2018 STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS
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Preface

Early last year I received the illustration with which I am opening my state of the city address from EW Tucker, known to most simply as “Mother.” I told him back then when I received it that I would be using it for this purpose because it is a beautiful illustration about why holding to the conviction of our beliefs is so essential to good government and why compromise in politics is less a virtue than a vice.

God’s timing to take Mother home yesterday is certainly not lost on me. I find enormous comfort in being able to set the stage tonight with something provided by this fine man.
Opening

During the first week of January, 1996, in Nashville, Tennessee, more than 4,000 baseball coaches descended upon the Opryland Hotel for the 52nd annual American Baseball Coaches Association convention.

One coach that attended the convention wrote about this event, which was his first time to experience the convention. Here’s what he wrote.

While I waited in line to register with the hotel staff, I heard other more veteran coaches rumbling about the lineup of speakers scheduled to present during the weekend.

One name, in particular, kept resurfacing, always with the same sentiment — “John Scolinos is here? Oh, man, worth every penny of my airfare.”

I soon learned the reason behind the excitement.

In 1996, Coach Scolinos was 78 years old and five years retired from a college coaching career that began in 1948. He shuffled to the stage to an impressive standing ovation, wearing dark polyester pants, a light blue shirt, and a string around his neck from which home plate hung — a full-sized, stark-white home plate.

After speaking for almost twenty minutes, Scolinos said, “You’re probably all wondering why I’m wearing home plate around my neck.”

I laughed along with the others, acknowledging the possibility.

“I may be old, but I’m not crazy” he said. He then continued, “The reason I stand before you today is to share with you baseball people what I’ve learned in my life, what I’ve learned about home plate in my 78 years.”

Several hands went up when Scolinos asked how many Little League coaches were in the room. He then queried, “Do you know how wide home plate is in Little League?”

After a pause, someone offered, “Seventeen inches?”, more of a question than answer.


“Seventeen inches?” a guess from another reluctant coach.

“That’s right,” said Scolinos.
He continued, “Now, how many high school coaches do we have in the room?” Hundreds of hands shot up, as the pattern began to appear. “How wide is home plate in high school baseball?” he asked.

“Seventeen inches,” they said, sounding more confident.

“You’re right!” Scolinos barked. “And you college coaches, how wide is home plate in college?”

“Seventeen inches!” we all said, in unison.

“Any Minor League coaches here? How wide is home plate in pro ball?”

“Seventeen inches!”

“RIGHT! And in the Major Leagues, how wide is home plate in the Major Leagues?”

“Seventeen inches!” came the response.

“SEVEN-TEEN INCHES!” he confirmed, his voice bellowing off the walls.

“And what,” he asked, “do they do with a Big-League pitcher who can’t throw the ball over seventeen inches?”

“What they don’t do is this: they don’t say, ‘Ah, that’s okay, Jimmy. If you can’t hit a seventeen-inch target, we’ll just make it eighteen inches or nineteen inches. We’ll make it twenty inches so you have a better chance of hitting it. If you can’t hit that, let us know so we can make it wider still, say twenty-five inches.”

“Coaches…what do you do when your best player shows up late to practice? or when our team rules forbid facial hair and a guy shows up unshaven? What if he gets caught drinking? Do we hold him accountable? Or do we change the rules to fit him? Do we widen the proverbial home plate?"

He turned the plate toward himself and, using a Sharpie, began to draw something. When he turned it toward the crowd, point up, a house was revealed, complete with a freshly drawn door and two windows. “This,” he began, ‘is the problem in our homes today. With our marriages, with the way we parent our kids. With our discipline.

We don’t make our marriage our top priority or establish boundaries for ourselves that can help prevent us from falling into the temptations that lead to adultery. We fail to teach accountability to our children, or uphold consequence for failing to meet standards, we just widen the plate!”

Then, to the point at the top of the house he added a small American flag. “This is the problem in our schools today. The quality of our education is going downhill fast because teachers have been stripped of the authority they need to be successful, which should be to educate and
discipline our young people. We are allowing others to widen home plate! Where is that getting us?”

