



LITTLE COMPTON TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION

● ● NEWSLETTER ● ●

PO Box 455, Adamsville, RI 02801

Email: Taxpayers@cox.net Web: www.LCTaxpayers.com

May 17, 2013 Vol. XIV, No. 1

Officers

Chairman: Joseph Quinn
 Vice Chair: Robert Hayden
 Sec/Treas: Roger Lord

The 2013/2014 Town Budget

The Budget: There is good news and bad news associated with the budget for fiscal year 2014 (July 1, 2013 thru June 30, 2014). The good news is that the tax rate will remain the same - \$5.38 per thousand. The bad news is that overall spending is up again as it always is. Increased revenues and taxes from new homes make this possible. The services provided by the town have not changed, but the cost of providing them is up. There are some items beyond our control such as heating fuel, electricity, gasoline, etc. But the rest of it is just budget creep and, in some cases, asking for more than is needed and settling for what passes, but always more than the previous year.

How is it that the School accumulated over \$1.3-million in surplus funds over the years despite higher operational costs year after year? To its credit, the school has used the funds to offset unplanned costs of the school renovation project.

Some of budget creep is from salary hikes per labor contracts. This occurs because the unions do a much better job of negotiating than the town does! It is the same people performing the same job, but at a higher cost.

Should external money dry up or the Town runs out of space to build new homes, the low tax rate structure will unravel and will all come crashing down. Next fiscal year (2014-2015) the loan for the school renovation project will hit your wallets for the first time. As usual labor costs will increase again and the taxpayers will find a hefty increase in their tax bills. That's why we feel that the total spending in this new budget should be down and not up. Each successive year builds on the previous year. It has to stop!

Staying with the good news, the tax rate will remain the same as it is now - \$5.38 per thousand. The Budget Committee, Town Council, and School Committee are to be commended for this accomplishment. Unlike a decade ago, the relationship between these three organizations is outstanding. The Town has never had it better. But we should utilize these improved relationships to economize and reduce spending further!

Rhode Island's economy and unemployment rate are nearly last place in the United States. Little Compton is not exempt from this - we have our share of the poor and financially strapped taxpayers. A large tax hike would represent a major hardship to these people. The current tax rate is already a hardship for some. Our elected

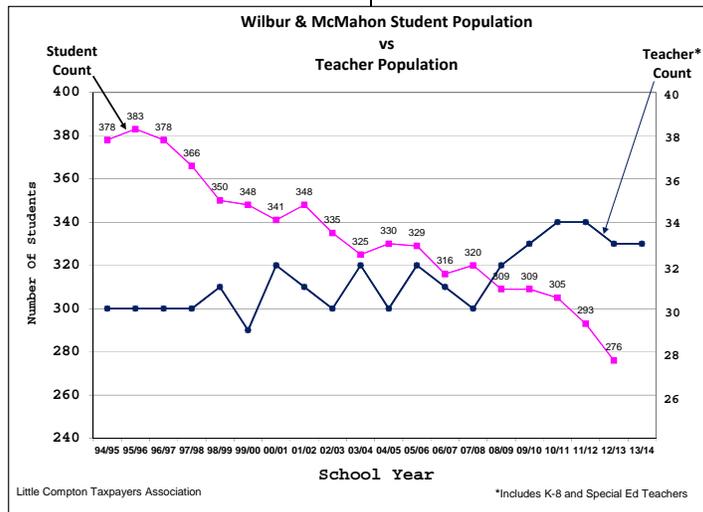
officials should always keep that in mind when they form their budgets.

We fully support the budget recommended by the Budget Committee. They worked hard and did a great job.

But we do have some issues that will need to be addressed before the next budget. The Budget Committee estimates that the addition of the school loan will add a 5% increase in and of itself. If the remainder of the budget reaches the 4% cap, then the taxpayers could be facing a 9% tax hike!

What can be done?

- Combine some classrooms at the school. We are facing a significantly declining student population (see the chart center) and currently have the smallest class sizes in the state - two kindergarten classes with 10 kids in each! The table below illustrates the class size. Note: if you search "Does class size really matter?" on the internet, you will find that a "small" class is considered to be 20 students and that teacher quality, learning environment, and community affect student performance much more than small class size does.



Town	Grades		
	K	1st	2nd
Barrington	27	21	22
East Greenwich	17	20	21
Jamestown	15	14	17
Middletown	21	21	19
Tiverton	21	23	22
Portsmouth	20	21	21
Little Compton	9½	12	13½

These are average class sizes

- Little Compton has police & fire dispatchers. So does Tiverton. There is no reason why this function cannot be centralized and reduced in size. We would benefit and so would Tiverton.
- The school should ask for a waiver for bus monitors. The charge is over \$26 per hour for them, amounting to \$95,000 including unemployment income during the summer. RI is the only state that requires monitors. School Committees, based on need, should decide which bus runs need monitors.

(More on other side)



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- It's time to consider outsourcing certain functions that are not inherently government. For example, Town Clerk and Police are inherently government. Custodial and Maintenance are not. In 2009, school bus transportation was outsourced to First Student. Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been saved!
- The Town is owed about \$500,000 in back taxes. The Town Council and Treasurer should aggressively go get it. They should: Develop an action plan, send a strong letter, make follow-up phone calls, publish names and amount if legal, and put a property tax lien on those who don't pay or agree to a reasonable payment plan. Why should most of us pay while some don't?

CHANGES ON THE LCTA BOARD: Roy Bonner, a founding member of the LCTA recently decided to retire as a Director. His contribution since 1990 has been huge. Kevin Healey resigned as a Director. Both will be missed and we wish them well in their new endeavors.



Don't Forget!

Financial Town Meeting - May 21, 2013

BUDGET COMMITTEE AND BEACH COMMISSION ELECTIONS: Scott Morrison, George Crowell, and Robert Goulart deserve re-election and your vote for the Budget Committee. Also, Art Jones and Joe Rocha are running for re-election to the Beach Commission and deserve your vote.

LCTA MEMBERSHIP / CONTRIBUTION FORM

NAME _____
 (For couples, please provide both first names)

Mailing Address Check if year-round address

ADDRESS _____

CITY/TOWN _____

STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____

HOME PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

Suggested Contribution: \$15 (Single) \$25 (Family)

Other \$ _____

Mail this form and your contribution to:

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