

I have been an employee with the Denton Central Appraisal District for over twenty years. Throughout that time, I can not recall a more stressful, challenging and frustrating period than what our team has faced over the last three years. During that time our staff has been handed a tennis racket and been asked to hit home runs time and again. For years we were able to eek a shot over the right field wall. But over more recent years, that wall has been moved further and further away from home plate. CAMA system conversions, Covid, exponential county growth, loss of senior employees - all being contributing factors to that moving wall. The expectations by all are to still get the job done, but when DCAD finally had someone with enough 'balls' to ask to use a bat for once, the response from too many of our leaders has been 'how dare you conceive of such an ideal'.

In my time at DCAD I have worked under multiple chief appraisers. Like any other human being, they all have their strengths and weaknesses. In my opinion, our current chief's primary strength is her care for the well-being of the staff at DCAD. She has not only spoken to it, but proven it with her actions. The team comes first at DCAD. Her stance as chief has been 'what can I do for you?', which is refreshing. To see patronizing politicians, using a personal vendetta because someone didn't 'kiss the ring', putting that in jeopardy is sadly par for the course in our country. What's happening in our local government today is a microcosm of what's happening on our state and federal levels. Those in power being okay with negatively impacting the lives of many (even those that have been past constituents for those in office) for their own personal reasons is sickening. It has been mentioned by our 'leaders' and heard many times, that if a certain individual was not employed at DCAD, the budget would be approved in a heartbeat. This kind of thinking will do us in as a society. Be better. The reasons for a 2023 budget approval can be easily justified to a small child.

Will the legacy of our leaders be one of creating more overly inflated, half-empty concrete structures dedicated to their self-dom? Or the people who's hard-work creates the infrastructure for those monuments to become a reality? History shows us that those figures who are well-written, are those that inspired and empowered people to achieve greatness. Our current political leaders seem far more concerned with the former.

Regardless of what is in print and on social media, I know first-hand that the staff in place at DCAD is full of invigorating personnel, doing the absolute best they can with what they have. For them to continue to show up day after day and put forth an effort that is above and beyond, is something special to see. Our chief, and the rest of our administration, play an invaluable role in creating that atmosphere. I have people here that are talented and I thoroughly enjoy working with. One can only imagine what they can accomplish given the proper equipment.

I've been here a little over a year and overall has been a positive environment for me. The culture here is better than in any other place I've worked, and I feel valued as an employee. Moral support makes a huge difference when taking on heavy workloads and stress. In my opinion, Hope has been a positive impact and has done her best to be a great leader despite all the changes and stress that she has had to endure here upon taking on her position. I believe that we all still have a great chance to prove our worth next year with the higher budget and the improved team that we have now.

To whomever it may concern,

I was hired last December at Denton Central Appraisal District into the IT department. I had been with my previous job for 10 years, and had a family vacation already planned and paid for. I knew it was during our protest season, which is the busiest time for our facility. Based on my past experiences with supervisors, I was hesitant to communicate this with my supervisor David. When I did, he told me he'd have to check with Hope since we weren't supposed to be taking off during this time. Shortly after (I can't remember if it was the same day, or the next day.) I received word that Hope had approved my time off! One of the things they (David and Hope) made sure to convey to me at my interview is the importance of a healthy work and family balance. The fact that they approved this time off for me just a few months after my hiring, during our busiest time proved to me their compassion for us employees and our families.

In preparation for protest season, I was assigned the task of setting up the ARB panels. Once everything began, it was a whirlwind. We (the IT department) were not only maintaining our department's responsibilities, but also helping other departments answer their tickets because of the sheer amount that was coming through. Hope and David were very communicative of what was needed, and responsive to our needs as a department and as individuals. I couldn't imagine working for a better facility.

I believe the only time I ever spoke to the independent consultant who described DCAD's workplace environment as "toxic" was when I onboarded him, I certainly wasn't asked how I feel about DCAD's culture. But, a great deal of animosity towards our current Chief Appraiser, as far as I can tell in the news articles I've seen, seem to boil down to a generational disagreement for what makes a great leader in the workplace.