He replaced the flag with a Cross, where he continued, “And this is the problem in the Church, where those ordained to stand firm where God’s Word is firm, instead widen the plate to accommodate those it might offend. So instead of influencing the world the Church is being influenced by it.”

“And the same is true with government at every level. More often than not, those in public office widen the plate to satisfy the special interest groups that pad their re-election coffers.

If we fail to hold ourselves or our children to standards, if we are unwilling or unable to provide a consequence when they do not meet the standard; and if our schools & churches & our government fail to hold themselves accountable to those they serve, there is but one thing to look forward to…”

With that, he held home plate in front of his chest, turned it around, and revealed its dark black backside, "We have dark days ahead!”

“The solution, however, is simple,” he said. "Don't widen the plate!"
From Council Member to Mayor- A Two Year Overview

We have come a long way in the two short years since Wayne Orchard and I were elected to the city council by a landslide in the largest voter turnout in the history of our city for a municipal election by a factor of three.

Of course, our landslide victories came alongside our success in leading a tax rollback ballot initiative where the people of this great city were sick and tired of being sick and tired of those in power widening the proverbial home plate again and again.

Almost a year ago by a unanimous vote, where of course I did not vote, the former City Council appointed me to fulfill the remainder of the mayor’s term, who had resigned from office just a few weeks before.

2017 Vision
Last April I presented the first-ever state of the city address and focused on what we hoped to accomplish in the coming year. For the first time in our city’s history the people of McLendon-Chisholm had the opportunity to know and understand where we were headed and how we planned to get there.

The addition our four newest members to this body catapulted that vision forward. Each one has brought with them the mindset that the role of a member of city council is to do more than just fill a seat but actually work to contribute to the success of our city by working on behalf of the people.

Just as Thomas Jefferson said, “I have no ambition to govern men; it is a painful and thankless office,” the mindset of this council is not to govern the people but to represent them.

Restoring the Voice of the People
Tonight, I have the opportunity to highlight our accomplishments, all of which have restored the voice of the people and put them back in control of their own destiny.

It’s been a long time since our city has had leaders who don’t widen the proverbial home plate, which is why the state of our city is strong.

We have made sweeping changes to our city government and I am so proud to highlight these accomplishments and honor those who sit alongside me behind the Deus.

Restoring Representative Government
Paraphrasing Thomas Jefferson who established in his first inaugural address that the purpose of our Democratic Republic it is to ensure that the majority opinion rules. This is the cornerstone of representative government and more than ever before in our city’s history, this City Council truly represents the desires and expectations of the majority.
Last year I reiterated that a fundamental of representative government was the mindset that those of us who make decisions on behalf of the people should act as we believe the majority would do if they were sitting in our seats; that we should never raise taxes, put the city into long-term debt, or take away the personal liberty of what citizens can do on their own property without the expressed consent of the people.

Where doubt may linger about what the majority of the people may do, we should not act.

City Hall; A True Boondoggle

Had the former mayor and City Council had this perspective the city would not today be saddled with the long-term debt on this new City Hall.

Citizens were told time and again what a great deal we were getting in building this new structure. After all the brick was donated, we got the roof, flooring, and cabinetry all at half price. The furniture was purchased at $.25 cents on the dollar.

And yet despite all the savings, this 5000 ft.² facility cost the citizens of McLendon-Chisholm $2.125 million to build, which put us into long-term debt at over 3 million.

There’s a house in Kingsbridge that’s for sale for just under $1 million that has more than 6000 ft.² and high-end amenities that includes an incredible home theater and an outdoor living space and pool that makes our City Hall look like a shack.

The fact that the appraised value of this facility comes in around $800,000 [Figure 1] amplifies how out of step those who made the decisions truly were when they tried to convince us that our vision simply wasn’t big enough.
As a citizen I went before the City Council and begged them to stop pouring concrete, as it was the single largest budget expenditure.

