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1	CITY OF MILWAUKEE					
2	COMMON COUNCIL					
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4	In the Matter of:					
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6	736 South 3rd Street					
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8	Proceedings held in the above-entitled					
9	matter, June 25th, 2002 in the Common Council					
10	Chambers, 200 East Wells Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin,					
11	before the Common Council, reported by Terese M.					
12	Schiebenes of Milwaukee Reporters Associated, Inc.					
13						
14	A-P-P-E-A-R-A-N-C-E-S					
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16	DAVID LARSON, appeared in person.					
17	OFFICE OF THE CITY ATTORNEY, BY BRUCE					
18	SCHRIMPF, 200 East Wells Street Milwaukee,					
19	Wisconsin, 53202, appeared on behalf of the Common					
20	Council.					

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1	PROCEEDINGS					
2	THE CLERK: The Committee recommends					
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4	approval of Item 11, substitute motion to approve					
5	recommendations of the committee relative to the					
	nonrenewal of the licensed dwelling facility license					
6	for the premises at 736 South 3rd Street.					
7	PRESIDENT PRATT: Have members of the					
8	council read the report and recommendation of the					
9	Utilities & License Committee in this matter? We'll					
10	have roll call of that.					
11	THE CLERK: Alderman Herron.					
12	ALDERMAN HERRON: Aye.					
13	THE CLERK: Alderman D'Amato.					
14	ALDERMAN D'AMATO: Aye.					
15	THE CLERK: Alderman Henningsen.					
16	ALDERMAN HENNINGSEN: Aye.					
17	THE CLERK: Alderman Bohl.					
18	ALDERMAN BOHL: Aye.					
19	THE CLERK: Alderman Johnson-Odom.					
20	ALDERMAN JOHNSON-ODOM: Aye.					
21	THE CLERK: Alderman Gordon.					
22	ALDERMAN GORDON: Aye.					
23	THE CLERK: Alderman Donovan.					
24	ALDERMAN DONOVAN: Aye.					
25	THE CLERK: Alderman Richards.					

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1	ALDERMAN RICHARDS: Aye.
2	THE CLERK: Alderman Cameron.
3	ALDERMAN CAMERON: Aye.
4	THE CLERK: Alderman Dudzik.
5	ALDERMAN DUDZIK: Aye.
6	THE CLERK: Alderman Sanchez.
7	ALDERMAN SANCHEZ: Aye.
8	THE CLERK: Alderman Pawlinski.
9	ALDERMAN PAWLINSKI: Aye.
10	THE CLERK: Alderman Breier.
11	ALDERMAN BRIER: Aye.
12	THE CLERK: Alderman Nardelli.
13	ALDERMAN NARDELLI: Aye.
14	THE CLERK: Alderman Murphy.
15	ALDERMAN MURPHY: Aye.
16	THE CLERK: Alderman Hines.
17	ALDERMAN HINES: Aye.
18	THE CLERK: Mr. President.
19	PRESIDENT PRATT: Aye.
20	THE CLERK: 17 ayes.
21	PRESIDENT PRATT: 17 ayes.
22	THE CLERK: Are the following licensees or
23	complainants or their representatives present and wish
24	to address the council: Licensee David Larson?
25	AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yes, sir.

00004 1 THE CLERK: Did you wish to address the 2 council, Mr. Larson, this morning? MR. LARSON: Yes, I do. 4 THE CLERK: And let me ask if any of the 5 complainants are present and wish to address the 6 council: David Martin, Dain Maddox? Those are the 7 two. 8 ALDERMAN NARDELLI: Mr. President, I want to 9 formally object because the recommendation is to 10 approve, making their appearance here unnecessary. 11 PRESIDENT PRATT: So your objection again, 12 Alderman Nardelli? 13 ALDERMAN NARDELLI: We're recommending 14 approval of their license. What's the argument? 15 THE CLERK: This one is recommended for 16 nonrenewal. 17 PRESIDENT PRATT: Alderman Dudzik would move 18 that we go into committee as a whole to hear oral 19 arguments on behalf of the licensee or the 20 complainants in opposition to the report and 21 recommendations and a statement presented by the city 22 attorney. Any objections to that? Roll call that. 23 We don't have any objections to that, don't have to 24 roll call it. Hearing no objections, if none, so 25 ordered.