"Traditionally," I'll say so as not to offend anyone, leadership positions were generally aged into. After decades of loyalty and experience, anyone could earn the right to sit at the top of the pyramid and be the boss, but experts in the field of business management have taken note that such a practice does not lead to good leadership. An experienced appraiser is exactly that – an experienced appraiser. They may understand the tax code backwards and forwards, they may be able to perform those specific duties as a Chief Appraiser, and may very well fail to inspire passion and dedication and loyalty in their employees.

However, an experienced office manager who already knows most of the employees by name, has spent years noticing the cracks forming and the need to modernize an office trapped in the 1980's, can absolutely learn how to decipher the tax code. And judging by Hope McClure's certifications, I'd say she has.

Under the previous Chief Appraiser's administration, practically every department had a "part time" worker whose hours were capped at 28 per week with no sick time, no paid time off, no benefits, and the hourly wage was \$10, with a 50 cent raise after three years. This hourly wage had not been raised in 8 years, according to other part-timers, and although I felt like a respected member of my own department, the attitude towards other part-timers was noticeably toxic. Department managers that are no longer employed by DCAD would threaten to cut the hourly rate of their part-time employees if they could not complete 28 hours a week due to medical conditions, and work balance between part-time employees and full-time employees was noticeably disproportionate.

However, under Chief Appraiser Hope McClure's administration, part-time positions were phased out and many dedicated part-time employees like myself were offered full-time positions. This decision may have changed my personal life tremendously, giving me financial and medical stability in exchange for my years of dedication, but it is not boastful to say that this move benefitted DCAD as a whole as well. With full-time hours, benefits, and respect afforded to them, many of the part-timers that made that career advancement with me are able to learn more, do more, and see a real future with the district for years or decades to come. Our Chief Appraiser continues to invest in young people like myself by hiring from our full-time temp employee pool when possible, and it cannot be overstated what a difference that makes for millennials like myself that are highly-educated, incredibly dedicated, and abysmally unfortunate to graduate into the volatile job market that we've inherited.

This certainly isn't the only example of our current Chief Appraiser's brilliant leadership. Our office events such as the Post-Protest Luau or Halloween, or the DCAD Olympics no longer feel

like a half-hearted and dispirited luncheon where employees prefer to grab a plate and run back to their offices, these are fun events that reinvigorate the staff, and invite everyone to participate in our little work community.

All department managers meet with each other and our Chief Appraiser regularly, and it cannot be understated how instrumental that communication is to our everyday operations. In previous years, the IT department would sometimes only be alerted to ARB hearings beginning the day said hearings began, causing the department to scramble in order to assemble the needed hardware when the hearings had been scheduled for months.

All non-appraiser employees have been invited to at least take an introductory course in appraisal at DCAD's office, with paid time to do so, and the importance of that education cannot be overstated. I have been able to apply that education to answer questions when property owners call me for an IT-related issue, and direct them to the appropriate department for follow-up questions as needed – which doesn't sound terribly brag-worthy, but a computer geek like myself wasn't terribly well-versed on the difference between personal property and real property before those courses.

Although the IT department is the only department at DCAD that is fully staffed, I can absolutely feel the strain on other departments. Many property owners have called or emailed this year because they have always received a digital settlement offer before appearing before the formal ARB, but this year there were simply too many protests and not enough appraisers. Our appraisers have always cut their lunch hours in half during protest and put in hours of overtime on weekdays and weekends, but even then, there simply weren't enough man hours to review every protest created. Our customer service department works tirelessly and employs one of the largest pools of full-time temporary employees to process exemptions, and volunteers from other departments chipped in overtime as well to help. Personally, I have volunteered to help our appeals department upload evidence and affidavits or reschedule protests, and I can feel where the workload could be managed with at least another person. I can answer 100 emails every day, and still leave the office with a 100 more to do, which just balloons to 200 emails before you know it.

It's not the intention of any employee of DCAD to make property owners ask for a settlement offer, to wait months for their exemptions to be applied, to wait weeks for their evidence to be uploaded to their protest file. That's simply the result of our current staffing conditions, passion and overtime simply cannot overcome the impossible. When our Chief Appraiser said she can't squeeze blood out of a turnip, she was right! There's no leadership method that can overcome the impossible ratio of workload to manpower.