Then Mayor Gary Moody stated that the concrete being poured was for the parking lot, which by ordinance was required to have so many parking spaces for the size of the facility. In an open session of a city council meeting before a room full of citizens Mayor Moody said that every inch of concrete was absolutely necessary.

I urge our citizens to take a close look the next time they come to City Hall where they will see for themselves that in addition to the parking lot which may in fact have been built to specs in accordance with the ordinance, two streets to nowhere are also included, which accounts for more than $200,000 of the concrete budget.

Never once were the citizens of McLendon-Chisholm ever told where those two streets to nowhere were inevitably supposed to lead. That’s because whatever plans had been concocted by those in power have never been disclosed. Think about it, those in power invested $200,000 for a “future something” that we may never know or understand.
This is why, where the majority stands in opposition to an action or proposed action of a governing body it is that governing bodies responsibility to convince the people that such actions are the best path to take. If the governing body fails to do that especially when it comes to big issues that will have a long-term impact on the people, then it is the responsibility of government to acquiesce to the will of the people not the people to government.

Accordingly, a year and a half ago we conducted the city’s first-ever citizen survey.

The purpose of the city survey was to establish empirical evidence about why our citizens choose to live in McLendon-Chisholm, learn what’s most important to them when it comes to lifestyle and municipal growth, what kinds of businesses the people would like to see come in to the city, and their expectations about the role of municipal government, it’s size and scope.

This action flies in the face of what most in politics would do, especially following a landslide victory, like Wayne Orchard and I experienced, and most especially when we campaigned on many of the very same issues that were being addressing in the survey.

Last week I spoke to the current “Leadership Rockwall” class, which is made up of community leaders. The current mayor of Heath, Brian Barry spoke before me and expressed a common mindset of public office holders that is if the majority of the populous disagrees with you keep charging forward.

This mindset, that I’m elected to do what I think is right, regardless the opinion of the majority of the people was the very same mindset of the former ruling class in our city.

It is a philosophy that is in stark contrast to the way this city is now lead.

The vision for the city that I expressed in my last state of the city address was informed by what our citizens told us through the survey.

Keeping Perspective About What’s Most Important to Citizens

As last year’s survey demonstrates, the overwhelming reasons that citizens choose to live and/or stay living in McLendon-Chisholm are centered on their desire to live in a more rural community verses a metropolitan city [Chart 1]. More than any other option, “open spaces” best describes
why McLendon-Chisholm is where citizens choose to live and is how they define their quality of life.

Seventy-six percent of respondents in the first survey answered that our city’s 1.5 acre minimum per home site ordinance should be enforced and protected, which was the highest percentage support for any issue in last year’s survey [Chart 2].
In this year we asked a more specific question which was whether or not citizens would like to see the standard change from 1.5 acres to 1 acre per home site. 64% of respondents oppose this reduction which further amplifies how important these standards are to the people of our city [Chart 3].

Chart 3 Attitudes about reducing the minimum lot size ordinance.

1.5 Acre Per Home-site Ordinance is a Long-Established Standard
As comments in this year’s survey reflects, some of those who are new to our city are under the misimpression that our 1.5 acre minimum per home-site ordinance is a new standard for our city, but in fact it’s a long-standing ordinance that I understand was actually lowered from 2.5 acres more than two decades ago.

Confusion of Newcomers to McLendon-Chisholm
Understandably, there is much confusion by those that are new to the community, especially among those who have made Sonoma Verde their home. One person asks in the survey why, if there’s no intention of growing and developing government amenities, did city leaders approve a high-density development like Sonoma Verde in the first place.

Of course, the question comes because they are unaware of how the development was approved.

As Sir Edmund Burke said, “Those who don’t know history are doomed to repeat it.”

How High-Density Developments Came to M-C
On July 7, 2007, two development agreements were approved by the City Council and signed by then Mayor Mike Donegan just two weeks later.
One was a development agreement for what would be called Sonoma Verde, where 1,100 homes will be built on 546 acres.

