



LITTLE COMPTON TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION

• • NEWSLETTER • •

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May 15, 2015

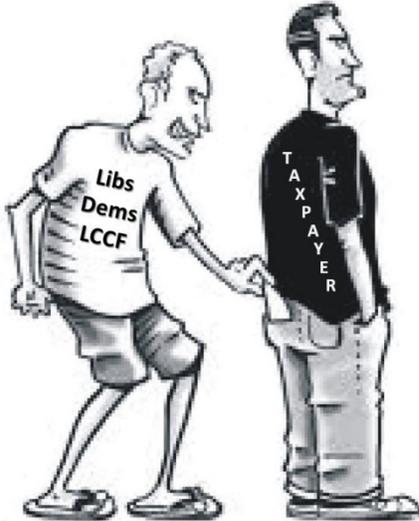
Vol. XVI, No. 1

Officers

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

★ TAX ALERT ★

**The Taxpayer Pick-Pockets have arrived.
Your wallet is their target!**



Who are they?

They are the far-left Liberal Democrats who have virtually destroyed the United States economy; who have destroyed the State of Rhode Island in almost every aspect; and who are now planning to do the same thing in Little Compton. They are aided and abetted by the Little Compton Community First (LCCF) organization.

What can you do to protect yourself?

Show up at the Financial Town Meeting on May 19th and defeat them there as they try to needlessly boost spending and increase your tax bill.

☛ The Budget

Hopefully, we have your attention. This is a serious matter. The Budget Committee held its first hearing for next year's budget on Thursday, April 30, 2015. It was there that the Big-Spending Liberal Democrats telegraphed their intent... to push the Town's budget up to the maximum 4% as allowed by law. Prior to that meeting, the Budget Committee had initially voted on a recommended budget that would have increased the tax

rate by 1.4% or 8¢. We supported that. After the meeting and after significant pressure applied by the Liberals/LCCF, the recommended tax rate became 1.95% (we did not support that). It's not a lot; but, they also asked how much more they could spend on the school to bring the Town budget up to 4%. And they weren't fooling! They have no plan on what to spend the money on, they just want it from you to spend on something.

Liberals claim they are for the working man and the "victims" of big business & fat cats. But when it comes to spending tax money, here's the truth about them:

- They do not care about struggling families.
- They do not care about the poor.
- They do not care about people on fixed income.
- They do not care that the Food Bank is stressed.

What they do care about is that their liberal agenda is maintained at your expense. Sure, they have to pay the additional taxes as well, but that is irrelevant to them in their quest for Big Government and Big Spending. Just look what they have done at the national and state levels.

✓ ECONOMIC DISASTER

While the Little Compton Taxpayers Association supports the Budget Committee's recommendations, more could have been done. Here are some of the things that have raised red flags:

1. The amount of funding requests for private organizations has doubled in one year. The items are Strokes 6 through 11 in the Budget Committee's report. Last year the appropriations totaled \$9,680. This year, the requests total \$19,650. It is our belief that taxpayer money **SHOULD NOT** be used in this way despite the virtue or worthiness of the organization.

2. The Overtime Pay requested by the Fire Department is starting to get quite high: \$130,656. Last year it was \$117,340 and the year before that it was \$112,820. Associated with that is the request for Part-Time firefighters to offset the overtime a bit. Last year the request was \$30,000. None of it was ever spent. But, this year the request is for \$45,700. The Budget Committee has recommended \$30,000. We agree.

3. The Fire Department collects ambulance costs from a person's health insurance unless the insurance company will not pay. In that case, the ambulance tab is waived. The Department contracts out the bill collection which takes 6% of the funds. Why can't the firemen do this themselves while they are sitting in the Public Safety Complex during periods of inactivity?

4. The "Unrestricted Reserve" is really an over-collection of taxes and currently sits at \$1.3 Million which is 12% of the tax levy. It is called all kinds of things such as "rainy day fund", "emergency fund", "slush fund", "stash", etc. It is really taxpayer money sitting in an account in case a major catastrophe occurs like the '38 hurricane. And specifically, it was built up to its current level in order to get a lower interest rate for the \$11-Million loan for the school renovation project. As the Town had no plans to float more bonds on the horizon, it should slowly be drawn down to lower the tax rate. If the Town were to take \$200,000 out of the \$1,300,000 reserve, the tax rate would be the same as the current year. That is, of course, if the Liberal Democrats are defeated in trying to boost the school budget to its legal maximum of 4%. The Town auditors recently said that Moody's is happy if a town's unrestricted fund is 7%. If our 12% were dropped to 7%, the tax rate would actually go down by 6%.

School Budget: The primary focus of the Liberals/LCCF seems to be the school. Consequently, a major focus of this newsletter is the school which represents 60% of every dollar you pay in property taxes.

After the 2014 election, the Liberals/LCCF controlled the School Committee. It was clear that there was an agenda to erase anything done by the previous Committee and to boost the school budget to that maximum allowed by law (4%) even in the absence of a carefully thought out budget. Fortunately, one of the three newly elected members of the new School Committee (Lori Craffey) is objective and independent minded and broke free of the

"we can't spend enough" Liberals/LCCF agenda resulting in the change in School Committee chair from one of the newly elected members (Polly Allen), to one of the incumbents (Tom Allder).