Under our current Chief Appraiser's leadership, employees have seen an increase in recognition for what they do, an open dialogue to address not only issues but any improvements that can be made, more education opportunities, and to put it simply, a better place to work. These are not things that can be accomplished by anyone who appraises property for 20 years and ages their way into the highest position in our county's property appraisal system.

Hope McClure has tried to modernize and improve DCAD from the moment that she took her position as Chief Appraiser, and DCAD desperately needed improvement, but the additional obstacles from COVID protocols and several employees retiring or nearing retirement after decades of service have compounded the issues that she is charged to resolve.

To put it simply, the issue is not with our Chief Appraiser. We need more people, to handle the increased workload as Denton County continues to grow exponentially. There is no other option, and quite frankly, turning down job creation just isn't a good look for those who disapprove of DCAD's proposed budget.

I am very saddened by the negative articles about our Chief Appraiser, Hope McClure and feel compelled to let everyone know how my experience as an employee of Denton Central Appraisal District makes me want to get out of bed in the morning, but first how I got here. I was looking for a more inclusive and better work environment than the one I was in at the time, which was condescending and toxic, and I came across Hope's April 01, 2021 letter to the public on the DCAD website. I was so inspired by her refreshing honesty and transparency, I decided I wanted to work for DCAD and applied. I was very grateful they gave me the opportunity to interview. This opportunity was another good sign DCAD gave people a chance when they may not fit perfectly in the box. The best part was I interviewed with all the hiring managers with positions open so we both could determine where I might fit best, where I might be happiest and where they thought I might be most productive, plus I learned how focused the management team was on hiring people willing to serve our taxpayers with heart. They walked through the roles for the other jobs I did not apply for and they asked me if I would be interested in the agricultural support role, which after hearing about it I was very interested, so I started working here six months ago in ag/land appraisal support and love it! I have found everyone at DCAD so nice, helpful, and accommodating working together as a team to get the job done. This is an environment that invites my opinion even only six months into this job. I feel valued as an employee and a human being. A place that treats me and my co-workers with dignity and respect. I don't understand anything they are saying in the printed press and know they have the wrong place. I came to work here just because of Hope, who I find refreshingly fair and honest, and is accommodating if it is reasonable and feasible. I plan on staying here a long time with Hope at the helm. It is not always easy working with the public but we are all people and are human beings who work hard and try to do our best and this place is great about working as a team to serve our taxpayers with heart.

I have been an employee with the Denton Central Appraisal District for over twenty years. Throughout that time, I can not recall a more stressful, challenging and frustrating period than what our team has faced over the last three years. During that time our staff has been handed a tennis racket and been asked to hit home runs time and again. For years we were able to eek a shot over the right field wall. But over more recent years, that wall has been moved further and further away from home plate. CAMA system conversions, Covid, exponential county growth, loss of senior employees - all being contributing factors to that moving wall. The expectations by all are to still get the job done, but when DCAD finally had someone with enough 'balls' to ask to use a bat for once, the response from too many of our leaders has been 'how dare you conceive of such an ideal'.

In my time at DCAD I have worked under multiple chief appraisers. Like any other human being, they all have their strengths and weaknesses. In my opinion, our current chief's primary strength is her care for the well-being of the staff at DCAD. She has not only spoken to it, but proven it with her actions. The team comes first at DCAD. Her stance as chief has been "what can I do for you?"; which is refreshing. To see patronizing politicians, using a personal vendetta because someone didn't 'kiss the ring', putting that in jeopardy is sadly par for the course in our country. What's happening in our local government today is a microcosm of what's happening on our state and federal levels. Those in power being okay with negatively impacting the lives of many (even those that have been past constituents for those in office) for their own personal reasons is sickening. It has been mentioned by our 'leaders' and heard many times, that if a certain individual was not employed at DCAD, the budget would be approved in a heartbeat. This kind of thinking will do us in as a society. Be better. The reasons for a 2023 budget approval can be easily justified to a small child.

Will the legacy of our leaders be one of creating more overly inflated, half-empty concrete structures dedicated to their self-dom? Or the people who's hard-work creates the infrastructure for those monuments to become a reality? History shows us that those figures who are well-written, are those that inspired and empowered people to achieve greatness. Our current political leaders seem far more concerned with the former.

