The City Council of the City of McLendon-Chisholm convened in a Special Town Hall Meeting on August 28, 2018, at City Hall, 1371 W. FM 550, McLendon-Chisholm, Texas, with the following members present:

Keith Short  
Adrienne Balkum  
Herman Larkin  
Scott Turnbull  
Jim Bloom  
James Herren  
Mayor  
Council Member  
Council Member  
Mayor Pro Tem  
Council Member  
Council Member

Staff Present: Lisa Palomba  
Jim Simmons  
City Secretary  
Fire Chief/Fire Marshal

1. Mayor Short called the meeting to order at 8:04 p.m.

2. Mayor Short announced the Town Hall Meeting is an opportunity to discuss Fire Protection services for the City of McLendon-Chisholm and the unincorporated area of Fire District 22. There will be no votes or any formal actions taken on subjects discussed during this meeting as this Town Hall Meeting will only present an exchange of ideas and information among City officials and members of the public. Mayor Short emphasized everyone should remain polite and show respect to everyone in the room.

Mayor Short indicated the main issue for fire service is to decide to merge the McLendon-Chisholm Fire Rescue Department and McLendon-Chisholm Volunteer Fire Department into one McLendon-Chisholm Fire Rescue Department or if the City should operate an independent fire department.

The following is a transcript of the Town Hall Meeting by Council Member Balkum:

Chief Simmons opened his townhall presentation: Good evening, I'm Jim Simmons. I was hired April 24, 2018 by the Council to help build a municipal fire department. What we are presenting tonight between Chief Murphy and myself are working towards providing the best fire protection for District 22. We feel that we have given 110% to come up with the best solution for the citizens. We are going to go over a few slides. Short they are not very long. Then we will give you the opportunity to ask questions and get the
answers that you have been waiting for a long time. Does everybody have a handout? On the first slide are some things that we are going to talk about, like MCFR stand-alone that does not include MCVFD. That will be just McLendon-Chisholm Fire Rescue, hiring of the staff, building a fire station and all the necessities that we would need to function as a fire department. The second one to talk about is the merger option, the pros and cons of the merger option, the benefits of bringing the two agencies together to build off the foundation that has already been established in the five pieces of the puzzle that we call it. The merger plan, getting our dispatch, we have interlocal agreements that have been presented to Council for dispatch, fire protection and the unincorporated area. We have staffing with SAFER, for those that haven’t heard we were awarded 6 SAFER grant positions from FEMA in order to assist us and being able to hire staff to make sure that we have the coverage we need for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Of course, the budget, which recently approved or not necessarily approved, adopted last Council Meeting. And interlocal agreement between the City and MCFR and MCVFD. The process to allow us to start a transition period. Those are the things that are out there, the 5 puzzle pieces. 4 of those things we have in play. Obviously the last one, the merger or the ability to merge is actually the piece of the puzzle that we are missing. So, a MCFR standalone that does not include MCVFD in this process. The pros are, obviously, City owned and operated. The cons are to stand this up October 1. It will require us to build a temporary station of some sort. Whether it is a tent or whatever it may be. It’s temporary, because you can only operate out of for so long. Hiring, training new staff. One thing that is needed in hiring and training new staff is that they are unfamiliar with the district. With the merger process we already have people dedicated who know the district. It is one less concern as Chief about training them on. Purchasing additional equipment outside the merger budget. Bunker gear, 15 sets of bunker gear. $3,200 a piece. Air packs 7. $67,500. Rescue equipment: $5,000 - $10,000 depends on what you buy. It would be additional equipment that would need to be purchased in order to do the stand alone. One option if we do the stand alone is current Texas A&M Forestry grants that are in play with the McLendon-Chisholm Fire Department now we would lose those. We would have the opportunity to be a part of those. Now we could start the process over – which we would. We would start the process over and the process of applying for grants through the Texas Forestry Services. Possible loss or assistance with TxDOT which we heard depending on what goes on with 205 widening that TxDOT may be willing to have a sit down and have a conversation with us if that is the only station that is operable in the city. And the last one we found out, we did some research on, the radios that we have in place, we would need to purchase new radios to make sure that if we were to stand alone that MCVFD sits over here and we are over here by ourselves that we all have the ability to communicate with each other, other agencies in the County. It would cost us additional monies to purchase additional radios to continue to move forward. Sorry I didn’t introduce Chief Murphy, the McLendon-Chisholm Volunteer Fire Department Chief. We worked long and hard on this thing. Chief’s going to help out and jump in here. And provide some information.

Chief Patrick Murphy says, Thanks Chief, Mayor, Council thank you for this opportunity. I just want to go over some of the things discussed and go over the pros and cons of MCFR and MCVFD merger. Some of the pros would be that it is city owned and operated. Once the integration is complete. It will also provide us a seamless transition of fire
protection services of Fire District 22. We already have the equipment and everything is in play. So, if a merger were to happen on October 1 there is no change in service. Staffing is already in place they are already trained, familiar with the fire district and we will maintain our grant rank for fire apparatus and equipment, we already have the station, apparatus, equipment, bunker gear which is the full ensemble of what you see us wear. The pants, helmet, hood, gloves, if you are not familiar with all that. We already have the two sets of rescue equipment like the jaws of life. We would have no need of a temporary station we will already be able to convert the station on 205 into a living quarters if that is how Council chooses to go. Possible assistance from TxDOT. Council Member Herren has stated before he is on the (Transportation) committee that there is that opportunity that TxDOT could replace that station that it will be the only fire station within the city limits and the district. TxDOT would give us assistance in building a new fire station. The ability to use our fleet. Council Member Balkum (pointed to the Townhall Presentation Posters on the wall) has presented the apparatus here. The one on the right is the fleet currently in Pilot Point that is getting lights and stuff put on them. This will give us the ability to assist with our equipment. Replace whatever they purchased. If the merger were to happen. Sell older equipment and use that money to purchase other equipment so it doesn’t come out of City budget. Another pro for the 501 (MCVFD) I will continue our status for grants, this part that we are going over was just added and it is not in your packets. So, if you are going to take pictures take a picture of what is on the screen. The ability to obtain the ranking we can use it as an auxiliary. We can do community service projects out of that. Fire Department programs, certified emergency response teams, get the community involved. It will give us the ability to do fundraisers. I know that Council Member Herren is interested that and it could help. Fundraisers will help us alleviate costs for those in the County/unincorporated area. Some of the cons, the integration has complexities. There are some fiduciary, judiciary and congressional things you have to go through. Two government agencies can’t just switch properties back and forth. Without going through the property process. So, there is no timeline for that. Our lawyer (Dodd) has stated it can be done quick or it could take up to 1 to 2 years. The only big problem is Engine 42 which is currently a Texas A&M Forestry Service Grant. It is a 10-year grant if you turn it over within that time you have to apply to them and it cost us up to 90% of the cost of that vehicle if we were to keep it or we can turn it over to them. So, it is just a process where we have to send a letter to them. I believe Council Member Balkum has it under Grant Eligibility (pointed to the Townhall Presentation Posters on the wall) on the bottom right. It would be up to Texas A&M Forestry Services to decide what they want to do with that. It could either stay put or they can collect the apparatus. It would not be known until we file that letter.

**Chief Simmons** continued to share, we have presented a couple different options over the last couple of months. And we wanted to put something together that is short and sweet and hit home on some things that we have discussed for months in Council Meetings and you have the opportunity to look at. And throughout this you may have some questions that come up or you might have a question on a particular subject. So, we wanted to get this out to you. On the last slide that we have in play. This is the 5 pieces that guarantees operational capabilities October 1, 2018. Dispatch Service it is the IOA (Interlocal Operation Agreement) from the County. The County has offered an interlocal
agreement for dispatch and that annual fee is going to be $10,000. To be honest with you, based on dispatching fees around, $10,000 is a pretty good deal. I can't complain about that. The next one we have in there is the interlocal agreement with from the County that says that the City MCFR would be responsible in responding to the unincorporated area. Obviously, the funds of the amount of $67,500 is going towards that. The SAFER Grant, we hit on that earlier, Ms. Lisa worked on that, many, many, many hours back at the end of April up until the end of May. It was April. She worked hard to get these submitted in a month's time that normally takes cities and agencies many months to do. And we were able to receive our first grant. And that first grant gives us 6 funded positions. And those 6 funded positions allow us to staff A, B, C shift out or however we are going to do it. With 2 people per shift. Our plan that we talked about and discussed is having 3 full-time shift guys. 1 guy on every 24-hour shift. And we supplement that second position with part-time firefighters. Certified fire fighters we would run 2 firefighters/EMT and/or paramedics on a 24-hour shift. And of course, we would have volunteers that help supplement that. So that grant has allowed us to do is offset that cost over the next couple of years for the city budget for the funding for salaries and benefits for those employees.

Chief Murphy noted, on the August 28 City Council Meeting the County contract was originally set for that agenda however, Commissioner Bailey asked the Mayor to postpone that item to September 5, 2018.

Chief Simmons continued, the merger budget we presented a budget it was based on if we were to merge two agencies together. MCVFD and MCFR to standup together MCFR. That budget was presented a couple weeks ago to the City Council and it was approved.

Council Member Balkum shared a date correction on the Interlocal Agreement form the County contract that Commissioner Bailey requested to postpone that item to September 11, 2018.

Chief Simmons shared that they have accomplished the top 4. The last one we are waiting on that puzzle piece. And we feel that to achieve to accomplish our goal in standing up MCFR, providing you citizens the best fire protection that you deserve. We feel having the interlocal agreement between MCFR the City and MCVFD will allow us to start the process of a transition or a merger or whatever you want to call it. To make sure we do our due diligence. That we take care of all documentation that we allow all the process to run — smoothly. And not be rushed. And eventually, whether it is one month, 6 months, a year. I don't know the exact timeframe, I have tried to get an exact timeframe. We just have not been able to achieve that goal. But both of us stand before you we believe this is the best option. We are not going to back out. Chief Murphy has said over and over, 'There's no backing out'" This is what we believe is best for this community.

Chief Murphy added, All MCVFD members filed applications to join the city's (MCFR) fire department.

Chief Simmons said, absolutely. We both feel this is the best solution for this community.
An unnamed attendee asked, Can you explain what the outcome of the county services?

Fire Chief Simmons answered, It has been tabled to September 11 at the request of Commissioner Bailey.

Peter Hancon from the unincorporated area asked, Did I hear Chief Murphy say that he was going to rely upon a fundraising efforts to provide services to the unincorporated area?

Fire Chief Murphy answered: No sir. The fundraisers are if we keep the 501c4, we can utilize that to do fundraisers to help supplement the costs of the County contract for the services to the County. It won’t be solely based on the fundraisers.

Peter Hancon from the unincorporated area asked, is the County going to continue to offer a contract?
Chief Murphy answered, as far as we know. Yes sir. It is up to the County on a year to year basis.

Peter Hancon from the unincorporated area asked, is it going to October?

Chief Murphy added, the agreement offered is for the following year. (October 1, 2018 – September 30, 2019)

Peter Hancon from the unincorporated area asked, what was the funding level on that?

Chief Murphy answered, $67,500.

Gary Nickel asked, are both plans for 6-day staffing or 7 days?

Chief Simmons answered, Both of them.

Gary Nickel, Do you have rough budgets to compare them to?

Chief Simmons answered, We do, but we do not have them ready to show. We do have the initial budget that was presented at the last Council Meeting. We do have a copy of that and can show on the screen.

Troy Reich asked, Can you explain about the staffing with the SAFER Grant? From how much is it and how long is it and when does the City become responsible for covering the staff costs?

Chief Simmons followed up with Gary Nickel, we can share with you the copies of the budget that was accepted by Council later. (Please note the budget that Chief Simmons is referring to was not approved, accepted or adopted when presented.)
Robert Quinn inquired, Excuse me, Council Member Adrienne Balkum said that the material would be posted on the website. Can we add that to the materials to be posted?

City Secretary addressed, The entire budget is on the website. I just don’t have your public safety, written out.

Council Member Balkum said, I will just put it on one location on the website so it will be easy for people to find.

Chief Simmons reiterated, Council Member Balkum will put it on one location on the website the budget that was adopted, the breakdown of the SAFER Grant too.

Chief Simmons asked City Secretary, if she could pull up the SAFER Grant information on the screen. It is on the same memory stick that I provided you.

Another unnamed attendee from the unincorporated area asked, Have you projected from year 5 how the City would be impacted or effected by the SAFER Grant?

