



**Jason E. Mumpower, Comptroller of the Treasury**

March 7, 2022

## **Comptroller Mumpower Pens Open Letter to the People of Mason**

*Letter Urges Mason to Surrender its Charter*

A critical situation in the town of Mason has prompted Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury Jason Mumpower to mail a letter to the people of the Tipton County town of 1,337.

Comptroller Mumpower believes it is time for the Town of Mason to relinquish its charter.

Mason's town government has been poorly run for at least 20 years. There has been a pattern of fiscal irresponsibility and even instances of fraud. Mason hasn't submitted its audit on time since 2001, and the Comptroller's Office hasn't approved the town's budget for four years in a row.

The Comptroller's Office has attempted to work with the town on a corrective action plan for years, but the problems are not getting fixed. The recent closure of the West Tennessee Detention Facility will make the town's revenue situation even worse.



"I am very concerned that Mason's history of mismanagement will prevent the town from benefitting from economic development," said Comptroller Mumpower. "The new Ford plant offers a major opportunity to West Tennessee, but Mason will be left out if it continues to be judged by its poorly run government."

The Comptroller's letter encourages Mason's citizens to attend a Special Called Meeting about the future of the town on March 10<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. at Cedar Grove Church at 122 Washington Avenue in Mason. If the town's Board of Mayor and Aldermen chooses not to relinquish its charter, the Comptroller's Office is prepared to take over the town's finances.

The Comptroller's letter to the citizens of Mason is below.

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JASON E. MUMPOWER  
*Comptroller*

March 3, 2022

Dear Citizens of Mason,

Last month I visited the Town of Mason to have a difficult discussion with your town leaders. Mason is at a critical point in its history, and I am concerned about its future. **In my opinion, it's time for Mason to relinquish its charter.**

For at least 20 years, the town government has been poorly managed. Audits have been late, budgets have not been approved, major infrastructure needs have been ignored, and fraud has taken place...just to name a few issues. **For years we have been told the problems are getting fixed, but the facts tell a different story.** Due to financial mismanagement, the Town of Mason finds itself in a deep hole.

The construction of the new Ford plant in West Tennessee could offer hope to your community, but I worry that if you remain an incorporated town these opportunities will be missed. New jobs, infrastructure improvements, and economic investments are made in places with a track record of good government. **Unfortunately, government is not working in Mason, and the closing of the prison has made things even worse.** People and companies will not invest their money in a poorly run town.

**Mason currently has the highest municipal property tax rate in Tipton County.** I asked your mayor how these taxes help you. Other than the town's 26 paid employees, it was difficult for the mayor to identify any benefit to the citizens from the town's existence as an incorporated municipality. This is unfair to you and your neighbors.

There is a long line of people who believe in your community and are ready to assist. Opportunity awaits if the Mason community can be viewed separately from its poor government by relinquishing its charter. **A Special Called Meeting is scheduled for March 10 at 7:00 p.m. at the Cedar Grove Church.** I urge you to attend and encourage your local officials to do what's necessary to allow Mason to thrive. There is no time to waste.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jason E. Mumpower", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jason E. Mumpower  
Comptroller of the Treasury