Regardless of what is in print and on social media, I know first-hand that the staff in place at DCAD is full of invigorating personnel, doing the absolute best they can with what they have. For them to continue to show up day after day and put forth an effort that is above and beyond, is something special to see. Our chief, and the rest of our administration, play an invaluable role in creating that atmosphere. I have people here that are talented and I thoroughly enjoy working with. One can only imagine what they can accomplish given the proper equipment.

I wish to not only stand with my fellow co-workers at DCAD but I wish to tell you of my experience here under 3 different chiefs.

In 2006 I was asked by the residential manager if I would be interested in working part-time for the district. And for the next 10 months I had an opportunity to work beside some wonderful people and gain a real appreciation for the jobs they do for the entities and taxpayers they serve.

At that time the district was under the leadership of Joe Rogers and I will say I had little if any contact with the man. One district pizza party to thank everyone for the hard work they did during protest. However during the protest what I saw was everyone helping the taxpayers. Managers and Supervisors co-ordinating and speaking with the taxpayers. It was all hands on deck and even myself who was there to help sketch blueprints spent the days scheduling taxpayers for ARB hearings. It was a great atmosphere from my perspective and I felt a great place to work. However the pay of the district and the no spring/summer vacation time with my family did not align with my needs of the time. I was offered a lucrative position within a past field I could not turn down.

10 years later after choosing to step back and consider what retiring would be like, downsizing, moving into town, and kicking breast cancer to the curb I received a message from Eva Collins at DCAD they were looking to hire and would I be interested? This time the 3 miles to work, approaching 60 and no children at home, was the perfect solution. And it was like coming home. Some new faces but yet so many that I had worked with before were so welcoming.

Rudy was now Chief and as always very cordial and always spoke in passing. The District had a very seasoned group of appraisers and an IT department like none I had ever seen in any of my past industries. Just prior to his retirement it was determined it was time to upgrade and move to a system that would accommodate the growth and provide the employees the ability to help move data faster, upload and download with our fellow entities and help create fewer double entries. I was excited about the changes coming because I know first hand how productivity can change on a dime when given the tools to move employees from paper to screen data. A Beta project and the additional workload coming from the growth of the county was more than some wished to take on. This is when it began the consideration of retirement and the exodus. Some will say the negativity began after Rudy left and with the announcement of Hope as Chief. But I would say they missed the underlying current and the true catalyst (CHANGE).

I will admit there was a lot of negativity towards Hope from the staff upon her acceptance of the position as Chief. However I have seen the same negativity directed at many of the

individuals that have been promoted from within. The District is a small group and from someone as old as myself and who has worked and contracted with multiple companies in my lifetime, what I it appears to me as can only be described to others as sibling rivalry.

I will say this about Hope when she was attacked from within she had the courage to stand her ground and present her qualifications. That is a leadership quality. She also invited everyone at the district to sit down one on one with her and discuss any concerns they may have with her or the direction of the district. How many of my co-workers chose to do so I do not know. However I did and as I have told Hope that was my need to interview her and determine for myself if she was someone I wished to work for. Unlike so many I have always been in a position of privilege to walk away from working with or for those that do not share the same principles, morals and values that I adhere to. In my past life I have interviewed, hired and fired numerous individuals. And what I discovered that day was a determined young lady ready to take on and make the changes to elevate DCAD to the next level. Someone willing to listen to others and accept recommendations. Several of the topics she and I discussed she has implemented. She and the leadership team have worked hard and long hours to build a strong team. I believe they are on the Road to Awesome. They just need a little help from what should be our friends and partners in building a great team by helping us to obtain the budget for the workforce we need to make it happen. Without additional staffing we could face additional loss of staff due to exhaustion and the negative press imposed upon us.

Relationships are two sided and both parties must come to the table for the relationship to work. If your relationship with Hope or anyone else at the District is not working maybe ask yourself have you had the courage to come to the table or is it easier to continue to be distant and point fingers than to help. I always told my employees never to be afraid to bring me a complaint but with it you must also bring along your solution. It may not be the right solution but bring something other than a complaint.

I cannot close without stating that none of the past internal negativity compares to the outside attacks brought about almost weekly by Judge Eads since he announced his reelection last November. In my opinion we have become his red meat to throw for getting free media attention. His rhetoric has brought individuals into our place of work with unfounded accusations of incompetency. He should be ashamed of himself. I voted for him before but never again. His ethics no longer match mine.

