

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Citizens Prepare for Tax-Rollback Petition Campaign

MCLENDON-CHISHOLM, TX, AUGUST, 21, 2015 — A group calling themselves “Citizens for Representative Government of McLendon-Chisholm” [CFRGMC] are preparing to lead a tax-rollback campaign in anticipation of a 150 to 228 percent tax increase that citizens expect their City Council to pass by a vote of 3 to 2. The Council has already confirmed to the public that, at a minimum, a 60 percent rate increase is guaranteed, which is to cover the bond-debt to pay for the building of a new city hall, on which citizens were barred from voting.

Under current law, cities and counties 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.

Chief among their concerns is the fact that the cost for the city hall building is \$600 thousand dollars over the initial one-and-a-half-million dollar budget. They are also demanding that construction stop and the plans be modified to fall within the initial budget.

This follows other actions of the Mayor & Council that includes depleting the city's capital reserves to purchase ten acres of land at a time when the two councilmen that opposed the purchase were absent on vacation. In January, after the cost estimates of the city hall building came in \$600 thousand over budget the Council approved the increase without notice to citizens of any kind.

To make matters worse, during last week's first of two public hearings for the proposed 228% tax increase, a citizen revealed to the audience that, by a vote of 3 to 2, the Council had approved \$12 thousand to hire a consultant with an "inside the Beltway pedigree" to help write & produce two mailers to promote the increase, highlighting that fact that the city's entire annual communication's budget has been just \$1,500.

The first mailing, a letter signed by the mayor, is picked apart by the group where a litany of half-truths are highlighted calling into question the integrity of those who participated in it's writing. CFRGMC organizer, Robert Steinhagen, said "the past actions of these officials followed by their willful effort to deceive the people in a letter that was more fiction than fact demonstrates why we cannot trust anything they may say about why a tax increase over the bond-debt is necessary."

CFRGMC already has an online petition for citizens to tell the Council that if they approve a tax rate that exceeds \$.16, they will sign a petition for an election to be held to rollback the excess increase.

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