Okay, Mr. Larson. Each side shall be limited to five minutes. You have five minutes, Mr. Larson, and arguments shall be limited to the subject matter of the report and recommendations of the committee.

(Whereupon, DAVID LARSON was duly sworn.)

MR. LARSON: Members of the Common Council,
the process for renewal of this rooming house license
began with a notice from the Department of
Neighborhood Services in February of this year. In
early March, I submitted my application for license
renewal, paid the required fee, and on March 20th
passed the building inspection required for renewal.
Unbeknownst to me was that previous to the building
inspection, March 14th to be exact, a complaint from
Mr. Dain Maddox had been recorded with the city clerk
objecting to a rooming house license for my building.

According to Mr. Dain's letter, he was renewing his previous request to deny a license for this location. There are two very disturbing issues here. First, I didn't receive notice of this or any other complaint until May 23rd, more than two months after the recording of the letter. Second, in his letter, Mr. Maddox expressed his concern over a number of rooming houses in the neighborhood, not legal

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justification for the denial of renewal of a rooming house license. He specifically stated that, quote, "We do not need more rooming houses" in this neighborhood.

Mr. Maddox recently attempted to have the renewal of a license denied for another rooming house less than a block from his home. While I applaud his concern for the neighborhood, I must suggest that Mr. Maddox is on a crusade to reduce the number of rooming houses near his own home beginning with my facility.

Consider that I was not informed of any complaints, concerns, or objections to the rooming house by any of the neighbors directly for the entire time I have owned the building nor have any of my tenants, guests of tenants, or I received any fines, citations, or warnings from the police, the Department of Neighborhood Services, or other city departments. In other words, the rooming house has a clean history during my time of ownership.

Also consider that it has been only 32 days from the time I first received notice of any neighborhood concerns, specifically the city notice of the formal process for reviewing the rooming house license application to today's hearing. That's hardly enough time to address concerns and bring about change

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for the rooming house, if indicated. Please remember, no one from the neighborhood has offered me the opportunity to discuss or work on resolving any of their concerns or issues.

Of additional concern is the bias with which the findings of fact, conclusion of law, and resulting recommendation was completed by a hearing examiner. Much of my very relevant testimony and mention of my only witness, Mr. Albert Wellstein here today, and his supporting testimony were omitted in addition to many inaccuracies in reporting. This is certainly not due process but appears to be to me hostile grounds for legal action.

The building has been for sale for four weeks. Although most parties interested in the property have expressed no desire to operate a rooming house, some have. It is my feeling that if the rooming house license is not renewed, this will hamper my efforts to sell the building. There's certainly a stigma attached to a property denied the opportunity to operate as it was intended. Even with the suspension of the license, the same stigma is attached.

My final concern is for the welfare of the tenants of the rooming house. 10 individuals, some

00008 1 without employment, would be forced to find new homes. Two tenants, one 18 and the other 19, are just beginning to learn what living independently is all 4 about. My tenants are not bad people, just less 5 fortunate in many cases than most of us. Although I 6 do not know how much time they would have to 7 accomplish relocation, it's very difficult to find low 8 income housing. Some will undoubtedly end up homeless 9 and would probably remain right in the neighborhood. 10 I don't want any part of being responsible for putting 11 anyone out on the street. 12 I'm asking that you allow for renewal of 13 this rooming house license and hope that the matter 14 ends here. Thank you for your time and consideration. PRESIDENT PRATT: Thank you. Questions from 15 16 members of the council to Mr. Larson? 17 ALDERMAN SANCHEZ: One. 18 PRESIDENT PRATT: Any other questions from 19 members of the council of Mr. Larson? Thank you, Mr. 20 Larson. We'll now hear from the City Attorney. 21 MR. SCHRIMPF: Thank you, Mr. President. 22 While I was drafting the committee finding of fact, 23 which, of course, are largely based on the hearing 2.4 examiner's findings of fact, I went through the

transcript references that the hearing examiner

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included in the report to the Utilities & Licenses Committee, and all of those transcript references upon which he based his individual findings of fact checked out. Therefore, the record contains the facts the hearing examiner says were in the record regarding the basis upon which he ultimately came to the conclusion he did.