Thank you for taking the time to read.

After a 20 year career in education, I was thrilled to find a position where I could continue to use my strengths. Over the last two years, as I have worked for and grown to know Hope McClure, I have seen strength, commitment, compassion, and leadership not often found in one person.

Hope stepped into a situation at Denton CAD that many would have shied away from or even completely run the opposite direction from. She saw the issues that were present and embraced them - knowing that it would bring turmoil, knowing that it would bring hardship, and knowing that it would be full of difficulty. However, she has faced and continues to face each and every threatening phone call, divisive email, negative comment in the media, and deliberate and vicious attacks on her character with a poise that I find admirable. The strength in her drive to do her job ethically, legally, and timely is often met with roadblock after roadblock but she tackles each one methodically to bring about the best outcome possible.

Hope has a compassion for her team that is unmatched. Her desire to hear where things can be improved and her true heart for making everyone feel they are heard and seen are qualities unseen in many leaders. I have watched her time and time again, reach out to employees who are hurting, reach out to employees who are struggling, reach out to employees who need a friendly face and encourage them, spend some time with them, and allow them to speak their mind.

As someone with a front row seat to the ins and outs of the Appraisal District and the constant barrage of attacks that are hurled at Hope on an almost daily basis, I marvel at her continued humor, strength, and leadership. Hope pours her heart and soul into making this District the best workplace it can be. Having a positive, upbeat culture is very important to her and that is evident in so many of the changes I have seen made in my two years here. Her heart is for each and every employee to find a healthy work-life balance that allows them to be the best version of themselves. Even if that means taking more on herself. She will selflessly and sacrificially do whatever she can to take the burdens off of others.

I am proud to work for Hope McClure and Denton CAD. I see the current, active negativity that surrounds our workplace and it is my prayer that Denton CAD can continue to face these slings with as much grace and dignity as possible, behind the grace and dignity of our leader, Hope McClure.

August 19, 2022.

I have been at the District almost as long as Hope has been Chief. I was one of hers and Don's first hires. She tells me I was her "best hire", and I choose to believe it. LOL 😊

I came from almost 14 years in municipal finance where I found myself in too many stretches with very fractured Councils. I loved being on the "Staff" side that proudly kept things running for our citizens, and I loved everything about the complexity of municipal revenue and expenses. I was on the receiving end of "certified values" each budget year and have experience with the tax rate setting process and the impact of that to the entity. I genuinely felt it was my responsibility to guide the finances through the ups and downs of council cycles for the benefit of our citizens and our employees.

The stress of dealing with the disharmony from various Councils played a large part in finally pushing me out of a job that I loved, but the proverbial "straw" was the last few months where our staff "team" lost their cohesiveness. Most of my town managers had been wonderful leaders and the staff atmosphere under their leadership was excellent. The ability to rely on your coworkers means everything! Unfortunately, in the last year, not all our employees continued to support and encourage each other, and the negatives of my job finally far outweighed the positives. I knew it was time to find something else. That's when I found the job listing for the Finance Manager here at DCAD.

This job has been so interesting to be on the appraisal side of the tax process. I am a learner by nature, and Hope has been so encouraging and a source of great information. She asks for and respects my input from the entity side and always makes me feel a valued member of the team. I am so happy to be back in a stakeholder focused, fun, hardworking environment with a great group of people.

The tone for a workplace is always set at the top. Good leaders set expectations for productivity, attitudes, and teamwork. Hope has set the bar high, but it is done with fairness and compassion. She sets the standard and leads by example. She and Don strive to make employees feel appreciated and supported. There is a high level of camaraderie with the employees who have been hired since I started as well as most of the employees who were here before me.

It would be naïve to think that everyone in an organization of this size is going to be happy, but I can honestly say that everyone I have a chance to visit with feels valued and supported, even during our stressful protest periods. As a result, an amazing amount of work has been accomplished under very trying circumstances. That alone speaks to the leadership here. People simply don't perform at the levels they are performing if they don't feel valued. That level of cohesiveness, coupled with increased staffing, will set the foundation for future success. We all take our jobs seriously, understand the impact of our task to our entities, and want to keep moving forward and improving.