Chief Simmons answered, No at this time we have not. But that is something that we definitely have talked about once we determine the direction we are going we will sit down to develop our 3 year/5-year plan. And we will start addressing the needs for the SAFER Grant when the funding goes out in the fourth year. Some of this I am going to refer to Lisa on regarding the SAFER Grant. She has lot of answers, but let me show you what we have here. It is a breakdown of the first 12 months. What we are receiving from FEMA. And what the City’s costs are for the first two years and in that third year. You’ll notice on that first year, for the total cost is $336K. It would cost the city $84K that first year. The federal share will be $252K. The second year continues and in the third year it changes course a little bit. It will start transitioning off the Federal Fund. That third year, the City’s share jumps up to $218K. The Federal share reduces. That fourth year the City assumes all responsibilities of those positions. Obviously in that first year, we are going to start accessing what we need to do and how we are going to plan in that fourth year. That third and fourth. Obviously, it is going to cause the City additional funds to support those positions.

Mayor Pro Tem Turnbull stated, Sir, please make note, that the City is not obligated to continue those positions at the end of the grant.

Chief Simmons continued, As Mayor Pro Tem Turnbull said, the City is not obligated to continue those positions after that third year. If the City decides to not carry on those full-time positions they are not obligated to carry on those positions.

Christine Reich asked, Why is there not a third option to keep MCVFD that has worked for many years? We have been here for 20 years and we have had very good experiences. And it cost what $300K a year, we do not have to build a new station, we don’t have to provide to buy new equipment and everything you guys are merging is going to cost us citizens a lot of money. I don’t see how it is helping us or saving us any money
Chief Simmons redirected the question to the City Council to assist him in answering. Council can you help me out on this one? I completely understand what you are saying. I hear what you are saying ma'am.

Mayor Short addressed Christine Reich. Ma'am I think would be better served when he is done with his presentation for you to ask the Council or voice your opinion that is what you would like to see verses a merger or integration or a city owned. That is what part of a townhall meeting is hearing your opinion and what is it you really want.

Gary Nickel asked, In the stand-alone version would we be looking at essentially two independent departments fully staffed. And one will serve as back up to the other?

Chief Simmons, The stand alone option would have the City Municipal Fire Department and the County would have technically a county fire department.

Gary Nickel continued, If the City is not funding the County, if the City is not funding MCVFD any longer how do they maintain the same staff and equipment that they have now.

Chief Murphy answered, We wouldn't maintain the staff.

Mayor Short interrupted, Folks, we are trying to do things correctly and one thing is Chief Simmons need to be recorded on the record for what he is presenting as well as you guys. Unfortunately, we will need you to stand at the podium to ask your questions. We are here for you to express your desires or concerns regarding fire service.

Chief Simmons continued, So to summarize Council had hired me to start a fire department. When you hired me to create a fire department. And I feel that we have. That we have accomplished it. MCFR is here. You created it, you charged me to bring it into fruition to create a department from the ground up is unchartered territory. Even though I have been part of creating fire departments in the past each situation is unique and this one has been very unique. I took this position with an open mind in regard that what steps would needed to be taken to be fully functional and efficient. And I'm still committed to those goals. I know some of you have doubts about merging with MCVFD. And some of you feel that merging assets with MCVFD somehow takes away from MCFR. And it does not. It continues with our vision. Merging in no way diminishes MCFR. It just makes good business sense to merge the two departments with all its assets together. And it makes sense to use human resources that has served this city for so many years. I want you to know that these many months. I have listened to your concerns. We have had great conversations over some of your concerns. Each of you that are opposed to merging has specific concerns. Council Member Balkum, one of your concerns is hiring MCVFD personnel as city employees. I want to assure you I understand your concerns and please understand the intent is to merge assets and employees. Employees hired will go through an open and fair hiring process. Each MCVFD personnel hired will be held to the same MCFR high standards as any new employee would be. There are no free rides. Everyone hired on earns their spot based on their knowledge, skills, abilities and qualifications. And
keeps their spots based on performance standards. Mayor Pro Tem Turnbull, you said, that there is a 99.9% likelihood that it was financially the best option and I explored the MCFR merger many times. And the merger always ends up being less expensive. I believe without a shadow of doubt that what is shown the merger is the most fiscally responsible way. Council Member Herren I have heard your concerns of the iniquities with the city paying more than what is fair than the County. I agree there are iniquities. I can assure with which direction we can move forward that those iniquities will be fully reviewed and solutions will be sought whether it involves billing in the County, instituting a crash tax, extensive fundraising efforts or a combination thereof. Mayor Short, Council Member Larkin and Council Member Bloom I haven’t heard a lot from you, but I appreciate the support and guidance. And the opportunities you have given to me to move this forward. You asked tough questions. Sometimes I didn’t answer them very well. But the questions that you asked of me forced me to do even better. That’s each one of you. Each and every one of you have challenged me. And each time you have challenged me it continued to make me stronger. So, with that being said, I would like to summarize this up to have these lovely citizens the opportunity to be able to speak and not hear from me anymore.

**Chief Murphy** concluded, In summary, we believe that MCFR and the MCVFD merger plan would best serve the citizens of McLendon-Chisholm and the citizens of Fire District 22. This plan allows us for the time needed to perform our due diligence to ensure that the MCFR provides the best transition of fire emergency services to our citizens. The plan also allows for immediate standup for MCFR per Council’s direction and enables the creation of one fire department. The merger plan allows us to move forward on making a great department, to follow-up with a process for fundraisers, for the across county response, TxDOT with the fire station, economic development, fire inspections and all the other things that we discussed, fire safety programs, community programs. We would like to thank everyone for coming out, Council to present at this townhall. Thank you very much.

**Mayor Short** addressed the audience. Alright folks, now it is your opportunity, please come up to the podium, make sure the light is on the mic so that it is turned on. With your name and address. We are also doing the unincorporated area. Voice what is your opinion, concern about fire services.

**Council Member Herren and Council Member Balkum** addressed Mayor Short to correct what he said about the unincorporated area.

**Mayor Short** shared that it was his decision.

**Council Member Herren** appealed to the ruling of the chair and Council Member Balkum seconded it.

**Mayor Short** spoke, The individuals in Fire District 22 that because of the statement that was made at the County Commissioner’s Court that we would ensure that Fire District 22 was serviced by whatever fire department is stood up on October 1. I made the decision
that the people in the unincorporated area Fire District 22 that they can come in here and have their say on it. Whether you agree with it or not.

Council Member Balkum said, if they have an issue then they need to go to the County we don’t have that authority.

Mayor Short, what happens here tonight as far as our ideas and what is discussed will ultimately affect the decisions made at the next meeting. And I want to hear what they have to say. Because whatever fire department is up it does matter to both.

Point of order by citizen Robert Quinn that the agenda was published that is was going to be open for everybody.

Council Member Balkum said, I understand that, however, Mayor Short made that decision. Last meeting, we did not say to have it written like that on the agenda. Mayor Short said, I put down that we were going to have a townhall meeting over fire protection. It was posted. And the people in the unincorporated area were invited.

Council Member Herren said, It was never approved by the Council.

Mayor Pro Tem Turnbull said, Mr. Mayor the ruling of the chair appealed and seconded you have to honor a vote without discussion.

Council Member Bloom, Can I ask what are you afraid of hearing from people in Fire District 22?

Mayor Pro Tem Turnbull, Mr. Mayor there is no discussion.

Mayor Short, If this is the game that you want to play then let’s play. Alright, we have a motion. We have a second. All in favor, oh now we have a discussion on it.

Mayor Pro Tem Turnbull. No. Appealing to the ruling of the chair is not discussable.

Mayor Short agreed. We will have a vote. All in favor not allowing the people incorporated areas of Fire District 22 to not speak at this townhall meeting say, I?

Council Member Herren shared, I’m in favor of this townhall meeting for the Citizens of McLendon-Chisholm I say I to that.

A vote was cast and the motion to disallow non-residents to speak carried with 3 in favor, 2 opposed (Larkin, Bloom).

Mayor Short recessed the meeting into Executive Session in accordance with Local Government Code 551.071 at 8:45 p.m. to seek legal advice from the City Attorney by teleconference regarding allowing non-residents to speak.
The Meeting reconvened at 9:02 p.m.

Mayor Short announced that Council reached a compromise and will allow comments from non-residents, but only after all McLendon-Chisholm residents have had an opportunity to speak first.

Mark Kipphut, 31 Fireside Drive, I want to thank the Council, because I originally make a generic statement of support. But now I will just modify that a little. I want to publically thank Chief Simmons and Chief Murphy for their outstanding ability to work on getting a fire department that we can rally. They are doing what that ordinance (pointed to the townhall presentation poster on the wall) says to do. For the folks who want to go back to just having the MCVFD that ordinance must be removed. That's what restricts the Mayor's actions. Restricts the Council's actions. Prior Council passed that ordinance. Chief Simmons is fulfilling a mandate and Chief Murphy is bringing the city capabilities the city needs to operate. As far as the issue it has been going on too long. Way too long. So, when I say that I want to get to the motivation. So here I have an email, I don't want to get into the specifics of it was dated, Monday, November 27, 2017. It's almost a year ago. At 4 o'clock in the afternoon, one of our Council Members in communication to another Council Member and the former mayor said and I quote, they were discussing a contract that was presented to the MCVFD last November that the MCVFD wisely turned down. The intention of that contract was really an unconscionable contract. I'm sure Mr. Herren can explain that what that means. What that means is one party offers another party contract can't except it because it puts them in unfavorable position. Contracts are mutual beneficial. So, given that background. So, since we know they need to use 2 full-time firefighters to respond to the Fire District they will be in breach of contract after the first dispatch into the fire district. In other words, this contract is being set up specifically so they could seize the property of the MCVFD. The City. That's not the city government that I want. I want a government that is run ethically. Period. Ethically. That's not ethical behavior. And if anyone wants to argue with me on that point. I would be happy to argue that one. But I can't imagine how they would offer people who have been serving our community for so long, so long, done it professionally. Done it well. Sacrificed. Put their lives on the line. And the answer was, well we are going to create a contract that is going to seize their equipment. And we wonder why we are at this problem. Now these two have worked it out. Let's rally behind them. We are on the verge of greatness. We can create something. I am okay with creating a city fire department. Justin Hood and I were just talking about that. We disagree on tactics, maybe, but we certainly agree on where the city needs to go. No plan is perfect. I have been to war 3 times for this nation. At the operational level where we are maneuvering large forces. I have never seen a plan that has survived the first contact. We were always having to change it. Even when we had overwhelming force, we had to change it. So that normal part of execution. You just have to have a plan where you are able to work together and get through. And these two men. Can do it. The firefighters that are in this room. The serve this community. My hats off to them. I can't believe the stuff they have been through within the last year. They are my heroes. They are professionals. And I know there are some folks in here that had relied on them for service. Fortunately, I never had. My wife and I never had. They have not had to come to our house. But I am going to tell you, I would lay my life on the line with them.
The real issue that I come down to is October 1. You've got a contract that runs out with MCVFD...One October create a fire department. The chief just told me that he can't do. Unless you do the merger. It's pretty straight forward to me. You can force him to try to do it, but that could be a high risk of potentially a break in service and what happens to the folks in the unincorporated area, because this is an intricate relationship between us and the county. It is the way work here in Rockwall County. There are no exceptions. Rockwall City sends their Rockwall Fire Department. Fate DPS, Heath DPS, Royse City Fire Department. All work together. That's called mutual aid. They come together. If you say that we are not going to service the unincorporated areas, because we think there is an iniquity. I'm not going to argue that point. You can go see the County Commissioners and have that discussion with Judge Sweet and happily have that conversation. But at the end of the day we need to have a fire department on One October. They gave you a plan. It is an executable plan. I say get behind the plan. And if you can't get behind their plan. I'm asking each member of Council I would love to hear your words on whether you support or don't support it today. If you don't get behind their plan, what's your plan?

Thank you.

Troy Reich, 441 Briar Glen: Thank you Mayor for finally bringing this to a townhall meeting where the citizens can not only have the opportunity to not just voice their displeasure and sit there and watch you kind of giving us the round eyes, but actually have to answer some questions relative to what this has come to. And for Council Persons Balkum, Herren and Turnbull. Seeing that you are part of the City Council that initiated this fiasco for either one of you or all of three of you. What was the urgency of having a city owned fire department when we had a fully functional volunteer fire department? Which at one time you said that the city fire department would be a volunteer fire department? So, what was the need? Number one.

If somebody can give me a common sense answer I would certainly like to hear it if either one of you. Speak up. It is your opportunity to tell the citizens why was it so damn important a city owned fire department?