So as far as notice was concerned, I think the objection of Mr. Larson relates to whether or not the neighbors who were objecting had contacted him prior to the time that they filed something formal with the City of Milwaukee. It would be nice if neighbors would do that. The experience of the Utilities & Licenses Committee is that sometimes neighbors do and sometimes neighbors don't. The ordinance requires that if they have a specific objection and if they file that with the City of Milwaukee, then at the point in time that the City of Milwaukee is considering the renewal of the license, the City of Milwaukee must provide a list of the written objections to the neighbors, to the licensee, which was done in this case.

The final point that I'd like to address is the issue raised by Mr. Larson regarding the number of rooming houses in the area, which was raised by Mr.

00010 Maddox. That was specifically dealt with by the 1 hearing examiner in Conclusion of Law No. 2 in his report, which was replicated in the committee report; 4 namely, that there was the objection as to 5 concentration of rooming houses, and he specifically 6 rejected that conclusion or that argument in drafting 7 the findings because this was a renewal and not a new 8 license, and concentration of outlets or concentration 9 of licensed facilities is an issue that applies only 10 on an application for a new license. So Mr. Larson's 11 concerns in that regard were, in fact, addressed by 12 the hearing examiner by rejecting those matters 13 outright. 14 I stand ready to answer any questions 15 that you have. 16 PRESIDENT PRATT: Alderman Richards. 17 ALDERMAN RICHARDS: Yes. Attorney Schrimpf, 18 could you recount for me -- I believe Mr. Larson said 19

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ALDERMAN RICHARDS: Yes. Attorney Schrimpf, could you recount for me -- I believe Mr. Larson said that he had something to the effect -- and I just want to get it accurately -- that he had no complaints, no violations. But what is his record in terms of operating the rooming house in this period?

MR. SCHRIMPF: The hearing examiner determined -- and this was supported by the transcript -- that the Department of Neighborhood Services

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appeared, and she indicated there were no pending work orders or code violations on the property at that time, and therefore, the Department of Neighborhood Services had no objection to renewal of the license. Furthermore, the Milwaukee Police Department had no objections, as well.

That is something that relates to the physical condition of the building and whether or not the police department actually has got a record of some violations that occur at the premises. This was a situation, not unlike other situations the Utilities & Licenses Committee routinely sees, where there are problems that are observed by the neighbors. The neighbors appear, they testify about those problems, notice of those problems is given by the city to the licensee, and the licensee rather has the opportunity, one, to introduce countervailing evidence, and two, cross-examine the witnesses that are appearing and testifying as to these particular problems.

MR. RICHARDSON: Another question. Would you -- and I read the hearing examiner's data end report. In reading that yourself, did you get -- It's hard for me to judge, when I see, for instance, the owner of the property, I -- H.I. -- the owner of the property testified that at times the door of the

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property is left open and locked. Without any doorbells on the property, this leads to noise and nuisances of honking horns and people yelling upstairs to tenants. I know we all get irritated when that happens.

I had a sign I printed in my newsletter, "Your horn is not a doorbell." It didn't cause a massive change of behavior in my district or anywhere else, I guess. How substantive was this complaint? Was it widespread, was it occasional? We're talking about a rooming house, and I don't think any of us live in a rooming house by choice. I know none of us says, "Gee, if I get enough money, I'm going to go and move in a rooming house." That's sort of not the first choice of people, it's where people go. And we do want to have rooming houses. We need them, and they need to be well run. We're trying to decide whether or not this one is well enough run to continue its license. That's what I'm trying to get at.

MR. SCHRIMPF: With respect to -- That particular problem, at least from the transcript, did not stand out as any greater problem than the other problems that were associated with the rooming house. This was one of those situations where you have a variety of episodes of conduct by either the residents

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of the rooming house or guests of the rooming house, and that while that particular problem occurred and while that particular problem occurred on a number of occasions, as was testified to, it was a problem that, combined with the other problems, were creating the animosity of the neighbors and the concerns of the neighbors for the peace and quiet of the neighborhood. By itself, probably not enough to deny renewal of the license, but coupled with everything else, it indicates the pattern.

