

CITY OF PATERSON
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MUNICIPAL BUILDING
PATERSON, NEW JERSEY

7:00 P.M. : Subject: *Board of*
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 30, 2016 : *Education Budget*
SPECIAL JOINT MEETING : *Planning - 2016-2017*
:

A P P E A R A N C E S:

MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL:

WILLIAM C. McKOY - Third Ward - President

MOHAMMED AKHTARUZZAMAN - Second Ward - **ABSENT**

RUBY N. COTTON - Fourth Ward

MARITZA DAVILA - At-Large - **ABSENT**

MICHAEL JACKSON - First Ward

DOMINGO MENDEZ - At-Large

KENNETH M. MORRIS - At-Large

ANDRE SAYEGH - Sixth Ward - **ABSENT**

JULIO TAVAREZ - Fifth Ward - **ABSENT**

JOAN CAMPBELL-DOUGLAS
Deputy City Clerk

NELLIE POU
Business Administrator

1 BOARD OF EDUCATION COMMISSIONERS:

2 CHRISTOPHER C. IRVING, President

3 CHRYSTAL CLEAVES, Vice President

4 OSHIN CASTILLO

5 DR. JONATHAN HODGES

6 ERROL S. KERR

7 LILISA MIMMS

8 NAKIMA REDMON

9 FLAVIO RIVERA

10 KENNETH L. SIMMONS

11
12 DR. DONNIE W. EVANS

13 State District Superintendant

14 EILEEN SHAFER

15 Deputy Superintendant

16 DAISY AYALA

17 Business Administrator

18 TERRY CORALLO

19 Executive Director of Information Services

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21

22

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1 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Good
2 evening. Good evening, ladies and gentlemen.
3 We're still a few minutes out. Our fifth
4 person, Councilman Morris, is on his way to
5 provide a quorum. But I hate to be late and I
6 hate not to start when the late folks come in
7 to make sure that they understand that they're
8 late.

9 So, I think you're without your
10 secretary. Madam Clerk is going to be
11 deputized, so we would call our meeting to
12 order and we'll do it in the reverse.

13 We'll do the roll call on the Board of Ed
14 side and get your preliminaries done and at the
15 end of that hopefully Councilman Morris would
16 have arrived and we can do it on this side.
17 Other than that we will operate in a committee
18 format until such time that we obtain a quorum.

19 This is our Joint Meeting of the Board of
20 Ed necessitated by the financial conditions
21 that have upset us and so we've called for this
22 communication that we can jointly look at the
23 issues and see how we can navigate our way
24 forward. All right.

25 Madam Clerk, would you please do the roll

1 call for the Paterson Board of Education that's
2 here with us this evening.

3 THE CLERK: Yes, Mr. President.

4 Dr. Donnie Evans, Superintendent?

5 DR. EVANS: Here.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Do you do
7 any preliminaries?

8 COMMISSIONER IRVING: I'll call the
9 Public Meetings Act.

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Go ahead.

11 COMMISSIONER IRVING: Thank you,
12 Council President.

13 The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act
14 was enacted to ensure the right of the public
15 to have advance notice of, and to attend the
16 meetings of the Paterson Public School
17 District, as well as other public bodies in
18 which business is discussed or acted upon.

19 In accordance with the provisions of this
20 law, the Paterson Public School District has
21 caused notice of a Special Joint Meeting, March
22 30, 2016, at 7:00 p.m., City Council Chambers,
23 155 Market Street, Paterson, New Jersey to be
24 published by having the date, time and place
25 posted in the office of the City Clerk of the

1 City of Paterson, at the entrance of the
2 Paterson School District offices, on the
3 district's website, and by sending notice of
4 the meeting to the Arab Voice, El Diario, the
5 Italian Voice, the North Jersey Herald & News,
6 and the Record.

7 Madam Clerk, roll call, please.

8 THE CLERK: Certainly. Dr. Donnie
9 Evans?

10 DR. EVANS: Here.

11 THE CLERK: Ms. Eileen Shafer?

12 MS. SHAFER: Here.

13 THE CLERK: Ms. Daisy Ayala?

14 MS. AYALA: Here.

15 THE CLERK: Mr. Terry Corallo?

16 COMMISSIONER CORALLO: Present.

17 THE CLERK: Commissioner Oshin
18 Castillo?

19 COMMISSIONER KERR: She's here.

20 THE CLERK: Commissioner Chrystal
21 Cleaves?

22 COMMISSIONER CLEAVES: Present.

23 THE CLERK: Commissioner Jonathan
24 Hodges?

25 COMMISSIONER HODGES: Present.

1 THE CLERK: Commissioner Errol Kerr?

2 COMMISSIONER KERR: Here.

3 THE CLERK: Commissioner Lilisa

4 Mimms?

5 COMMISSIONER MIMMS: Here.

6 THE CLERK: Commissioner Nakima

7 Redmon?

8 COMMISSIONER REDMON: Here.

9 THE CLERK: Commissioner Flavio

10 Rivera?

11 COMMISSIONER RIVERA: Here.

12 THE CLERK: Commissioner Kenneth

13 Simmons?

14 COMMISSIONER SIMMONS: Here.

15 THE CLERK: Commissioner Christopher

16 Irving?

17 COMMISSIONER IRVING: Here.

18 THE CLERK: Mr. President.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Thank you,

20 Madam Clerk. We'll now do the roll call for

21 the City Council.

22 THE CLERK: Yes, Mr. President.

23 Roll call for the Special Meeting between the

24 Joint Meeting of the Board of Education and the

25 Municipal Council.

1 Councilman Akhtaruzzaman? Councilwoman
2 Cotton?

3 COUNCILWOMAN COTTON: Here.

4 THE CLERK: Councilwoman Davila?
5 Councilman Jackson?

6 COUNCILMAN JACKSON: Present.

7 THE CLERK: Councilman Mendez?

8 COUNCILMAN MENDEZ: Present.

9 THE CLERK: Councilman Morris?

10 COUNCILMAN MORRIS: Seated and
11 please accept my apologies for being late. As
12 you know, I work in healthcare and oftentimes
13 we get called to do things at the very last
14 moment.

15 Here.

16 THE CLERK: Councilman Sayegh?
17 Councilman Tavarez? Mr. President?

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCKOY: Here.

19 Councilman, no need for apologies.
20 Although we were a bit late, but we certainly
21 appreciate your presence this evening as
22 opposed to my colleagues who are not here. We
23 always have to take things in context.

24 COUNCILMAN MORRIS: I could have
25 mentioned that I was late because I was

1 finishing off a tax appeal for one of the Board
2 Commissioners over there, but I'll keep that to
3 myself.

4 COMMISSIONER IRVING: Council
5 President, just in accordance with the
6 conversation we just had, what we'd like to do
7 tonight is to allow the opportunity for
8 Dr. Evans to introduce to the Council and share
9 with you all the same presentation he shared
10 with the school district, and then to allow the
11 public to have an opportunity to comment on
12 Dr. Evans' presentation and then for the
13 Council to engage in conversation with the
14 Superintendent and/or with the Board
15 specifically relative to the issue at hand,
16 which is underfunding of the school system and
17 then the proportionate levy of a 13 -- now
18 currently a 13 percent tax on the City. That
19 is of grave concern to this Board.

20 I think we have been united and unified
21 in recognizing that a tax increase of any sort
22 at this point in time just is not possible for
23 a multitude of different reasons. Some have
24 been discussed in front of this body and
25 certainly been discussed at length within the

1 Board of Education. But, we want to
2 expeditiously but thoroughly want to have a
3 spirited conversation, but also a respectful
4 conversation with each other, you know,
5 regarding this.

6 At this point in time I'm going to turn
7 it over to Dr. Evans, Council President, for
8 his presentation.

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCKOY: Yes. Dr.
10 Evans.

11 DR. EVANS: Thank you, President
12 Irving. Council President and Members of the
13 Council, it is in deed a pleasure and in some
14 ways a replete because the topic isn't the most
15 pleasant of topics to have to discuss and to
16 comment on tonight, but indeed it is an honor
17 and a pleasure to address the Council as well
18 as Members of the Board.

19 You have a folder in front of you, a
20 black folder with a label on it that says
21 "Special Joint Meeting between the Board of
22 Education and City Council" that includes
23 information to which I'm going to refer and it
24 also includes the comments that I'm about to
25 make. And because you have it in writing, I

1 won't cover it word for word. I would
2 undoubtedly be brief because I know that there
3 is a strong desire to engage in conversation
4 between the Council and the Board as well as
5 with the community as well.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Right.
7 Dr. Evans, before you move on into your
8 presentation, I failed to have the Special
9 Meeting Notice read in and as you were
10 mentioning that, I think that's a necessity.

11 Madam Clerk, would you do those
12 preliminaries for us.

13 THE CLERK: Yes, Mr. President.
14 First I will read the 48-Hour Notice notice.

15 The time, date, location and agenda of
16 this meeting were mailed to the North Jersey
17 Herald News, the Record, the Arabic Voice, the
18 Italian Voice, the Passaic County Pulse, the
19 New Jersey Pulse formerly known as the Paterson
20 Pulse, the Rumbo Dominicano formerly Rumbo
21 Latino, the Paterson Press, the Quisqueya
22 Internacional, the El Especial, the Christian
23 Heritage newspaper, the U.S. Latina Pulse, the
24 uslatinapulse.com, and the City Post at
25 11:00 a.m., on March 17, 2016, posted on the

1 bulletin board in the offices of the City
2 Clerk, at said City Hall, and mailed to the
3 offices of the persons who paid the fee of \$25.

4 Mr. President.

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Thank you.
6 Thank you, Madam Clerk. Dr. Evans, you may
7 proceed.

8 DR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr.
9 President.

10 THE CLERK: Excuse me, Mr.
11 President, if I may. Should I read the Special
12 Meeting Notice?

13 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Oh, Madam
14 Clerk, yes. I'm so sorry. I missed your
15 queue.

16 THE CLERK: Just to read it into the
17 record.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Yes,
19 please.

20 THE CLERK: Pursuant to the Open
21 Public Meetings Act, be advised that the
22 Paterson Municipal Council has scheduled a
23 Special Joint Meeting with the Board of
24 Education Commissioners to be held on
25 Wednesday, March 30, 2016, at 7:00 p.m., in the

1 Municipal Council Chambers, Third Floor, 155
2 Market Street, Paterson, New Jersey for the
3 purpose of discussing the following matter:

4 Public Portion.

5 Then there's a discussion.

6 Discussion with Dr. Donnie W. Evans,
7 State District Superintendent, the Board of
8 Education Commissioners, and City Officials
9 regarding the Board of Education Budget
10 Planning for 2016-2017 School Year.

11 No formal action will be taken.

12 Mr. President.

13 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Thank you.
14 Thank you. Dr. Evans, third time is a charm.

15 DR. EVANS: Thank you. Some of you
16 know Ronald Ferguson or you know the name
17 Ronald Ferguson, who is an African-American
18 Economist and Educator on faculty at Harvard
19 University. He once said in a presentation to
20 Rhode Island Superintendents a few years ago
21 that "Education is the best economic policy
22 there is for any community," a strong belief
23 held by many including myself.

24 Consistent with this position, the vision
25 of the Paterson Public School District is to be

1 the leader in educating New Jersey's urban
2 youth and our mission is to prepare each
3 student for success in the college or
4 university of their choosing and in their
5 chosen profession. More specifically, our work
6 has focussed on seven "transformation
7 objectives" as described in the annual report.

8 You have in your folder a copy of the
9 District's annual report in narrative form and
10 in colloquy form and it describes in detail the
11 District's vision and mission that are
12 represented and thought out for the strategic
13 plan as well as seven major objectives that
14 drive the work in the school district.

15 Those drivers include: Building healthy
16 school cultures and climates; efficient and
17 responsive district operations; revising
18 teacher and administrator evaluation systems;
19 implementing the Common Core State Standards;
20 implementing high impact academic interventions
21 for low performing students; strengthening the
22 district's assessment system; and building
23 capacity among staff, inclusive of teachers,
24 principals and vice principals, and district
25 administrators and supervisors.

1 During the past six years, the
2 initiatives and strategies that are associated
3 with and aligned with both our strategic plan
4 and these objectives that I've mentioned have
5 resulted in much improved academic and process
6 outcomes for our students and you'll see a
7 listing there under Item No. 3, A through N,
8 that illustrate the kinds of things that we've
9 demonstrated in terms of improvement and much
10 of this I know that the community and the
11 Council and definitely the Board is very
12 familiar with including the restructuring of
13 our schools starting with Eastside, ultimately
14 Kennedy, and then we restructured and
15 re-staffed. There was more than restructuring
16 schools, we re-staffed those two schools along
17 with many others at the elementary level and in
18 the high school level.

19 So we have demonstrated significant, and
20 in some cases, record-breaking improvements in
21 performance on the State assessment,
22 particularly HSPA. Our district has
23 demonstrated, before HSPA was no longer being
24 used by the state a couple years ago and
25 replaced by PARCC, our district was at that

1 particular point demonstrating its highest
2 performance ever on HSPA. It continued to
3 improve year after year until the test was
4 replaced with PARCC.

5 Historic increases in high school
6 graduation rates as determined by State and
7 Federal criteria and two of our schools
8 demonstrated 100 percent graduation rates, and
9 they include Rosa Parks and HARP. And Rosa
10 Parks has the unique distinction in our
11 district of having demonstrated in two
12 consecutive years 100 percent graduation rates.

13 Significant improvements in QSAC scores.
14 QSAC it represents the major for determining
15 whether or not the district is meeting
16 standards and expectations set forth in the law
17 and those standard include instruction program.
18 They include operation and a number of other
19 standards. And the district that's successful
20 earn the return of control to the district in
21 three of the five major areas and we're well on
22 our way to becoming in full control of our
23 district if we do things right over the next
24 one to two years.

25 The best audits ever have been

1 demonstrated in our district since,
2 particularly since State control was invoked in
3 1991, according to the auditors that audited
4 our records and according to the Department of
5 Education as well.

6 Evaluating and restructuring
7 district-level divisions to increase capacity.

8 Making adjustments and sharpening our
9 focus on implementing recommendations for
10 improving education and related services to
11 students with disabilities, an area that we
12 continue to work in.

13 And you see a number of others there and
14 I'll skip down to PARCC. You know, PARCC is a
15 new test. It is a test of higher standards,
16 but even there we have distinguished ourselves.
17 One of our schools, School 28 was the top
18 performing school in Passaic County considering
19 all the elementary schools in Passaic County in
20 three grades -- four grades actually in English
21 Language Arts and Math, and we were very proud
22 of that to distinguish ourselves in that way.
23 And we fared well as compared to other schools
24 in our district, actually other groups as well.

25 Our district leads the State in

1 implementing breakfast after the bell. As you
2 know many of our kids come to school hungry,
3 meaning they haven't had breakfast before they
4 come to school. And so we implemented that
5 program so that when they come they can benefit
6 from a breakfast that they can be better
7 prepared to receive the instruction they are
8 going to get in our classrooms. Our district
9 leads the State in participating in that
10 program.

11 Facilities. We over the next three years
12 will acquire four new facility acquisitions.
13 Now, not necessarily new buildings. All of
14 them won't be new buildings. One of them in
15 particular won't be a new building, but two of
16 them -- three of them will be new buildings.
17 Two will open next fall, one should open within
18 the next two years, and then once that third
19 one open, then we will acquire the Paterson
20 Catholic facility as a school district facility
21 as well. So we're acquiring four facilities in
22 the next few years that are either being built
23 or transferred to us by the SDA.

24 And I can go on and on and on. The point
25 is we have been demonstrating significant

1 progress and that has occurred because we've
2 done some things ultimately to make that
3 happen. And those kinds of things really are
4 where we face our current challenges as it
5 relates to the budget and I'll say more about
6 that in just a moment.

7 The fiscal challenges that we currently
8 face actually go beyond our control in many
9 cases because we obviously benefit from State
10 dollars, federal dollars and local dollars to
11 be able to balance our budget and move forward.
12 And when we have cost drivers that are out of
13 control as well, that makes it difficult for us
14 to balance the budget.

15 And I've noted some things there that
16 really represent examples of the kinds of
17 things like benefits costs. They've been
18 increasing dramatically and that challenges us
19 particularly when we are flat-funded at the
20 State level to be able to deliver a balanced
21 budget without having to make significant cuts
22 from year to year.

23 We entered into a new collective
24 bargaining agreement that also had a dramatic
25 impact as it relates to salaries and these are

1 well-deserved salaries. That's not the issue.
2 The issue is from year to year that increases
3 our fiscal obligation when at a time when
4 funding is not increasing.

5 Last spring we went through a significant
6 budget reduction exercise and reduced more than
7 500 school and district-level positions from
8 our rolls. That was significant. Some of
9 those positions were vacant and they were
10 intentionally vacant because we were trying to
11 prepare ourselves for the times when we knew we
12 would ultimately have to cut positions if,
13 indeed, we were not given that additional funds
14 to support our work. In the end we ended up
15 reducing our staff, the staff who were in place
16 by 375 between the school and the district
17 office.

