of their requested financial  
11          information by July 1st which gave the City six  
12          months to prepare.

13                      Then she details the reports that  
14          were sent to Council and some of the  
15          information that was -- had still not been  
16          received. In a September 3rd update she  
17          reported that with the exception of the census  
18          status for the OPEB plan, no additional  
19          information had been received.

20                      On October 1st they received trial  
21          balances and some work papers for the general  
22          fund, special city's fund in OECD, a partial  
23          list of some items which are still outstanding  
24          they attached and additional items were going  
25          to be requested as they worked through the



1           audit.

2                       They expressed to us that they're  
3 working diligently to accommodate the City  
4 audit in their schedule after receiving the  
5 information later than they had planned and  
6 will do everything possible to deliver the  
7 audit as soon as it is reasonably possible.

8                       She did offer up other items to  
9 consider. The City has a new business manager.  
10 The City was shut down for several months due  
11 to the COVID-19 pandemic. The City's  
12 accounting system was offline several weeks due  
13 to a cyber attack after the original July 1st  
14 deadline to receive all of this information.

15                      And OECD was closed until November  
16 1st while the employees were under quarantine.  
17 So those were just other items to consider.  
18 But again, we went through the same thing last  
19 year. And I just find it unacceptable.

20                      It's, you know, very disappointing  
21 to go through a budget process without last  
22 year's audited financial -- the audited  
23 financial information. It's just not  
24 acceptable. So, Mrs. Reed, I have been talking  
25 with Mr. Deeley. But I think it's important

1 for this Council to get something in writing  
2 from the administration on what the plan is  
3 moving forward.

4 It's now November 2nd. And I think  
5 we should have this audit, you know, before  
6 final passage of the budget in December --  
7 December 15th. So if you could ask them what  
8 the plan of action is. Mr. Deeley told me that  
9 he's going to now meet weekly with Kohanski and  
10 Company to get further updates but very  
11 disappointing.

12 The other thing we talked about in  
13 Third Order was the overtime cost. We're going  
14 to be sending something to the administration  
15 so that they could explain the reasons in  
16 detail in writing as to why we're over in the  
17 police and fire overtime budget.

18 Also, we're going to ask for what  
19 the deal is on the DPW equipment donation from  
20 Keystone Landfill. This has been months now.  
21 We have not received anything official in  
22 writing even though we've asked several times.  
23 I would also like to ask Mrs. Reed for an  
24 update on the conversion of the garbage bill  
25 into the real estate tax bill also an update on

1           how the wind down of the NRS contract is going.

2                     I think they'll be officially done  
3           at the end of December. So I'd like to know if  
4           all the data has been transferred over, how  
5           much, if anything, the City is going to owe  
6           this company and just a general update on where  
7           the City is at with that.

8                     Also, I haven't seen anything lately  
9           on the sale of receivables. This was a line  
10          item in the budget in terms of revenue for a  
11          million and a half dollars. I know the RFP was  
12          sent out. I don't know quite frankly if we've  
13          received anything back yet. But I'm a little  
14          concerned we haven't seen any legislation yet.  
15          And again, it's a substantial figure in the  
16          2020 budget. And that's all I have for this  
17          week.

18                    MS. REED: 5-B. No business at this  
19          time.

20                    SIXTH ORDER. 6-A. READING BY  
21          TITLE - FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO. 32, 2020 - AN  
22          ORDINANCE - AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND OTHER  
23          APPROPRIATE OFFICIALS OF THE CITY OF SCRANTON  
24          TO DONATE AN OBSOLETE AND INACTIVE FIRE ENGINE  
25          TO JOHNSON COLLEGE FOR USE.

1 MR. GAUGHAN: You've heard reading  
2 by title of Item 6-A. What is your pleasure?

3 MR. DONAHUE: I ask that Item 6-A  
4 pass reading by title.

5 MR. SCHUSTER: Second.

6 MR. GAUGHAN: On the question? All  
7 those in favor signify by saying aye.

8 MR. SCHUSTER: Aye.

9 MR. MCANDREW: Aye.

10 MR. DONAHUE: Aye.

11 DR. ROTHCHILD: Aye.

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

14 MS. REED: SEVENTH ORDER. 7-A.  
15 FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMITTEE ON RULES -  
16 FOR ADOPTION - RESOLUTION NO. 85, 2020 -  
17 APPOINTMENT OF MARY JO SHERIDAN, 123  
18 SCHLAGER STREET, SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA, 18504,  
19 TO SERVE AS A MEMBER OF THE LAND BANK EFFECTIVE  
20 SEPTEMBER 8, 2020. MS. SHERIDAN IS BEING  
21 APPOINTED TO FULFILL THE UNEXPIRED TERM OF  
22 MR. WAYNE BECK WHICH WILL EXPIRE ON FEBRUARY 9,  
23 2024.