And I might add if the rooming house is not equipped with doorbells, that is something that would, in fact — there's no legal requirement for doorbells, but if, in fact, the operator of the rooming house is interested in getting along with the neighbors and this is a problem that's occurring, then that's something that could be installed to address that particular problem, and at least one issue would be deleted from the case.

 $\begin{array}{c} \text{ALDERMAN RICHARDS:} \quad \text{I guess one last} \\ \text{question.} \quad \text{How many rooming houses do we have in the} \\ \text{city?} \end{array}$

MR. SCHRIMPF: If I told you, I would be hazarding a total guess. I have no idea.

MR. RICHARDSON: Couple hundred?

00014 1 MR. SCHRIMPF: I would guess it's in that 2 area. That's totally a guess. I have no idea. ALDERMAN RICHARDS: And of the rooming 4 houses that we have, what percentage have these kinds 5 of difficulties? 6 MR. SCHRIMPF: Again, that would be 7 hazarding a guess. ALDERMAN PAWLINSKI: Mr. Chairman, I can 8 9 probably answer that question. I can answer the 10 question this way, in that in two-and-a-half years now 11 serving as chairman of the committee, we have not had 12 a rooming house license come up for renewal except for 13 these three, which were legitimately filed by 14 complainants. So you have a case where very few reach 15 the level where we need to conduct a hearing on this. 16 I don't think technically the committee conducted a 17 hearing since 1998. So most of the rooming houses 18 operate in a manner that is not detrimental to the 19 health, safety, and welfare of the neighborhood. 20 MR. SCHRIMPF: I would agree with the 21 Alderman. The experience of the committee is that 22 these are relatively rare. 23 PRESIDENT PRATT: The Chair recognizes 2.4 Alderman Marlene Johnson-Odom, then Alderman Angel

Sanchez. Alderwoman Johnson-Odom.

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00015 ALDERWOMAN JOHNSON-ODOM: Attorney Schrimpf, 1 in your opinion, if this were denied and Mr. Larson took this to court, would he win? 4 MR. SCHRIMPF: The standard that's typically 5 applied to one of these is whether or not there was 6 any evidence in the record upon which the Common 7 Council could come to the conclusion that it did. There certainly is, because it was specifically 8 9 referred to and cited in the transcripts, and that's 10 precisely why I cross-checked those citations in the 11 transcripts. So applying the usual rules of law, 12 there is sufficient evidence in the record to support 13 a finding, in this case a recommendation and a finding 14 of nonrenewal of the license. 15 ALDERWOMAN JOHNSON-ODOM: I don't know if I 16 can ask this next question without going into the next 17 renewal, which had more objections than this one 18 presented to the committee. 19 MR. SCHRIMPF: I'm sorry, I didn't hear all 20 that. 21 ALDERWOMAN JOHNSON-ODOM: The next license 22 was renewed. 23 PRESIDENT PRATT: On this license, 2.4 Alderwoman, do you have a question on this one?

ALDERWOMAN JOHNSON-ODOM: I read the

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findings of fact, and there were fewer people objecting to this one than the one coming up, which was approved. So I'm just wondering if this kind of thing could be used in court. If the judge would approve it, it supersedes our action here.

 $$\operatorname{MR.}$ SCHRIMPF: Are you referring to 902 South 3rd?

 $$\operatorname{\mathtt{PRESIDENT}}$ PRATT: The last one is 902 South 3rd, File No. 011680.

MR. SCHRIMPF: Well, Alderman, you don't particularly look at the number of specific findings of fact or the number of the particular complaints, you look -- and that's what the hearing examiner is required to do, the committee and this council is required to do -- you look at the substance of them. And I think what is very clear from reading the substance of these particular complaints is that the hearing examiner -- this was supported by the record -- was impressed by the fact that not only were there these complaints, but there were some of these complaints and calls for police service that were, in fact, generated by the operator of the rooming house, and that seemed to play very large in the hearing examiner's recommendations. The licensee says, "Look, that indicates that I'm managing the property properly 00017 1 because when I hear of a problem, I call the police, which is the proper thing to do." The hearing examiner and the council have to 4 look at the issue of well, why are the police being 5 called, because obviously, if the police are being 6 called, there are problems that are being generated, 7 there is noise that is being generated, there are 8 concerns for the safety of the residents in the area, 9 and from that, do you conclude that this is operated 10 in such a manner that it's consistent with the 11 ordinances of the city? Certainly one of the items in 12 the ordinances is the fact that if the location 13 generates police calls to the point where it is -- you 14 are concerned about the health, safety, and welfare of 15 the citizens both residing within the facility and 16 those residing immediately around the facility, then