18 And then this year, obviously, we
19 continue to face funding challenges and that
20 presents a huge issue when we're already
21 demonstrating significant progress in the
22 things that we're doing that results in that
23 process have to be cut and that's literally
24 what's happening. I alluded to some of those
25 things in one of the items here, number seven

1 in particular. Full service community schools,
2 which is a program that benefits not only our
3 children but our families to better position
4 them and help them as it relates to health
5 issues, language issues, and a number of other
6 issues which, in turn, helps our students to be
7 better prepared when they come to school as an
8 example, and there are many other programs as
9 illustrated in that particular item.

10 (At this point in the proceeding, Ms. Pou
11 joined the Council.)

12 DR. EVANS: The most unpleasant part
13 of this budget exercise is finding funds to do
14 the things that we have to do to keep pace with
15 the progress that we're making. To say it
16 another way if funds are not available to do
17 the things that we've had to do in the past to
18 make these things happen, then we run the risk
19 of slipping backwards or not moving forward at
20 least, but perhaps even slipping backwards in
21 terms of the progress that we've made.

22 I have some items that are included in
23 the packet that are listed under number eight.
24 One of them shows the revenues that are coming
25 into the district from the three major sources

1 that ultimately result in funding coming to us,
2 and it's an item that's headed "Paterson City
3 Tax Levies (County, School & municipal)." And
4 it really shows over the past 24, 25 years how
5 much money has come into the district as well
6 as to the county and to the City from tax
7 revenues and that item speaks for itself.

8 Competitive grants. We haven't sat idly
9 by and not attempted to find funds beyond what
10 we're allocated. We have gone after federal
11 funding, additional federal funding. And one
12 of the items that you have in your packet is
13 headed "Accomplishments 2014-2015 Competitive
14 Grants Awards - Over \$38 million." Between
15 2010 and 2015, the district has gone after and
16 sought aggressively federal funding to support
17 our work and that has resulted in over
18 \$38 million in grant funding and these are all
19 competitive grants. These are not entitlement
20 grants. These are funds for which we had to
21 compete with other districts or in some cases
22 colleges and universities to get because,
23 again, we knew what our needs were and we were
24 hoping they would help close the gap, if you
25 will, the revenue gap, or the gap between

1 revenue and expenditures by generating as much
2 as we could from third-party sources and that's
3 the result of that effort.

4 Local, state, federal revenue comparison
5 1991-2017. There's another item in there that
6 actually shows a comparison of funding coming
7 into the district for -- from rather federal
8 sources, from local sources, as well as from
9 the State. It's headed "Paterson Public
10 Schools Revenue Comparison 1991-2017," so you
11 can see just at a glance how much funding has
12 been influenced over the past few years.

13 There is also an article there I put that
14 you probably saw that in the -- I think it was
15 the Record that that article appeared, that
16 indicates that State-wide districts are faced
17 with the kind of challenges that we are, but I
18 think we are probably on the extreme end of
19 this need continuum, if you will.

20 Attached is information that indicates
21 the districts across the state are facing the
22 same or similar challenges. Also attached is
23 information as I've mentioned that gives you
24 the state and local information and information
25 particularly as to the issue of taxes.

1 In closing, I wish to state again that
2 increasing taxes is not pleasant. It's the
3 most unpleasant part of this exercise. In
4 fact, I refer to it in my talking points as a
5 bitter pill to have to swallow for everyone,
6 including me. I am a resident of Paterson, so
7 I'm impacted just as all of the other residents
8 in the City of Paterson. However, I believe as
9 the lyrics of Whitney Houston's song suggests
10 *"I believe the children are our future, teach*
11 *them well and let them lead the way."* Indeed
12 this is about our children and doing the very
13 best we can for each and everyone of them.

14 Thank you, Mr. President.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Thank you,
16 Dr. Evans. Let's be clear, I know the
17 President has alluded to it, what is the budget
18 recommendation where we are now?

19 COMMISSIONER IRVING: The tax levy?

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Right.

21 DR. EVANS: \$5 million. And I would
22 also say to you we have -- we have another week
23 before we submit the budget and my commitment
24 and I put that in my talking points as well is
25 to continue to search for ways to reduce that

1 figure. It is my desire, strong desire to
2 reduce it. We haven't done it as yet, but we
3 haven't given up yet either. So we're
4 continuing to pursue every avenue possible to
5 reduce that 5 million.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: And we
7 certainly appreciate that and support that
8 effort because it only takes a teaspoon of
9 water to drown if you're already filled -- if
10 your lungs are full, and the taxpayers are
11 really at their wits end at this point. And so
12 we wish you all that effort and we're here to
13 reenforce that and support the efforts moving
14 forward because we are in a distressed cities
15 condition to the \$25 million State Aid to
16 partially plug the deficit in the City budget
17 and we're still facing a 5.8 percent tax
18 increase. While it may appear or sound modest,
19 it is significant for quite a number of folks
20 in Paterson given our medium income and the
21 high unemployment and underemployment in our
22 City. So any additional increase certainly
23 will be of grave concern to us.

24 We understand that the State has its
25 obligation for a thorough and efficient

1 education of our young people and it is our
2 hope that they would step up to the plate and
3 deliver on that promise recognizing that
4 ultimately education is the State's
5 responsibility. The local community plays its
6 part and its role, but basically based on its
7 capacity and Paterson is beyond its capacity at
8 this point.

9 I know that the Council Members and
10 Commissioners will have a few questions. We
11 both want dialogue -- thank you, Mr. Ming --
12 but I think it would also be helpful to have,
13 given that this is a Special Meeting, to a
14 modest adjusted Public Portion so that we can
15 hear from the public their questions and
16 concerns.

17 We are seated a little bit differently
18 tonight, so I'm going to modify the approach of
19 the public. Yes. If we can use the middle
20 one, the second one next to you, Madam BA. So
21 if we just roll the chair back.

22 Who is the first speaker?

23 THE CLERK: Mr. President, the first
24 speaker is Mr. Corey Teague.

25 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Teague.

1 COMMISSIONER IRVING: Council
2 President, do we need a motion to go to Public
3 Portion?

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: No. The
5 Public Portion is now open. That's it.

6 Mr. Teague, we're relocating you just so
7 that you're not speaking to the Commissioners'
8 back.

9 Madam BA, could you for the moment shift
10 over to your left one and then move the chair.

11 MS. POU: Okay. Which way?

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Your
13 right. Your right.

14 MS. POU: My right?

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Your
16 right.

17 MS. POU: So you want him here?

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Yes.

19 MS. POU: Okay.

20 MR. TEAGUE: Good evening, everyone.
21 Commissioners --

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Give us
23 your name and we say address, but at least a
24 town.

25 MR. TEAGUE: Okay. Corey Teague, 65

1 Prince Street, Paterson. Good evening,
2 everyone and Commissioners. I can speak to you
3 much differently because last year I sat in the
4 same seat you are right now. We come to the
5 same rhythm and roll year after year and I'm
6 going to continue to echo what I've been saying
7 for the longest.

8 The State right now according to the SFRA
9 owes us in excess of \$281 million, all right.
10 They're not -- they're illegally underfunding
11 our district. If Governor Christie would do
12 what he's suppose to do by law, we wouldn't
13 even be sitting here right now.

14 So some way somehow if the Council and
15 the Board of Ed can put together a resolution
16 or something making it very clear that what's
17 happening with our schools is not a direct
18 result of the School Board here or the Council,
19 but it's a direct result of the State of New
20 Jersey illegally underfunding our City.
21 They're doing it on the municipal level, now
22 they're going to do it on the school level.

23 Governor Christie does not care about
24 Paterson. He does not care about public
25 education. He does not care about our kids.

1 He wants to underfund us. He wants to pretty
2 much replace public schools with charter
3 schools, private schools. He just doesn't
4 care. Now, the long term, of course, we're
5 going to have a new Governor hopefully in, you
6 know, about 2017, but in the meantime we have
7 to put the pressure on this current Governor
8 and make him understand that because he doesn't
9 want -- because him and Mr. Hespe, because they
10 want to continue to play games, it's going to
11 cost our children a lot.

12 We're already facing a deficit this year.
13 Next year that deficit is going to continue to
14 increase. So I'm pretty much begging you all
15 if you can somehow come together to draft up
16 something to get to the public to get to the
17 Governor to let them know that situation is not
18 our fault. It's because the State has
19 deliberately, for the last seven years,
20 deliberately underfunded our budget and they
21 have not funded our schools in accordance with
22 the School Funding Reform Act.

23 I know it's not something that you want
24 to talk about, but it's something we have to
25 face. If we don't put the pressure on them and

1 we don't let them know and we don't have a
2 collective effort to let them know what they're
3 doing, they're going to continue to ignore us.
4 That's where the problem is. Raising taxes is
5 not the answer, making the State do their job
6 is.

7 Thank you.

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Thank you.
9 Next speaker, Madam Clerk.

10 THE CLERK: Yes, Mr. President. The
11 next speaker is Elizabeth. Just Elizabeth.

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Not here.
13 Next speaker.

14 THE CLERK: Next speaker Charles A.
15 Ferrer, F-E-R-R-E-R.

16 MR. FERRER: Good evening, everyone.
17 Charles Ferrer, Paterson. Educator. First
18 vice president of the PEA.

19 I again concur with Mr. Teague in what he
20 said about demanding -- Senator Pou, we need
21 your help making the Commissioner and the
22 Governor understand the importance of following
23 the funding formula that the legislators put in
24 place.

25 I did a little research because it's

1 important to do some research and I went to the
2 N.J.S.B.A. website, the New Jersey School Board
3 Association, and there's been a lot of concerns
4 and questions about the sports program. And
5 they said in this article entitled "Keeping an
6 Eye on your School District's Finances," it
7 talks about when funding is particularly tight,
8 there's a wave of interest in charging students
9 to participate in extracurricular activities
10 when athletics and other extracurricular
11 activities are typically a small portion of the
12 annual budget. In the range that they talk
13 about pay-to-play and I know they've done this
14 in some school districts where people have paid
15 for their children to play sports. But one of
16 the things that it said that before we make
17 this decision about programs, they said that
18 there needs to be research done. This is the
19 New Jersey School Board Association
20 recommending that it says appointing an ad hoc
21 temporary committee with knowledgeable members
22 of the public, public, that wouldn't mean the
23 stakeholders, such as a financial manager or
24 accountant can help the board investigate
25 topics for financial decisions and so forth.

1 It's important that we have to be
2 included in the process. We can't wait until
3 the whole thing has been put together and then
4 to try to have input and discussion because
5 that's after the fact.

6 I'm finding out some things. I plan to
7 call the County Commissioner tomorrow. I plan
8 to call Commissioner Hespe and ask him a very
9 simple question.

10 I have nothing against Jersey City. I'm
11 glad they're getting the financing that they're
12 suppose to get. I have nothing against Newark
13 and any district. I just have an interest in
14 making sure that the children of Paterson get
15 what they're entitled to according to the
16 funding formula, and based on information that
17 I have found through research, that's not
18 happening.

19 You cannot and I will not allow the
20 children of Paterson to be treated as second or
21 third-class citizens just because they're from
22 Paterson. Whatever Jersey City gets and any
23 other district, we should be entitled to it
24 too. If they only give -- short Jersey City by
25 less than a million dollars, then short

1 Paterson by less than a million dollars and
2 we'll have no complaints.

3 Those are the questions and discussion I
4 will have with Commissioner Hespe, if we can
5 get through to him, the County Superintendent.
6 But, we need to put together committees and
7 have discussions before we make decisions
8 whether it's a sports program or other program.

9 Council Members, Board Commissioners,
10 thank you.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Thank you.
12 Next speaker, Madam Clerk.

13 THE CLERK: Yes, Mr. President. The
14 next speaker is Bilal Hakeem.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Madam
16 Clerk, I'm going to ask you to call the next
17 two names so that those persons can begin to
18 mosey on to the right side of the room.

19 THE CLERK: Yes, Mr. President. The
20 next two persons are Ernest Rucker and David
21 Gilmore.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: And
23 they'll need all the time we can give them.

24 MR. HAKEEM: Yeah, I need a chair.
25 I'm a little tired. I've been travelling all

1 day. If you don't mind.

2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY:

3 Absolutely.

4 MR. HAKEEM: Good evening. Good
5 evening, everyone, to the Commissioners of the
6 Board of Education and the City Council. It's
7 always nice to come to the corridors of
8 diplomacy.

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: All right.
10 You look good. Don't be too confident. You
11 still only have three minutes.

12 MR. HAKEEM: Well, let me just cut
13 straight through the chase.

14 And, you know, echoing what Corey Teague
15 and Ferrer mentioned, it's no doubt -- you
16 know, for 25 years the State has been here and
17 what we see happening is a result of the State.
18 What we see happening is the result of the
19 State. They're the ones that have been in
20 control here. The commissioners that are on
21 this here Board function in an advisory
22 capacity. They don't really have any real
23 power.

24 It is clear that 25 years ago when this
25 here district was taken over, you know, some of

1 'ya was, you know, 'ya were very young. I
2 remember when it happened and I remember that
3 there were people that are still walking around
4 here in the City Council that colluded with
5 those forces to make that happen. Yeah. A
6 Judice of factor. And I say that in this
7 context because the Governor of the State of
8 New Jersey has an agenda, and that agenda is to
9 destroyed public education. He's pushing
10 charter. Now, when I mentioned charter someone
11 screamed out last night at the Board of
12 Education, I like charter. I like it too. I
13 like competition. Yeah, we should have
14 competition, but there should be another source
15 for them to receive their funding. The way
16 they're taking the money, it just creates the
17 collapse of the public system. So they know
18 what they're doing.

19 So what I'm going to say to the two
20 distinguished bodies here, President Obama just
21 appointed a new commissioner of education. We
22 have drafted a letter, myself and some other
23 parents, and if we don't see something
24 happening soon, I think a federal monitor is
25 needed to be called in this here area here

1 because it's no doubt about it the Governor in
2 the State of New Jersey sitting in Trenton is
3 nothing but a bully. He's a big bully. I want
4 to call him something else, but I'm not going
5 to be obscene tonight. He's a big bully.
6 That's what he's doing.

7 And, you know, to the State-appointed
8 superintendent, you know, I looked at your
9 resume last night. It's on line. It's in my
10 download. It's impressive. It's impressive
11 and if I was you, as I mentioned and one of the
12 my friends he said, "Well he's not going to
13 walk away from over \$200,000." If I was you, I
14 wouldn't let them continue to use me in this
15 here process of destroying things here in the
16 City of Paterson. You have many years in. You
17 could enjoy a retirement and you have
18 qualifications to go anywhere. I salute you.
19 I looked at it last night and it made my hair
20 stand up on my head and I ain't got much up
21 there.

22 So I just say this here I'm very serious
23 about -- and I know the Governor's friend is
24 here in the City of Paterson and I have no
25 personal quorums with him, but I do have a

1 problem with redirecting money from the public
2 treasurer to fund schools.

3 One last thing and I'm out of here. We
4 waste a lot of money. We waste a lot of money.
5 There is an alternative school that you have up
6 in Prospect Park called STRIVE, right? That's
7 on the chopping block. That's a disgrace.
8 That place is a disgrace. I've been there to
9 observe it. They don't have -- number one, you
10 don't have the proper person there in the
11 position running the place. Number two, there
12 are no resources.

13 When you're talking about children coming
14 out of a setting in the other schools with
15 discipline problems and they're not having any
16 resources to deal with, I'm telling you that
17 place is insane. And I'm telling you right now
18 and a lot of the students that -- and there's
19 only a few -- that been sent to that school
20 coming from the staff there saying that, you
21 know, they sent some of these here children
22 from schools talking about principles. From
23 some of the other schools sent these children
24 to these alternative schools for discipline
25 problems, right, that really didn't even exist.

1 The same type of misdiagnosis that's always
2 going on because they don't want to deal with
3 the child. I mean, this is what I heard from
4 people anonymously there. So that was a
5 failure and we need to be mindful of how we're
6 spending our money. That's a disgrace up
7 there. It is a disgrace up there.

8 COUNCILWOMAN COTTON: What's the
9 name?

10 MR. HAKEEM: STRIVE. It's no strive
11 in going up there -- going on up there.

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Next
13 speaker, Madam Clerk. Mr. Rucker.

14 MR. RUCKER: I made it up here.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Thank you.

16 THE CLERK: Mr. Ernest Rucker and
17 then Mr. David Gilmore.

18 MR. RUCKER: Ernest Rucker,
19 Paterson. Last night I went to the Board
20 meeting and I heard many ideas. We heard where
21 some things should be cut and other things
22 could not be.

23 These two bodies are struck with a
24 dilemma. We on one hand want adequate
25 education and funding for our children. On the

1 other hand the taxpayers cannot afford another
2 dime. It's a dilemma. But along with that,
3 Dr. Evans, I heard that you have not begun to
4 look at where we can strip that \$5 million.
5 I'm sad to hear that. We should have been
6 looking at the savings of that \$5 million from
7 the time it was proposed.

8 The major issue that we face here is
9 inadequate funding. Supreme court says we are
10 to be funded fully. All of these years and
11 last year when we faced the same issue, we did
12 not begin the process of taking the State to
13 court as well as the City. We should have been
14 involved in that to make sure that our schools
15 are funded.