The other was Triple Creek, which will allow for more than 1,867 homes on just 409 buildable acres since the overwhelming majority of that property is in a floodplain.

Despite the fact that they were about to obliterate city standards established to protect what citizens held most dear, their wide-open spaces and more rural lifestyle, no effort was made to inform citizens through the mail about these planned developments, but only the basic State mandated public notices.

Ironically, it was shortly after the approval of both developments that the bottom fell out of the economy, which delayed both projects and was why, when construction began for Sonoma Verde, it was such a shock to the citizens who were previously unaware.

The only reason that no construction has moved forward for Triple Creek is because the developer died.

Think where we would be today if the Triple Creek development had moved forward, including the impact to traffic on FM 205 or the added strain to our water supply.

**Mission to Protect Our Open Spaces.**

Thomas Jefferson defined tyranny as that which is legal for the government but illegal for the citizenry.

This is why my mission as Mayor is to protect our wide-open spaces and more rural lifestyle.
Commitment to Limited Government
Along with the focus of this administration has been to find ways to limit the size and scope of our city government and keep government out of the back pockets of our citizens.

Tax Cap for Senior Citizens
For years, city council after city council gave lip service to capping the tax rate for seniors, something that they could do for both County and School taxes.

We finally stopped talking about a senior tax cap that protects our senior citizens from future municipal property tax rate increases and finally did it. With the help of Councilman Wayne Orchard, Jerry Klutts and Gary Lovell, we were able to overcome opposition and persuade the one dissenting member to vote with us and approve the senior tax cap unanimously.

NEW Municipal Noise Ordinance
We also passed a new Municipal Noise Ordinance, which restricts construction times to 7am to 7pm and prohibits construction on Sundays and major holidays.

NEW Municipal Peddlers and Solicitors Ordinance
A new Municipal Peddlers and Solicitors ordinance was also adopted, which requires door-to-door sales organizations to register with the City.

Questioning Everything
This is the first council that has been willing to question everything, challenge the status quo, and stand up to the a political ruling class that had violated those fundamental standards of our city that were most important to the people, put the people into debt without their knowledge or consent, and shut out citizens from knowing their plans to grow and expand our municipal government, and raised our taxes to fulfill that hidden vision.

Reviewing All City Contracts
We have brought every major city contractor before the City Council in an open session where every member of the City Council has had as much time as they need to ask the questions and get the answers they need as we consider three things.

1. First is the service provided by the contractor necessary for the city,
2. Second is the contractor best suited to serve our citizens and,
3. Third are there things in the contract that we should renegotiate to improve the level of service and accountability.

This process has led to many long council meetings some of which have gone to 2AM in but the benefits have been undeniable.
Saving Hundreds of Thousands of Taxpayer Dollars!
We have renegotiated many of our City contracts and in some cases have changed contractors saving taxpayers literally hundreds of thousands of dollars. For a city with a $1.1 million budget, that’s significant.

Council Member Scott Turnbull; Focus on Finance
I credit Council Member Scott Turnbull for leading the City Council through a comprehensive review of city finances and as a result, his proposed resolution to advance payments on the City Hall bond, which will reduce the total cost of that debt and save taxpayers $226,800 in interest, was passed by unanimous consent.

With last year’s surplus in revenue not only did we ensure that our city’s reserve accounts were properly funded, but we also took deliberate steps to cut down on the bond debt for the City Hall.

Council Member Turnbull also guided the council to change fees to be more in line with other cities and more favorable to individual homeowners versus fee schedules more favorable to developers. For years our city has missed out on hundreds of thousands of dollars in revenue at the expense of taxpayers.

This change alone has already resulted in an increase in revenue that puts us 276% over budget.

We also lowered our tax rate to a flat $0.15, which is the lowest rate in the County. In last year survey we asked about increasing the sales tax by .5% for total sales tax rate of 8.25%, which showed overwhelming support. Even with that support we put this issue on the ballot for voters to decide last May in accordance with our conviction that any increase in Taxes should have the expressed consent of the people.