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being operated in a manner consistent with the ordinances, which is what the hearing examiner did.

ALDERWOMAN JOHNSON-ODOM: My last question.
This decision, was it based on what the hearing

you have a basis for concluding that no, this is not

examiner said, and did he examine all three?

MR. SCHRIMPF: I'm sorry, I couldn't hear
the end of that.

ALDERWOMAN JOHNSON-ODOM: Were all three of

00018 1 these rooming houses examined by the hearing examiner? MR. SCHRIMPF: Yes. On different days, but they were all before the same examiner. 4 ALDERWOMAN JOHNSON-ODOM: So the conclusion 5 was based on what the hearing examiner said? 6 MR. SCHRIMPF: It was based upon several 7 factors; number one, the presentation of the hearing examiner, number two, the evidence that was cited by 8 9 the hearing examiner, and number three, the facts that 10 were provided by the hearing examiner as well as the 11 conclusions of law. 12 PRESIDENT PRATT: Alderman Sanchez. 13 ALDERMAN SANCHEZ: Thank you very much, Mr. 14 President. Just simply I wanted to let everyone know 15 that I support all the recommendations that the 16 hearing examiner made. Only some rooming houses from 17 time to time have been a problem in the district. I 18 know some of the rooming houses. There's others that 19 will be coming up, as well, in the near future. And so 20 I'll support the recommendations from the hearing 21 examiner. Thank you. 22 PRESIDENT PRATT: Thank you, Alderman 23 Sanchez. Two other lights on. Alderman Richards and 2.4 Alderman Henningsen.

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MR. RICHARDSON: One question on the written

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testimony by Mr. Larson on the second to the last page. Page 3, Item 6, "My only witness, his testimony was omitted." Could you comment on that?

PRESIDENT PRATT: Excuse me, Mr. Schrimpf. Could you speak up a little louder. The court reporter is having some problems picking up. Could we speak up a little louder. Go ahead.

MR. SCHRIMPF: One witness who lives there has indicated that he has not seen or was aware of --which was the exact testimony -- drug activity, prostitution, or other illegal activity with the tenants. That is a fact that was testified to by one of the witnesses. The hearing examiner then also looked at other witnesses who testified who said that they did see these things, and the licensee himself who said that yeah, not only did he see and was aware of these things, but he himself had to call the police regarding some of these matters.

So you take that testimony in light of this testimony, and what the person is saying is, he's not saying I deny that this activity is occurring, he's saying I'm unaware of it. And there are other witnesses who testified who knew the licensee who said, "Well, yeah, we are aware of it." So obviously, what the hearing examiner did was disregard the

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testimony of Mr. Wellstein, probably because he didn't deny that the activity was going on, he was simply unaware of it, which really kind of doesn't get you anywhere when you have other witnesses who testified to dates, times, places, circumstances, and events that they can nail down with particularity and say yes, this did occur.

MR. RICHARDSON: In other words, you're saying that the hearing examiner omitted his testimony because it wasn't substantive or it was irrelevant or it didn't prove any point?

MR. SCHRIMPF: It doesn't prove a point, because the person doesn't say it didn't occur, he's saying I'm unaware of it.

ALDERMAN RICHARDS: It doesn't open us up under review for saying he was selective in accepting testimony?

MR. SCHRIMPF: No, because it's something that courts have to do all the time. Witnesses see different things different ways all the time, and you have to make choices as to the testimony.

PRESIDENT PRATT: Alderman Henningsen.