16 You know, every year I look and they cut
17 25 million, 45 million. Next year there's
18 another cut. The following year there's
19 another cut until there's nothing to cut. If
20 you think that you're going to be able to make
21 up these budget shortfalls on the City of
22 Paterson, let me tell you we don't have it.
23 It's a sad fact.

24 Instead of each year coming back talking
25 about we need 5 million, let's start the

1 process of taking the State to court. And I
2 know that puts you in a very difficult
3 position. I would be in that same position if
4 I was sitting there. But we have to make that
5 determination. Do we come back year after year
6 and go through the same thing when our
7 municipal budget is in trouble, our school
8 budget is in trouble? Let's get our funding to
9 the level it should be. If the State of New
10 Jersey said that we owed them money, they're
11 going to get it by any means necessary.

12 Most of the people in this audience live
13 here in the City of Paterson. So it's a double
14 whammy on both ends again.

15 Has the process begun to take the State
16 of New Jersey to court based on the supreme
17 court ruling that says we must be fully funded?
18 Has anything been done to receive or to
19 retrieve the 280-something million dollars
20 owed? These are some questions that we have
21 been asking and we need to find out where we
22 are.

23 There is a unique saying in Paterson, if
24 you try to tax me too much, you can have the
25 house. And a lot of seniors have left their

1 homes. A lot of people that just bought homes
2 as their first homes are losing their homes.
3 We just went up 5.8 percent in taxes on an
4 already overburdened City.

5 And when I testified in front of the
6 assembly Monday, there was something very
7 interesting that happened. The young lady next
8 to me broke down. There's human suffering
9 that's going along with the numbers. We have
10 mothers that want to make sure their children
11 get the education, but we have a problem with
12 educational outcomes as well. We talk about
13 graduations, but we don't talk about when they
14 get to the colleges, they can't function.
15 That's a problem. When we talk about these
16 numbers on both ends of the spectrum, we're
17 looking for the relief necessary that is fair
18 to the Board of Education and fair to the City
19 of Paterson.

20 In closing, no longer are we going to sit
21 by and yell education until this system starts
22 to go after the money it deserves. Do your
23 job, we will back you up. But you can't keep
24 coming to us talking about 4 million, 5
25 million, 6 million when we just lost a half a

1 million dollars because we asked for cuts.

2 Thank you.

3 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Thank you.

4 THE CLERK: Next speaker Mr. David
5 Gilmore.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Call the
7 next three, Madam Clerk.

8 THE CLERK: Mr. Sirrano Baldeo, Ms.
9 Rosie Grant, and Mr. Donald Lynch.

10 MR. GILMORE: This chair is hot.
11 Good evening. Dave Gilmore, Paterson.
12 Taxpayer as well. My kids are grown, thank
13 God.

14 But I come here tonight to talk about
15 some of the issues because as you can see on
16 many of these venues the public doesn't show
17 up. They're not here tonight. They should be
18 here kicking and screaming. If it was an
19 abatement being dissolved, they'd be here. But
20 they're not here tonight and they should be.

21 But notwithstanding, Dr. Evans, I heard
22 your first opening remarks in terms of your
23 presentation and it was just too much, too much
24 embellishment on how good the School Board is
25 doing or the public district is doing not the

1 school board. I think you're doing the best
2 you can with what you got. But in terms of
3 accomplishments, I never give up the
4 opportunity to talk about the 60 minimum
5 passing grade and social promotion. It's real.
6 We're pushing these kids through and then we're
7 bragging about pushing them through with 100
8 percent graduation rates. Let's publish the
9 GPAs and grade levels and what increments from
10 60. Publish the GPA.

11 These -- I don't really have a real big
12 problem with people's salaries. I think if
13 people are professionals, they should get paid
14 for what they went to school for and the
15 accomplishments and what they bring to the
16 table. But my God, it's just not -- we're not
17 getting what we're paying for.

18 You know, I also look back at the folk
19 that were celebrating that the State had given
20 us budget and fiscal control -- fiscal and
21 curricular -- what is it? Personnel. It's a
22 set up for failure. How could you be glad that
23 you got it when they're going to cut you 45
24 million? They gave you the knife to cut your
25 own throat, so they can't be blamed. Oh, we

1 gave it to you, you did it. So I don't
2 understand where is the celebration.
3 Twenty-five years of an opportunity to prepare
4 and we're in disrepair continually year after
5 year.

6 Now, we can't blame you for that. That's
7 the State, but what we can blame you for and
8 I'm here to do that to raise the voice of
9 concern is the lack of backing us into a fully
10 funded budget. We're accepting the fact and
11 pushing and promoting a State budget that is
12 already in deficit. They're deciding --
13 they've told us, and again, I'm taking liberty
14 with the accusation -- allegation, but they
15 must have with the State-appointed
16 superintendent bringing a budget that they will
17 approve. We don't want that damn budget. We
18 want a budget that reflects what you're suppose
19 to pay us and then kick it back. I don't want
20 to hear that, "Oh, they won't take this
21 budget." We're not asking you to take it,
22 we're telling you what we want. Now tell us
23 why you won't take it? That's what we should
24 -- that's the position that we should be
25 taking. This is what we're -- allotted by the

1 supreme court and this is what we're asking
2 for, tell us why you won't do it? That's what
3 -- I believe that's the position we should
4 take, you know, and go forward from there
5 because underfunding us continually, in
6 closing, is a criminal act. You're defying the
7 supreme court.

8 So when do we stand up and say no more,
9 enough is enough? And it's about -- it should
10 be about education not about the money, but
11 about education and educational outcomes and
12 what we need to do to ensure that these kids
13 are getting a quality education because I don't
14 think they are, not with a 60 minimum passing
15 grade and not with credit repair pushing kids
16 through that have missed the obligatory
17 attendance requirements. What is credit
18 repair? I don't know. There's something wrong
19 with this when they don't have the proper face
20 time with the teachers, but they can go to some
21 filtered condensed version of class attendance
22 or curriculum and get pushed through. It's
23 called social promotion continuously. No
24 matter how you disguise it, no matter how you
25 talk about, it's social promotion and our kids

1 are suffering for it. Paterson is suffering
2 for it. The future is suffering for it. The
3 image is suffering for it. The business
4 opportunities are suffering for it. Everybody
5 is doing or suffering in this particular
6 situation.

7 Thank you very much.

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCKOY: Thank you.
9 Thank you, Mr. Gilmore. Next speaker, Madam
10 Clerk.

11 THE CLERK: Yes, Mr. President.
12 It's Mr. Sirrano Baldeo.

13 MR. BALDEO: My name is Sirrano
14 Keith Baldeo, from Paterson and Rochelle, Park.
15 I had on my Facebook page a lot of people say
16 why don't you just move in here and run for
17 mayor. Run for mayor.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCKOY: How many
19 people told you that? Don't listen to them.

20 MR. BALDEO: You didn't interrupt
21 anybody else, don't interrupt me, please.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCKOY: Don't say
23 that.

24 MR. BALDEO: I have a couple of
25 questions that, Dr. Evans, through the chair to

1 Dr. Evans and through the chair to Nellie Pou,
2 and I'm going to get to that in a second. But
3 I think, you know, there are four of you
4 running for the City Council. And, Sister
5 Mimms, you said the reason that you're doing
6 that is because you can't make decisions here
7 for the kids that you can make over there and
8 that's one of the reasons you're running. So I
9 hope you watch the line in the bridge that if
10 you get over there what happens, and I think
11 this is like déjà vu.

12 Through the chair to Dr. Evans. We were
13 here with the same \$5 million about a year ago
14 and I personally asked you, is there a
15 possibility that you don't have to charge
16 Paterson the extra \$5 million? And you said
17 yes, there's a possibility. And then you know
18 what, you went back and you didn't charge
19 Paterson the extra \$5 million. So I'm hoping
20 that would be the same case here.

21 Taxpayers are now paying up to \$8,000 in
22 additional taxes so far here in Paterson. The
23 budget that they just passed here, it was at
24 257 million that they shut the government down.
25 They passed it at 256 I think with a \$400,000

1 difference and that was hard for the City. So
2 now you want an extra \$5 million on a tight
3 budget that they just had. So I hope that you
4 can go back with the same déjà vu that we're
5 having here today and say you know what, I
6 don't have to take the extra \$5 million on top
7 of the \$39 million I'm already taking from
8 Paterson. I hope that can happen here today.

9 So my question is -- that was actually my
10 question not a statement. Through the chair to
11 Nellie Pou. What would happen if that
12 \$5 million was now -- now has to be taken out
13 of the Paterson budget on top of the 39
14 million? What would Paterson suffer if that
15 went to the State and was passed? I'm assuming
16 there would be major tax -- another tax
17 increase for Paterson taxpayers.

18 MS. POU: Council President, through
19 you.

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Yes, Madam
21 BA.

22 MS. POU: So, basically, what would
23 happen would be that, obviously, we would need
24 to add the additional \$5 million to the
25 collection of the tax levy through the

1 taxpayers. So it would -- the amount of the
2 taxes that would be increased to the taxpayers.
3 If the 5 million was to be applied, would be
4 increased through the tax levy.

5 MR. BALDEO: And it would be in the
6 thousands? 800? Or what?

7 MS. POU: Oh, we didn't do the
8 calculation in terms of what that actual cost
9 would be, quite honestly, but what you would
10 need to do if you're talking about \$5 million
11 based on the current tax rate and the amount
12 that we're now looking about -- I want to say
13 like maybe it could be like \$57.

14 MR. BALDEO: Well, Councilman Morris
15 had said when they saved the \$400,00, taxpayers
16 will see a \$200 increase. Based on \$400,000.
17 So based on \$5 million on the other side of
18 that coin --

19 MS. POU: So let me just correct
20 some of the numbers that you said. So the
21 amount of the City budget is not 200 and
22 whatever you said --

23 MR. BALDEO: 57 million.

24 MS. POU: Okay. That's not correct.
25 The amount is 275. The amount that was raised

1 -- the amount of the City budget to be raised
2 by taxation is 156, \$156 million. That
3 \$5 million then would be added to the 156 and
4 then the calculations would be done on 156 plus
5 the \$5 million.

6 MR. BALDEO: So there would be
7 another tax increase for that 5 million?

8 MS. POU: That would be based upon
9 just the School Board and that amount would
10 only be based on the amount that the Paterson
11 Public School District's tax -- school tax
12 amount is. The Paterson school tax amount, and
13 I don't have that, any of that information in
14 front of me, I was not asked to make any
15 presentation or discussion, but whatever the
16 amount is that we now currently pay for
17 Paterson school tax, that \$5 million would be
18 added to that. So it's not on top of the --
19 let me just make that clarification, so it's
20 not on top of the \$156 million, it's whatever
21 the amount that we now currently pay for school
22 taxes. So if we pay \$31 million I think it is?

23 MR. BALDEO: 39. I think 39
24 million.

25 MS. POU: I don't have that in front

1 of me. But whatever it is, it would be added.
2 The \$5 million would be added to that.

3 COMMISSIONER IRVING: Council
4 President, we have the figures.

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCKOY: Yes, Mr.
6 President. Go ahead.

7 COMMISSIONER IRVING: The increase
8 would be roughly in addition to what taxpayers
9 are currently paying per household, it would be
10 an additional \$149 on top of the current levy.

11 MS. POU: A year. Right. That's
12 for the year.

13 COMMISSIONER IRVING: That's
14 correct.

15 MS. POU: Now, if you multiply --
16 right, which is why I'm saying if you then
17 calculate that in terms of your quarterly
18 amount, then you just divide that by four and
19 that gives you the additional cost to the
20 taxpayers. So it's in -- actually, it's in
21 the, you know, small figure. So you're not
22 really talking about a lot, but any time that
23 you're dealing with taxes, it's always a
24 concern to all the taxpayers and we understand
25 that.

1 MR. BALDEO: Thanks.

2 MS. POU: You're welcome.

3 MR. BALDEO: Thank you.

4 MS. GRANT: Good evening. Rosie
5 Grant, Paterson Education Fund. Thank you for
6 this opportunity to speak.

7 I've provided for you tonight the PEF
8 school budget report and I will be speaking
9 from this report. It shows on the first page
10 that the total revenue and, in fact, the total
11 expenditures in this budget is \$560 million.
12 This budget cannot provide a thorough and
13 efficient education for our children in
14 Paterson. That's with the 5 million included.

15 The New Jersey Constitution clearly
16 states that it is the responsibility of the
17 State of New Jersey to provide an education for
18 our children and I want to say before I go any
19 more deeply into this that we have to demand
20 that the State meets that mandate and give us
21 what is called for under the law to educate our
22 children.

23 If you open the page, you'll see that
24 we've prepared the school by school budget. So
25 this is the portion of the money that goes to

1 the school and, obviously, it's a lot to digest
2 tonight, but I'll give you a summary.

3 There are 39 buildings without a
4 full-time attendance person or social worker.
5 There are nine buildings without a full-time
6 nurse. There are nine buildings without a
7 guidance counselor. There are 26 facilities
8 without librarians. This is not the way we get
9 to a thorough and efficient education.

10 The other piece that I have for you is
11 the charts produced by the Education Law
12 Center. These charts show you what the State's
13 obligations are and where they are in meeting
14 those obligations. The first chart on the left
15 shows you in that little red box that this
16 current proposed budget underfunds the State
17 aid by \$35.7 million. The chart to the right
18 of it at the bottom shows that for this
19 proposed 2017 budget, Paterson would be
20 underfunded over nine years by \$278 million.
21 We would not be having this problem if the
22 State had been paying its fair share for the
23 last nine years.

24 Now the State is saying to us raise taxes
25 and pay your fair share. I say they should

1 lead by example and that the citizens of
2 Paterson should demand that the State meet its
3 obligation. It was presented by the State as
4 the way to fund a thorough and efficient
5 education. The advocates didn't like it and we
6 took it to court and challenged it and the
7 supreme court upheld it as constitutional if
8 fully funded. It has not been fully funded and
9 we must put the pressure on to demand through
10 litigation or whatever else it takes to demand
11 that the State pays its fair share before
12 demanding our fair share.

13 Thank you.

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCKOY: Thank you.
15 Next speaker.

16 THE CLERK: The last two speakers,
17 Council President, Mr. Donald Lynch and
18 Dr. Joseph Atallo.

19 MR. LYNCH: Good evening. The last
20 gentleman said we asked him to run for --
21 people in Paterson asked him to run for mayor.
22 That's just like asking Donald Trump to run for
23 mayor. You know how bad we want that.

24 But getting to the budget part. Correct
25 me if I'm wrong, you said the State been here

1 for 25 years? So was they shorting up the
2 money for 25 years when we had two democrat
3 governor in and we did not do anything about
4 it? Because if that's the case, we waited too
5 long. We waited too long.

6 And if you cut sports for the schools, if
7 you cut anything from the schools, you know how
8 many kids we're going to lose to the streets?
9 Do you know how many kids we're going to lose?
10 You cannot, you cannot lose sports out of
11 school. No kind of way.

12 And let me give a little thing what's
13 happening in the school. I talked to a person
14 in 21 today. They told me in School 21 you can
15 go in the bathroom, you can find liquor
16 bottles, you can find cigarettes, you can find
17 -- they call it herb, reefer in School 21.
18 Something got to be done. Something got to be
19 done. That can't happen. That can't keep
20 happening. And another thing happened there,
21 it was a young lady left school, went in an
22 abandoned house with five boys, five boys, and
23 they called her mother. You know what she told
24 her mother? They all used protection. This
25 was a young girl. So something got to be done

1 with these schools.

2 We're talking about cutting this, we're
3 talking about cutting that. We went to
4 Trenton. You still ain't getting help. We got
5 to do something, Board Members. We got to do
6 something. The president said don't talk to
7 your back. It seems like we've been talking to
8 the Board's backs for 25 years. Nothing,
9 nothing have been done. We keep talking about
10 the same thing. Same thing. So when are we
11 really going to do something? When are we
12 really going to get the money? That's the
13 question I want to know. When are we going to
14 get the money that the State owe us? You keep
15 talking about it, but nothing happens. You go
16 to Trenton, next meeting we got to get this
17 money. So when is something going to happen?
18 That's the question I'd like to know.

19 Thank you.

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Thank you,
21 Mr. Lynch.

22 THE CLERK: Last speaker Dr. Atallo.

23 MR. ATALLO: Good evening, Members
24 of the City Council and Members of the Board of
25 Education. My name is Dr. Joseph Atallo. I'm

1 a former board member. Nine years I served.
2 Paterson resident and taxpayer.

3 We need to look at the big picture and
4 what I want to talk about tonight is what I
5 talk about in my lectures at the university;
6 quantity versus quality. There's a lot of
7 quantity, but we have to look and find the
8 quality. Now, it's there, but not as much as
9 it should be.

10 I'll give you an example. Mr. Gilmore
11 made an excellent point and I want to follow up
12 on it. I think he was alluding to credit
13 recovery. Students take English I, II, and
14 III. They don't pass it. They get to senior
15 year, they take credit recovery, suddenly
16 they're graduating. They get a diploma. They
17 can't read the diploma, but they get a diploma.
18 Then they want to go to college. Where do they
19 go? Passaic County Community College. What
20 happens a year later when -- I live in town.
21 I'm talking to people in the barbershop, you
22 know, and the supermarkets when we used to have
23 supermarkets and the kids will say, "Do you
24 know, Dr. Atallo, I dropped out. I failed
25 out." Because they really weren't prepared.