24 MR. GAUGHAN: You've heard reading  
25 by title of Item 6-A. What is your pleasure?

1 MR. DONAHUE: 7-A. It's 7-A, Bill.

2 MR. GAUGHAN: Oh, I'm sorry, sorry  
3 about that. As Chairperson for the Committee  
4 on Rules, I recommend final passage of Item  
5 7-A.

6 MR. DONAHUE: Second.

7 MR. GAUGHAN: On the question? Five  
8 second delay there, I apologize. Roll call,  
9 please.

10 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Schuster.

11 MR. SCHUSTER: Yes.

12 MS. CARRERA: Mr. McAndrew.

13 MR. MCANDREW: Yes.

14 MS. CARRERA: Dr. Rothchild.

15 DR. ROTHCHILD: Yes.

16 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Donahue.

17 MR. DONAHUE: Yes.

18 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

19 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes. I hereby declare  
20 Item 7-A legally and lawfully adopted.

21 MS. REED: 7-B. FOR CONSIDERATION  
22 BY THE COMMITTEE ON RULES - FOR ADOPTION -  
23 RESOLUTION NO. 86, 2020 - RE-APPOINTMENT OF  
24 ANTHONY SANTOLI, 1041 PRESCOTT AVENUE,  
25 SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA, 18510 AS A MEMBER

1 OF THE SHADE TREE COMMISSION FOR AN ADDITIONAL  
2 FIVE (5) YEAR TERM EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 29, 2020.  
3 MR. SANTOLI'S CURRENT TERM IS SCHEDULED TO  
4 EXPIRE ON OCTOBER 29, 2020 AND NEW TERM WILL  
5 EXPIRE ON OCTOBER 29, 2025.

6 MR. GAUGHAN: As Chairperson for the  
7 Committee on Rules, I recommend final passage  
8 of Item 7-B.

9 MR. DONAHUE: Second.

10 MR. GAUGHAN: On the question? On  
11 the question, I just want to say that many  
12 people throughout the City know Mr. Santoli.  
13 He is our City forester. He does not get paid  
14 a salary by the City. He does everything just  
15 because he loves being the City forester.

16 And he is one of the most  
17 knowledgeable people on -- in that aspect that  
18 I've ever met in my entire life. So if anybody  
19 ever wants to know anything about the trees in  
20 the City or anything related to forestry, Mr.  
21 Santoli is an encyclopedia on this type of  
22 stuff.

23 And again, he's doing this as a  
24 volunteer. He does not get paid. He drives  
25 all over the City. On several occasions the

1           last couple years I've called him because  
2           there's been a tree on someone's property or a  
3           City property that's been coming down.

4                     And he will go out and at any point  
5           during the day. He is just a gentleman, very  
6           nice man. And I want to thank him on behalf of  
7           the City for doing such a great service, the  
8           things that he's done at Nay Aug Park and other  
9           parks throughout the City is really amazing.

10                    So, Mr. Santoli, thank you, not only  
11           as the City forester but as a member of the  
12           Shade Tree Commission. Anyone else on the  
13           question? Roll call, please.

14                    MS. CARRERA: Mr. Schuster.

15                    MR. SCHUSTER: Yes.

16                    MS. CARRERA: Mr. McAndrew.

17                    MR. MCANDREW: Yes.

18                    MS. CARRERA: Dr. Rothchild.

19                    DR. ROTHCHILD: Yes.

20                    MS. CARRERA: Mr. Donahue.

21                    MR. DONAHUE: Yes.

22                    MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

23                    MR. GAUGHAN: Yes. I hereby declare  
24           Item 7-B legally and lawfully adopted.

25                    MS. REED: 7-C. FOR CONSIDERATION

1 BY THE COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT -  
2 FOR ADOPTION - RESOLUTION NO. 87, 2020 -  
3 AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND OTHER APPROPRIATE  
4 CITY OFFICIALS FOR THE CITY OF SCRANTON  
5 TO EXECUTE AND ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH  
6 NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA ALLIANCE, 1151 OAK  
7 ST. PITTSTON, PENNSYLVANIA 18640-3726 TO  
8 PROVIDE THE CITY OF SCRANTON AND OECD WITH  
9 UNDERWRITING SERVICES AND SUPPORT FOR THEIR  
10 VARIOUS LOAN AND GRANT PROGRAMS.