ALDERMAN HENNINGSEN: There was one telling fact that was recited and then disputed that I'd like to ask you. The gentleman said he evicted nine

people. Isn't it true that he was owning that for a period of time and he originally rented to those people?

MR. SCHRIMPF: That's true. He may not -- Wait. They may have been there at the point that he took it over, that's a possibility.

ALDERMAN HENNINGSEN: That was not asked? Because it always gets me -- and I've had some experience with the rooming house thing, I think we amended the ordinance years ago to have these types of hearings just like tavern licenses -- but it's always amazing that landlords can come in and say, "Well, you know, I evicted the damn guy when you called." I said, "Yeah, but you rented to him in the first place. How did you do that?" Well, no screening, no record check, no credit check.

MR. SCHRIMPF: I don't believe the record reflects whether he initially rented to the individuals that he evicted. If he did not originally rent to them, when he purchased the rooming house, he was subject to the same -- In other words, there was a contract, and when he purchased the rooming house, he had a choice, he could either throw all the people out, which if you're operating a rooming house would not make economic sense, so you wouldn't do that, and

00022 therefore, you would allow that particular contract, 1 even if it's a verbal contract, to continue. His point in giving that testimony was to 4 show that he is being proactive. You are raising the 5 counter argument why are you renting to such people in 6 first place, why don't you run better checks? 7 PRESIDENT PRATT: Thank you. Thank you. Alderman Dudzik moves that the committee now rises. 8 9 Is there any further discussion on this license? If 10 members approve of the committee's recommendation, no 11 further action is necessary. If you don't approve, 12 then someone would have to make a motion to override 13 the committee's recommendation. 14 I would request a vote of those council 15 members in attendance to approve the recommendations 16 of the Utilities & Licenses Committee as contained in 17 File No. 011703. City Clerk, please call the roll. 18 THE CLERK: Alderman Herron. 19 ALDERMAN HERRON: Aye. 20 THE CLERK: Alderman D'Amato. 21 ALDERMAN D'AMATO: Aye. 22 THE CLERK: Alderman Henningsen. 23 ALDERMAN HENNINGSEN: Aye. 2.4 THE CLERK: Alderman Bohl. 25 ALDERMAN BOHL: Aye.

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1	THE CLERK: Alderman Johnson-Odom.
2	ALDERMAN JOHNSON-ODOM: Aye.
3	THE CLERK: Alderman Gordon.
4	ALDERMAN GORDON: (No response.)
5	PRESIDENT PRATT: Excused.
6	THE CLERK: Alderman Donovan.
7	ALDERMAN DONOVAN: Aye.
8	THE CLERK: Alderman Richards.
9	ALDERMAN RICHARDS: Aye.
10	THE CLERK: Alderman Cameron.
11	ALDERMAN CAMERON: Aye.
12	THE CLERK: Alderman Dudzik.
13	ALDERMAN DUDZIK: Aye.
14	THE CLERK: Alderman Sanchez.
15	ALDERMAN SANCHEZ: Aye.
16	THE CLERK: Alderman Pawlinski.
17	ALDERMAN PAWLINSKI: Aye.
18	THE CLERK: Alderman Breier.
19	ALDERMAN BRIER: Aye.
20	THE CLERK: Alderman Nardelli.
21	ALDERMAN NARDELLI: Aye.
22	THE CLERK: Alderman Murphy.
23	ALDERMAN MURPHY: Aye.
24	THE CLERK: Alderman Hines.
25	ALDERMAN HINES: Aye.

1	THE CLERK: Mr. President.
2	PRESIDENT PRATT: Aye.
3	THE CLERK: 16 ayes, one excused.
4	PRESIDENT PRATT: 16 ayes, one excused. The
5	committee's report is upheld.
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1 STATE OF WISCONSIN )
   MILWAUKEE COUNTY )
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                  I, TERESE M. SCHIEBENES, of Milwaukee
6
        Reporters Associated, Inc., 5120 West Blue Mound Road,
        Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53208, certify that the
7
        foregoing proceedings is a full and complete
8
9
        transcript of my stenographic notes taken in the
10
        foregoing proceedings.
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                               TERESE M. SCHIEBENES
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                               Certified Shorthand Reporter
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   Dated this day of
                                       , 2002.
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