Strong Financial Position
As of the end of February, which is our last reporting period, our city has $1,259,377 in cash on hand. As this demonstrates, the financial position of our city is incredibly strong primarily due to our commitment to fiscal responsibility and good stewardship.

Council Member Sim Woodham Focus on City Ordinances
Council Member Sim Woodham has been leading the Council through a review of all the City ordinances to help identify those which are troublesome, unnecessary or non-applicable. It is our hope that by doing this no future City Council will ever again be caught off guard by an ordinance that could allow a company to circumvent processes that help to ensure that the rights of our citizens are never violated as we experienced recently with the former Tower ordinance.

Council Member Jim Herren; Focus on Transportation
When he first came on the city council Jim Herron researched the way decisions were made in the past it is highlighted how little consideration was given two decisions that would have a demonstrable impact on transportation and the water supply.
Councilman Herren is our liaison with TxDOT and represents our city on the County’s transportation board. He is the squeaky wheel that is working to drive improvements for our citizens as the plans for the 205 expansions continue.

Council Member Adrienne Balkum; Focus on Communication
Perhaps one of our most notable improvements to our city government has been in the area of communications which is being led by Council Member Adrienne Balkum.

By a large margin our city government has never been more open, transparent or accountable.

Through her leadership we initiated the live-broadcasting of city council meetings such as, via YouTube Live, which are also available for viewing or download.

She writes and sends out weekly e-blasts and manages the city Facebook page that keeps citizens connected and informed. She’s working on another complete makeover of our city’s website, the first came just a year ago.

Council Member Balkum has also initiated something we call coffee chats where citizens can meet with one or two city council members or the mayor and talk about the things that most interest them. These have been an amazing success and all of us on the council feel as though this is a great step forward to ensure that we are staying connected with our citizens.

4,000 Acre ETJ Handover to Rockwall
Our resolve in this matter was put to the test last year when out-of-state landowners of approximately 4,000 acres in our ETJ began the process to establishing a water district, which is the precursor to what’s known as a Municipal Utility District or MUD.

MUD districts are essentially sovereign municipalities that are the bane of every cities existence since coming into being. Similar to a public utilities district or PID, which is what Sonoma Verde is in, developers finance their infrastructure by selling privately held bonds that are collateralized by the guarantee of payment through the local taxing authority. Unlike a PID, the assessment that a property owner pays on their lot never goes away and like a PID a portion of the assessment is set aside for the long-term maintenance of the development.

MUD’s have absolutely no accountability to the cities they border and create an unwelcome burden on the infrastructure of neighboring cities. Ask any mayor of any city in the state of Texas and they will tell you that the perils of such special districts are the bane of their existence.

The Arizona-based owners/developers of the property adjoining our city also presented a plan to create a massive high density planned development which allowed for apartment complexes townhomes and small lot homes.

The only real power to govern development in a city’s ETJ, which it was little power to begin with, was taken away last year by a Texas state Supreme Court decision which removed the requirement that development in those areas to maintain the building standards of the City where inspections were required.
The city of McLendon-Chisholm had no power over what these out-of-state developers were planning for the ETJ.

Some have tried to argue that the future development of the ETJ was somehow an opportunity for our city to bring in revenue, which is a complete fallacious argument, since a MUD district has absolutely no obligation and provides no benefit whatsoever to a neighboring city.

**Negotiating with Nothing**

The misguided notion that somehow the city could negotiate with these landowners had already proven to be incontrovertibly untrue. One of the properties that are included in the 4000 acres had already gone through lengthy negotiations with a former mayor and city council it cost the city tens of thousands of dollars in attorney fees.

The fact remains that that landowner/developer simply walked away from the negotiating table because they were not compelled to negotiate anything, so they didn’t.