11 MR. GAUGHAN: And I'd ask at this  
12 point if someone could please make a motion to  
13 table agenda Item 7-C.

14 DR. ROTHCHILD: I make a motion to  
15 table Item 7-C.

16 MR. DONAHUE: Second.

17 MR. GAUGHAN: There's been a motion  
18 to table agenda Item 7-C. Councilman Donahue  
19 seconded the motion. On the question? On the  
20 question, I had noticed when I was going  
21 through the legislation that the disclosure  
22 forms were included but they were not filled  
23 out.

24 So Mrs. Reed got in touch with OECD  
25 Director Cipriani and they are going to take



1 care of that issue. Councilman Schuster had  
2 questions. Solicitor Hayes is going to get  
3 together with the OECD Solicitor to sort that  
4 out and hopefully we'll be able to vote on  
5 final passage next week. Anyone else on the  
6 question? All those in favor of the motion to  
7 table agenda Item 7-C signify by saying aye.

8 MR. SCHUSTER: Aye.

9 MR. MCANDREW: Aye.

10 MR. DONAHUE: Aye.

11 DR. ROTHCHILD: Aye.

12 MR. GAUGHAN: Aye. Opposed? The  
13 ayes have it and agenda Item 7-C is tabled.

14 MS. REED: 7-D. FOR CONSIDERATION  
15 BY THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY - FOR  
16 ADOPTION - RESOLUTION NO. 88, 2020 -  
17 AUTHORIZING THE COORDINATOR OF EMERGENCY  
18 MANAGEMENT, AL LUCAS, TO ACT AS AN  
19 AGENT FOR THE CITY OF SCRANTON FOR EMERGENCY  
20 AND DISASTER RELIEF PURSUANT TO THE ROBERT T.  
21 STAFFORD DISASTER RELIEF AND EMERGENCY  
22 ASSISTANCE ACT, AND AUTHORIZING CITY OFFICIALS  
23 TO EXECUTE THE DESIGNATION OF AGENT AND THE  
24 PEMA PUBLIC DISASTER ASSISTANCE APPLICATION AND  
25 AGREEMENT FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.

1 MR. GAUGHAN: What is the  
2 recommendation of the Chairperson for the  
3 Committee on Public Safety?

4 MR. MCANDREW: As Chairperson for  
5 the Committee on Public Safety, I recommend  
6 final passage of 7-D.

7 DR. ROTHCHILD: Second.

8 MR. DONAHUE: Second.

9 MR. GAUGHAN: On the question? Yes,  
10 on the question, this just allows the City to  
11 enter into an agreement to apply for and enter  
12 into an agreement with the Commonwealth of  
13 Pennsylvania through PEMA for the grant of  
14 diaster assistance funds related to the  
15 COVID-19 pandemic.

16 So Al Lucas is just simply being an  
17 agent of the City and giving us the ability to  
18 go for these funds. Anyone else on the  
19 question?

20 MR. MCANDREW: Just quickly, we  
21 mentioned in caucus my concern was, you know,  
22 was it a movement from, you know, the union to  
23 management, is there more money; and it was  
24 determined that there's not. So like it's just  
25 like you said. So I'll be voting yes then.

1 Thank you.

2 MR. GAUGHAN: Roll call, please.

3 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Schuster.

4 MR. SCHUSTER: Yes.

5 MS. CARRERA: Mr. McAndrew.

6 MR. MCANDREW: Yes.

7 MS. CARRERA: Dr. Rothchild.

8 DR. ROTHCHILD: Yes.

9 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Donahue.

10 MR. DONAHUE: Yes.

11 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

12 MR. GAUGHAN: Yes. I hereby declare  
13 Item 7-D legally and lawfully adopted.

14 MS. REED: 7-E. Previously tabled.  
15 FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMITTEE ON RULES FOR  
16 ADOPTION -- RESOLUTION NO. 79 2020 --  
17 AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND OTHER APPROPRIATE  
18 CITY OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE AND ENTER INTO A  
19 CONTRACT WITH WILLIS TOWERS WATSON FOR  
20 CONSULTING BENEFITS BROKER SERVICES FOR THE  
21 CITY OF SCRANTON EMPLOYEE BENEFITS FOR A PERIOD  
22 OF TWO YEARS.

