

London City Council Update May 17, 2018

Even though the past couple weeks have been busy and there are a lot of great things going on I have decided to skip the usual Council Update and go straight into my Mayor Fun Fact.

This week's Mayor Fun Fact is that I am excited to announce that I would like to lower taxes. This reduction in taxes will be accomplished by lowering property tax by 1 mil.

My political career began over seven years ago starting as a councilman, progressing to Council President and now to Mayor I feel it is my duty to continuously assess all operations of the City even more as Mayor. I knew I would have to do this to make sure we were being both effective and efficient as well as a good steward of public funds. Many decisions have been made in these areas and all of them were in the best interest of not only the City but also the taxpayers.

Since becoming Mayor, my administration has challenged all department heads to think outside the box, to improve their departments and to find areas to be more cost effective. Through my progressive leadership and the teamwork of my administration and departments we identified deficiencies while improving and providing an equal or better service with less of an impact on the taxpayers. Sometimes, these decisions may not be popular for everyone but I feel they are the correct moves and in some cases overdue.

For several years, the City of London has relied on the Madison County Emergency Medical District and others to provide emergency medical coverage to the citizens in our great City. In that time the City has seen growth and has gone through dramatic changes. This is why I feel it is time for the City of London to secede from the current emergency medical district and provide an improved service to the citizens of London. My team has been meeting for quite a while now looking at all the options, fact finding and we have put in countless hours to come to this decision. While assessing the current operations we have concluded that the City of London can provide an improved, more efficient service to our community for a **third less** than what is currently being assessed for the provision of providing emergency medical services.

I know this decision will not sit well with all of the citizens of London but the majority will see that we will offer an improved service for less money and cut taxes while doing so. This small group of naysayers will say things like,

"This is the way our emergency service has always been."

To those people I would say that just because that is the way it has always been doesn't make it right in today's world. The City of London is progressing and evolving, and with that comes change. I would also say that I feel we have been being over taxed for the current emergency service and that is proven by the City of London being able to do it for less money.

This small group will also say,

“The City of London won’t be able to give the same service and one reason is that because they won’t be focused on one thing.”

I would have to say that statement is totally false. I feel that we will be able to give an improved and more efficient service. This will be accomplished by providing flexibility and versatility over a single service organization. Our employees will be cross trained, which makes more sense economically and strategically. Being efficient and effective in the delivery of emergency medical care is dependent on sending the closest trained personnel to the scene which we will do and is not currently being done.

They may also say,

“Everyone currently working at the Madison County EMD is going to lose their jobs.”

This would be another false statement. Just because the City of London is seceding there are many other areas that the EMD currently services and will continue to serve. Even if there are cuts at their department there will be job opportunities within the City of London. With this expansion of the City we will have to hire employees. We will need the best and the brightest paramedics to join our already established team of highly trained personnel.

Others in this group may also say,

“This isn’t right that you spring this on the Madison County Emergency Medical District and they have no time to prepare for London seceding.”

To that I would say that this is no surprise to the EMD. The talk of London seceding has been around for many years. I can remember talking about this every year since I was on City Council and I know there had been talks way before that. We have been very up front when researching this move, doing things such as public records requests and sitting down with three EMD board members when they reached out to my administration for a meeting. In that meeting, they asked what it would take for London to stay in the district and at that time, we were only on a fact finding mission. When we really started to look at seceding, we sent their board a letter to their monthly meeting and the number one thing we wanted was for them to stop overtaxing our citizens and drop their property tax in the City of London by a third, which is 1 mil. Since that letter we have not gotten a response, they have not held a special meeting to discuss it further and I have not heard from any of the their board members. We even obliged when there was a records request for the finances of the City of London from 40 East Center Street, the Madison County EMD.

This small group may also say,

“The Mayor doesn’t care about the County.”

To that I would answer that I do care about the County, and my County wide involvement shows that, but I was elected to serve the fine people of the City of London. This move isn’t about going against the County, it is about doing what is best for my constituents and being a good steward of tax dollars.

I assume that my colleagues are also assessing their departments and looking at ways to save money and improve their services.

And they may even say,

“The City of London lacks the personnel and technology needed to run these emergency services.”

At this time, I would have to agree with that statement. We currently don't have all of the personnel needed or all the technology, like ambulances. We wouldn't go out and waste tax dollars to add additional personnel or equipment that isn't currently needed. But I can say that when the citizens decide on November 6th that they want to get more for less and cut their taxes while getting a improved service, we will be ready when we secede to run these emergency services.

The decision to secede for the Madison County Emergency Medical District does not come lightly or half hearted, nor does the legislation to place a 2 mil levy on the November ballot which would eliminate the current 3 mil levy. Like I said earlier, there will be a small group of people who will be upset because it is change. All I can say is that my team and I have done our due diligence reached out to other similar organizations and asked many questions, and we all feel that this is the right move for the City of London. I feel that this is one of the reasons why I was elected by the people to serve as Mayor for the Great City of London. People know that I care and that I want what is best for the people of London and that I want a better future with a stronger London.