1 Maybe they weren't college material.

2 But the point is the community college,
3 which I'm very disappointed in, has a 96
4 percent attrition rate of failure. That means
5 four out of a hundred kids actually graduate
6 from the program. That's a fact. You can
7 challenge it. You can ask but, you know, 96
8 out of the hundred students who start the
9 program do not complete the program and that's
10 a tragedy and that hurts on student self-esteem
11 and they're 18, 19, 20 years old and they can't
12 get through that.

13 And I've been working with Paterson
14 students for over 25 years. I was here before
15 the takeover. I mean, a lot of you I look at
16 is a lot younger than me. But I was here
17 before the takeover and hopefully we'll all be
18 here after the takeover when there's local
19 control and I have confidence in this Board as
20 I do with the Council of having the best
21 interest of the City at heart. But we have to
22 look at quality. Look at the programs. You
23 start new programs which are drivers in the
24 budget, but there's no balances. Take out the
25 programs that aren't working. You start a

1 boy's school, but it was fumbling and stumbling
2 all over the place. And I've had private
3 conversations with all of you about these
4 programs. I expressed my concerns.

5 I want to see Paterson kids succeed.
6 It's very important that they do and make sure
7 your dollars are spent wisely. But if you're
8 going to be good stewards of the money, you
9 can't put millions of dollars into programs
10 that fail and don't work. And if you're going
11 to put money into new programs, you got to cut
12 out programs that aren't working.

13 Now I'm going to talk about the 800-pound
14 gorilla in the room. You got to look at 90
15 Church Street, the central office. It's the
16 friends and family plan, folks. And the people
17 in Paterson have had it. The taxpayers have
18 had it. You saw my neighbors from Garret
19 Heights in the last couple of meetings. You
20 can't continue. A \$5 million tax increase is
21 unconscionable.

22 And we can jump up and down and stamp our
23 feet about "we want the money, the supreme
24 court says we get the money." We're not going
25 to get the money in the next couple of months.

1 If you follow as I teach the *Abbott v. Burke*
2 case, that's a case that's over 20 years old
3 and that's before I had gray hair. That's
4 before -- so if you Board Members -- when you
5 members were born.

6 If you start a lawsuit with the State,
7 what do you think they're going to do? I mean,
8 you folks are sharp. What do you think they're
9 going to say? "Oh, yes, Paterson, here's your
10 \$200 million. So sorry." That's not going to
11 happen.

12 So the thing is why would Chris Christie,
13 Governor Christie, in all due respect give
14 money to Paterson when Paterson votes
15 overwhelmingly against him each time? So, you
16 know, the thing is you hadn't worked anything
17 out with Governor Christie. You turn to
18 Senator Pou and say "go get the money." She'll
19 put a Bill in, in good faith, but the Governor
20 will veto it. And he's not going to put the
21 money into cities where he's not getting
22 political support. These are realities. So
23 let's deal with the money we have.

24 I've looked at this budget. I've
25 analyzed it. This is what I do. You want

1 \$5 million out of here? We're going to look at
2 -- and you talked about the county vocational
3 school and what they charge us. When they need
4 more money, they just bring more students in
5 and deplete the schools. The county vocational
6 school is there to complement the academic
7 program of Eastside and Kennedy and it's not
8 there to overcome it and to take the best and
9 the brightest away and put them at the
10 vocational school where we lose our best
11 students, academic students, you know.

12 And the thing is as far as the athletic
13 program, it's a drop in the bucket. They don't
14 do it to the kids. Most of us were not great
15 athletes. We played in the teams. So in the
16 afternoons it kept us busy. You know, I was
17 not a Mike Jackson. You know, I didn't play
18 professional sports. I didn't go to a major
19 school and be the star quarterback, but I was
20 on the team and from three to six we were kept
21 busy. And I was tired, I went home, took a
22 shower, my mom made dinner, did my homework and
23 went to sleep. I wasn't on the street getting
24 in trouble, which if you knew me at that age
25 that's probably what would have happened and I

1 would not have become Dr. Atallo and be at the
2 university.

3 So I know the bell has rung. I
4 appreciate your time. I know you're working
5 hard at this. If you want a citizens committee
6 in the next couple of days to look at this
7 budget, I'll sit down with you and I will show
8 you how to take money out of here. But you
9 cannot have sacred cows, ladies and gentlemen.
10 You know, it's a friends and family plan. It's
11 a political job mill. I'm putting it out there
12 straight.

13 And as far as talking about graduation
14 rates, you can't say we increased graduation
15 rates by having the credit recovery program.
16 It's not helping our children and I see them at
17 the community college and I see them all over
18 town. Like you guys, I live here. And some of
19 them talk to me and say, "Dr. Atallo, I want to
20 go to college. All right. What do you want to
21 be? I want to be a doctor. You want to be a
22 doctor? How did you do in science? How did
23 you do in math?" I was a math major in
24 college. I sit down with these kids; they
25 can't do basic math. How they're going to do

1 calculus, trigonometry, algebra, geometry?
2 They're not there. They don't have the
3 background. Yet, the Paterson Public Schools
4 have given them a diploma, which they can't
5 read, but they say here's a diploma. And
6 you're shortchanging our kids and that's wrong.

7 If you want to sit down with this budget,
8 I'll be happy to sit down with you and show you
9 the right way to do it. And by the way, let's
10 get this done because I'm getting a lot of
11 phone calls. I don't mind them, but I like
12 being a private citizen when I'm at home
13 watching the ball game and I'm getting all
14 these calls at night from people saying,
15 "Dr. Atallo, what can we do about this budget?"
16 All I can do is express my views to you. I
17 think I've been candid and honest in talking
18 about things we all know about, but we don't
19 talk about. But I'm here to say I'm here to
20 talk about it.

21 And one more thing. You know, students
22 come -- parents come up to me, teachers,
23 there's just about every teacher I know out of
24 their own pocket goes out and buys school
25 supplies and I think that's an embarrassment to

1 the district to go out and buy it out of their
2 own pocket. And, you know, teachers get
3 knocked and this is what they should be
4 complimented for and I'm very proud of them for
5 doing that.

6 So I thank you for your time and if you
7 want me I'll be happy to sit down with you. We
8 can work it out together, but a \$5 million
9 budget increase is not acceptable,
10 unconscionable at one shot. And the taxpayers
11 of Paterson have been hit so hard this year
12 between the county tax increase, the city tax
13 increase. And I will say one final thing, you
14 cannot get blood from a stone.

15 Thank you very much.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Thank you.
17 Thank you, Dr. Atallo.

18 DR. ATALLO: Thank you for having
19 me.

20 COUNCILMAN MENDEZ: Council
21 President.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: I thought
23 you were getting ready to say...

24 COMMISSIONER IRVING: No. Thank
25 you, Council President. I mean, at this stage,

1 I mean, I think it might be good to have the
2 Council be able to address any questions they
3 have to the superintendent. But, you know, I
4 think our goal as a collective in coming here,
5 it alludes to what some of the community
6 members have indicated is try to work with the
7 Council on some type of joint legislation that
8 we can jointly submit to the State and to the
9 Commissioner and to the Governor indicating
10 that the underfunding of the Paterson Public
11 Schools is having an adverse effect on the
12 quality instruction of our children.

13 And let me be very clear. You know, the
14 budget adoption will come and go next week.
15 But this year is not the issue, it's next year.
16 It's next year when we face almost a
17 \$97 million structural deficit and I have no
18 clue, and I'm being absolutely frank with you,
19 I have no clue where the heck that money is
20 going to come from and taxes alone are not
21 going to be able to fill that gap. You know,
22 you'd have to raise taxes 200 percent in order
23 to fill that gap. So it's not plausible. It's
24 not possible.

25 But I will say over the course of next

1 year there has to be a comprehensive plan
2 between the two municipal bodies, between our
3 legislators, and our Mayor in particular in
4 which we sit down with the Governor's office
5 and the Commissioner's office to make it very
6 clear to them that in truth we would not be
7 able to afford to deliver a quality education
8 effective next year if the cost of operations
9 for the district seem to go up and the funding
10 for the school system remains flat.

11 And so I want to make it very clear that,
12 you know, this conversation is important for us
13 to engage in, but this needs to be the first of
14 several conversations, several actions that we
15 need to take part in over the course of the
16 next year as we prepare ourselves for the next
17 fiscal year and the next budget cycle.

18 COUNCILMAN MENDEZ: Council
19 President.

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Yes.
21 Councilman, just before that. Seeing that we
22 have no other persons on the list, we'll take a
23 motion to close the Public Portion.

24 COUNCILMAN MORRIS: Moved.

25 COUNCILMAN MENDEZ: Second.

1 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Moved by
2 Councilman Morris. Second by Councilman
3 Mendez.

4 Roll call, Madam Clerk, to close the
5 Public Portion.

6 THE CLERK: Yes, Mr. President.
7 Roll call to close the Public Portion.

8 Councilwoman Cotton?

9 COUNCILWOMAN COTTON: Yes.

10 THE CLERK: Councilman Jackson?

11 COUNCILMAN JACKSON: Yes.

12 THE CLERK: Councilman Mendez?

13 COUNCILMAN MENDEZ: Yes.

14 THE CLERK: Councilman Morris?

15 COUNCILMAN MORRIS: Yes.

16 THE CLERK: Mr. President?

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Yes.

18 THE CLERK: The vote is five in
19 favor, four absent. The Public Portion is now
20 closed.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: All right.
22 We don't need a second roll call on the Board?
23 It's sufficient for the Council? Okay.

24 Council Members, we have an opportunity
25 to ask some questions to the superintendent who

1 is here as we discuss the budget situation.

2 Councilman Mendez.

3 COUNCILMAN MENDEZ: Thank you. And
4 good evening, Dr. Evans, former colleague. And
5 I love that Board. I should sit on the other
6 side, right, Councilman Morris? Before the
7 finance --

8 COMMISSIONER IRVING: You can have
9 him.

10 COUNCILMAN MENDEZ: Before
11 Councilman Morris take over the conversation --

12 COUNCILMAN MORRIS: Go right ahead.
13 You can have him.

14 COUNCILMAN MENDEZ: Let me first and
15 foremost, I would like to welcome each and
16 everyone of you for, you know, to have this
17 conversation.

18 One of the issue that I see with this is
19 that we only -- we wait until this time to sit
20 down. That's the biggest problem that I have
21 here. And I would like to talk about
22 solutions. But let me just for the record say,
23 Dr. Evans, that the \$5 million increase is not
24 an option. It's definitely not an option.
25 Now, we're dealing with over a thousand

1 abandoned properties in the City of Paterson.
2 We're losing revenue every single day. We have
3 seniors losing their property because they
4 can't afford the taxes. On the past five years
5 our homeowner they've been hit with over
6 50 percent increase in the past five years,
7 which is incredible.

8 We recently adopted a budget for the
9 Fiscal Year 2016-2017 and -- 2015-2016 and we
10 increased 5.8 percent on the taxes and that's
11 something that we have to keep in mind and this
12 City is not attractive anymore for business
13 owners and for people to choose Paterson as a
14 place to buy a property and to educate their
15 children and for business owners. We're losing
16 revenue left and right. We have to be
17 creative. We have to start thinking outside
18 the box and we have to start finding a
19 different way of bringing revenue to the City
20 and reducing the budget.

21 Every tax -- every dollar count right now
22 and that's the reason why I would like to talk
23 about shared-services agreement. I believe
24 that we don't have an effective shared-services
25 agreement between the City and the district. I

1 think that we should sit down and find
2 different ways where we can work together and
3 utilize the resources to save dollars in both
4 sides. And I know that there's a lot of
5 different areas where we can definitely work to
6 make that happen and I'm looking forward to
7 have that conversation. I'm going to -- just
8 I'm making this request right now that the next
9 conversation that we have, we're going to sit
10 down and talk about shared-services agreement
11 and the way to utilize the resources that the
12 City and the Board of Education has.

13 Now, Dr. Evans, you mentioned that you
14 have a week to submit the budget to the State,
15 correct?

16 DR. EVANS: Yes.

17 COUNCILMAN MENDEZ: So we have a
18 week to reduce \$5 million out of the budget.
19 That's what we have.

20 Now, one of the things that I definitely
21 that I think that the district should look into
22 and somebody at the Public Portion mentioned
23 this is that reducing the amount of consulting
24 that we have in the district. I believe that
25 we need teachers in the classrooms, consulting

1 and the professional development that we've
2 been spending money into that are not giving
3 the results that we need, we have to look into
4 those professional development consulting and
5 look how much money we can save from those
6 different areas.

7 I don't know what area are you just been
8 going through, Dr. Evans, but I think that
9 that's a conversation that I would like to have
10 right now because at the end of this meeting I
11 definitely need to know if we're going to be
12 able to reduce those \$5 million out of the
13 budget. That's the main concern because, once
14 again, an additional tax increase is not an
15 option for the City of Paterson.

16 And I would leave it at that, Council
17 President. Thank you.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCKOY: Thank you,
19 Councilman.

20 COUNCILMAN JACKSON: Council
21 President.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCKOY: Councilman
23 Jackson.

24 COUNCILMAN JACKSON: Thank you,
25 Council President.

1 Welcome, Patersonians, Paterson Public
2 School Board, Mr. Superintendent. I have some
3 concerns because we witnessed and I've been in
4 attendance of many School Board meetings. I've
5 heard your cries of the Board Members who
6 consistently show their concerns about the
7 budget and I've yet to hear your position or
8 your concerns and the impact or the potential
9 impact that these cuts directly make on the
10 students. And correct me if I'm wrong, but the
11 perception that I have it's just it's simply a
12 business exchange. It's a matter of a cut
13 that's being proposed or being demanded upon.

14 So to help circumvent or negate some of
15 these perceptions that I have, my question to
16 you is: As the State-appointed superintendent,
17 what measures have you personally implemented
18 or taken to, one, combat these current proposed
19 cuts that's being pushed on us through the
20 State because I have not heard of any coming
21 directly from you? I've seen a number of
22 different Board Members travel to Trenton to
23 address the State legislature. I've seen and
24 heard the outcries of certain Board Member at
25 the Board meetings to encourage parent support,

1 but I've yet to hear that directly from you
2 who's driving the bus.

3 And also to address the consistent or the
4 past few years of underfunding, what measures
5 have you personally taken to insure because you
6 alluded to the fact that you are currently a
7 Patersonian, so these issues should be touching
8 down with you as hard as they're touching down
9 with, you know, all of us?

10 So just to give you an opportunity to
11 address that, what measures are you taking as a
12 State-appointed superintendent to push back
13 against this cut?

14 DR. EVANS: Because of my
15 relationship, obviously, with the State I'm
16 going to choose my words very carefully.
17 Number one, I have made a direct request of the
18 Commissioner of Education for increased funds
19 for the district. I can't say any more
20 specific. I can't share any more specific
21 information with regards to the nature of that
22 conversation, but I know it was heard and it
23 was acknowledged. And the information was
24 clear that if, indeed, funds become available,
25 then Paterson along with some other districts

1 would be considered, and that was the response.
2 So I have made requests for funds directly to
3 the Commissioner, my immediate supervisor. And
4 he has it in writing, actually. So does the
5 Board. The Board is very much aware of the
6 request that I have made of the Commissioner
7 for additional funds. So we are awaiting some
8 type of formal response to that particular
9 request.

10 With regards to your second question, we
11 have been streamlining and cutting back for the
12 past four years, actually. We were in a
13 similar position about four years ago where we
14 had to make some significant reductions and
15 actually it was engaged in -- actually, it was
16 five years ago, a very impactful reduction in
17 force. And since that time we've held the line
18 and where we could cut a position without
19 impacting negatively on particularly our
20 instructional program and particularly with
21 safety because safety is paramount as well as
22 just as instruction is, then we've made
23 reductions. But we've done that methodically
24 without anyone knowing that we were cutting
25 positions and taking other measures to reduce

1 funds. With the challenges, it has not been
2 enough.

3 COUNCILMAN JACKSON: And that's very
4 much so appreciated. With all due respect,
5 through that time I've noticed that there's
6 been salary increases in certain areas.
7 There's been implementations of new positions.
8 You know, these cuts that you're referring to
9 aren't as widely broadcasted or I'm not aware
10 of them, so as you said they were being done,
11 you know, with the, you know, I guess
12 discretely.

13 But, you know, there's a huge concern
14 that I think echoes widely amongst the
15 community and that's the direct impact of
16 certain cuts that, you know, cutting certain
17 situations where we know and, you know, I'm not
18 aware of any study that's been done that will,
19 you know, outline the direct impact of how
20 Paterson students are learning? What keeps a
21 Paterson student in school? What drives the
22 desire to just, you know, want to learn?

23 So, you know, the gist -- and, you know,
24 forgive me for my harshness, but I am truly
25 impacted by this by having children that are in

1 the Paterson Public School district, being a
2 taxpayer. You know, so I'm directly impacted
3 completely having young children in the
4 district. So it's very personal to me.