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

1 MR. DONAHUE: Second.

2 MR. GAUGHAN: On the question.

3 MR. MCANDREW: Yes, on the question,  
4 first of all, I have nothing against Willis  
5 Towers Watson. I'm all in favor of moving the  
6 City forward and realize some savings with this  
7 organization.

8 But my problem is with the process.  
9 I don't have a dog in this fight. I don't have  
10 a horse in this race. But what I do have are  
11 concerns about the process, the selection  
12 process. So in '94, the judge determined that  
13 the unions had to have a health care committee.  
14 Okay, so it's there. It's imbedded in the CBA.

15 They were supposed to be part of the  
16 selection process. They were not. The  
17 selection of this firm, like I said, nothing  
18 against them but the selection of this firm was  
19 solely done by the Mayor, the Business  
20 Administrator and the new HR Director. So they  
21 clearly violated the CBA.

22 It's already being grieved. So I  
23 can't feel good about voting yes for this. And  
24 my -- my no is not no for the company. My no  
25 is no for the process because what's going to

1           happen is, if they win arbitration six, eight  
2           months from now, we're going to have to do this  
3           process again.

4                         So the money that, you know, they  
5           think we're going to save real quick getting  
6           this great firm in, we're going to lose money  
7           fighting this through arbitration and then  
8           losing and then possibly losing and going  
9           through this whole process again.

10                        So I'm a no because of that. I'm  
11           not a no for the company. I'm not a no for  
12           moving forward with a lot of realized savings,  
13           but I'm no for the simple fact it's a  
14           principle. We talk about, you know, past  
15           administrations and best practices and  
16           horrible processes.

17                        So here's a process that is actually  
18           clear and defined that is in place that we're  
19           not following. For that I'm sorry, but I'm a  
20           no.

21                        MR. SCHUSTER: As well on the  
22           question, you know, when looking at the  
23           agreement for savings, I think there's an  
24           opportunity here to save. I'm glad that this  
25           was put out. But I did have some questions.

1 I did speak with the Business  
2 Administrator and the answers I got I guess  
3 echo Mr. McAndrew's response that it does seem  
4 it was part of the CBA. The health care  
5 committee wasn't advised. And it could be  
6 probably a simple remedy. But it hasn't been  
7 addressed at this time.

8 MR. GAUGHAN: Okay. Anyone else on  
9 the question? Yeah, just two things, number  
10 one, I would think that if there was any issues  
11 in that regard that the head of the union,  
12 whatever union -- I don't know what union  
13 whether it's the fire, police or clerical would  
14 have sent something to Council and attached  
15 their name to it so that we could solve that.

16 I was told by the administration  
17 that the -- I think the union for -- the  
18 attorney for one of the unions was involved.  
19 But I don't think that is neither here nor  
20 there at this point.

21 We're voting on the contract with  
22 Willis Towers Watson for the consultant  
23 benefits broker services. You know, whether  
24 someone was included or not included, I just  
25 don't think that's an area that the Council

1           should get involved or would get involved in.

2                       But I never received anything  
3           officially from the union so, you know, if they  
4           wanted to make Council aware of that they  
5           should have sent something officially in  
6           writing from their business agent or from an  
7           attorney or from someone. Anyone else on the  
8           question? Roll call, please.

9                       MS. CARRERA: Mr. Schuster.

10                      MR. SCHUSTER: No.

11                      MS. CARRERA: Mr. McAndrew.

12                      MR. MCANDREW: No.

13                      MS. CARRERA: Dr. Rothchild.

14                      DR. ROTHCHILD: Yes.

15                      MS. CARRERA: Mr. Donahue.

16                      MR. DONAHUE: Yes.

17                      MS. CARRERA: Mr. Gaughan.

18                      MR. GAUGHAN: Yes. I hereby declare  
19           Item 7-E legally and lawfully adopted. If  
20           there is no further business, I'll entertain a  
21           motion to adjourn.

22                      MR. DONAHUE: Motion to adjourn.

23                      MR. GAUGHAN: This meeting's  
24           adjourned. See everybody next week. Thank  
25           you.

ATTY. HAYES: Good night everyone.

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C E R T I F I C A T E

1  
2  
3 I hereby certify that the proceedings and  
4 evidence are contained fully and accurately in the  
5 notes taken by me of the above-cause and that this copy  
6 is a correct transcript of the same to the best of my  
7 ability.

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12 Official Court Reporter  
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