The City Council with legal experts in the field to council us on what we might do to prevent the kinds of density from being built in the ETJ and what became absolutely clear was that the only thing our city could do is delay the projects, not by years, but months cost to taxpayers in the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

As an act of good faith, we did try and negotiate with these landowner developers. But as was the case before they had nothing compelling them to negotiate and in the end their ability to maximize profit far exceeded any concern they expressed for preserving quality of life that is so important to our citizens.

**M-C Should Remain a General Law Type A City**

The city of McLendon-Chisholm is a General Law Type A city which means that the primary governing authority for the city is based upon state law. As I presented in my last State of the City Address, I hope and pray that our city never becomes a home rule city because doing so necessitates the expansion of government for the sole purpose of maintaining itself.

For a city like ours where the majority of the people just want to be left alone and live freely without the burden of government intrusion remaining a General Law Type A city is the best way to maintain and protect this.

**No Power to Involuntarily Annex**

The cities surrounding McLendon-Chisholm are all Home Rule cities, which means that they have a population of at least 5000 people and the citizens voted in an election to become home rule. Of course one of the benefits of becoming a home rule city is the ability to involuntarily Annex property within a city’s ETJ.

While we do not have that power, the city of Rockwall does.

When I first proposed handing over that 4000 acres to the city of Rockwall I expected immediate pushback from my fellow members of the City Council. What I found instead was hope that we may have finally found a solution that could actually control the growth and density levels whereas before there was absolutely no means to do so.
The landowner developers didn’t believe for a second that we were serious about handing over our ETJ to Rockwall.

**Our Belief in Limited Government Is Not a Tag Line but a Mindset**
What I have learned since being mayor is that the prevailing mindset of municipal leaders is always growth, growth, growth. However, we are a literal anomaly to that traditional mindset because we actually stand on the conviction of our beliefs to preserve and protect our city’s wide open spaces.

**Rockwall’s Comprehensive Plan Protects McLendon-Chisholm**
The discussion with Rockwall city Mayor Jim Pruitt was simple and straightforward. We did not want to have apartment complexes or townhomes on our border nor did we want to see the highest density housing along our border. We also wanted to see traffic directed away from MC and not into it.

Mayor Pruitt was able to answer my concerns with their comprehensive city plan which has already accommodated for apartment complexes in other areas of the city.

Our desire to see the higher density buildouts further away from our city blends well with their comprehensive plan.

The question is not whether or not high-density developments will come into that 4000 acres. But the level of density the landowner developers presented far exceeded Rockwall’s comprehensive plan.

Equally important is that Rockwall’s traffic plan for all future developments place is a burden on the developers to protect and contribute to the free flow of traffic in and out of developments.

**Our City No Longer Makes Under the Table Deals**
State law prohibits cities from any kind of exchange in situations like these. I recognize that some have a little regard for the rule of law and have lived their lives skirting the rules and making deals under the table. I simply refuse to put our city’s future in jeopardy in attempt to circumvent the law to satisfy those who are discontent with this handover.

Accordingly, the city of Rockwall cannot be bound to any promises made. But former councilman Gary Lovell said, “I trust my neighbor in Rockwall a whole lot more than the landowner developers in Arizona.”

We made our case to the people of McLendon-Chisholm in this year’s survey and overwhelmingly the citizens agree with and support our decision to handover the 4000 acres to Rockwall [Chart 4].
Chart 4 Respondent attitudes regarding the 4,000-acre ETJ handover to Rockwall

**Concerns by High Point Lake & High Point Ranch Homeowners**

Last year when we revealed that we were considering this handover, a very vocal and altogether angry group of homeowners from High Point Ranch and High Point Lake Estates converged on City Hall. They expressed their concern that by giving away that 4000 acres to the city of Rockwall, their ETJ would then extend into their developments making them a prime target to be involuntarily annexed by the city of Rockwall.

Ironically, some have even posted the notion that the homeowners in these two developments are the future citizens of McLendon-Chisholm.