August the 18th, 2022

To Whom It May Concern,

For around nine years I worked for one of the five largest Appraisal Districts in Texas. I am a Residential Appraiser hired in June by Chief Appraiser Hope McClure. I applied for this job position because, even from the web page, it was clear that Denton Central Appraisal District is well organized. I can confirm that, from the beginning of the process of DCAD hiring me, this organization is a competent, professional and pleasant place to work.

The level of professionalism at every extent is outstanding for me, in my observation everything stems from Chief McClure leadership. She is a very approachable leader, and one of the things that I like the most about her management style is that she can see everybody's potential, she builds people up. If I had to use one word to define her leadership style (that permeates to all levels of management) it would be that she is like a Bamboo; firm but flexible.

When I see the bad press we are getting, it is upsetting because the attacks seem to be personal and unwarranted. I have worked for large companies for more than 28 years and I can bear witness that our Chief is doing all she can to respond in an effective manner to the Property Market Boom that Denton County is experiencing.

Refusing to approve the 2023 budget is a disservice to our community -if not negligent- because not only affects our ability to function in an acceptable capacity as a team, but affects directly the Residents of this County. We need more staff, we need to train the new staff to be up to the task of giving great customer service. Our community deserves the best from the Central Appraisal District.

Customer Service staff attitude is proof of how awesome McClure leadership is. In my experience, Customer Service staff are the beating heart of a Company. If they look happy, you can confidently extrapolate that sense of job satisfaction to the entire company.

In summary, I've felt camaraderie, strong sense of team, trust, openness, sensible leadership & an overall positive attitude during my brief time here. I just wish we get the resources needed to thrive as an organization.

Residential Appraiser

Anonymous

Appraisal Support Position

To whom it may concern,

After reading some of the negative articles in the newspapers regarding the DentonCAD and our Chief Appraiser, I am compelled to speak up. Let's talk about the TRUE reasons why DentonCAD did not reach its goal this year.

First, the software conversion from PACS to the malfunctioning Prodigy and then back to PACS caused us to lose months of valuable time. Moreover, some of the work that had been completed in Prodigy had to be redone in PACS at an additional loss of time. Essentially, our more complicated work, initially drafted into Prodigy, didn't transfer correctly back to PACS. Since the software change was approved by the previous administration, it is unconscionable to blame the current administration for the decision to purchase faulty software.

Second, COVID hit everybody hard, not only us but also all entities' personnel. This caused the district to not receive hundreds of permits and blueprints, and contributed to us not reaching our goal. The missing homes were discovered by our appraisers in the field or when frustrated taxpayers called to ask why there is no house improvement on their account. After checking those accounts, there was no permit received from the entities. If the city fails to send us a permit and blueprint, you can't blame us for an unfinished product.

Third, some of the entities, particularly the county, don't provide ANY blueprints; yet, at the same time, they expect us to finish our work. Would you ask a seamstress to sew a dress but not give her any fabric to work with? The County doesn't require taxpayers to submit blueprints during permitting, so we have no material to work with. It is solely the expertise of our blueprint team that those accounts are sketched and finished. Please note, the guesswork involved in this process slows things down. To provide some numbers, out of 6,894 permits (entered so far for 2023) 999 of them are permitted by the county. An estimated 95% of those accounts are missing the requisite blueprint.

My last point is that, during my many years of working here, we have always been severely understaffed. We can't take vacation in summer because of Protest time (which is fine because we were made aware of it during the hiring process). I could personally never take vacation during Christmas, because we are behind with work. The point is that it is difficult to take ANY vacation here because we are always behind. We have a proficient staff that works diligently, but the fact remains that we are

understaffed. And let's not forget that, Denton County is one of the fastest growing counties in the country! As a result, the number of permits has exploded.

The true reasons (mentioned above) are why we are behind with our work. All of them are beyond the control of any single person and equally beyond blame. In other words, our current Chief Appraiser came into office at a very difficult time. Whether there is cheap politics or personal vendettas at play, the vitriol is as disrupting as it is disheartening and it needs to stop. Our Chief Appraiser and all of the employees of DentonCAD are working hard to catch up. Furthermore, our Chief Appraiser, while fighting off the numerous affronts to her person, is working hard to make this place a better place to work.