5 But when we talk about the cutting of
6 certain programs like athletic programs, we've
7 already lost music. We lost art. We lost a
8 lot of programs that give the enrichment that
9 would encourage or excite a young student to
10 go, to just go to school.

11 And, you know, obviously, as a product of
12 Paterson Public Schools, had I not had the
13 opportunity to win a full scholarship, I doubt
14 I would have had an opportunity to go to
15 college. And I don't know. I mean, my parents
16 may have, you know, had to pull their
17 bootstraps together, but my brother and I both
18 had an opportunity to go to school on a full
19 scholarship. So that within itself, you know,
20 allowed us to have that bridge outside of the
21 community to, you know, find, you know,
22 different things in life.

23 So just the notion of being able to cut
24 athletic programs and to do it so nonchalantly
25 is bothersome to me. When we talk about not

1 looking for other provisions and consolidating
2 our athletic programs, our student population
3 and you guys would know possibly better than I
4 would, but the perception that I have is it's
5 growing on a daily basis. It's not shrinking.
6 So to shrink opportunity, you know, we should
7 be adding opportunity. We should be finding
8 ways to add other programs to our curriculum
9 whether it's chess or field hockey or swimming.

10 You know, we're -- you know, I can't help
11 but agree with almost each and every speaker
12 that came to the microphone when we're not
13 fighting back against, you know, the county
14 school that's taking, you know, so much more
15 from us and their facilities that yearly are
16 being upgraded and yet we have facilities that
17 have not had attention for a matter of 20-plus
18 years.

19 So it's troublesome to me when we can
20 very, you know, corporately discuss cuts that
21 are impacting our children's lives. Those cuts
22 would speak directly to the prison population
23 increase in the next five to ten years and, you
24 know, there's studies that has been done across
25 the country.

1 So, you know, forgive me for my position
2 and that's why I'm glad you had the opportunity
3 and the platform to express that to us, but I
4 don't get that from -- I get it from the School
5 Board Members, I hear the passion, I see the
6 commitment. School Board Members, you know,
7 sponsoring a bus ride. I mean, school Board
8 officials, I'm sorry, sponsoring buses, taking
9 the trip, rallying the parents, you know,
10 paying for certain efforts, but I really don't
11 get that from the superintendent's office. I
12 haven't gotten that for a long number of years.

13 There's been many years of allegations.
14 There was a year when there was an alleged
15 \$30 million that was stripped or stolen from
16 the district, yet that investigation has never
17 --

18 AN AUDIENCE MEMBER: 60.

19 COUNCILMAN JACKSON: Whatever that
20 allegation has been. There's never been a
21 position by the State to have to audit those
22 books for those years that we lost revenue.

23 You know, I see faces. Maybe that's
24 something that's an urban myth, correct me if
25 I'm wrong, Mr. President, but I have, you know,

1 heard echos of the money that was lost by the
2 previous administration. I'm not referring to
3 you, talking about the previous --

4 COMMISSIONER IRVING: Thank you for
5 clarifying.

6 DR. EVANS: Yeah, thank you.

7 COUNCILMAN JACKSON: But be that as
8 it may that was money that was our money was
9 still misappropriated and it is the job of this
10 current or any future, before we add that
11 burden on our taxpayers, we should go back and
12 find out what was done. Because, again, your
13 position is not one that has been chosen by
14 this community. It's been one that's been
15 forced upon us by the State. So there's all of
16 these other line items of the miss or
17 underfunding and then on top of that we have
18 the misappropriation of funds.

19 So, you know, I'd, you know, love to give
20 you an opportunity to address all of that. I
21 know it was lot, but it's a lot that we have to
22 endure when we're considering our children.

23 DR. EVANS: Even though it may not
24 be apparent, I do feel the pain in ways that
25 people -- that I don't show purposely. I don't

1 disagree with much of what you said with
2 regards to -- particularly with regards to
3 athletics and some of the other programs that
4 we've had to cut. The position that we're in
5 though is one that we either cut programs or we
6 cut more teachers and that -- you know, there's
7 no winning when you have to choose between, you
8 know, math teachers, English language arts
9 teachers, librarians or reducing a program.
10 It's not pleasant any way you look at it. Any
11 way you look at it. And knowing the
12 backgrounds and the issues that our children
13 face even before they get to school not to
14 mention what happens when they get to school I
15 understand. I grew up in similar
16 circumstances, so I know what they face. And
17 so we are cutting -- I refer to it in our staff
18 meetings as bones. We're cutting essential
19 programs that I wish we didn't have to cut, but
20 it's either do that or again cut teachers until
21 my request for additional funds is honored.

22 COUNCILMAN MORRIS: Council
23 President.

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Just
25 before, I think I'd like, if you could,

1 elaborate a little bit on the notion of
2 Councilman Jackson with the unavailability of
3 some items.

4 I was watching a program on television
5 and there's a young lady maybe 16 or 17 from a
6 nontraditional venue that was a fencing
7 phenomenon and I look at here and go "wow, a
8 kid from Paterson would never go to the
9 Olympics for fencing because we just don't
10 offer that." We don't have an Olympic size
11 swimming pool, so you'll never be a swimmer.
12 We don't have a high diving platform board, so
13 that one is ruled out. So a lot of the sports
14 program that we had before even when I was in
15 high school, if you can believe that, we don't
16 have now and yet we're facing not an expansion
17 but a request to retract even further and to
18 cut funding from our schools.

19 So I think the argument or the concern of
20 what it is that we ought to be doing in terms
21 of pressing the State to live up to its
22 obligation is something that we need to talk
23 about and we certainly want to dialog around
24 that joint resolution from the Board and
25 Council with respect to that. All right?

1 Councilman Morris.

2 COUNCILMAN MORRIS: I'll defer to
3 the lady on the Council, if she would like to
4 have her comments first.

5 COUNCILWOMAN COTTON: Oh, you want
6 to hear what I have to say first.

7 COUNCILMAN MORRIS: I always want to
8 hear what you have to say. I'll let you follow
9 me then.

10 Just welcome once again, Commissioners.
11 Just a few things, if I may. It was mentioned
12 earlier during one of the public comments with
13 regard to -- that a lot of it actually begins
14 under a democratic governor and we have a
15 republican governor now, which means that, you
16 know, the fight is going to be that much more
17 difficult. In fact, in 2002, it was the
18 McGreevey administration that first applied or
19 made application to the supreme court for a
20 one-year freeze on the implementation of Abbott
21 remedies. And then in 2003, he actually
22 petitioned the supreme court again to remove
23 the mandates on whole-school reform. And then
24 back actually in 2004, 21 school districts did
25 appeal the fact that the State wasn't living up

1 to its mandates. So I say that to say that,
2 you know, this isn't all Christie's fault in a
3 sense, it really started early on with a
4 democratic administration and someone mentioned
5 at that point that that's when we really should
6 have started the fight when we actually had a
7 sympathetic ear in the State House and we don't
8 have that now, so the fight is going to be that
9 much difficult.

10 Let me also say that I recognize that
11 although we play in two different sandboxes, so
12 to speak, we're using the same sand and from
13 our perspective is that the \$5 million proposed
14 increase we really can't advocate for, but I'm
15 not going to supplant myself for the
16 commissioners as well as the superintendent to
17 figure out a way to deal with that. You have
18 the knowledge and the skill set and you know
19 what needs to be done educationally because
20 that's what you were elected to do, so I charge
21 you to come up with remedies in which to reduce
22 that budget. And then my hopes is that that
23 would be successful because as it was pointed
24 out earlier even at -- that small increase it
25 may seem small in the global or universe of

1 things when you look at the actual rate, but it
2 is a slippery slope, and once you do it once it
3 becomes easier and easier to do it year after
4 year after year. So I would ask that you do,
5 do meaningfully address that.

6 The other thing I found curious in the
7 chart that was provided "Paterson City Tax Levy
8 (County, School & Municipal)," I believe you
9 provided, Mr. Superintendent, and I don't know
10 if the intent was to show that over the years
11 since 1991, that the municipal portion of the
12 school levy more or less remained somewhat
13 steady. So it's almost the message is that,
14 yes, we're looking to increase it now, but keep
15 in mind there had not been an increase over
16 this period of time. Well, the fact is, is
17 that during that period of time it was the
18 State who had control over the district, so it
19 was the State that decided not to implement
20 that increase, so I'm not going to be held
21 accountable to the fact that an increase did
22 not come over those particular years.

23 The other thing I find interesting and I
24 would have loved to see another column that
25 really showed the difference between what the

1 State provided and what was owed in comparison
2 to the other numbers that are on this chart to
3 help us make that particular argument.

4 So I'll conclude with simply saying that
5 once the toothpaste is out the tube, you can't
6 put it back in. And once -- if you move
7 forward with this particular tax increase, you
8 know, I foresee more and more coming. The City
9 of Paterson is in municipal overburden and when
10 you talk about the average, and I don't recall
11 the number, Mr. President, that you mentioned
12 of 125 or whatever the case may be, that may be
13 the number on an averaged assessed home in
14 Paterson, all right, which means that number
15 can dramatically increase on certain homes and
16 it can go down a little on others.

17 But when we wrestled with the budget here
18 on the City Council, when the recommendation
19 was made to reduce that budget by a little
20 under half a million dollars knowing that the
21 State would also reduce it as a condition of
22 transitional aid by a little over a half a
23 million dollars, it only resulted in a reducing
24 the 6 percent levy to 5.18, and that was less
25 than a million dollars overall. So now we add

1 back onto that by another \$5 million, not only
2 that all that hard work just gets blown out the
3 window. It has a ripple effect in the fact
4 that we now have to look at our rate for
5 uncollected taxes because the City just
6 basically acts as a passthrough, you know. You
7 get 100 percent of your taxes. The county gets
8 100 percent of their taxes right off the top.
9 All right. The City may not necessarily get
10 100 percent of theirs because if folks don't
11 pay or don't have the ability to pay, the City
12 suffers because you get yours right off the
13 top. So our rate for uncollected taxes will
14 then increase. And that's going to lead to
15 increased foreclosures, people walking away
16 from their homes and all the things that we've
17 talked about.

18 So I'll conclude with that, Mr.
19 President, and allow Councilwoman Cotton to
20 have her remarks.

21 COUNCILWOMAN COTTON: Thank you.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Thank you.
23 Councilwoman.

24 COUNCILWOMAN COTTON: Thank you,
25 Councilman Morris. Thank you, Council

1 President.

2 I would just like to say welcome to
3 Dr. Evans, to all the Board Members for us to
4 have this meeting tonight.

5 You know, I would just like to say I've
6 been around since Dr. Napier. I have sat -- I
7 have been involved since we had Dr. Duroy, we
8 had Dr. Glascoe, we had Dr. Clancy, and now we
9 have Dr. Evans. And I can remember saying to
10 Dr. Clancy, he was only interrims, two times,
11 it's going to get a point in your life where
12 you're going to know that you have to talk for
13 children, and he was put here by the State.
14 But you get a point somewhere in your life that
15 you have to know that you have to do the right
16 thing and fight for children.

17 And I remember the last hearing that I
18 went to and my two ladies are in the audience,
19 Rosie Grant and Linda Reid, and we were in
20 Hackensack because what was happening was the
21 suburban districts were getting angry that they
22 were not getting the money and they were
23 getting angry. So now we're in court again and
24 I remember saying to Dr. Clancy you got to
25 fight for our children.

1 And I remember sitting in court with
2 Rosie Grant and Linda Reid. And when that
3 judge said to us that day -- no, he said to
4 Dr. Clancy you really got a big crowd and it
5 was only like ten of us, but out of all those
6 Abbott districts Paterson sent the most which
7 was only about 10 maybe, 12 at the moment and
8 we couldn't believe now how they weren't even
9 coming no more to the courts to fight. I'm
10 talking about the other 32, 35 Abbott
11 districts. So we saw that with Governor
12 Corzine where it started shifting. The funding
13 started shifting because the suburban districts
14 were getting upset. They were getting upset
15 because Paterson urban district was getting too
16 much money.

17 So we have to -- and, you know, and we
18 know what happened in the supreme court. They
19 said that you have to fully fund. So now how
20 do we make -- how do we make the State of New
21 Jersey fully fund us? How do we do that? I
22 don't have an answer. I don't know how we're
23 gonna -- do we hire as a combined board City
24 Council, Board of Education? How do we force
25 -- of course, you know, when we go to court

1 we're forced. The judge says you have to do
2 this, then you have to do this. I can't
3 understand how you're forced and it's nothing
4 being done and I don't know how we're going to
5 be able to do this. But one thing I can say is
6 and I say to parents all the time that we have
7 to fight for our kids and we have to do the
8 right thing and we have to make sure that our
9 kids -- and I disagree with some of the things
10 that the Board has done. Personally, I
11 personally would not send my child to a school
12 that do not have a library, do not have a gym,
13 do not have a cafeteria. Those to me are not
14 schools. But for those who wants to do that
15 because they would rather not send their kids
16 to a Eastside or to a Kennedy, they rather have
17 the small setting and that's where the
18 academies came into play where I believe now we
19 had a different group of kids that we had to
20 try to put them on a pathway by having the
21 academies. We had to try to do that to put
22 them on a path to what they would like to do in
23 their life.

24 But, we're here to decide to see how we
25 can do this because when I hear I think the

1 Board President said next year is 90-something
2 million?

3 DR. EVANS: 91.

4 COUNCILWOMAN COTTON: And we're
5 talking about \$5 million now. But it's 90.
6 How we're going to make them make sure that
7 they fund us?

8 And you know what, back in the day when I
9 remember we had the business administrator
10 called Mike Dunow. Now, Mike Dunow had
11 parents, and I was a parent volunteering all
12 these years, Mike Dunow showed us how to do a
13 budget. They showed parents how to read a
14 budget. They showed parents what zero zero dot
15 zero zero meant. They showed us how we need to
16 look at something and if we needed to put
17 something in this spot and take it out of that
18 spot. But I'm not sure if that's happening
19 today for parents because I think that they
20 kind of understand some of the things. But
21 what I found is that I liked Dr. Glascoe when
22 he was here. Some people didn't. But I knew
23 that he fought for kids and I knew that the
24 State was not going to renew his contract and
25 his contract wasn't renewed.

1 The money that was missing came under
2 Dr. Duroy. That's where it came under. When
3 Duroy, when Dr. Duroy left, he went to another
4 school district for the State of New Jersey --
5 no, he went back to his own district?

6 DR. ATALLO: Never worked in a
7 district since.

8 COUNCILWOMAN COTTON: Oh, he didn't
9 work -- no, not in Paterson.

10 DR. ATALLO: He hasn't worked
11 anywhere.

12 COUNCILWOMAN COTTON: Oh, okay.
13 Well, they said that he went down somewhere to
14 work for another -- well, he didn't get in
15 trouble, put it that way.

16 So, you know, I'm saying to us as a
17 combined, as a gathering of together on how we
18 can put our minds together on how we can force
19 -- the supreme court said, this is what they
20 said that you have to fully fund and that's
21 what we need to do and I know that we're
22 probably all on the same page and we're all
23 here for the same cause and we're all here for
24 the same reason, but we need to be able to
25 understand how we're going to be able to fight

1 for our kids because our kids -- and, you know,
2 my daughter graduated from Rosa Parks High
3 School and let me tell you something, when she
4 came out of Rosa Parks she went straight to
5 college. No remedial classes. None of that.
6 Straight to college. As a matter of fact,
7 South Carolina State. My son comes out of
8 Eastside High School; remedial. And that's
9 with him taking honor classes.

10 And I say to parents you got to be real
11 careful. Look at honor classes because the
12 academies at that time wasn't offering honors
13 for kids. You had to go to one of the big high
14 schools and those are important after classes.
15 You know, those are a lot of things that are
16 important for us and so I know we're all here
17 in the same accord. We got to figure out how
18 we're going to force the State to fund us like
19 we should and we both going to be on the same
20 page.

21 Thank you, Council President.

22 COUNCILMAN MENDEZ: Council
23 President.

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Thank you.

25 COMMISSIONER IRVING: Council

1 President, if I may. I know the Council -- go
2 ahead, Dr. Evans. Dr. Evans has to take a
3 quick phone call, but while he does so I want
4 to because I know the Council President and I
5 talked about trying to make sure we were out of
6 here by 9:30. I want to make sure that we move
7 into the action piece for what happens next.

8 So I want to just be mindful of that
9 because there are three points between the
10 Council Members and the School Board Members
11 made. One, about a joint resolution. The
12 second is a working or super committee to
13 discuss, you know, what the municipal levy, you
14 know, for the school district would look like
15 over the year, but also finding support and
16 then legal action. And on some level, you
17 know, I want to see if we can just come to some
18 type of consensus around these three items in
19 particular because to answer Councilman
20 Jackson's point, you know, something has to be
21 done in leveraging the strength of both bodies.
22 You know, we have to begin to start taking
23 action to do so.

24 So I don't know at what point in time,
25 Council President, you're going to begin to

1 shift those conversations.

2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Right.