Turnbull speaks for myself: The reason why we passed the ordinance is because we were not able to contract MCVFD. My feeling was there was no option except to provide fire service for ourselves.

Troy Reich: Based on what we just heard from Mr. Kipphut, you didn't want to service the McLendon Chisholm Volunteer Fire Department. There was no reason–you passed a budget that funded the volunteer fire department for the year and in fact you increased it by $9,000 over what they asked for.

Mayor Pro Tem Turnbull and Council Member Balkum said: No sir, we did not the budget. We allocated that amount. But we did not have a contract.

Troy Reich: If you allocated it, then why didn't you just fund them?
Council Member Balkum answered: That's not the same thing. We had a meeting that was scheduled after the budget season which was on October 10, 2017.

Troy Reich: Why was it so important to have a city owned fire department when we already had a fully functioning volunteer fire department?

Council Member Balkum: There is two things. We had an opportunity to do negotiations in the fall of 2017. The negotiations fell through regarding the presentation presented to us in June 2017. Then the threats came, political campaigning, and politicize it and we kept getting threat letters and that point if you were person wanting to have contracting service and told you how it was going to be then we had to make a decision. Because we do represent the citizens.

Troy Reich: You were getting threat letters?
Council Member Balkum summarized: Pay up or we don't service you. And we have had footage of meetings as well.

Troy Reich: So, what you are saying is that there was a contract presented to you and you refused it, because it did not coincide with what you wanted, is that correct? So according to this email that we just heard this evening you didn't except the contract from MCVFD because it eliminated your position of taking over their equipment.

Council Member Balkum: First off, that email is just one of many emails, but...

Troy Reich: But it is an email that goes directly to your refusal and contract with MCVFD of which you could verily easily worked a deal out and accepted their contract or put together a contract, because there were people that were working to do that. There were very viable contracts that were presented to you and you continue to refuse them.

Council Member Balkum responded: We have invested over $700K in the assets that they have and it was supposed to be city owned property. There was a lot of people that got the impression that they were part of the city. And it wasn’t. There were a lot of intricacies that needed to be taken care of at that time. But it wasn’t. So there has been constant changing of ideas of what they wanted to have in the contract...it seemed like every other week it kept changing. So yes, at some point the City Council made the decision that we needed to have 2 negotiators outside of the mayor and outside of the fire chief at that time. To keep the personalities out. And then at that time there was negotiations with two parties. Now we expected, the City Council expected 2 negotiators from MCVFD that actually had authority to make decisions and that did not happen. They would have to go back to MCVFD membership for discussion. Now I wasn’t part of the negotiation team. It would be fair for Mayor Pro Tem Turnbull to discuss that.

Mayor Pro Tem Turnbull: I guess the question that was asked, why we didn’t have the contract? Why we set up the fire department? And the answer was. We are unable to reach a contract.
Troy Reich: Well who breached the contract?

Mayor Pro Tem Turnbull: Nobody breached it. The existing contract expired. We were unable to reach a mutually agreeable contract between Council and MCVFD.

Council Member Balkum added: It ended on December 31, 2017.

Troy Reich: It sounds to me the reason you did not reach an agreement with them, because it was not your desire to reach it. That to me pretty sad politics for a small community such as ours.

Council Member Balkum asked: What do you mean by design? Can you clarify what do you mean by design? Do you think that we didn’t want to have...

Troy Reich: From the sounds of the email that we heard this evening yes.

Council Member Balkum: I apologize that is how you feel, but

Troy Reich: You don’t have to apologize. It’s not your fault. It’s not my fault. There is nothing to apologize for. You just screwed up. Period.

Troy Reich: You have an opportunity to do something that was very common sense and you blew it. And I don’t know necessarily your agenda was important to have a City owned fire department when we had a very viable fire department already. And now you give us options of these men working very diligently and I heard you sit there and criticize what these people are trying to do when you asked them to do it.

Council Member Balkum: I apologize sir, but you are incorrect we did not offer options. We established MCFR that happened in April which has transpired already. That was a response that we have to do something. There were not any options.

Troy Reich: And now we are in August, first week of September and we still have don’t have a fire department that you said that you started back in April.

Council Member Balkum: Yes, we started the paperwork process. We even did the SAFER Grant. Because we were thinking about financial ideas if we didn’t get volunteers this would helped with hiring. We discussed about hiring from volunteer, part-time to full-time. There is a timeline everything has been laid out pretty diligently. It was not overnight that we came up with this idea.

Troy Reich: Sure, doesn’t sound like you didn’t put enough time putting it together. It seems to me the common-sense thing would have been to go ahead and work with the volunteer fire department and then take the necessary time to getting the consultants that you needed. Because you sure as heck are not qualified to put together a fire department. You have hard enough time running a City Council Meeting. And come up with some kind
of a plan that was viable plan that you can one day been able to bring to the Citizens, this is what we come up with. It is not here, we got three options. Or we got two options we could do it this way or that way. You could have come to us with a plan that said this is the plan for citizens of McLendon-Chisholm going forward for a fire department that is going to give us the services that we need.

**Council Member Balkum:** Sir at that time, we were basically told, if you don’t pay up, we won’t service you.

**Troy Reich:** That’s not true.

**Council Member Balkum:** In a nutshell yes it was and we had to respond. We saw the letter that was sent to us and we know what was said. And this is our response we, as the City Council we had to make those type of decisions for public safety. I know, I know...what you are feeling. It is an emotional thing. I get it. I really do. At that time, this is how we had to react to the situation, because what if something should happen.

**Troy Reich:** So, when Mr. Turnbull was at the Commissioner’s Meeting and said, we were going to have a fire department by June sometime that was the plan? You already had that in place that was going to work?

**Mayor Pro Tem Turnbull:** Mr. Reich, to answer you, I will direct that to Chief Simmons to answer you. Explain the information that he provided to me. Which I relayed the information to the County Commissioners about setting up the department by June 16.

**Chief Simmons:** When it was presented to me in the beginning, prior to our initial meeting Chief Murphy and myself. We had no communications. Unfortunately, I was unable to be able to get in contact with Chief Jones at the time to hopefully maybe have some dialogue so at that point we had nothing. We were in that stall mode. So, when I was asked by Council we are going to have to do something, can you put something together by June 16. If that is what I have to do then that’s what I got to do. If we can’t get any communications with the volunteer fire department to be able to get something going I’m going to have to put something together. It’s going to be pieced meal together. It’s not going to be great, but I will do what I have to do. Whatever Council tells me I need to do I will do it. So that’s where that statement came from Mayor Pro Tem Turnbull is coming from. At that time, things were completely different that where we are today. So, I was being tasked to put something together in 16 days.

**Council Member Balkum added:** And that was because of the letter.

**Troy Reich:** Do you honestly believe that you could put a fire department together in 16 days?

**Chief Simmons:** Yes. It was going to piece mail. It was going to be a tough impossible task. Thank God that Chief Murphy walked in to a Council Meeting, I’m here I would like
to start talking. That was outstanding. I knew at that point. Alright, I knew I was not going to have to piece mail something together that was going to have my name tied to it. And take a chance of ruining what little reputation that I have. Yes, I hope that answers the question that Yes, I did say at that time, because we had no options – I was going to have to do something. But things changed in that 16 days prior to Mayor Pro Tem Turnbull speaking at the Commissioner's Court.

Troy Reich: Going forward and beyond the 3rd and 4th year in having a city owned fire department, I have a feeling that means you are going to have to raise the city taxes.

Council Member Balkum asked: How?

Troy Reich: You know as well as I do what something costs today is not going to cost the same 4 or 5 years from now. And you are not going to have the money from the SAFER Grant and the city becomes responsible for the fire department and you are thinking if we can't afford the fire department then you would dismiss half the fire department.

Council Member Balkum: Are we not allowed to get more grants?

Troy Reich: I didn’t say that you wouldn’t.

Council Member Balkum: We are going to be constantly looking for opportunities.

Troy Reich: So, you have no intention of raising city taxes in the future?

Council Member Balkum: I have no zero desire in raising city taxes. I want to use the budget that we have.

Troy Reich: That doesn’t sound realistic to me. I haven't seen a city government that has yet to operate on the same budget that you are talking about today especially five years from now. Especially when you will have a full funded city owned fire department. Ain’t going to happen. You know it as well as I do. So, you are sitting there just blowing smoke up...

Council Member Balkum: What is our current property tax?

Troy Reich: I don’t know. You tell me.

Council Member Balkum: .15 cents. We didn’t increase from last year. Of course, we will have a public hearing where you can say that you want to increase it. You may be the only one. But you can do that.

Troy Reich: You can’t sit there and tell me that 5 years from now that it is not going to require more money from the citizens. You just can’t say that. You know darn good and
well. You can’t fund a city 5 years from now with the same price with the funding you have today.

Council Member Balkum: We also discovered about 6 months ago other financial options for our city, called Munileases.

Mayor Short: We are to talk about fire service today. I can say today’s intent is not to raise taxes, but I can’t promise that, because I don’t have a crystal ball. My intent is to try to operate within the same budget, but just as you stated that costs go up, buildings can go down, we don’t know, you folks are grown adults, you are very well-educated individuals we have all heard the terms and the statements throughout the real estate bubbles are going to burst. There is a lot of variables. I can tell you from my heart my intention not to raise taxes, but I can speak of what could go on between now and 5 years from now. My intent is not to. But I don’t know. And that is a fair answer to you. Troy Reich: What I am getting at is the fact that a fully funded City owned fire department beyond 4 years is going to be more expensive to the city. Because you don’t know that there is grants that you are going to be able to get. You got to look at it in terms of...

Council Member Balkum: It’s not just grants sir. There are other financial options. Here the way that I look at it is, if you can’t afford something you tried to work within your budget. So, there are options out there we just need to make sure we are doing the due diligence of looking into that.

Mayor Short: I do know the fact that you are concerned about the rising cost.

Council Member Balkum: I want to make sure that you know, your concern, I understand that, I don’t want to pay more than what I need to pay. You want to pay things fairly.

Troy Reich: My concern is really how all this has gone up to this point, I don’t have much confidence in your ability to keep it where it’s at. Thank you. That is enough from me.

Council Member Balkum: Thank you.

Stuart Mayberry, 21 Fireside Drive: The first thing I want to do is point out the first line on that slide. It says the Citizens of McLendon-Chisholm and the Citizens of Fire District 22. So, what are we even arguing this? Is this a surprise to you? Did this come out of nowhere? Chief? This should have been known to you. Fire District 22 includes all of the people you just disrespected here, by saying oh, you are second class citizens, you can go second, that’s wrong. And Mayor I know what you and the Council are trying to do, but I also know what Colonel Kipp hut, I worked with him for I don’t know. I have worked with him for over 30 years in the military, I know his experience, and what he did after as a program manager for a major defense contractor. If there is something that knows how to get something done, he was on the committee with two of the City Council people to work this issue with the fire department. No matter what they came up with it was voted down. No matter what they came up with ya’ll found fault with it. It was no where they were going to win. Because Steinhagen and you decided that this was personal and you
let your personality and your instinct, well, I don't know what the hell it was, you let your emotions, I am not going to much longer, but I wanted to let you know there is no one that has worked harder for this than that gentlemen right there Mark my hats off to you. I'm just trying to figure out, when we are talking about money here, we are standing up here a fire department, $529K. Does that include the firehouse that you are going to have to build? Where is the money going to come from? This building cost $1.2 million. What is a fire department going to cost? We are damn sure not going to let you build a metal shack out there with a chain link fence around it when we are held to higher standards. You need to be held to higher standards. You need to maintain... I'm proud of this building. I think it set McLendon-Chisholm on the map. If we are going to do a fire department, let's do it right. But I want you to sit there and tell me where you are going to get the money that it is going to take to build a fully functioning fire house? At least one. You may need two. As far as TXDOT is concerned on Hwy 205... that's 3 to 5 years down the road. We are talking to 2020 to 2023. That money ain't there yet. You can't depend on that and you can't stand up a fire department you've got to be able to put it somewhere? Just like the new equipment that you bought. Thank God it still out in California, maybe it will slide off into the ocean and disappear. You bought fire equipment. You appointed a fire chief. You got no fire department. And we are paying for it. I just want to know where is the money going to come from to be able to build this fire department? Taxes. Grants are not going to pay for it. You are not going to get that much. I'm trying to figure out what the estimated tax burden is on the rest of the people out here. Again, civility I just really appreciate the fact you are trying, but again, I think everybody in the audience can say it's not working, we thought it was bad under Mr. Steinbagen. And Mayor Short this is not a shot at you, but you are a marine you can handle it. Like Colonel said, he's been in 3 wars, I have been 3 wars too. I was at the tactical level. That's why I don't pay taxes. I feel bad, because I have to stand up here to say that you are probably going to have to raise some taxes. I'm 100% disabled. It was not my idea that I don't have to pay taxes. I would willing pay, and I will whatever the difference is that anyone out here has to pay in taxes. I will pay that out of my own pocket if I need to so that this thing works. So, I'm asking collectively to please get your crap together and work together as a team and leave your personalities out of it. Thank you.