To clarify, we are understaffed and doing our best to correct the issues above. However, the solution for you seems to be to punish the Appraisal District by not approving our budget and refusing to give us the additional help we need. This compounds the problems outlined above. How do you ever expect us to catch up?

Anonymous

DentonCAD

Appraisal Support

DCAD Employee Statement

Every day, in every County across the State, thousands of Texans show up to their local Appraisal District to do their job. It's a job that is difficult, a job that is thankless and a job that is increasingly dangerous due to escalating anti-government, anti-tax disinformation and rhetoric from politicians and on social media. It is also a job that is necessary. Per the Texas Comptroller website, "The local property tax is the largest single funding source for community services. State government receives no benefit from these local taxes. Your local property taxes **help to pay for your public schools, city streets, county roads, police departments, fire protection and many other vital programs.**"

Denton County's growth is undeniable. A reasonable person should be able to look at the explosive growth of the County in recent years and objectively conclude that the Appraisal District needs the staff and funding to grow with it. Richard Petree of Western Valuation and Consulting conducted an independent study and determined that DCAD needs an additional 54 people "to be able to handle the large numbers of new homes and businesses in the district and the large number of protest filed". 54 new, good paying jobs. Why are local leaders being persuaded to deny a budget that includes new jobs for members of their community? Why are local leaders intent on providing no relief to current DCAD employees and members of their community who are strained and exhausted by an ever-increasing workload? Why are local leaders electing to keep DCAD underfunded and understaffed, thereby setting it up for failure year after year? These are just a few things for people to consider as they cast their votes on what is generally a mundane annual matter that isn't political or divisive or newsworthy but that seems to have taken on a life of its own recently due to outside interference. And just a reminder: Appraisal Districts were established by the Texas Legislature in an effort to not only standardize the property tax system but to also operate independently and free from political pressure.

Chief Appraiser Hope McClure continues to go above and beyond for her people. At this point she seems to be the only one. Those engaged in the odd and extremely obvious public effort to stymie her and DCAD need to be reminded that there are more people with a stake here than just the Chief Appraiser. Hope is a capable and determined leader. She is not the problem. Understaffing and outside interference are the problems.

Approve the 2023 Budget and give us the time and space to get DCAD where we **ALL** want it to be and stop allowing the Appraisal District and its employees to be used as political pawns and punching bags.

DCAD Appraiser

I just wanted to take a moment and provide input to the topic of the work environment here at DCAD. I am a recent new hire to the Appraisal District. I have seen and read some of the recent criticism the District has received. My experience so far has been nothing but extremely positive. I have been very pleased with the support provided by Hope and her administrative staff. During my on-boarding process, Hope and her staff were very attentive. They have made the first several months very enjoyable and have exceeded my expectations in providing a welcoming environment. Hope and the HR staff have gone above and beyond providing answers to questions or needs that I had during the orientation period. Hope makes it a point to learn/remember your name and has stopped by on several occasions to see how things are going during the first few months. She and her staff are committed to providing a welcoming job environment to come to each day.

As mentioned, I am fairly new to DCAD. However, I have worked at more than several large corporations during my 40 year career. During that career, I have faced the challenge of working in a "toxic" work environment. I think most can look back and relate to that experience sometime during their employment. I certainly do not agree or concur with that being the reality at DCAD. If it were the case, I would have left already. It's easy to "armchair quarterback" or criticize a decision that you don't think was the best one available. It's much more difficult to be responsible for making those decisions on a daily basis for an organization that employs many. My observation is that Hope and her team are providing positive leadership and deserve our support. Leading a group the size of ours is challenging and we aren't going to agree with every decision, but overall, I believe our leadership is second to none.

It seems like we are in a period where finding "middle ground" is very difficult. It is my experience that finding the best possible solution, is neither to the far right or far left. It lies somewhere in the middle where all can achieve a positive outcome. We live in one of the fastest growing counties in Texas. Growth requires resources to provide maximum satisfaction to those we serve. I pray all those who serve our community work together to enhance the level of service we provide. I feel Hope is the right leader to guide DCAD as we focus on the growth and challenges we face within Denton County.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into our "work family". That in and of itself reflects our DCAD environment. I'm proud to be a member of this team and look forward to meeting the expectations of our county.