3 We'll move to that. Councilman Mendez.

4 COUNCILMAN MENDEZ: Sure. And I
5 have a question. It's based on the budget on
6 this page, but I think that while the
7 superintendent is not here, but I think that
8 Ms. Ayala might be able to help us on this. I
9 would like to get some information on the State
10 project. The code is 88-200 State project. On
11 the last fiscal year 2015-2016, the district
12 allocate 56.3 million and on 2016-2017, I see
13 only the reduction of 942,000, having
14 \$55.4 million. What the State project is
15 covered in general? Can you elaborate on that?

16 MS. AYALA: That's the SDA. So when
17 we have big projects such as new elevators or
18 roofing, we go and put an application to the
19 SDA for funding. So if you want a detail on
20 that, I have to pull it out from the SDA and
21 give you a detail of what it is that they've
22 awarded us.

23 COUNCILMAN MENDEZ: Okay. Because
24 what I see is very, a very light, light
25 reduction on that. I think that that's a line

1 item that you should look at.

2 But let me move to code number 52-480,
3 which is transportation service. On
4 transportation service I understand that Essex
5 County used to have the transportation,
6 correct? Now, it's my understanding that we're
7 bringing transportation back and I only see
8 last year we allocate \$18.5 million on
9 transportation. Now on the 2016-2017, I see
10 \$16.8 million on transportation. I believe
11 that the savings it should be bigger than 1.7.
12 It should be bigger. I think that we should
13 look into transportation and the question that
14 I have is that how do we get to the
15 16.8 million? Do we plan -- what is -- how we
16 get to this number on transportation? How we
17 came up with this number and the reduction.

18 MS. AYALA: So you're looking to
19 reduce that number for transportation?

20 COUNCILMAN MENDEZ: The
21 transportation how we came up with the 16.8?
22 Because it's my understanding that we're
23 bringing from Essex County we're bringing
24 transportation back to Passaic County.

25 MS. AYALA: We're actually having a

1 presentation tomorrow night to the finance
2 committee by the transportation department and
3 the plan on how that numbers -- they came to
4 that 16.8.

5 COUNCILMAN MENDEZ: Okay. I think
6 that also on that line item I think the savings
7 it should be bigger. I would like to get more
8 information on those two line items because
9 what we're talking about is \$5 million, and so
10 we have on the State project 55.4 million, on
11 transportation 16.8. I would like to know what
12 is the reduction that we could take from those
13 two.

14 And I know that we have three other items
15 on the agenda, Council President, I will leave
16 it at that.

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Thank you,
18 Councilman.

19 COUNCILMAN MORRIS: Council
20 President. I think in the interest of time we
21 do need to consider the three action items
22 that's put forward by the President. And as I
23 said earlier "sandbox," you know, your sandbox,
24 my sandbox, figure out where the cuts need to
25 be made that have the least amount of impact on

1 the education of our children to the extent
2 that we no longer have to be concerned by the
3 \$5 million.

4 COMMISSIONER IRVING: Mr. President.
5 Before we get into that I think some of my
6 Board Members may want to make comments, but
7 I'm going to ask if we do to be brief in our
8 remarks. We've had significant conversation on
9 the Board with this community to know where we
10 stand, you know, on many different levels and
11 the whole purpose of this meeting was to engage
12 the Council with the district, so that the
13 Council can get additional information. You
14 know, we've met eight times already and we meet
15 three more next week. So if there are any
16 Board Members who have any comments? You know,
17 Dr. Hodges.

18 COMMISSIONER HODGES: Mr. Rivera.

19 COMMISSIONER IRVING: Commissioner
20 Rivera. Is there anybody else? Just so we can
21 identify it now.

22 COMMISSIONER RIVERA: I will start
23 if off. I just want to let the public know
24 that we're an advisory Board. We have -- the
25 district haven't been inclusive in the whole

1 budget process. I do have to agree with a lot
2 of the comments that are passed here tonight
3 regarding the situation that the district is in
4 regarding the flat funding. As you all know,
5 you guys been through this, expenses go up
6 every year and our revenues remain the same.

7 The issue that I have is that -- and let
8 me just start off by saying that I've been
9 following the City Council for a long time, so
10 I'm familiar with the problems here, but when I
11 came on the Board I said you know what, I want
12 to know what's been going on on this Board. So
13 I started looking at numbers and this budget
14 that was given to us by the PEF, if you notice
15 on 2014-15, we had \$46 million in surplus,
16 another six in the maintenance reserve, so that
17 is equivalent to fifty -- about 52. Now the
18 following year we were down to 27. That's why
19 you've been seeing cuts.

20 Something that was happening during that
21 time is that the way that the district works is
22 if he don't use the surplus, they reduce our
23 funding. But if I was on that Board at that
24 time, what I would have recommended because
25 we're an advisory board, I would have told the

1 administration not to put the surplus into
2 operations. I would have put it into one-time
3 use, that way we don't depend on it in the
4 following years. I'll give you an example,
5 similar to what happened on this Board in 2011,
6 when we put in \$21 million worth of properties
7 that year to balance the budget because we
8 didn't want any cuts, it was around election
9 time, then the following year we didn't have
10 that million dollars in revenue because we
11 didn't have anything to sell. It's the same
12 situation here that is going on in the
13 district. So I just want to give you a little
14 history of what's been going on.

15 Now, when it comes to this, we're all
16 here to talk about the \$5 million, right? A
17 lot of people keep questioning me, "Flavio, you
18 always go to the City Council, why haven't you
19 done anything at the district?" Well, I'm
20 going to tell you this right now. I'm going to
21 tell you two areas that we could look at and
22 I'm going to tell the district right now in
23 public and I would like to see a report to the
24 outcome of this.

25 Now, one, Councilman Mendez just

1 mentioned last year the district decided -- not
2 we because we didn't make that decision -- the
3 district decided to outsource the
4 transportation program. That alone have cost
5 the district about four to \$5 million
6 additional from what we spent the previous year
7 and we moved it out because according to the
8 district we were not, you know, the program was
9 not being run effectively. Right? So now
10 we're bringing it back.

11 The district decided to also reduce
12 courtesy bussing. That means that we were
13 providing services to students that only lived
14 1.5 miles away walking distance and the State
15 mandate is -- requirement to provide
16 transportation is two miles walking distance.
17 So right there if we bring it in-house and we
18 plan the routes early, because that's what draw
19 the \$5 million this year, the district along
20 with Essex County sent out the routes, you
21 know, the bids for the routes real late, so a
22 lot of the transportation companies just bid
23 really high. So that drove up the price.

24 Now, if we plan ahead and we got to learn
25 from our mistakes, the reason I'm saying this

1 is not to throw anyone under the bus, but a lot
2 of the decisions that are taken in the district
3 ends up costing us a lot of money. And that
4 \$4 million that we spent too much last year, we
5 could have -- it could have been surplus, if we
6 didn't spend it on something else. We wouldn't
7 been talking about probably this \$5 million.

8 Now, going back to the budget. That 16.8
9 like Councilman Mendez says we need to cut
10 further, if we run an effective and we plan the
11 routes effectively, we don't have a need for
12 that amount of money to be budgeted.

13 Another area that I want to point out and
14 it would be irresponsible of me to go into
15 detail, but I want it to be looked at also is
16 this: We have made tremendous cuts in every
17 area that are -- well, not "we." The district
18 have made cuts affecting our kids, right, and
19 just keep in mind the two that I'm pointing out
20 doesn't affect programs or teachers.

21 The other area is I would like to see,
22 and I don't want this to be misinterpreted,
23 again, I want this to be analyzed, the security
24 expenses for the district. I need someone to
25 look at this and I'll tell you why. Just look

1 at these numbers in comparison. The City
2 Council what is -- and I want to ask Councilman
3 Morris. Councilman Morris, what is the budget
4 for our police department? I know the number,
5 I just want to hear it from you. Salary and
6 wages.

7 COUNCILMAN MORRIS: It's over 40
8 million.

9 COMMISSIONER RIVERA: Low 40, right?
10 About 41. In the current budget it's 41
11 million. Well, the district's security
12 expenses are over \$10 million.

13 COUNCILWOMAN COTTON: How much you
14 said?

15 COMMISSIONER RIVERA: Over
16 \$10 million.

17 COUNCILWOMAN COTTON: Is that
18 private, right? It's private?

19 COMMISSIONER RIVERA: It's not just
20 the private. That's what I'm saying, we need
21 to look into that. Again, I'm not getting into
22 details because there's no need for that here.
23 Somebody is going to have to look at that.

24 Listen, I wasn't put on that Board. I'm
25 a taxpayer here too in a bad situation. I

1 agree with all these Board Members. Next year
2 it's inevitable. If the State keeps flat
3 funding us, expenses continue to go up every
4 year, we are making cuts that we cannot afford
5 to make, but let's not pick and choose what
6 cuts we're making. Let's, you know, let's be
7 smart about these cuts.

8 I want to report about those two areas
9 and one planning. That \$5 million if I was
10 making those decisions, I could reduce that
11 \$5 million. And if somebody wants to question
12 it and go back and forth -- and again, people
13 will play games, oh, no, let's not let the
14 district put any fear. If you think about it
15 in comparison, we're spending 25 percent of
16 what the City is spending on police which, for
17 example, they have three shifts. There's a lot
18 of the personnel there that are highly paid
19 because they deserve it, they've been there a
20 long time, right, they also incur a lot of
21 overtime because the job, you know, the job
22 requires it a lot of time --

23 COMMISSIONER IRVING: Commissioner,
24 you made your point. You've driven home.

25 COMMISSIONER RIVERA: All right.

1 Okay.

2 COMMISSIONER IRVING: I mean, let's
3 just finish up.

4 COMMISSIONER RIVERA: I'll give you
5 that courtesy. I'll give you the courtesy. I
6 just want the viewers to understand and the
7 Council that in the same way that the public
8 came here to fight when you guys would try to
9 do that increase, I've been fighting on this
10 end and if I didn't bring this up before is
11 because a lot of the information was requested
12 last night and it was given to me today. Just
13 so you know why. The budget was -- you know
14 the budget, we're not inclusive in the budget
15 process. It's just a question that I had it on
16 a hunch and then I looked at the numbers and I
17 requested the information and I got it today,
18 but someone needs to look into those areas.

19 Thank you very much.

20 COMMISSIONER IRVING: Thank you.
21 Dr. Hodges, I know you have a comment, but
22 again, I want to echo there are three action
23 items that we really need to discuss.

24 COMMISSIONER HODGES: I'm not going
25 to be as expansive about the details. But, I

1 do have some points, some counterpoints. I'm
2 not here to cut the budget or talk about
3 cutting the budget. That's not why I am here.
4 That may be why the Board is here, but that's
5 not why I'm here. My concern is the fact that
6 our primary responsibility is the education of
7 Paterson's children. And what you heard from
8 the PEF was the fact that you have a deficit or
9 a dearth -- a lack of nurses, you have a lack
10 of guidance counselors, you have a lack of
11 librarians, there's a lack of awareness
12 coordinators. These have serious impacts on
13 the education of your children, particularly in
14 the environment that we have here now.

15 Dr. Evans gave an optimistic recitation
16 about the educational outcomes of our students,
17 but there are some concrete numbers that aren't
18 as rosie when you scroll down and look deeper.
19 And the act of cutting has some serious
20 implications for the long-term future education
21 of our children and that's what should be
22 discussed. That's what we should be
23 concentrating on.

24 Yes, we have the taxes which I certainly
25 don't support and I'm in accordance with what

1 the President wants to do in terms of pursuing
2 those three initiatives and this could bolster
3 you, but the primary issue, the fact that we're
4 cutting at all is a problem and that's what we
5 should be talking about because we can't afford
6 to cut.

7 The increasing -- the improvements
8 educationally have been shown to be plateauing
9 over the last several years, which
10 coincidentally is what has been happening with
11 the funding being cut. And so what you're
12 doing is you're systematically undermining your
13 educational future by robbing them of the funds
14 that you need.

15 And when you have -- and if Mr. Morris
16 was busy, no doubt, saving lives in St. Joe's
17 hospital, and he knows for a fact that you're
18 an asthma corridor here, so when you don't have
19 nurses that will cover your buildings, you have
20 children at risk.

21 There's talk about having our kids go to
22 PCC and not do well. Well, you have problems
23 with guidance counselors. You're cutting staff
24 that's going to be writing your curriculum to
25 respond to a more increased demand

1 educationally. You can't hide -- we cut
2 stipends to teachers who could write new
3 curriculum to respond to increased rigor.
4 That's been asked for educationally. That's
5 not being discussed. So what you're going to
6 have is a shell of an educational system.
7 You'll have some buildings, you'll have some
8 buses to transport kids, but they're not going
9 to learn a thing.

10 So again, we can cut, we can absolutely
11 cut. We know how to do that. But the product,
12 the result of the cutting is you're going to
13 cheat the children of Paterson.

14 And I'm going to conclude, Mr. President.
15 So the context with which you write any
16 proposal has to take into account that there
17 should be no cuts in the first place. And
18 there should be -- and as far as the tax
19 increase like -- thank you, Mr. Rivera -- they
20 had 24 opportunities the State of New Jersey to
21 impose one and just -- you heard me last year
22 tell you, we sat right here last year and told
23 you when they give us fiscal, what are they
24 going to want us to do? And then we're going
25 to be bankrupt and they're going to turn to

1 this Board and say we want you to make those
2 cuts. You heard it last year. So now when we
3 supposedly cut the budget, it's not going to be
4 the State of New Jersey, it's going to be the
5 Board Members of Paterson who did it. And it
6 doesn't matter how you cut it, that's what's
7 going on.

8 So, and I'm going to conclude, Mr.
9 President, there are larger issues here. There
10 should not be any cuts. I'm not wasting my
11 time with it. We can't close schools because
12 the Governor told the mayor of Newark that he's
13 going to run over him while he opens up new
14 charter schools. Run over the Mayor of Newark,
15 yes. I'm going to be here for 22 months and
16 I'm going to push charters throughout the
17 State. Meaning, the urban districts. That
18 means Paterson because we have the fewest.

19 So those are the issues that you need to
20 consider and the urgency of this discussion is
21 not just about cutting taxes, it's not just
22 about making sure we have cuts, it's demanding
23 that we have the education that the State says
24 we're suppose to have, which is a thorough and
25 efficient education and that means the

1 appropriate funding. And if you do anything
2 else, you're wasting your time and our
3 children's. Thank you.

4 COUNCILMAN MENDEZ: Council
5 President. I will be brief. I promise you
6 that --

7 COMMISSIONER IRVING: Councilman, a
8 few of my Board Members had a few more comments
9 before.

10 COUNCILMAN MENDEZ: Okay. All
11 right. After.

12 COMMISSIONER IRVING: Commissioner
13 Mimms.

14 COMMISSIONER MIMMS: Good evening.
15 I just want to duly note that we just want to
16 kill the perception that we, as a Board, are
17 not working hard and diligent to ensure that
18 our children receive a thorough and efficient
19 education. However, I do want to make a
20 clearcut stand that it's hard to even talk
21 about cuts in the budget, what should not be
22 there in the budget without us doing a
23 cost-benefit analysis. I've been pushing for
24 that from day one of being on this Board
25 because it's hard to identify whether a program

1 is working, whether it's effective and what's
2 the driving cause and why do we have it in the
3 district without doing a thorough and efficient
4 evaluation and analysis of our school for our
5 budget. And so another thing that I've
6 requested is that we do a three to five year
7 financial platform or a financial analysis of
8 what the budget will look so there's a
9 trajectory in place so that we don't have to
10 keep coming back to the table year after year
11 trying to identify what would be the numbers
12 year after year.

13 And so we're here. The taxpayers, we're
14 being taxed hard with the high taxes, the
15 increases. And so here we are sitting with
16 this \$5 million proposed tax levy. We were
17 here last year, but it's hard to even look at
18 cuts when we're being underfunded, number one.

19 But I think what we really need to do and
20 I've requested it is to look at all of the
21 things that are happening within the district
22 currently through a cost-benefit analysis to
23 look at all the programs that are being
24 offered. I've also requested to see all of the
25 consultants that we have. I believe if we look

1 at the comprehensive list of the consultants
2 that we have in the district, we'll find
3 \$5 million easily that can be taken out of the
4 budget, but without having that information
5 readily available, it's hard for us even as a
6 Board to make those decisions.

7 And so we are working hard as a Board to
8 ensure that our children get what they deserve.
9 I don't believe we need to make any cuts in the
10 budget, but I think we need to continue to
11 fight really hard to ensure that the money that
12 is owed to this district that we receive it,
13 but we have to look at each line item, we have
14 to review it, we have to analyze it and we have
15 to ask questions continuously why is this
16 happening and why do we need it.

17 And so there's so many points that we
18 drive in our meetings. We've had, as our
19 Commissioner Irving has stated, we've had eight
20 meetings already and we have three or four more
21 next week and we've been diligently working on
22 the budget over and over again. We've been on
23 the phone with different people in the district
24 to make sure that we ask questions what the
25 programs are about, what are they doing because

1 we want to ensure that our children receive a
2 thorough and efficient education.