Gary Nickel, 612 Kentwood: Last time I stood here I said that I was embarrassed the way this is being run and it is not getting better. It is so disappointing to see this group struggle to even have a civil conversation. It's just sad that we can't do better than this. The problem is not that hard. There are some contentious issues. Buried in the problem. The problem is really not that difficult. All we need to do is get the choices out there. Discuss it. And make a rational decision. The presentation that we saw tonight didn't have enough meat on it. Especially budgetary items to inform the citizens. To which way they might want to go. We really need to see more detail. Before we make a determination. I agree with the person that earlier said perhaps the best way to do this now is to have the Council come up with the plan based off what they know now and put together a packet that you all agree on propose it to the citizens and then ask them for input, massage it again if necessary that meets everyone's needs. You are not going to satisfy everyone, but the majority. The problem is not that great, it's not that hard to do. In conclusion I would say, it is fiscally irresponsible to build a station before we need it. It will be a while
before we get help from the state, we already have a building that we can use. There is no reason that we can’t continue using it. We got an outstanding professional staff that is already working and willing to do the merger and that sounds like a reasonable approach. There are facets to it that are not clear to everyone please uncover it, expose it and hash it out. One of the issues that I know, is the question of paying benefits. My suggestion on that is if you want to build a first-rate department, you will need to pay salary and benefits. And those are the people that you want if you want them to stay. And make a career of it if they can. Those are the people that have families and that have needs just like everyone else. There are very few of us that worked professionally that didn’t have the full salary and benefit package. That anybody that took any one of those away or reduce those...we would have gone elsewhere. And that is same problem that you are going to face with the fire department. Please consider paying what the people are worth. If you want citizen input you are going to have to come up with a budget description of what each plans are. However, you want to do it. In the interest of saving time. Given that it is not completed in time for the fiscal year, it looks like you are going to have to do it yourselves. I don’t know what restrictions you have on working in private or public sessions. I urge to try to come together and to stop the squabbling – it’s not helpful, it’s not productive, and is still embarrassing. Thank you.

Mike Donegan, 2620 Ridgelake Lane: I am a citizen of this wonderful city. Before I make my comments, I want to say, I’ve been where ya’ll sat as townhall and several times. And I know, it takes a lot of fortitude and strength. And personal courage to sit there and do what you are doing. I appreciate what you do. I may not agree with on some things, but I do honor your service and what you are doing. I appreciate what you are doing. In speaking of honor, a couple of personal reflections, at least more than half maybe most of half have served this country in uniform. And I bet over half the people served in this audience. Whether it is in the military or first responder and I know that we all wish that serving the city where you are that you would gain the same type of honor as people do who serve in uniform. And I think that is each and one of our personal prayer and goal is. People that find the opportunity and responsibility to sit where you are sitting also deem it honorable and serve honorably. Because it is an honor. I am personally am sorry that we are having these difficulties. And I’m sure ya’ll too. I’m sure none of you are going to get much sleep tonight. If there is no political reason and that decision has to be made in terms of the precise inner workings besides these two options. Maybe there is a way to extend what we are doing now. Once you decide which option you are going to go. To allow for proper planning and organization of the new fire department. Whether it being option 1 or option 2. Certainly, the merger of the fire department is the best option. So, I do not know if it is a political reason that the decision has got to be made. I’m sure there is. Surely there is quickly, maybe there was an opportunity for MCVFD to operate under the same type of conditions. So, we can make wise decisions. Being involved in city government over the last 30 years, every administration is faulted for not having enough communications to its citizens. Particularly on important issues. I haven’t seen a letter to the citizens on the issues of the fire department. I think the information that is put on the website is not sufficient. I just learned that by accepting the SAFER grant, that we are now committed to a 7 day a week 24-hour fire department. Is that correct? No, we are not?
Mayor Short: The SAFER grant. We agreed to accept the money to hire x amount of fire fighters it is not necessarily to how many hours or how many days they are up at the fire station. It’s a grant for hiring of firefighters.

Mayor Pro Tem Turnbull: Mr. Donegan, let Chief Simmons respond.

Chief Simmons: In receiving the SAFER Grant it does require us to have fire protection around the clock, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Mike Donegan: So, I’m not sure that given the choice that every citizen would say that’s what we need or what we can afford. I’m just saying these issues, heavily, there is a lot of details, involvement to it that the proper planning for what we are going to do hopefully there is a merger of the two fire departments. That we take our time and really go through the issues and communicate these issues to the citizens. I hate to say this, but maybe one thing is a very pointed survey to the citizens not with any political reference or anything like that, but just a simple survey that says what type of fire department do you want? And not do it like with some of the surveys sort of political agenda behind it. Just something that citizens can say yeah I like this or I don’t like this. And finally, I have a recommendation on how we get our civility back in the community. If you read the Gospels you know that Jesus said that two greatest commandments are to love God with all of our hearts, mind and strength and love our neighbors as we love ourselves. And what do we do when there is a personal or perceived conflict between loving our God and trying to love our neighbor. Number one, I think we got to let God tell us, point our finger towards God He’s our priority and then remember we ought to be loving each other as we much as we love ourselves. Thank you.

Justin Hood, 287 Pheasant Hill: So, I currently have been with the Dallas Fire Department for 16 years. I serve as the 2nd chief of the special operations team. I say all this to bring relevance when it comes to when we talk about staffing, budget, things that I have had to deal with in trying to look through those lenses as well. I have a question about the SAFER Grant, does it restrict you to staff personnel. Does it have to be spent on a salary of some kind? Is that the only way that you can spend that money?

Chief Simmons: Yes sir. On this particular grant.

Justin Hood: What is included? We are going to use this for positions and benefits? What is the long version of what those benefits exactly are?

Chief Simmons: The benefits would include obviously medical, dental, TMRS (pension), workers comp, liability. I think that is the benefits that we would offer to an employee.

Mayor Pro Tem Turnbull: Excuse me, Lisa, explain what items can we submit under the SAFER Grants, because medical is not one of them is that correct?
**City Secretary:** When we submitted the application for the grant we didn't include a full benefits package. $6,000 per firefighter for benefits was all that was requested because I thought we were hiring part-time firefighters. We requested funding for workers comp, liability, and only the required insurances, not medical and not dental. Now, there will probably be a little bit left that could be applied to another benefit such as TMRS or medical, but it won't be enough to cover all those benefits. The City would have to assume some of the costs of the remaining benefits that are not covered with the grants. We requested funding for 6 positions either full-time positions or full-time equivalent – it doesn't matter and benefits for each one. We assumed a salary of $50K for entry level firefighter positions and $6,000 for benefits for each of those positions. That is the max that we can do. Anything over and above we can certainly do, but we will have to fund it.

**Jeff Hood:** So, I think what you are obviously hearing from, a lot of the citizens, probably from me too, one thing what I was confused about is when the talk started to come out about the City's going to take over the fire department. Or we are going to merge into under the city. I have always been on record saying, I support that. But mostly under a volunteer fire department from the stand of the size of our city, the number of runs and the previous model (MCVFD) using where you had some part-time people staffing. There was nothing wrong with that model per say. Troy, I do think that the reason for some of the moving to go under the city was that even the volunteer fire department was growing or wanting to grow, maybe more equipment, more benefits, staffing, that was growing and that budget was growing. My personal opinion was if that's going to grow then bringing it to where it is under the City where the Citizens are making those kinds of decisions within the city would be better long-term solution versus renegotiating a contract with a private or someone outside the city, over and over and over again as those costs going up and eventually if we were going to do this we were going to be at this point. This was coming eventually if we were ever going to do this. So, it is just a difference in opinion whether it was the right thing to do or not. But I never thought for us to have a fully functioning funded fire department we cannot afford that. And I think that everybody knows that. And the only issue that I have is when I'm dealing with grants at work I have seen a lot of great ideas come from grants. But suffered too when they dry up. That's the concern that I have as a firefighter and we, as in the other firefighters would come in, Joe, Ron, Tina and Stan and four years later they are rolling and they got some seniority. Probably deserve a little bump in benefits and things like that. Oh, but wait we can't afford to keep you anymore. Now we are going to be come back in this room. Now we are going to tell this guy who has 3 kids that he doesn't have a job anymore. And now your taxpayers are saying well I guess we are going to have to fund this department that we have been saying that we can't afford. So, I'm going to wrap that up into saying we don't know what the 3-year, 5 year or 7-year plan is as far as where the city is going or what this fire department wants to look like. I'm not against a merger at all in order to create fire service for the people. But if that merger is going to give 6 positions and they each get all these benefits and we don't have a sustainability plan it comes and I have seen this done before. I'm just telling you, you may not want the grant that you can't sustain that is going to cause such pain in the future if that grant says you can only spend it on this and you have no idea where you are telling our firefighters that you can fund them in the future. So that is just something to think about. Something for all of us to think about. Because when you have a staff and
an engine. And a house and the next thing, we are going to fight firefighter's benefits, fight for more capabilities, more safety, we are going to want more equipment, we want a ladder truck we want all types of stuff. And to staff a ladder truck that is a minimum of 4 people. McLendon-Chisholm is this big. It's great that we are small and we can operate mostly volunteer fire department with good professionals that you hire part-time. And you can put them on staff. And we can do it under the City. There is no problem with that typical model. Then the other area that we need a little more information on is a little vague that we are going to have fundraisers. If the department grows and their run volume grows in the unincorporated area. Well somebody has got to fund that. There hasn't been a lot of talk about a plan for that. I guess in the future. I'm all about it. Everybody wants fire service. Let's do it. Let's jump in, if there's a fire, let's put it out. I'm not saying to put them out unless they do this. Realistically it has to be funded as it grows it has be funded. I was in support of it being under the City. I was not a support of fully funded and all that. And that's where some of the things now it is starting to come out. I highly recommend against it. If we do not have the support or the sustainability to plan because those are people that we are going to be putting in that fire station. We are talking, let's share equipment, let's share the building, let's figure it out. But to jump this through the roof overnight is not a good idea. We are all trying to find this balance between service and cost, responsibility, stewardship and we are all trying to find that balance. It seems that it is either this or that. I think there's a recruitment effort a high recommendation on my part. I'll jump in. I'll be on a committee and I will help in any way I can to find a balance and offer anything that I have to try to figure out what's the best way to get good service to the people without breaking the bank. I have said for a long time if the plan is to fully fund this thing and run with it it's not going to work.

**Mayor Pro Tem Turnbull:** Lisa what's our total cost over the 3 years?

**City Secretary:** It's going to cost $384K.

**Mayor Pro Tem Turnbull:** That's what is going to cost us over 3 years. I fully understand what you are saying about going forward. But to pay the same amount that was asked for in the 2018 budget for personnel that was $199K a year. So, we would have been at $597K if we were to continue paying MCVFD for 4 people verses what the City would pay out in the next 3 years.

**Mark Kipphut spoke out from the audience:** You can't have honest discussion and he's now making up numbers.

**Mayor Short:** You have to be at the podium to speak.

**Council Member Larkin spoke:** Actually, the number for $199K for four firefighters of the MCVFD is a valid number. That was the number that was proposed. In the 2017-2018 budget submission.

**Mark Kipphut** continued to argue with Council Member Herman Larkin.
Mayor Short: Gentlemen, we are getting out of order. Justin Hood is up there talking, Mr. Turnbull is responding to him.

Mayor Pro Tem Turnbull: My point is what we would have spent to fund the MCVFD for personnel for less personnel is more is a little over $200K or more than what it will cost us for this service. For myself, I would have never have suggested 2 people 24/7 in the city if the city was paying for it. I don’t know anybody on here on the Council that would have ever suggested that we would do that. The money is there. Whether it is a good thing or bad thing that we take it, it would be taken with the knowledge that we may not sustain it at the end of the 3 years. Okay. But if it is cheaper than sticking with what we had then what’s the problem?

