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Officials Will Try To Sway Citizen Support for Proposed 228% Tax Hike

ROCKWALL, TX, AUGUST, 26, 2015 — The Mayor & City Council of the Rockwall suburb McLendon-Chisholm, will try to take back lost ground at tomorrow night's 6:30pm, Town Hall meeting at the Chisholm Baptist Church, located at 1388 TX-205, in Rockwall, following two public hearings that brought about scorn and ridicule over their proposed 333% budget increase, which would result in a 228% tax hike.

Unlike a public hearing, where the Mayor & Council must refrain from responding to citizen comments, the town hall gives them a stage on which to bring in experts to help explain the proposed budget increases and promote benefits that would come to the city.

However, the Mayor & Council may find their biggest hurdle to be restoring trust after denying voters the right to decide on whether or not to support the city's first long-term debt to build a new \$1.5 million city hall, which is going to raise taxes by 60%, even if the rest of the budget increase get scratched. Adding to that distrust, the Mayor & Council voted 3 to 0 to approve depleting the city's capital reserves to purchase ten additional acres of land when the two councilmen that opposed the purchase were absent on vacation. Just months before in a compromise, the two dissenting members had voted with the majority to instead purchase just three acres, in addition to two that were gifted to the city, for the new city hall complex.

Anger turned to outrage when citizens got wind of a \$12 thousand outlay for a consultant, with a "Washington DC, inside the Beltway pedigree," to help write & produce two mailers to promote their increase even though the city's entire annual communication's budget is just \$1,500.

A group calling themselves "Citizens for Representative Government of McLendon-Chisholm" [CFRGMC] has been organizing citizens to engage the council and demand that they not move forward, beyond what the Mayor & Council has obligated the city to service the debt. They are preparing to lead a tax-rollback campaign as current law establishes that a city can't collect more than an additional 8 percent in property taxes on pre-existing properties without opening themselves to the possibility of an election to lower the tax rate — to roll it back.

Speaking at last night's public hearing, CFRGMC organizer, Robert Steinhagen, told the Mayor & Council that their current online petition in support of a tax-rollback will demonstrate to the Council that there is enough support to require the city to hold a special election and enough votes to rollback the tax increase when an election occurs. He added, "If you decide to move forward and approve a tax increase in excess of \$0.16, you will knowingly be putting our city in financial jeopardy as the people will have already made their intentions known."

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