3 I know that, you know, there was bus
4 rides to Montclair, bus rides to Trenton and I
5 stated it last night I was not on those bus
6 trips because one of my girlfriend's mother was
7 in hospice and now she has passed, so I was
8 with her through that process. So just to make
9 that duly noted. But just because I was not on
10 the bus does not mean I'm not fighting for the
11 district. So I just want to make that clear.
12 But we are fighting and I, you know, want to
13 commend all the Board Members for the hard work
14 that you put in with all the hours that we
15 volunteer diligently hardworking for the school
16 district.

17 Thank you so much.

18 COMMISSIONER IRVING: Thank you. Is
19 there anybody else? Then I'll turn it back to
20 you, Council President --

21 COUNCILMAN MENDEZ: Council
22 President.

23 COMMISSIONER IRVING: -- and then
24 I'd like to see if we can tackle these three
25 issues.

1 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Councilman
2 Mendez.

3 COUNCILMAN MENDEZ: Sure. And I
4 will try to be brief. But, Board President, I
5 know you try to finish this meeting at 9:30,
6 but I think that it's going to be next to
7 impossible. There's a lot of topics. There's
8 a lot of -- I mean, let me start by saying that
9 I disagree with Dr. Hodges' comment, with
10 Commissioner Hodges. I'm here to talk about
11 the budget and I'm here to talk about the
12 \$5 million increase that the district trying to
13 put in the City with our homeowner. That's the
14 reason why I'm here and I think that we all
15 understand that the State, the State is being
16 underfunding the district for many, many years.
17 That's a reality that we have to face. And
18 that's a fight, that's a fight that we have to
19 take to the State. We understand that, but we
20 have to deal with the reality that we have.

21 The reality that we have is in a week
22 this budget have to be ready to submit it to
23 the State and we have to find a way to reduce
24 \$5 million. We all understand that the State
25 is not funding the school, our district and we

1 have to fight with the State.

2 Now, I would like to talk about how we're
3 going to make this happen. We all need to --
4 we all understand that. If we pay attention on
5 the cuts, we will not affect that much our
6 students. For example, I started with
7 transportation and I want to go back there.
8 Because we outsourced that service to Essex
9 County, we're spending close to \$5 million
10 more. Now we're bringing that back. And also
11 because the bid with -- the district received
12 the bid late and there was additional funding,
13 additional money on that. We're suppose to
14 have a big reduction on transportation. Maybe
15 the \$5 million that we are looking to increase,
16 we have it on that department of
17 transportation. We have to look at those
18 numbers and we're not affecting our children's
19 education, but we need to plan and we need to
20 be responsible. You cannot come here and put
21 \$16.8 million when we know that we can lower
22 that number.

23 So I need to have a conversation about
24 this number because in a week my goal is to
25 make sure that our taxpayers doesn't get hit

1 with another tax increase. Bottom line.
2 That's my priority. That's the reason why I'm
3 here and in the beginning, I said this in the
4 beginning, the problem that I see with the
5 Board and the Council is that we only sit down
6 when we have this problem at this stage. We
7 should have a conversation to talk about future
8 project. I mentioned the shared-services
9 agreement in the beginning. Many cities --
10 there's other cities that's saving millions of
11 dollars by working together and utilizing the
12 resources that they have. Why we're not doing
13 that? I believe that we don't have a good
14 relationship with our school district. This is
15 my opinion. You could see that on the plowing
16 with DPW and the school district. You see that
17 in many areas we're not utilizing the resources
18 that we have and we could save millions of
19 dollars, we just need to sit down and do the
20 work and be responsible.

21 Now, there's two items. I want to check
22 transportation and also State project, the
23 \$55.4 million that we're spending on that line
24 item. I need more explanation about those 54
25 -- the 55.4 and transportation and I guarantee

1 you that if we do our job, we're going to
2 reduce those \$5 million out of this budget.

3 That's it. I'm finished, Council
4 President.

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Thank you.
6 Just to clarify though the State projects were
7 SDA projects, so those are State construction
8 projects coming to Paterson. So we don't need
9 to reduce them, we need to increase them. When
10 I was on the Board we needed 12 new schools and
11 I think that time --

12 COMMISSIONER IRVING: We need 24
13 now.

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Right, but
15 we've gotten what, three now? Four?

16 COMMISSIONER IRVING: Four.

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Four on
18 the table out of 12. That's a failing grade in
19 any classroom.

20 COMMISSIONER HODGES: We can assure
21 you, Mr. President, we've been very thorough in
22 going through the budget and we would be
23 going -- there's no need -- I don't want to --
24 I know Mr. Mendez is very, very busy, but we
25 have nine people here who pay attention to

1 the --

2 COMMISSIONER IRVING: That was going
3 to be my point, you know, to Councilman Morris'
4 point about playing in the sandbox.

5 COMMISSIONER HODGES: We'll take
6 care of it.

7 COMMISSIONER IRVING: But,
8 Councilman, I encourage you, we have three
9 meetings next week, you like every other
10 citizen is welcome to attend, you know, the
11 School Board meetings all three and hang out
12 with us each night and to offer your
13 recommendation just like anyone else can. But,
14 you know, as Councilman Morris has indicated
15 and as I indicated to the Mayor a few weeks
16 back, it's important for us to, you know,
17 maintain a level of respect for our respective
18 duties and responsibilities in the roles that
19 we've been charged with.

20 So, you know, your concerns are
21 absolutely noted, you know, but we have a job
22 that we have to do and that we have I think
23 done and done very diligently over the last
24 month or so. But that does still leave us with
25 the point where do we go from here. And if I

1 can, Council President, I would like to, you
2 know, take, you know, I think the first option,
3 you know, which would be to, you know, work on
4 a language, you know, with the Board Members to
5 be able to present to the Council, you know, by
6 next week.

7 Council President, when is the next time
8 you all meet as a governing body?

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: We meet on
10 the 5th is our Workshop and Special Meeting and
11 the following week is our Regular Meeting.

12 COMMISSIONER IRVING: Okay. I will
13 work with our current Board to put together
14 language very similar to what we used last
15 year, you know, for a joint resolution. But I
16 think, you know, as Dr. Hodges, you know,
17 illuminated, the resolution, you know, in
18 addition to discussing, you know, a tax
19 increase should really be focussed on the
20 underfunding of the SFRA and what the
21 underfunding have resulted in because
22 underfunding just as it resulted in, you know,
23 the catastrophic cuts you see this year,
24 remember we lost 400 educators last year, 400
25 instructional leaders, you know, from our

1 school system -- thank you so much. 400
2 instructional leaders from our school system.
3 You know, we've had to, you know, scale back
4 and reduce athletic programs even before we're
5 talking about, you know, closing athletic
6 programs. Eastside no longer has a tennis
7 program presently. There are other athletic
8 programs, you know, that have been, you know,
9 consolidated as well.

10 So there have been very clear-cut
11 delimitations that have resulted, you know, in
12 the underfunding and I think that, you know, if
13 we can commit to putting together some language
14 that we can present to the Council and have you
15 all vet and if you want to endorse and support
16 it we will as well and make sure that that
17 resolution, you know, finds its way to the
18 Commissioner, you know, either, you know, right
19 before our adoption or as soon as our adoptions
20 over it. I think the second piece --

21 COUNCILMAN MORRIS: Mr. President,
22 before you move on, if I may just offer a
23 suggestion because I really don't want to lose
24 sight of the argument that Dr. Hodges put forth
25 on the table. And as you begin to prepare the

1 language of the resolution, if it can be framed
2 around the conversations that this is the
3 amount of money we need to provide a thorough
4 and efficient education to support those
5 programs and those staff and come up with a
6 figure which you tie back to those programs and
7 the things that you need. And part of that
8 argument is that we're not going to the
9 taxpayers for this number, we're coming to you,
10 the State of New Jersey because --

11 COMMISSIONER IRVING: Because it's
12 the State's responsibility.

13 COUNCILMAN MORRIS: -- it's your
14 responsibility. This is our budget to ensure
15 that our kids receive the education they
16 deserve just like your kids, you know, and you
17 need to meet that budget and we're committed
18 not to go to the taxpayers to do that, but
19 committed to come to you to get that number and
20 we can work to support that.

21 COUNCILMAN JACKSON: Council
22 President.

23 COMMISSIONER IRVING: Good point.

24 COUNCILMAN JACKSON: Council
25 President.

1 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Councilman
2 Jackson.

3 COUNCILMAN JACKSON: Mr. President,
4 if you will entertain us for a brief moment.
5 Just for a point of clarity I have a question
6 first and then a potential statement. It
7 sounds as if the Board is coming forward to the
8 Council in order to adopt or draft a resolution
9 to formulate the tax increase. Is that
10 accurate?

11 COMMISSIONER IRVING: No. No.

12 COUNCILMAN JACKSON: Okay. All
13 right. All right. Thank you very much. I
14 appreciate that.

15 So, you know, I would like to make a
16 suggestion and we have Ms. C here who is our
17 appointed PR representative. I think that, you
18 know, maybe an effort that we can, you know,
19 come together in solidarity to form a press
20 conference to voice our opinion and hold firm
21 on that because when we look at the State's
22 position that they've chosen to take, I think
23 this Council, and I would like to, you know,
24 bring this forward to my colleagues, this
25 Council needs to take a firm position that we

1 refuse to fund any more than what we are
2 regarded to fund.

3 There's a formula that has been set. We
4 are abiding by all of our necessity to fund
5 that formula in full and, you know, considering
6 that we all share the same sentiment, we all
7 share the same concerns, we all share the same
8 issues when it comes to the increase, you guys
9 as well as us will be the bearers of that cross
10 as well as our residents. I think that, you
11 know, in addition to those three items that you
12 have, look at a power position that we need to
13 voice ourselves to the State to let them know
14 what our positions are and hold firm to that
15 position as the State needs to, you know, take
16 us to court and, you know, let that matter be
17 brought before, you know, a court the way that
18 the other issue was. So that's a suggestion I
19 would like to bring forward to the table to
20 both boards to consider.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Thank you,
22 Councilman.

23 COMMISSIONER IRVING: And,
24 Councilman Jackson, just to support what you
25 just said, you know, that's been the Board's

1 argument is the fact that the State is
2 unwilling to fund the statutory constitutional
3 mandate, but yet they're asking us to give up
4 of ours without them giving up theirs, and
5 their share is a much bigger part of the pie
6 than the 5 million that they're asking us to
7 pony up. And their share, you know,
8 significantly impacts the quality instruction
9 and the way our kids will receive instruction
10 in this district.

11 COUNCILMAN JACKSON: I agree and
12 just to add to that I think that when we went
13 down, for those of you who were unable to make
14 it and I'm sure you viewed it on the
15 recordings, we had an enormous amount of
16 support from our State legislators.
17 Mr. Wimberly, Assemblyman Wimberly, you know,
18 voiced his opinion loud and clear. I think
19 that if we make sure that we come together in
20 solidarity, call for that press conference and
21 bring every major news network here as we stand
22 firmly together with our State legislators as
23 well as our State senator who also has to be
24 responsible for our local budget as the BA I
25 think -- personally I think that's --

1 COMMISSIONER IRVING: I support the
2 idea. I mean, once the resolution I think is
3 drafted and approved, I think it should be
4 followed up with some level of press conference
5 with respect to the municipal body as well.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCKOY: So I think
7 we have consensus I would believe around the
8 first item, the joint resolution. Again, not
9 to forget the note that Councilman Morris is
10 making, which we need to be able to identify
11 what would it take to bring forward a thorough
12 and efficient education for the population that
13 we have and the curriculum that's required.
14 Meaning, many of those things that have been
15 taken away should be added back that are found
16 in every other progressive and advancing school
17 district in the State of New Jersey. It's not
18 as if we don't know how it is -- how to educate
19 children, we do know that. The question is
20 whether we want -- we think the urban centers
21 are deserving of such an education and that's
22 the problem that I have.

23 Dr. Atallo made a point and I want to
24 anchor that with respect to sports, that not --
25 certainly a very small percentage of Joe's

1 children that have participated in scholastics
2 in sports in high school or even elementary
3 will go on to play professional sports such as
4 Mr. Mike Jackson next to me and others, but it
5 is an outlet. It is a part of the educational
6 program. It allows for children to build their
7 self-esteem and to get their footing.

8 I know for me for one as an immigrant
9 coming to John F. Kennedy in the early '70s,
10 the one area that the playing field was level
11 was on the soccer field. I call it football
12 then, you call it soccer. I thought that was a
13 little bit odd and, you know, you call
14 something else football. But I made that
15 adjustment. But on that team you had kids that
16 were from many nations. I learned to speak a
17 little Czechoslovakian in language, whatever
18 that might be that said pass the ball or, you
19 know, and you get that dynamic going on.
20 Without that you have more kids on the street,
21 more kids being less successful and increase in
22 the challenges that we face, and our City and
23 our community face tremendous challenges.

24 We can't forget that we are a distressed
25 city in need of -- they've reclassified it as a

1 ploy and we seem to be falling into it. You
2 know, we have accepted the notion, oh, this
3 transitional aid, we're suppose to be
4 transitioning off. No, this is distressed
5 cities aid. As long as we're a distressed
6 city, we need aid. So let us get out of the
7 distressed city condition, which means improve
8 education which is the primary driver for any
9 community, create jobs and opportunity and
10 rebuild back the infrastructure of our urban
11 center so that we can be a thriving community
12 again and that's how you transition off
13 distressed cities aid. You don't cut your toes
14 off to fit in the shoe because the shoe is too
15 small. You get your proper size shoe. That's
16 what you do.

17 And the conversation here and I don't
18 want anybody to misinterpret Commissioner
19 Hodges' comment in the fact that he's not here
20 to talk about the cuts or the deficit, it's a
21 -- it's an understanding of what *Abbott v. Burk*
22 was all about, it's an understanding of what
23 the constitution of the State of New Jersey is
24 about and it's an understanding of what
25 thorough and efficient education means. It

1 means that the State has an obligation to
2 provide that, not the local municipality, not
3 the local school district, the State. It's a
4 State right. It's a State guarantee. And when
5 we fail to do that and have the Governor sell
6 us the okeydoke that you can only get the
7 education that you can afford locally, that's
8 not it. Public education is suppose to be the
9 level playing field for everybody across the
10 State. You get an equal education guaranteed
11 by the Constitution and that's not happening.

12 So it's not that the Board is not working
13 hard or the teachers are not working hard,
14 children come to school in deficit positions.
15 And I work in early childhood three- and
16 four-year-olds. And why is the State doing
17 that? Because we have found that urban
18 centers, children of disadvantaged parents come
19 to preschool and to kindergarten with an
20 educational deficit less likely to hear
21 somebody read, less likely for someone to put a
22 book in your hand, less likely for you to have
23 the nutritional program you need and you show
24 up at kindergarten in a deficit position.
25 Therefore, let's now begin to educate three-

1 and four-year-olds. And we have seen in New
2 Jersey the most successful pre-K program in the
3 nation. So we know how to educate children.
4 The question now is how do you afford it?

5 And when it comes to children's
6 education, that's the one thing that can't be
7 too expensive because ignorance is very costly
8 and we need to do whatever we need to do to
9 make sure that our children are getting the
10 full measure of what it is that they deserve
11 because you see that so much on the back end.
12 We have seen the actions and the loss that's
13 occurring on the streets.

14 I was reading in the paper, online paper
15 today not in New Jersey but in Philadelphia
16 speaking of the murder rate and the number of
17 under 25 that is shooting and being shot and
18 it'll make you cry. And if you have that
19 youngster from all that I've seen and heard in
20 the fourth grade and not achieve educational
21 success, it followed them for a very, very long
22 time. It's a very slippery slope and that kid
23 goes down the road.

24 So we have to do all that we need to do
25 and that's why we take this so seriously and

1 why we take this reduction as such an offense
2 because we know the consequences of that. We
3 know the consequences of that. All right.

4 So I think we have the consensus on the
5 first and we will try to build around that to
6 make sure that that is sufficient. I'll ask
7 you not to pass it first and give it to us, but
8 that we will work with it -- work on it in an
9 initial draft form and we can --

10 COMMISSIONER IRVING: Come to a
11 common language.

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Right.
13 And we add to it. Okay. Absolutely.

14 The second item I'm not as clear on the
15 definition, so let's skip number two and go to
16 number three, which I think would be an easier
17 one, which is -- I think that was some form of
18 legal action.

19 COMMISSIONER IRVING: Right.

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: I think
21 that the State of New Jersey has shown over the
22 years since *Abbott v. Burke* that whereas
23 protesters queue and standing up and saying
24 it's wrong, it's wonderful. It's a good
25 exercise in our democratic process, but we in

1 the State of New Jersey understand a lawsuit.
2 We seem only to move when the supreme court
3 says move and the supreme court has been wrong
4 in the past, we know that, but I think they
5 were right on the issue of the Abbott centers.
6 They were right on the funding of our schools
7 and they were right on upholding the fact that
8 we have a constitutional right to a thorough
9 and efficient education.

10 So I think that we are not going to be
11 able to avoid taking that next step of
12 consulting with our parents, our community, the
13 Educational Law Center and providing them with
14 the information they need to take a stand
15 against the years of underfunding, which is a
16 cutback in a deficit position that we have
17 always been in and to make some legal action
18 take place, be it jointly with the Board or by
19 identifying parents in the community, by
20 supporting or requesting the assistance of the
21 Educational Law Center which might be our first
22 preliminary step to ask them to come in and do
23 an assessment, a preliminary assessment of our
24 condition. And I'm sure they have been
25 monitoring this situation and might be able to

1 give us some upfront recommendation moving
2 forward.