Justin Hood: Yes, sir, I guess my question is, could you use that money to fund the part-time position or staff 8 to 12-hour shifts. Can you staff them in 12 hour shifts around the clock? Do you have to be full-time employee with all the benefits or could you use the money to go toward a salary to get people to staff the station during that time?

City Secretary: It’s either full-time or full-time equivalent. So, if we wanted to do 6 full-time firefighters we could. If we want to do half full-time firefighters we could. If we wanted to do 3 full-time and the remainder a combination of part-time hours we can do that. It has to be 2 people on duty 24 hours a day. However we fill that is up to us.

Justin Hood: My suggestion would just be okay utilize that staff it, but don’t put yourself in a way that you put all the money into one basket that you can’t afford all of that going forward. And then you are cut off. Make sense? So, if you got all of these full-time positions, instead of all them going towards all full-time positions, a hybrid of that, if we get look to the future say and we can’t sustain that particular number with the amount that has particularly gone up in time. But we still can afford have of that and still staff the station so that we are not going back to this room doing the same thing 4 years from now. That’s what I’m saying as far as let’s get people that done this before and let’s to some people who utilized that grant so you don’t pull all your eggs in one basket. And just gamble. I’m all in on getting it started. But there is a way to take care of the firefighters and take care of the citizens. People have to be in the same room can speak on behalf of the citizens and find that balance so it doesn’t tip over later on.

Mayor Pro Tem Turnbull: I agree 100%.

Lance Agee, 1509 Via Toscana: I’m going to share my opinion on the fire services. But I do want to say, so the citizens can understand is ultimately a city of citizens and what the majority of the people want is what the majority of people should get. So, the MCVFD was voted on for an approved budget for $330K for the 2017-2018 fiscal year. Is that correct?

Council Member Balkum answered: No.

Lance Agee asked: What was that amount then?
Council Member Balkum continued: We didn’t approve a MCVFD budget. We just approved what was presented.

Lance Agee: So, you just approved what was presented for $339K? In the line item in the budget $330K for fire service.

Council Member Balkum: It’s just a line item. We didn’t agree that money was going to be given to MCVFD.

Lance Agee: So where did you come up with that amount of $330K to allocate towards fire services?

Council Member Balkum: There was a presentation at that time, we knew and noted it in whenever we passed the budget that we needed to have that discussion and negotiation, a contract discussion. We were interviewing contractors and it was going to be on October 10. It was after we approved the budget.

Lance Agee: So, you approved the budget. And in that budget, you approved $330K for fire services. Anyone. This is a townhall meeting I’m trying to interact with each of you.

Council Member Larkin: We were not on the Council.

Lance Agee: No, you weren’t, but you were on the fire department (MCVFD). So, the budget was approved for $330K.

Council Member Larkin: $329K number came from what was submitted from MCVFD yes. The proposal.

Lance Agee: So, we can run a fire department off of $330K which the Council approved? So, the merger from the numbers that I understand is $604K.

Chief Simmons: Is that a question?

Lance Agee: Yes, it is a question. I’m wanting clarification. A standup fire department, with a station is $1 million dollars.

Chief Simmons: I can’t answer that.

Lance Agee: So, we don’t know what the cost of a stand-up fire department is going to cost?

Chief Simmons: When you talk about the station it goes under capital expenditures. It can be spent a little different. It depends on what you are asking. The City is not going to spend all that money upfront to build a fire station. It will be obviously drawn out over a period of 10 years/15years or whatever it may be.
Lance Agee: Sure. We understand. But to do that it would total $1 million dollars. I'm asking because there should be based on what we are being told there should be some idea what it would cost to build a fire station. What is that cost?

Chief Simmons: Currently, $500K to $600K.

Lance Agee: Is that just the building? All the furnishings?

Chief Simmons: That's everything.

Lance Agee: So $600K plus another $600K is how much? $1.2 million dollars. Okay, there I'm just letting you know. It's going to cost me a $1 million dollars whether you spread it out over 1 year or 10 to 15? Correct? So, what is the staffing cost of the MCVFD? Of the merger? Annually? What is the cost if we do a merger to staff the joint fire department?

Chief Simmons: The current budget gets approved by Council. Is that what you are asking for?

Lance Agee: Yea, what is the staffing portion of the merger? I hate to ask all these questions, but it really wasn't included in what was presented tonight.

Chief Simmons: Sorry, but it was presented in the previous Council meeting. So, without the SAFER Grant money calculated in on the staffing is $507 that includes 4 positions, part-time shifts at $18 an hour covering 24 hours a day. Volunteer call stipend. Workers Comp, of course my salary plus benefits.

Lance Agee: So, let's think about this. $507K for staff that doesn't include any fuel costs or insurances or anything like that. Or we could get a fully funded MCVFD for $330K. It's a townhall meeting.

Council Member Bloom: Is that a question?

Lance Agee: Can someone explain to me that we will spend $200K more on a fire department when we have 2 stations, 4 trucks, great men and women who volunteer to service us who mostly live in the unincorporated area. I think only 2 live in the actual city limits. Chief Murphy and I guess Kenny still lives here, I don't know. So why are we spending this much money on the fire department? When the original argument was that it's too much money? So, we present a proposal and Mr. Turnbull was involved in all that stuff for $33K to the MCVFD with penalties of $92K. Yet, we are at $507K. We presented the MCVFD offered to give the City everything for free. With a transition period. No cost. Yet today, no one has asked this question that the merger is $507K just in staffing. When you have a fully funded fire department for $330K. Do you guys not see the $200K differential? Can someone explain to me why that is even better than what we have today? And that is a question.
Council Member Bloom: One thing to point out the obvious. It's just 2 people 24hrs a day.

Lance Agee: I don't mean to cut you off on your thought process, but I'm going to use their arguments. We don't need that. We don't have the call volume in the city.

Council Member Bloom: I don't disagree with you.

Lance Agee: That's what Balkum, Herren and Turnbull said. They said it for over a year now. The others are not here to defend themselves, but I'm not going to include by throwing them under the bus. I'm not attacking you, but that is the argument that they have made. I'm going to use their argument towards your point. We do not have the call volume, the unincorporated has all that. So why are we spending all this money? All the calls are taking place in the unincorporated area. So, I'm trying to figure out using your own argument why are spending another $200K?

Mayor Pro Tem Turnbull: Mr. Simmons were asked by the Council to put together a budget that included 24/7 coverage?

Chief Simmons: To have coverage yes.

Mayor Pro Tem Turnbull: That's not the question. Were you asked to put together a budget for 24/7 coverage?

Chief Simmons: We had several discussions over the last few months and when deciding what would be best to make sure that we needed to be covered. Volunteering is hard to keep up. Part-time is hard to keep up. So, to have the minimum 3 full-time 24/7/365, a, b and c shifts.

Mayor Pro Tem Turnbull: Once again, sir were you asked by the Council to put that together?

Chief Simmons: I was asked by the Council to put a budget together for coverage. No particular hours.

Mayor Pro Tem Turnbull: Okay, thank you. Does that answer your question?

Lance Agee: Yea. So, we all agree that we don't need full coverage, so why do we want to spend over $200K more? Mrs. Balkum.

Council Member Balkum: All I know is that back in the fall the price kept going up and if you look at their 6-year plan that they brought to us the cost ended up in 2017 was $338,150 plus the $67,500.

Lance Agee: I'm sorry to interrupt, but what is this for?
Council Member Balkum: I’m just saying this is how end up in this direction. Okay we had no apparatus or assets at that time with MCVFD.

Lance Agee: But you did not have to approve $338K.

Council Member Balkum: We needed to have a negotiation conversation.

Lance Agee: But you did approve $330K.

Council Member Balkum: I think that you are – I understand what you are trying to say. But I’m going to have to.

Lance Agee: But I’m not looking at 2018-2019. Or 2020 down the road. You don’t have to approve if MCVFD say they want a million dollars. You don’t have to give them a million dollars.

Council Member Balkum: That’s right we do not have to give them a million dollars. We budgeted an amount in expectation that we were going to have a negotiation on October 10. After the budget.

Lance Agee: Where was it stated about the negotiations. What record can I find that in? Once you approved the budget you would negotiate with the fire department.

Council Member Balkum: When we approved the budget. Yes, it is in there, we talked about it. It is noted in there.

Lance Agee: Where? Please tell me where it is?

Council Member Balkum: At the meeting. I would have to go look it up and I will find it for you. But I will have the City Secretary email that to you.

Lance Agee: Not to my work email. My private one please. You have that as well don’t you? (Question to the City Secretary.) So, we got a situation here. We have a great fire department that’s $330K. You guys are wanting to spend $507k just to staff it at the same level that we have today. So, for $507k, Jim Herren, can you provide better fire services than MCVFD?

Mayor Short: Mr. Agee, I’m the moderator of this, it’s not personal attacks.

Lance Agee: It’s not personal attacks.

Mayor Short: If you interrupt me one more time. I’m going to tell you that you are out of order. Okay? I have listened to everybody here to give them the opportunity to talk without interruption. If you can’t give us the same respect in return. Then I’m going to ask you to stop. I don’t want them interrupting you. You don’t interrupt them. You don’t interrupt me. You are starting to get off track. You can ask us a specific question, but you have been a little bit accusatory and settle down a bit. You made a cheap shot just a minute ago about
email addresses. That needs to be left out of it. This is about fire service. I understood what you were saying. That’s your first warning.

**Lance Agee:** Mr. Herren again, I will rephrase the question. For $507K are we going to be provided greater services protection to our city than what we are currently being provided by. Knowing that you said we shouldn’t be spending any more money on the fire department.

**Council Member Herren:** I have always advocated that we should have an all-volunteer force. I have never said anything other than that. As far as this budget that we are talking about that budget is not approved. You said you didn’t want to talk about fictitious future numbers, that budget has not been approved this City Council. So, it doesn’t really exist. You are bringing up something there the same as Chief Hood believe we don’t need a full-time paid fire department. And I said that from the very beginning.

**Lance Agee:** I’m glad that you are saying that and agree that $507K is excessive. Do you agree?

**Council Member Herren:** I agree.

**Lance Agee:** Mr. Turnbull you were all volunteer fire department so are you in support for $507K?

**Mayor Pro Tem Turnbull:** No, I am not in favor of $507K because that budget that is up there that was stated before was not what was asked so no I would not support that budget.

**Lance Agee:** So, knowing that you are not in favor of $507K are you in favor of keeping the MCVFD of $330K?

**Mayor Pro Tem Turnbull:** No and the reason why I have to say no is because that includes money that they used for capital expenditures and if the City is going to make that investment it should be in their own equipment a private company’s business.

**Lance Agee:** So, with that stated what do you think is a fair budget number for the fire department?

**Mayor Pro Tem Turnbull:** That will depend on the type of service we decide to have.

**Lance Agee:** What type of service do you foresee for our city?

**Mayor Pro Tem Turnbull:** Personally, as I had said before I think an all-volunteer department will be fine, but that doesn’t mean that is what the majority of the citizen’s want.

**Lance Agee:** Haven’t you voted in favor of these resolutions?
Mayor Pro Tem Turnbull: For starting our own department?

Lance Agee: Yes.

Mayor Pro Tem Turnbull: Yes, sir I did.

Lance Agee: So, you can start an all-volunteer fire department for how much money?

Mayor Pro Tem Turnbull: I don't think Chief Simmons has ever provided that type of information.

Lance Agee: Well, I'm asking you since you are the elected official and he is under your direction.

Mayor Pro Tem Turnbull: Yes, sir, but he is the one that would provide this Council with information.

Lance Agee: Okay, but you have driven this before he was here and hired by you to be the expert for fire service. So, what the is the cost for a volunteer that you foresee for our City?

Mayor Pro Tem Turnbull: For all volunteer?

Lance Agee: Whatever you see?

Mayor Pro Tem Turnbull: Per year. After equipment that we bought, all-volunteer including a start-up for bunker gear, etc. First year will probably run us about $250K. After that it will probably half that.

Lance Agee: So, you can run a fire department on half of $250K and provide the services that we have with the MCVFD?

Mayor Pro Tem Turnbull: That's not what you asked.

Lance Agee: I'm asking you now?

Mayor Pro Tem Turnbull: The services that we now are not all-volunteer.

Lance Agee: But I'm asking you base on your scenario? Can you provide the same level of service with the department that you want to put out on the streets?

Mayor Pro Tem Turnbull: Obviously the answer is no sir, because you are comparing a volunteer department to a fake department.

Lance Agee: So, what you are saying is, in your scenario you can't get the same level of service that we have today. But with this level of service here we are not getting anything more than what those guys are providing today.
Mayor Pro Tem Turnbull: Excuse me sir. (Lance began to talk over him.)