However, those homeowners can take comfort in the fact that they never became or will be citizens of Rockwall, or McLendon-Chisholm, or Terrell, or Heath, or Royse City or Fate. This I can say is a certainty.

That’s because a few months ago Council Member Scott Turnbull discovered that the streets of both of these developments are owned by Rockwall County. He confirmed this fact with County Judge David Sweet.

There is a provision of some kind that exists in Rockwall County where, if a developer builds their streets inside a development to specifications of the county that after two years the County will take on the burden of maintaining those streets.
There is no city in the state of Texas that would annex these two developments where the projected long-term burden of street maintenance far exceeds whatever short-term income can be gained by annexing these new properties onto their tax rolls.

I will say that the decision to take on these developments was made long before David Sweet ever became County judge.

Public Safety

It is my privilege to announce that this Council will consider offering contracts to fill the Fire Marshall position and to hire a consultant to lead us through the procedural requirements for the creation and organization of a City of McLendon-Chisholm Fire Rescue.

Council Member Balkum recommended the formation of a citizens committee to conduct a feasibility study that would review historical data and projected growth to plan for the future needs of our community and to provide cost projections that would meet those future needs, as well as a way to conduct annual assessments to ensure that the needs for public safety are being met.

With the help and guidance of experts, the committee would then make recommendations to the City Council about what the city should be doing in planning for the public safety of our citizens.

Council Member Balkum’s ESAC is working diligently to determine the best path for the City. This process should have been completed prior to the ratcheting up of payments to the MCVFD.

Back then, the Rockwall County EMS ambulance service contracted to serve Rockwall County for a guaranteed maximum response time of 11 minutes for priority one calls inside our city limits. The dilemma facing the City was that Rockwall County EMS’s response time often exceeded that guaranteed maximum, not by a little bit but often times far longer than was tolerable, 30, 45 minutes, which necessitated a change.

The previous Councils turned to the MCVFD to provide basic life support aid to our citizens until Rockwall EMS arrived.

As we all know, in medical emergencies time is critical and can mean the difference between life and death.

For a cardiac emergency, the sooner CPR can begin the greater the likelihood that the victim will survive.

Stopping or curtailing bleeding in situations where blood loss occurs is critical.

Tonight, by a unanimous vote, the City Council will now be able to provide citizens with training in CPR & Stop the Bleeding initiative.
However, with the October 1, 2017 contract Rockwall County EMS is required, and has been providing, advanced life support skills including administration of life saving drugs, to our citizens in seven minutes and 59 seconds for priority one calls.

The overwhelming majority of our public safety calls are medical in nature, which begs the question about where public funds should be invested going forward.

It is impossible to justify having a full-time paid fire department for a city of just 2,500 people. The City of Rockwall didn’t begin paying firefighters to staff stations until just a few years ago when it was more than ten times the sized that ours is now.

Our city’s fire department budget last year fell just $150 short of our neighbor Royce City, with a population five times the size of ours and a tax rate more than four times higher!

Of course, we need fire protection, no one on the council has suggested otherwise, but the path that former city leaders had been taking us was based on flawed reasoning and absolutely no actual research into the true needs of the City.

This Council has gone to great lengths to try and make the MCVFD part of our future, but they have rejected all offers to date.

On February 28, 2018 the City and MCVFD signed a Letter of Intent. Item 27 of the letter states “In the event negotiations between the City and MCVFD fail to produce a Transitional Contract acceptable to all parties by March 12, 2018 negotiations will cease and the All Volunteer Contract will be the only contract available from the City.

This Item was further defined in a March 5, 2018 document presented by the City negotiators to the MCVFD negotiators. The clarification reads, “In the event the MCVFD fails to deliver this contract, bearing an authorized members signature to M-C City Hall at or before 5:00 PM Monday, March 12, 2018 this contract offer is null and void. M-C will deliver a M-C drafted contract for all-volunteer service to MCVFD no later than 5:00 pm Tuesday March 20, 2018.