3 COUNCILMAN MORRIS: Council
4 President.

5 COUNCILWOMAN COTTON: Council
6 President.

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY:
8 Councilwoman Cotton and then Councilman Morris.

9 COUNCILWOMAN COTTON: Thank you,
10 Council President. Let me ask you, Mr. Irving,
11 the Educational Law Center knows our situation
12 now?

13 COMMISSIONER IRVING: Oh, very much
14 so.

15 COUNCILWOMAN COTTON: So I mean --
16 and have they done anything that you know of?
17 Because I know the Educational Law Center by us
18 only having that one firm to help cities like
19 Paterson, but, you know, they get so many
20 requests and I'm saying requests from parents
21 with situations that happened with them in the
22 school system. So is this on top of their
23 list?

24 COMMISSIONER HODGES: If I may, Mr.
25 President.

1 COMMISSIONER IRVING: Go for it.

2 COMMISSIONER HODGES: The
3 Educational Law Center is currently engaged in
4 an Abbott-like case for rural districts. Now,
5 they are, they are -- they're monitoring what's
6 happening in Paterson because some of us --
7 some of the people in Paterson are part of an
8 ongoing collaboration with them, so there's
9 discussions that have taken place about what's
10 the next steps and what they're doing.

11 But they are -- and I'll let Chris
12 elaborate on some other things that are going
13 on, but they are apprised of what's going on in
14 Paterson and they're looking at the situation
15 and not just Paterson, there are other urban
16 districts that are struggling and how to move
17 forward with that.

18 COUNCILWOMAN COTTON: Thank you.

19 COMMISSIONER IRVING: I think it's
20 also important for us to note, you know,
21 Council President, that there have been parents
22 and community groups who I know have taken a
23 very close look at this legal action and
24 barring, you know, violating any
25 confidentiality that, you know, they've

1 entrusted in some of the Board Members here,
2 what I can say is that I would be surprised if
3 that over the next few weeks, you know, an
4 independent group of parents, community members
5 wouldn't be coming together to, you know, to
6 state their case and claim to advocate, you
7 know, for that, which is why it's so important
8 for the elected bodies to get ahead of this and
9 to have some joint action and joint language,
10 you know, that we've gone on the record, you
11 know, to support and endorse while the
12 community members, you know, do so.

13 I also know the NAACP is looking at this
14 underfunding as a civil rights issue because
15 please make it very clear, you know, this is
16 not just a constitutional issue, this is a
17 civil rights issue. You know, Brown and Black
18 children are being denied their constitutional
19 right to a thorough and efficient education.
20 And because of -- you know, the NAACP is
21 looking at that as well.

22 So I think for the third piece, you know,
23 I don't think there will need to be any action
24 that come from these elected bodies because I'm
25 quite confident that there'll be other

1 entities, you know, who will be deployed, you
2 know, to, you know, carry that out and
3 rightfully so because, you know, this fight,
4 you know, we as elected officials have our own
5 end to fight as do you, but this fight should
6 come from parents. It should come from the
7 families who are being adversely affected and
8 it should come from the Black families, the
9 Latino families, the Arab families, the Bengali
10 families, all of the respective nationalities
11 who are affected by the underfunding of the
12 SFRA.

13 COMMISSIONER KERR: Mr. President.

14 COMMISSIONER IRVING: Yes, sir.

15 COMMISSIONER KERR: I heard what you
16 have just said, but outside of this elected
17 body we really have no control. So when you
18 say that, you know, these various groups are
19 looking into it, what's the timeframe that
20 you're given or you have heard of that will
21 give us some sort of comfort knowing very well
22 that action will be taken and it will not be
23 left up to, you know, next year or the year
24 after?

25 COMMISSIONER IRVING: I'll try and

1 use my words very cautiously --

2 COMMISSIONER HODGES: If I may. I
3 have been in -- I think some of us have been
4 involved in some discussions. In fact, it was
5 somebody, a group came forward at one of our
6 public meetings and stated an interest to
7 pursue legal action and that group seems to be
8 moving forward with that. But we prefer that
9 that group decide what their timetable is and
10 report their position as opposed to us stating
11 it because we're not part of that group.

12 COMMISSIONER KERR: My thing is if
13 there is nobody to really kind of massage the
14 movement, then it could end up for another two
15 years.

16 COMMISSIONER IRVING: Know this,
17 Commissioner Kerr. There are elected officials
18 who they have asked to serve as, you know,
19 advisors, you know, elected officials not just
20 on the Board, but elected officials in the
21 legislature and not just within our town and
22 our county. So I think that community group is
23 getting, you know, the advice that they need
24 and I wouldn't be surprised if something would
25 not be happening, you know, quite sooner than

1 later.

2 COUNCILMAN JACKSON: Council
3 President.

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Councilman
5 Jackson.

6 COUNCILMAN JACKSON: Thank you,
7 Council President.

8 COUNCILMAN MORRIS: I got the floor.

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: You still
10 got the floor. Councilman, hold on. Hold on a
11 second. I thought you relinquished.
12 Councilman Morris.

13 COUNCILMAN MORRIS: I was patiently
14 waiting my turn. But, you know, and I'll be
15 extremely brief because the argument you made
16 was the same one that I was about to make that,
17 you know, the State of New Jersey recognizes
18 class-action lawsuits and those are the most
19 powerful types of lawsuits that you can move
20 forward with when you do it in a form of a
21 class because it has a much higher financial
22 penalty in the end.

23 So I'm glad to kind of hear that that's
24 sort of, you know, in the motions because the
25 expectation from the State is that elected

1 officials and/or governmental entities will
2 move forward with some type of suit and they
3 expect that, they're prepared for that and they
4 know how to react for that, but when parents,
5 you know, those parents who are impacted by
6 this and their children form a class to move
7 forward, it becomes that much more powerful.

8 You know, there's a part of me that
9 wish -- wishes that a bunch of, you know,
10 parents from the City of Paterson jump on the
11 bus with their children and go to the Glen Rock
12 and Ridgewood and sit down in those classrooms
13 with their children and say, you know, we're
14 here to get the education we deserve because
15 it's not happening in our hometown. And if you
16 want us to leave this place, you help and work
17 with us to ensure that the State of New Jersey
18 provide the same type of education in the City
19 of Paterson.

20 Thank you, Council President.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Thank you,
22 Councilman.

23 COMMISSIONER IRVING: Duly noted,
24 Council President.

25 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Councilman

1 Jackson.

2 COUNCILMAN JACKSON: I'm glad I had
3 an opportunity to hear that, Councilman Morris,
4 before I made my next statement. But with all
5 due respect, Mr. President and Councilman
6 Morris, we understand the dynamic of our
7 community and unfortunately and fortunately we
8 have been charged with the task of moving the
9 necessity or the agenda forward for our
10 community, for those people who don't feel as
11 if they don't have a voice, who don't exercise
12 their voice.

13 The young people that are affected by
14 this, these -- this unfortunate situation don't
15 have the capacity and don't always have the
16 support team to fight for them. So considering
17 that, considering that we have been charged
18 with the obligation of being the bearer of bad
19 news, where do we stand -- right now from my
20 standpoint and my perspective is that if we
21 continue to wait for other groups, the fear is
22 that we may wait, you know, and continue to
23 wait.

24 So, you know, we can only be responsible
25 for our own actions and the actions of these

1 two boards needs to be resounding. It needs to
2 be unified. So I have no quorum with falling,
3 you know, in line with however we decide to
4 move, but I know that we need to act. That's
5 my opinion. We need to act. We don't need to
6 wait on -- we've been waiting on the NAACP for
7 many years not just our local, but our national
8 to, you know, bring forward, you know, efforts
9 for certain changes and we're still waiting.

10 So at this moment, at this point in time
11 my opinion, you know, completely respecting the
12 perspectives that everyone brings forward, but
13 I think that we need to lead the charge. We,
14 this chosen elected group, body, needs to lead
15 the charge and those members of the community
16 that choose to join, meaning as we've been
17 doing whether it's providing the vehicles for
18 them to join in, they will follow once we begin
19 to move in the direction that's necessary.

20 Most of our community don't know the
21 direction that it should be going into. We
22 don't have, you know, when we talk about the
23 numbers and, unfortunately, talking with Mr.
24 Best the other day, when you look at seven
25 percent of our community are college, you know,

1 are college graduates. We are not going to
2 have -- and that number may be wrong.

3 COMMISSIONER IRVING: 70 percent are
4 college graduates?

5 COUNCILMAN JACKSON: Seven. Seven
6 percent.

7 COMMISSIONER IRVING: Oh, seven.
8 Okay. I thought you said 70. I was about to
9 say that would come from T.J.

10 COUNCILMAN JACKSON: Not talking
11 about your household.

12 Well, considering that they may not
13 understand the direction that's necessary. So,
14 you know, we're charged with that effort and
15 I'm willing to completely bear that burden and
16 just into all of the other efforts that we as a
17 Board need to bear, but I think that that
18 initiative needs to be -- needs to come from
19 these two boards coming together to make an
20 effort to move the agenda forward. That's my
21 opinion.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Thank you.
23 Thank you, Councilman. So --

24 COMMISSIONER IRVING: To brings us
25 to the last point, Council President.

1 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Yes.

2 COMMISSIONER IRVING: I just think
3 that in the future, you know, we should just
4 effectively maybe over the next month set up a
5 series of working meetings to Councilman
6 At-Large Mendez' point to follow up on to
7 discuss additional issues that we may have in
8 common. Meet either on a quarterly basis or
9 even, you know, biannually or triannually.
10 But, you know, the conversation around issues
11 relating to public safety, relating to
12 unemployment, relating to, you know, academic
13 achievement, recreation, et cetera. You know,
14 our joint issues. And, you know, as Councilman
15 Morris indicated, you know, we share the same
16 sandbox and there might be opportunities, you
17 know, in those conversations.

18 Councilman Mendez talked about shared
19 service and shared services opportunity, but
20 that's not going to happen, you know, in one,
21 you know, trigger meeting overnight. We are
22 going to agree to, you know, consolidating
23 services right away. It's going to take, you
24 know, a series of different conversations, you
25 know, that we're able to kind of sit down and

1 really rack our heads together and see what can
2 we do, you know, to help make the quality of
3 life and the quality of education for the
4 children in our City, you know, the best
5 possible.

6 So I would commit, if the Board would
7 permit me to, to work with the Council
8 President and the Municipal Clerk, and the
9 Board Secretary to put on the books at least,
10 you know, one or two more meetings before the
11 end of this year in which the Council and the
12 School Board can come together to discuss, you
13 know, additional issues that will be important
14 and that should help lead us into the budget
15 conversation for next year. So if we meet
16 sometime around September, October in
17 particular as we begin the budget process, you
18 know, we can as a collective body begin to
19 forecast and understand, you know, where the
20 municipality is, you know, fiscally and where
21 the School Board is fiscally and we can begin
22 to really hammer out conversations related to,
23 you know, what the realities of our fiscal
24 house looks like, but early. And we can have
25 those, you know, intelligent conversations

1 together as a body.

2 And so, Council President, if it's okay
3 with you, I'll work with your office to
4 schedule at least two more meetings before the
5 end of the calendar year.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: All right.
7 Very good. We also have the option of being a
8 little bit more flexible if we identify the
9 committees. You know, we got fiscal could
10 probably meet with the finance committee and at
11 one point we had a group that was dedicated for
12 education committee. I'm not too sure that's
13 on my new list. But we certainly ought to meet
14 as a full board on a periodic basis and so we
15 look forward to that.

16 This meeting has been fruitful and
17 helpful. Let it be clear that we understand
18 the need for meeting the educational needs of
19 our young people in providing them with a
20 thorough and efficient education and we
21 recognize even in our best efforts right now we
22 are somewhat deficient in delivering on that
23 promise. Therefore, cutting back is an
24 unconscionable position to move into and so is
25 the notion of pushing forward to the City in

1 increasing the tax levy, which we are
2 insufficiently able to respond to or deliver
3 given that we needed the State to help us to
4 close our budget.

5 COMMISSIONER IRVING: And, Council
6 President, let me just say, you know, on behalf
7 of, you know, my colleagues, I want to thank
8 the Council for availing themselves and I
9 really do really mean the five of you for
10 availing yourselves, you know, for this
11 conversation. You know, I know you all had a
12 slew of different meetings and the five of you
13 found fit in your schedule to come here tonight
14 and to engage in this conversation. Not that
15 I'm knocking anyone who is not here because I'm
16 sure everyone has their respective reasons, but
17 I am extremely appreciative. You know, we've
18 spent a great deal of your time as a Board
19 meeting and discussing issues. And, you know,
20 to truly spend an evening to do so I certainly
21 appreciate, Council President, your leadership
22 to help make this happen.

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: All right.
24 Thank you. And we do need to let folk know
25 that their voice is important. There are only

1 nine seats here. Out of 150,000 people in this
2 City only nine have been chosen to sit in these
3 seats and when you're missing, your voice is
4 missing, your input is missing. So we were
5 just about able to hold quorum tonight with
6 five individuals. That's not acceptable, not
7 given the importance of this meeting and the --
8 simply that.

9 COMMISSIONER IRVING: Let the record
10 show that all nine of the Board Members were
11 here this evening. Just want, Councilman
12 Morris, you had --

13 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Rightfully
14 so. Rightfully so.

15 COUNCILWOMAN COTTON: Council
16 President, real fast.

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Yes,
18 Councilwoman.

19 COUNCILWOMAN COTTON: You said there
20 were three, so we're only going to be working
21 on one of them for now?

22 COMMISSIONER IRVING: Yes. We're
23 going to get the resolution --

24 COUNCILWOMAN COTTON: Yes.

25 COMMISSIONER IRVING: -- to you all,

1 but I think the Council -- I think an added
2 piece would be a joint press conference between
3 the Council, the municipal and our local
4 legislators and community members, stakeholders
5 who have been with us. And then I think the
6 next piece would be -- I'd actually like to go
7 back, you know, just to make sure that I
8 address the issues of my colleagues in
9 particular to each community groups who are
10 looking at taking legal action and then be able
11 to report back what is the projected timeline
12 and how can we help lead that process and steer
13 that process moving forward. And then we're
14 going to schedule the additional meetings, the
15 two meetings before the end of the fiscal year
16 -- calendar year, excuse me.

17 COUNCILWOMAN COTTON: Right. But I
18 believe though, Mr. Irving, that the State
19 NAACP is doing something about this. I'm
20 pretty sure on the state level.

21 COMMISSIONER IRVING: Again, I've
22 had several conversations, and just without
23 divulging, you know, the confidentiality I've
24 had with those respective bodies, I am quite
25 confident that they're going to follow through.

1 COUNCILWOMAN COTTON: Yeah. Thank
2 you.

3 COMMISSIONER IRVING: You and I both
4 know the same conversation.

5 COUNCILWOMAN COTTON: Right.

6 COUNCILMAN MORRIS: Move to close.

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Motion to
8 close by Councilman Morris.

9 COUNCILWOMAN COTTON: Second.

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Seconded
11 by Councilwoman Cotton.

12 Roll call, Madam Clerk.

13 THE CLERK: Yes, Mr. President.
14 Roll call to close this Special Joint Meeting
15 between the Board of Education and the
16 Municipal Council.

17 Councilwoman Cotton?

18 COUNCILWOMAN COTTON: Yes.

19 THE CLERK: Councilman Jackson?

20 COUNCILMAN JACKSON: Yes.

21 THE CLERK: Councilman Mendez?

22 COUNCILMAN MENDEZ: Before my vote
23 let me take this time to thanks the Board, I
24 mean, the entire nine member of the Board to
25 show up at this meeting. And I'm looking

1 forward to have, you know, the next two
2 meetings. I know this is the time for us to
3 work together and fight together. This is our
4 fight.

5 My vote is yes.

6 THE CLERK: Thank you. Councilman
7 Morris?

8 COUNCILMAN MORRIS: Yes and good
9 night.

10 THE CLERK: The vote is five in
11 favor, four absent --

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: I didn't
13 vote.

14 THE CLERK: Mr. President?

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: My vote is
16 yes. My vote is yes.

17 THE CLERK: Mr. President?

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT McKOY: Yes.

19 THE CLERK: The vote is five in
20 favor, four absent. The Special Meeting is
21 hereby adjourned.

22

23 (Whereupon, the proceeding is then
24 concluded at 10:07 p.m.)

25

C E R T I F I C A T I O N

I, **AMELINDA LOPEZ**, a Certified Court Reporter, Registered Professional Reporter, and Notary Public of the State of New Jersey, hereby certify that the proceedings herein are from the notes taken by me of a Special Joint Meeting of the Municipal Council held on Wednesday, March 30, 2016; and that this is a correct transcript of the same.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Amelinda Lopez", is written over a horizontal line.

AMELINDA LOPEZ, CCR, RPR
License No. 30XI00229700
A Notary Public of the
State of New Jersey
I.D. No. 2015074
Commission Expires 5-28-2019

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