Lance Agee: Which leads me to my question to Council Member Larkin. You served with the MCVFD for some time. The MCVFD can serve the unincorporated area, within the city for $330K. Is that not correct?

Council Member Larkin: Yes.

Lance Agee: So, do we need $500K just for the staffing? You were part of the MCVFD that told the City that you could run it for $330K.

Council Member Larkin: Okay so I listened to a lot of stuff, let me answer your question. We have to understand that a lot of numbers and opinions that are being put out here are not necessarily based on – some of them are based on an individual’s perception as opposed to real facts. I was on that fire department. I submitted that budget and the 6-year plan. And I tell you that the 6-year plan from the MCVFD said by 2020 it was going to cost $380K. It wasn’t outlandish. The reality of it is I need Chief Simmons to understand first and foremost that I think you have done a marvelous job. I want you to know that upfront. A large part of the cost here is – as far as I’m concerned is wasteful money. I believe hiring a $90K Fire Chief, and he has proven his worth, but I thought we hired him a little early. I think we bought equipment and we now have $58K a year that we have to pay for the next 3 or 4 years. That’s why part of this budget is high. Now, I will tell you that I don’t ever remember including benefits in the projection of the 6-year plan. I do think that benefits are an important piece of the puzzle for our fire department. For our firefighters. For the retention of firefighters. We have to remember that most of these guys are young people who are starting careers, starting families and they need medical insurance. They are not invincible. I know that think they are now. Now, let me finish my point. So, the reality is, there is a lot of stuff that is going on in standing up a city department quite honestly, my word would be, ludicrous. I think putting a tent out here to house fire trucks is ridiculous. I think building a fire station out here that has to run through a school district is ludicrous, because you can’t do it by law. There is a lot of stuff here that has been twisted and the citizen’s input hasn’t been listened to. I do think you are on point. I believe that the reason that the number is what it is because the SAFER Grants were put into it. So, the reality of it is that those numbers are even close is because there is $200K to $300K SAFER Grant money pulled out every year. So, that is the only reason why those numbers look close. So, when you say the number from the budget for this year and compare it to the MCVFD number – no not even close. Because of the offset of MCVFD does not have the SAFER Grants. I can rant for a long time. I am the money guy. Or, I was the money guy for MCVFD. And I can tell you that I met with Chief Simmons while I was running for office, before I was elected and I met with him after I was elected. And we discussed this and he said that he thought that MCVFD ran the tightest and cleanest ship that he has seen. Financially it was extremely streamlined. So, if you want my opinion I think MCVFD is by far a top-notch department that can serve the city for a long time. I understand the City’s need to want to own assets. I disagree with 100% that
the City owns or has had any claim in any of those assets. Because one of the things that a nonprofit does is a bid to do work a cost of service. Every person that runs a business has a cost of replenishing their assets, built into the number that they charge. I don't care if it is the guy doing lawnmowers. I don't care if it is the septic system's guy. I don't care who it is. They have that built in. The reason why it was so meticulously identified on those bids is because we were trying to be 100% transparent. I admit I am rambling now. I sit up here listen to people say things that I totally disagree with, it is their personal viewpoint. I don't believe it is fact. I don't think MCVFD ever held a gun to this Council's head and said they wouldn't do anything.

**Mayor Short:** You are getting off topic.

**Council Member Larkin:** One more point sir. I also believe that MCVFD showed their willingness to this community by running calls for 5.5 months without being compensated. And with that I will shut up.

**Council Member Herren:** Mr. Mayor I would like to address Mr. Agee's on what the cost should be for the fire department for the city? Ms. Lisa can you put my laptop on WIPS up on the screen.

*(Experienced minor tech issue with computer screen transition for projection.)*

**Lance Agee:** While we wait, I will move over to Mr. Bloom. You have firefighter experience, we talked on a couple of occasions. Is the MCVFD the best solution for our city after this current time? The reason why I ask this is in the presentation that was up there. Well it wasn't specific to the fire department. The TxDOT situation may change the direction of the city should we stay the status quo by keeping it funded at the level that it currently is at instead of creating something where I entire community is going to change with TxDOT. We do not know how it will affect the direction of traffic, we do not know how many people will move in and we don't know if people are going to move because of the congestion and the traffic flow in here. Trying to get in and out of the interstates. Not to mention the safety. Will it be wise to keep MCVFD at the current level that it is or should we go down this road of doubling, tripling, quadrupling the cost of fire services to our community where literally in 2 to 3 years we don't know where we are going?

**Council Member Bloom:** First, I will address the obvious we do not know where we are going to be. The hope of course is to attract revenue which is not something that we are building in right now.

**Lance Agee:** You are thinking commercial things.

**Council Member Bloom:** Yea. So, a few points I want to address personally I have never seen any city transition from a volunteer department to a city run department and end up worse off. If you look across the trend in fire service right now – it is getting away from a lot of volunteer departments, because even if in this town it was all-volunteer it is not as easy as you think to actually to show up.
Lance Agee: Do you see based on what you just said about the trend that it doesn’t necessarily go bad. But what is that transition period, 2 months, 6 months or is this over 24 months or 36 months that you have this transition period?

Council Member Bloom: I’m not sure I have the insight to answer that.

Lance Agee: The reason why I asked is because based on your point, you saw that fire departments do that. On June 15th Commissioner’s Meeting he said we would have a department stood up.

Council Member Bloom: To have 2 firefighters per shift is not extravagant. One by himself is none, because you can’t really do anything by yourself. As you and I have talked, as a firefighter advocate I’m for benefits and a reasonable paycheck. The $50K that is budgeted is no big deal. It’s nothing bad. It’s respectful. But the benefits beyond me if you need to go to the doctor or the dentist. If they get hurt on the job or disabled or anything like that having some kind of insurance obviously is some kind of benefit. I don’t think any family should have to go bankrupt because they were on some sort of volunteer capacity. I volunteered for 3 years myself. Quite frankly, I like the idea of paying firefighters and supporting them with benefits. The transition time, I don’t know of a way to do it much slower than having as one of the options: one paid guy, one paid firefighter supported by part-time and subsequently by volunteers as well. I know the department that I am working for it wasn’t all that long ago, they were volunteer. Then they were part-time paid, full-time ambulance and everything else. So, it is growth as the City grows.

Lance Agee: So, looking at what you are talking about benefits are the people could we not provide instead of doing this start-up that is costing us so much money. Can we apply a little bit of money, so that these guys can provide some type of benefit?

Council Member Bloom: That could be an option. The way that the ordinance is written right now I don’t see that happening.

Lance Agee: I guess to round this out, there is not a cheapest solution that the MCVFD.

Council Member Bloom: Correct.

Lance Agee: And not only not knowing the direction the city is going to go with the 205 expansion. Placement of a fire station. There is already been some talk about TxDOT helping with that cost. Is it wise, and anyone can say this, is it wise to jump off the cliff so to speak and go all in when we don’t know? But we know what we do have that covers that. Chief Jones spoke back in October, it wasn’t in October, a year ago. It must have been in June or July 2017 even if we added 1000 rooftops MCVFD could operate at the level that it currently is at because the call volume doesn’t necessarily increase even though you have added 2000 additional people to the city. That’s assuming 1 to 2 people per home. I just don’t see the need to start a fire department where it comes from. I support an ESD. The ESD brings in the unincorporated area and all of fire district 22 but it levels the taxation of the citizens of McLendon-Chisholm burden. Which was the original
argument a year ago that has taken us down the road where we are paying too much and you wanted to start a fire department. So, with that said, why do we need to go down the road to spend money to have when everybody wanted in the original opinion the MCVFD right down the road. I think the citizens want the MCVFD. I think everyone would like to see them (MCVFD) funded and protected. In the future after 205 comes in we can look at that, but it is also gives us time as a community to stop and have a discussion. And what would you want our fire station to look like? What you want the city to look like as a whole? You (Council Member Bloom) mentioned commercial helps fund fire departments. And we start this today and someone comes to town and puts a commercial building in what would we have the ability to protect it? It has to be planned. What you are doing today is not planning. You don’t start. Business mergers many times take multiple years to finalize. I work on projects that take up 3 to 4 years. You just don’t start something that effects people’s public safety. I think It would be wise to fund the MCVFD this year we can then look down the road at a merger or even a city owned fire department at some point in time. There are people who live check by check in our community. And any time they get hit with something, in their escrow, it increases their house payment. The ISO ratings all of this add up and effect people and their pocketbook. Especially the young families that live here that live check to check. I am imploring you to consider funding the MCVFD looking into a transitional period if that’s what you want to do or look into getting an ESD in play that lowers the cost of taxable rates and the city. And you can actually do a tax rollback. Because if you are bringing in additional revenue not even from Commercial but you can do that. So that’s all I got to say that something to think about it is wise and smart there is no reason to change what was working really good. There is no one here as of today that no one that has told me that anything is better than MCVFD. It’s $200K almost $800K cheaper to operate the MCVFD that Chief Jones presented so well in October of last year. And he presented back in June/July of 2017. Keep that in mind. Save the taxpayers money, do yourselves some political repair and stick with MCVFD. Mr. Turnbull has said it is the cheapest and best solution. And not one person has said that they can start a fire department better than these guys. Thank you I apologize to everyone for my time.

Christine Reich, 441 Briar Glen: I just have one question, I just wanted to know where the money is coming from in paying for this new building? Nobody has said anything about the building, about the people, about the equipment, no one has asked or answered where is the money come from for the building? It’s $500K what’s that going to build?

Council Member Balkum: Ma’am we were talking about that earlier about munileases. That is a financial option. I was not even aware of it until 6 months ago.

Christine Reich: So, you are saying that you would get a loan for it?

Council Member Balkum: It is a type of loan. It is very small payments over a period of years and that will give us an affordable option. Instead of getting us involved in what was done with the City Hall bond.

Christine Reich: So, it is like a house loan? So, it’s just another debt.
Council Member Balkum: Now hold on, when you say debt the difference is we are going to own this asset.

Christine Reich: Oh. I know you will.

Council Member Balkum: It's not going to be a crazy monstrous figure. It's just going to meet our actual needs.

Christine Reich: Yea, more taxes.

Council Member Herren: Unfortunately, Chief Murphy left and I wanted to thank him for giving me the call volume numbers from 2013 until now. We were not able to get those from the previous Chief. I also asked him if he could provide me the rooftop counts inside the city and outside the city. So, let’s talk about this real quick, because the gentleman asked how much it cost for fire services for the city. The County today gives us $67,500 to cover Fire District 22. The City of McLendon-Chisholm makes up approximately 1/3 of Fire District 22. So, if you look at the budget that they (MCVFD) gave us in 2017. They asked for $329,850 plus on top of that they got the $67,500 from the County. A total of $397,350 to cover Fire District 22. But the people of McLendon-Chisholm were only paying $329K of that. And the firemen that we were paying for were going in the unincorporated area on the amount of money that we were paying. If you were looking from the perspective by the numbers that Chief Murphy gave me I went back and looked at the last 18 months. Actually, the last 31 months. In the last 31 months there were roughly 817 calls. 4 of them I could not account for. I don’t have information on where it was actually located at. 400 in the city and 400 outside the city. You are still to see a pattern here. They were responding more outside the city than they were inside the city in the last 31 months. From January 1, 2016 to July 31, 2018. 31 months and when you take that number what we were doing is subsidizing the fire department to take care of people outside the city. At a rate of 4.9% more than what we were paying and the County was giving $67,500. So, when you look at the $387K that they were using for Fire District 22. The City only made up 1/3 of it. We are paying 4.9 times more for fire protection than the people who live out in the unincorporated areas – They don’t pay anything. That money comes from a 2-cent sales tax. So, they don’t pay anything for fire protection. So, let’s look at it from that perspective, so if the county says that all they are going to give is $67,500 to cover that entire area. If we are 1/3 of it shouldn’t our cost for fire protection be 1/3 of the $67,500? If that is what the County says that is all it pays to provide volunteer fire department for the entire district 22 then that’s my answer. Then our response should be if all we need is volunteer firemen. Our price should be approximately 1/3 of what the County’s paying. If that is wrong? Tell me why it is wrong? Why are we as a City paying 4.9 times more and subsidizing the fire department and they go outside the city. Based on what Chief Murphy gave me, I appreciate Chief Murphy for getting these numbers. And so inside the city, we currently have inside the city, 1,317 houses. Outside the city 1,275 outside the city. So, the city has approximately 42 houses more. Not a substantial amount. Basically, we are equal if you look at it from that perspective. Inside the city outside the city we make up 1/3 of the fire district. And yet there are 2/3rds out there that
just as many houses and they are paying less than one tenth in what we are paying for fire services.