Despite these documents, on March 20, 2018, John Crumpley, lead negotiator for MCVFD sent an email to the City negotiators containing the following, “This is another escalated request altering our agreed process. Each time this occurs it results in a misunderstanding and failure. Our process details that all negotiated items would be vetted by both negotiation parties, updated as required and then presented to our Organizations for final approval. I have availability next week to review the parameters of this contract. Once all parties are in agreement, I will present this contract to the FD Members for review.”

This email can only be interpreted to mean that Crumpley was unilaterally preventing the MCVFD from complying with the City’s requirement of returning the Fire Protection Services contract bearing an authorized members signature to M-C City Hall by close of business March 26, 2018.
The Fire Protection Services Contract provided by M-C to MCVFD is identical to the Contract the MCVFD accepted from Rockwall County earlier this year.

The fact remains that the MCVFD is literally playing politics with the public safety of our citizens for their own benefit and to prove this fact, just two weeks ago, the City Council presented the MCVFD with a contract that replicates the contract that they signed with the County, the only change is the name of the party contracting for the service, which is the city of McLendon-Chisholm. Even though our city makes up just one third of the fire district, we have offered the exact same level of funding that the MCVFD negotiated with the county for Service to the two thirds of their fire district.

Lest anyone try to argue that the MCVFD is acting in good faith and on behalf of the tax payers of McLendon-Chisholm they should explain why this offer was rejected.

1) Up until last November the MCVFD covered two distinct fire Districts. The city was one district and the unincorporated area was the other.

2) The County Commissioners approved the Chief’s request and merged the two fire districts into Fire District 22 with the MCVFD as first alarm responders for the entire district of which McLendon-Chisholm makes up one third.

3) Even though the County contract is specific in that the funding is to provide fire protection services to the other two thirds of the fire district, now that the fire district is one the MCVFD cannot deny the same level of service to the city that it is providing to the county.

The MCVFD leadership will have you believe that the membership makes all the decisions, since the fire chief, just like the mayor of M-C, cannot vote. But they fail to mention the Mayor cannot fire a council member who votes contrary to the Mayors position on an issue. The Fire Chief can, therefore one has to wonder if the members whose employment and paychecks are at the mercy of the Chief would cast votes contrary to the Chiefs.

While the MCVFD leadership will have you believe that they run their not-for-profit corporation like a business, the fact remains that, according to their public statements, they plan to continue the same level of service, and will continue to pay staff salaries, including the fire chiefs, who is paid as a part-time Fire Chief more than double what the former full-time fire chief was paid, until “they run out of money,” which according to them, will conveniently be sometime in May, which is coincidentally the same month as our city elections.

Furthermore, the City cannot and should not place the protection of its’ citizens at the whim and mercy of a self-serving private entity.
Closing Remarks

The results from this year’s survey demonstrate Jefferson’s philosophy about government being a voice of the majority has finally become a reality for our city where overwhelmingly citizens have affirmed the recent actions and direction of our City Council.

I feel that my greatest accomplishment has been in recruiting individuals that I consider to be far better than me. Every current member of this City Council is here because I challenged them to come and represent the people of McLendon-Chisholm. I fully recognize that one or two of them may never forgive me, but I can say with absolute conviction that every one of these fine people has more than fulfilled my challenge.

What’s more, every member of this City Council has proven that they are more than willing to challenge me or any member of the City Council. That’s primarily because none of us are personal friends. I don’t seek out people to serve because I know them or because I like them, but instead I seek out people who demonstrate a propensity to think critically.

Our success over the past year is primarily due to this bodies’ commitment to work as a collective. It has never been our goal to work for consensus but instead welcome points of view that challenges our thinking and sharpens our resolve. The time and attention that every member of this body has given to the business that comes before us is humbling.

I believe that our best days are ahead of us if we the people of McLendon-Chisholm are willing to resist the urge to widen the proverbial plates that make our city such a wonderful and extraordinarily unique place to live.

May the Lord richly bless our citizens, our city, our state, and our nation for His glory.

Blessings.