**Unnamed Citizen in the unincorporated area:** So, can we make a comment to that since you are talking about the County?

**Mayor Keith Short:** No, you will be able to get up here and talk in a few minutes.

**Council Member Herren:** Realistically, I have been from the very beginning, I made no bones about it, I said, I don't think we need a full-time fire department. Based on the size of the city, run calls and I got the statistics here if you want to see them. We don't have the call volumes that is necessary for that. The majority especially if you were looking at fire related calls. Out of the fire related calls I will address that real quickly. 147 fire calls out of those 31 months. Only 30 of them were inside the city. 117 of them were outside the city. So, what are we paying for? So that means out of that 815 calls only 147 were for fire, but 117 were outside the city. So, we do not have that many fires. Do we really need a full-time fire department? That's my question. We can argue all you want. I'll state based on that I think we are paying way too much money. Whether it's $329K or $520K. It's way more than we should be paying as a city.

**Council Member Balkum:** Make sure you point out about the call volume regarding the type of calls that they were.

**Council Member Herren:** Oh, yea the 147 fire calls are not all fires. Some of those calls they got called out to get terminated, grass fires, out of these, structure fires are much smaller.

**Robert Quinn, 1401 Corrara Dr:** So, I think we are back to kicking a dead horse thanks to the ordinance and the SAFER Grant being accepted, I believe this is what we are going forward with. The question left is whether we are going forward with a merger with the MCVFD or not. Is that your all's understanding? Raise your hand if that is your understanding. (Council Member Bloom raised his hand. Followed by Council Member Larkin.) Mr. Turnbull?

**Mayor Pro Tem Turnbull:** We have not discussed it in public or voted on so no.

**Robert Quinn:** But the ordinance was voted on the SAFER Grant was voted on that's where we are at. To break it down in the simplest of possible terms, the question left is whether we go forward with a merger with MCVFD as part of that future with MCFR. Or not? In your mind is that your last major question?

**Mayor Pro Tem Turnbull:** Yea.

**Robert Quinn:** Mr. Mayor?

**Mayor Short:** Yea.
Robert Quinn: Mr. Herren.

Council Member Herren: This last week I wasn’t here, but I came in via teleconference I tried to get the point across that when we voted on the SAFER Grant to make sure that everybody understood that when we accepted this of hiring personnel, by accepting that SAFER Grant it precludes us to be able to hire MCVFD anymore entity anymore. We have our own firemen. We can’t necessarily go out and hire other entities.

Robert Quinn: So, what you are saying is you can hire the individual people?

Council Member Herren: Yes.

Robert Quinn: Mrs. Balkum. What I summed up

Council Member Balkum: I’m still involved in researching right now. I still want to have a discussion with Commissioner Bailey. I was expecting him to be here today, but he wasn’t.

Robert Quinn: So that leads to my next question.

Council Member Balkum: Sure.

Robert Quinn: Do you also understand that you all have an obligation to provide fire service to the rest of Fire District 22 outside of this city?

Council Member Balkum: Based on what?

Robert Quinn: For one the interlocal agreements.

Council Member Bloom: It doesn’t stipulate paid personnel from here. Or volunteers. A volunteer department. Which is what they pay for.

Robert Quinn: Right.

Council Member Bloom: So, if we ever chose to.

Robert Quinn: So, let’s assume that we don’t merge with MCVFD. MCVFD dies on the vine. Liquidates as an entity. Who do you think is going to provide fire services to the rest of Fire District 22?

Council Member Balkum: Let me ask a question here. Why would you assume that MCVFD would go away?
**Robert Quinn:** I'm not assuming. I said, let's assume for a moment. Let's spitball for a second that MCVFD dies on the vine. You guys have stood up MCFR. MCVFD dies on the vine. Who provides fire service for the rest of fire district 22?

**Council Member Balkum:** That's not on my mind to or MCVFD's.

**Council Member Bloom:** It would be us.

**Council Member Balkum:** There is a process that we would be the first responders for fire district 22. Right now, MCVFD is. There has to be a change that would need to happen. Now as far as servicing those within the city limits that our department would take care of our city. Now MCVFD can absolutely have a contract agreement between the County and MCVFD just like last year.

**Robert Quinn:** This is what the County has tried to express all along, that if MCVFD is no longer here and you have decided to establish MCFR. We are on the hook one way or another we are on the hook for rolling calls in fire district 22 outside of the city.

**Council Member Balkum:** That is not. MCVFD is still here. You are talking as if MCVFD is going to go poof and be gone. They are here. That are right here. They want to have a contract agreement with the County and so. (Robert Quinn Interrupted.)

**Robert Quinn:** And so, you hire so many people and they call you for interlocal assistance.

**Council Member Balkum:** Who?

**Robert Quinn:** Let's assume the MCVFD calls you for some interlocal assistance.

**Council Member Balkum:** Okay.

**Robert Quinn:** Right?

**Council Member Balkum:** Right.

**Robert Quinn:** You are going to roll?

**Council Member Balkum:** We are going to be good neighbors. Chief Murphy has been really good, I can't say anything negative about him at all. He has been very helpful, communication wise and working with Chief Simmons.

**Robert Quinn:** I beg you to ask Commissioner Bailey this question when he is up here on September 11. And I bet you money. I certainly heard him say it before, to Scott, several times, right? Commissioner Bailey has told you that you will be responsible for calls in the county?
Mayor Pro Tem Turnbull: Only if we sign the contract.

Robert Quinn: The radio contract?

Mayor Pro Tem Turnbull: No.

Robert Quinn: Double-check. Because I have a recording that says that if you sign the radio contract you are required to respond to calls in Fire District 22 as a whole.

Mayor Pro Tem Turnbull: Which radio contract? The one that they presented to us?

Robert Quinn: Yes.

Mayor Pro Tem Turnbull: The one that they presented to us we struck out two items one item, which was we agreed to be responsible for calls in the unincorporated area. We did not sign the contract that said that we are responsible for the unincorporated area. It was presented and this Council struck those items and sent it back with that addendum included.

Council Member Balkum: He was supposed to be here today to discuss that contract as a discussion point and now it has been moved to the next meeting. Again, that is one of the reasons why I was looking forward for him to being here.

Mayor Short: Mr. Quinn, yes you are correct in what you are saying about the original contract, which was discussed by the Council they were sent back to Commissioner Bailey. He is has sent something else back, although, he asked for it be, postponed or tabled because he could not be here. Your point of who would be responsible, in a hypothetical situation, if the VFD is out of existence. We understand that. Can we answer that question right at this moment? No. But we still need to.

Robert Quinn: May I stop you for one second? Adrienne the face you made tells me that is not your understanding? Is that true?

Council Member Balkum: No, I was just listening.

Robert Quinn: That if MCVFD liquidated that you are not responsible do you to respond?

Council Member Balkum: Like I said it is a process.

Robert Quinn: It is a process, doesn’t answer my question.

Council Member Balkum: It is a process sir. We need to have the time to have that discussion with Commissioner Bailey.
**Robert Quinn:** It's been a process for how long now? This has been the answer for how long now? It's a process. This is was your answer when you promised us that we would have a contract by the year's end. This has been the answer all along.

**Council Member Balkum:** No.

**Mayor Short:** To answer your question, that we would be potentially servicing that area. Do you live in the unincorporated area? Just for one second. Is there anyone else that lives within the city limits that wishes to make a comment before I open it up to the citizens of Fire District 22 in the unincorporated area? You can't have a second shot Mike. Nice try, but no. Nope I can't do it. I got to be fair to everybody. I said what I said and I got to live with my word. Anybody else that lives or resides within the city limits?

**Peter Hancon, 209 Hidden Pass of Highpoint Ranch:** A long time ago, I came from the UK. Since then I have worked for the United States government for 40 years, don't worry I am a citizen. Don't call the Sheriff. What I am here to do is basically, well, I want to thank the volunteer fire department for over the years. One of my neighbors was struck by lightning they saved his house they have to the many medical calls out there. And what I am here to do is advocate for an Emergencies Service District (ESD). I think Mr. Herren's point that he made about the disparity in calls and in cost would be served by the Emergency Service District. This is about us living in the unincorporated area to pay for the fire service that we need. $67,500 is nothing. I probably pay 2 cents out of that. That comes out of the general sales tax revenue that the County provides. So, I'm also advocating for my taxes to be increased. We need the service out there and we need to continue it. So, what I have started is a petition to get the emergency services district started when I get a hundred or more signatures I shall present it to the Commissioner's Court and they will advise you that they accepted it. And you will have 60 days to either accept the inclusion of the municipality with the ESD or to reject it. I would hope to accept it. It gives you the funding and I think it will cut out a lot of the contention I have experienced so far during the year that this contract has been discussed. I have attended meetings with the previous Council at the early part of this year talked about ways to get the unincorporated area pay into this system and this one way to do it. Because you have our taxes, the County will not accept any more financial responsibility that what you are already getting. So, you need the fire protection. We need the fire protection in McLendon-Chisholm. That's all been paid for as a district. So, I'm looking forward in the next few months for a petition coming your way. Does anybody have any thoughts on that? I'm also surprised that you have not thought about it or considered it already.

**Council Member Balkum:** Actually, that is not true. We have.

**Peter Hancon:** Then why did you reject it?

**Council Member Balkum:** What do you mean by reject it?

**Peter Hancon:** Obviously you have not gone ahead with it. It's a fairly simple process to begin.
Council Member Balkum: Last year one of the things in the discussion, I think it was in November, I created a presentation of ideas of funding options for the unincorporated area. And one of them was a suggestion for an ESD.

Peter Hancon: And it was rejected?

Council Member Balkum: No. When I reach out to the HOAs, the people in Highpoint Ranch...(cellphone interruption) I was trying to reach people in the unincorporated area to discuss funding options, like the HOA could consider an extra fee. But no one really responded.

Peter Hancon: That is absolutely not practical.
Council Member Balkum: You know what I don’t disagree sir. At the same time, I gave out ideas for people to consider. So, I didn’t get any feedback or response that they would consider doing any of that.

Peter Hancon: So the ESD would take off the possibly all the fire protection precluding off of your hands. 5 people board that would be appointed by the Commissioner’s Board to oversee fire protection. It would be an assessment of everybody’s property value. Which is collected from the County. I would presume that the monies would be given to the fire protection district you would gain a contract whether it is a volunteer or a merged district that seems to where you are headed into. And then they would present their budget. There will be a contract of the two entities of the ESD and fire department.

Council Member Balkum: Have you taken the time and spoken with any of the fire chiefs?

Peter Hancon: Just this evening.

Council Member Balkum: Just this evening.

Peter Hancon: I want to know if there is anyone that would like share their comments on what they would like to say about an ESD.

Chief Murphy: That is something that has to be looked into and run by the County and put up for a vote. I think the biggest problem that it was going to cost to be put in the election.

Chief Simmons: It is an expensive process and it takes time.

Peter Hancon: I know that it takes time and hoping to tag it to one of the elections in the coming year.

Council Member Balkum: Were advised yet about that cost?
Peter Hancon: Um not specifically, but I have heard that it was around $20,000.

Council Member Balkum: Somebody has to pay for that. Are you willing to pay for that?

Peter Hancon: We'll see. That is putting the cart before the horse, we need to have it accepted by the County and then it comes back to you. And then after that will be voted on by the citizens of the district.

Council Member Balkum: I would definitely encourage you to ask that question to Commissioner Bailey in regard to the cost of the election.

Peter Hancon: I guess we will come to that bridge.

Council Member Balkum: I appreciate you in coming and thank you.

Peter Hancon: When do you plan to have a vote on the merger of the two fire district?

Council Member Herren: You mean two different fire department. To answer your question. Yes, we have thought about it. One of the things that you do need to understand about an ESD. That the board is appointed for 2-year periods. So, the people don't have any authority over them. And that is concerning in making decisions for your fire safety without any input by you.

Peter Hancon: We do have representation by the Commissioners Court.

Robert Quinn interrupted: At least you are allowed to speak.

Mayor Short: That's enough guys.

Todd Ahrens: 1520 Sterling Ridge Ct. (High Point Ranch): I think what we are looking at here everything comes down to money. Right? At the end of the day everybody wants a fire department. It is no secret I serve on the Fire Department. I lived here for 5 years and moved here from Wisconsin. And never did I ever anticipate this scenario in Texas. I got a lot of neighbors that are not from Texas. And they can't believe this is happening in Texas. This is why we moved from the state that we came from. I'm from Wisconsin. Wisconsin's political culture is like this 10 times. It's terrible. It's constant bickering. Nobody is getting along. It's awful. And it all boils down to money. And what we are missing here is this jewel that we call McLendon-Chisholm. Guys we are 33 miles out of downtown Dallas. One of the most thriving cities in the United States. If not in the whole world right now. We are not Houston. We are not like the mess down there. We are not Austin or the Maddison of the South where it is just all this craziness. We are 33 miles out of downtown Dallas. We should be so proud of that. Prosper can't say that. Weatherford that can't say that. We got a beautiful lake that we are on. Here is the deal guys. You have floundered 3 years of no business plan, no development. I am moved out here because I got and acre and a half 2 acres of land. Love it. The last person that sat up
there in the middle had us all drink this, tried to get everyone to drink this Kool-Aid that any type of development was a bad development.

**Mayor Short:** You are getting off topic.

**Todd Ahrens:** That’s cool. Okay so here is the deal, a little development is a good thing. Stop fighting about fire service. People rally obviously around fire service. People have a sense of pride of community around the fire service. I would love to see a sense of pride in community. In this community in McLendon-Chisholm. Your biggest asset for tax dollars is the ranch, the lakes, it’s the ranch over there. Where we were not too long ago. I’m a deplorable and freeloader. We are an asset to you guys. If you treat us well we may join the City. You made the people of Sonoma Verde feel terrible because they bought a house with a zero-lot line. They wanted to be out here with us. And they feel awful that they bought here, because they got one of the small lots. And that’s not fair. Guys Sonic and Shell brings in, just looking at your books of $114K a year in tax revenue. Go to Southlake Carol, go to Trophy Club and go to Roanoke and look at the proper business development with proper businesses for $114K a year for one little location of Shell/Sonic. That is really only busy at noon. Because you can’t get anything else that you need at noon there. Because of all this great development that we have here. If we had 5 little businesses like that set up properly with the building design that you want. Look at Flower Mound, the beautiful buildings they have for their retail.

**Mayor Short interrupted:** Stop. This is about fire service.

**Todd Ahrens:** Okay this is what you are missing my point. All I heard was sustainability. How do we get sustainability? Rockwall 67% commercial 33% residential. Commercial is where it is at guys. And I’m not saying I want Amazon here. That’s not what I am saying. I love the rural. Stop worrying about the sustainability and bring in the things that we need. These citizens they don’t want their taxes to go up. I don’t want my taxes to go up. You have control over that. If you have 5 businesses bringing in $100K a year. There is your $500K. You are going to need a fire department anyway. $500K. Sense of pride and community. Let’s rally the people. Three years have gone by and all you have done is argue about fire service. You should have put together a business development plan to bring some neat stuff down here for people to rally behind. Halloween parade, something. People will rally behind the fire department. They don’t like to rally behind the City Council. The rally behind first responders. There is nothing new here. I said my peace. We don’t want to end up like other cities that are not as likeable around this area. We want the Southlake, The Trophy Club that is what we want and you guys have the power to do that. And then you have the revenue to keep their taxes low. To redo streets that need to be redone. And bring that sense of community here. I appreciate your time and please I have been on the fire department for four years. I love serving this community and all its citizens. Please put this together. You got one heck of a bunch of good guys that we are here for everybody. And we always will be. Take care of us and we will take care of you. Find an alternative to get that money here. Thank you very much.
John Crumply, 163 Dove Landing, I was the County representation of the negotiation team. So, I got a lot of background the numbers and all the different things that we talked about over those weeks. But the first thing that I want to talk about today is I was the president HOA for High Point Ranch for the first 3 years. In 2003, our community came up and they were worried about being picked up by Rockwall and Terrell. And they said hey what would it take to be a part of McLendon-Chisholm. So, we took that action and went to the City Council in 2003. And the answer was no. We not want you to be part of the City. The model that ya’ll are trying to build out is exactly the model that we have with Highpoint Ranch, High Point Ranch Estates. No difference. In 2009/2010, Highpoint Ranch came back to talk to the City Council and said, hey we want to be part of the city and we like your tax base. Second time we were told no. Now then, the decisions that you make there is actually impacts. If we take a simple house of a rough estimate of $350K based on your tax rate that is $537K. We have about 321 lots. Just to make the numbers easy and simplistic $200K. That’s roughly $775K of taxes you could have collected from my community. If we would have started that back in 2003. You would have 1.5 million dollars in the bank unless you spend it. So, if you start talking about how do I grow or how do you get money? You can’t say I don’t want to grow. We got the same communities that look exactly like you and we can and knocked on your door. We said we want to be your partners. We want to be part of this community. And now all I see is the $67,500 with pennies and I’m told that I don’t pay for anything. I was rejected. You rejected to me. What was the word deplorable? So, what’s wrong with my community, why don’t you want it to be part of McLendon-Chisholm? Why do not want us to be part of the solution? When it comes back to the negotiations you guys were talking about a firehouse for $500K, you would have to go get a loan as part of the negotiation team we said $246K a year for 2 years and we will give you all the fire trucks, we would give you the fire houses, we would give you the land and will give you everything that we had and you would have it. $500K you would have the full fire department in 2 years. Now I’m hearing you are talking about getting a loan for $500K and we are going to pay it back for over how many years Mrs. Balkum?

Council Member Balkum: There was options on there for 3, 5, 10 years.

John Crumply: 5, 10 years. So, you could have paid $500K in 2 years and thing is that is really interesting about this guy you were budgeting $329K so that is $87K that you would have in your account. And that would give you about – what is that real rough numbers $180K over 2 years that is in your banking account and you would have a complete fire department. Everything that the negotiation team did was based on the budget that you had and the level of service that you were asking for. We gave you everything on a silver platter it was the small pieces that Mr. Turnbull that you were putting in to sour the grapes. You were putting in specific elements that was not a contract that was worthy to sign because it was all one-sided to the city it was not about partnering. So, if you really want to get through this situation you guys need to learn how to partner. Nobody at that negotiation table was there to throw you under a bus. We were actually trying to figure out a way to may it work. You guys lost out of 1.5 million and plus the neighborhood next door to us. That was a decision over 13 years ago. It’s going to be a lot harder now to get my community now to be part of you. Because of the way we
responded and the culture that surrounds that we see coming this City Council. That's pretty much all that I got to say. You guys have got to figure out, they got a really good plan. It is a little more expensive plan than what we offered 6 months ago. But the decisions that ya'll made to buy more equipment and to look at the grant you are pushing the price up. The decisions that you are making and not have the long-term visibility of what those decisions are doing is what's causing the problem. That's all I have for you and I'm done beating you up. I just want to let you guys know that you need a partner. And think there could be a possibility that Council turns over you might be able to be a part of my community. Because we are not coming to you. You are going to come to us. And hopefully will change how you do business. So that we look at you as a partner. Not as an advisory.

Robert Jones, 309 Lost Spur Lane, in the unincorporated area in the Fire District 22. I want to thank Mayor Short for allowing myself other citizens speak tonight. I left MCVFD on May 31st of this year. I want to make it clear that these comments and thoughts are my opinions and I do not represent the MCVFD. I also want to make it clear that when I speak about the Council it is directed to the previous Council and the remainder Council that is responsible for this self-imposed problem. I wrote this down, not speak off the cuff, because I have been told that perhaps I am too direct and it hurts people's feelings. I thought about all the things that I could speak about tonight as I have a first-hand experience in much of what has transpired in the past years. I could be hateful, because of what has been done to me. Because that would be the easiest thing to do, but I decided to speak about something that might help you as Council Members with the issue at hand and other things that you have addressed. I started to think about and ask myself, what is the root of the problem? And why is every single thing in this town such a beat down. There is one common thing that in the operation of everything that is create problems to solve. And the Council will be the subject matter expert on everything. And while it is your fault this fire department problem just so that you could fix it and be the heroes has drug on for more than 2 years. It was mostly how you were groomed as new council members with no experience and therefore you know no other way. You were made to believe as you as council members should be the subject matter experts on everything and trust no one's opinion. Even if they are the expert because they are all conspiring against the council. Tonight, I'm asking you to let it go to trust the ones that are the experts and the wants of the citizens. You have two chiefs here. That have dedicated their careers to public safety and have decades of experience, you have a mayor and two other council members that have decades of public safety experience you're city administrator is a retired police officer with decades of experience and yet you are going to tell all of them that you know better and it was because you were made to think that you were supposed to know more than anybody else. On every topic which indeed is impossible. I can assure that Google and YouTube are nothing like the real-life resources that sit out here. So, quit being so hard on yourselves, trust the opinions of all the subject matter experts and the citizens that you represent. Then weigh the facts and opinions and make an educated decision on what is best for your community. You'll find that your job just got easier. That people will value you as a council person and those 6-hour council meetings will be a thing of the past. I know there is a lot of details to work out and we don't know everything but I put my trust in Chief Murphy and Chief Simmons. And rely on them to tell us the best
course of action is and the last thing that I’m going to say is. The problem with trusting no one is ultimately no one will trust you. Thank you.

Sherry Couch, 936 Eagle Pass: It’s just that the reason you haven’t heard from the people in the unincorporated area, because we never ever had the opportunity to speak. This is our first opportunity. Or we have to go second for whatever reason. Glad we get to say something. As far as the ESD is concerned that would have alleviated a lot of the issue with what were presented with first started coming to the meetings. To equalize the cost of the fire service. And I understand that you have ordinances and the SAFER Grant but everything can be roll backed. Everything can be roll backed. Through a vote. Or turn the equipment back in. At what cost, I’m not sure what that would cost if you did that. If you want more money from other people and other people are willing to pay for it. Then it seems like a pretty easy option to go through, now there will be a vote, and now it will cost money for an election and everything else. And if people are willing to do it. It just seems like a productive way to go. Everyone wins, we are all in 22 together. We are all pulling the same direction. So that we are all protected. And then we don’t have to do this well you get to pay, you’re not represented or you pay $160K if we roll up to your door. None of that works from anybody. So, it seems like something you could do. Choose to look at it when the petition comes around. Or you could roll it back. I don’t know what that would cost with the equipment that we already have. But it seems like an option that you could at least consider the pros and cons from there. Instead of saying, no, we are not going to look at it. You didn’t say anything well we didn’t get a chance to say anything about it until tonight. So, I appreciate the opportunity to speak.

Council Member Balkum: May I ask you a question Ms. Couch?

Sherry Couch: Yes.

Council Member Balkum: Have you ever gone to the Commissioners Court and said, I want MCVFD to service the unincorporated area?

Sherry Couch: I talked to Mr. Bailey on several occasions about our service and Mr. Short after he was elected. And I believe that I have talked to you and other Council Members and I have tried to get the point across. Now when Mr. Bailey speaks to me about the $67,500 on whether it would we are covered, but he told me that it is a process. Everything has been a process.

Council Member Balkum: Have you actually said, Mr. Bailey I want the MCVFD to service the unincorporated and I want the County to contract directly with MCVFD?

Sherry Couch: I have asked about the fire service and if MCVFD would continue to provide fire service. So yes, I have.

Council Member Balkum: They were able to do that last year. You have that right and your voice can be heard at the Commissioner’s Court. Just like the citizens of McLendon-Chisholm talks to us. There is a way for you to speak at the Commissioner’s Court. I was
the one that supposed to the Commission, but to my understanding I was not the one without fire service. That you beat the burden of the majority of the expense.

**Sherry Couch:** To be able to pay our fair share with an ESD that we are all taxed based on the assessments. I have been to the meetings.

**Council Member Balkum:** That is only one option. There are other options out there. Like utility funding like adding $5.00 per household that can go towards that department. There are other ways not just ESDs.

**Sherry Couch:** You are talking about two stand alones. We are not sure about you people in 22. The County is responsible for you that's kind of just of what I heard.

**Council Member Balkum:** So, you feel from what you heard that is the perception?

**Sherry Couch:** Yes, that is the perception. And with $67,500 they can't be solvent. Logically, I don't know how they are going to operate on $67,500. When that goes away you are still paying and we are still in the same boat of us not paying our fair share. So, it doesn't make sense to me to keep kicking this can down the road. And this is our only opportunity to speak so I wanted to bring that up.

**Mayor Short:** What you asked for us to look at or are least consider it that will be done.

**Sherry Couch:** Thank you.

The meeting adjourned at 11:34 p.m.

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**ATTEST:**

Lisa Palomba, City Secretary

**APPROVED:**

Keith Short, Mayor