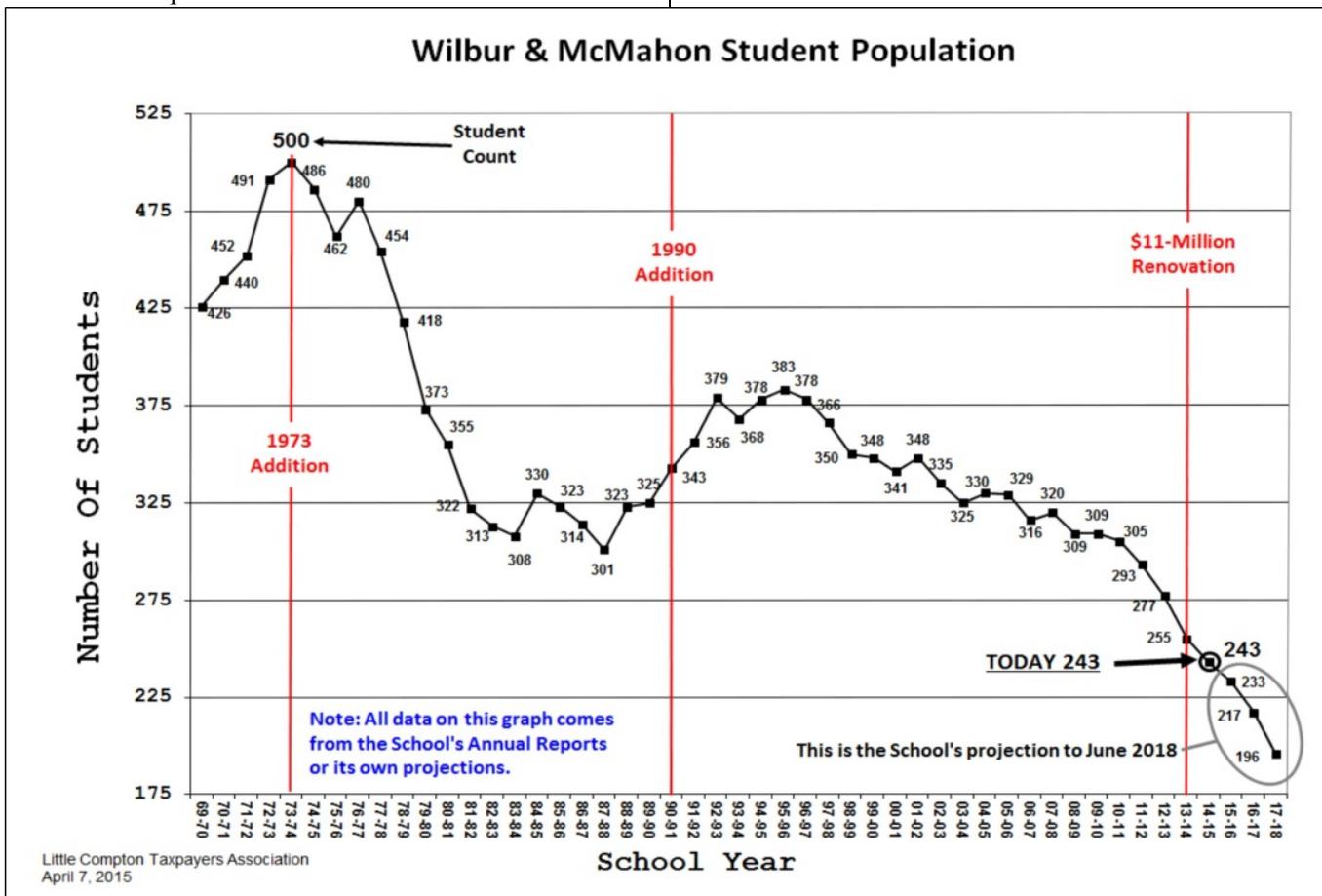
With new leadership on the School Committee, a more balanced and sensible approach to the business end of running the school ensued. The requested 4% budget increase was lowered to 1.74%. While this is more reasonable, the graph below tells a different story.

In 1973, there were 500 students in the original school building with the granite exterior. Since then, two additions to the building (1973 and 1990) were constructed, and in 2014 an \$11-Million renovation project (the largest in Little Compton's history) was completed while the student count dropped to less than half (243) today! And the school administration's own predictions indicate that the student count will go down to 233 next year, and 196 in the 2017/2018 school year.

While the student count has fallen off a cliff, each year's budget for the school is always more than the previous year. **If anything, the opposite should be true.**

The 1973/1974 school budget was \$560,177. In today's dollars adjusting for inflation, it was \$2,961,393 for 500 students in Wilbur. The 2015/2016 requested budget is \$6,842,094 with only 233 students in Wilbur! In 1973 there were 29 teachers. Today, there are 34 teachers.

★ THE STUDENT COUNT HAS BEEN DRASTICALLY DROPPING, BUT WE KEEP ADDING SPACE, MONEY, AND STAFF! ★



Most people are unaware of a Rhode Island law that defines what the minimum school appropriation from property taxes must be. The law is RI Law 16-7-23 entitled "Foundation Level School Support." One of its more oppressive provisions is the following:

"Each community shall contribute local funds to its school committee in an amount not less than its local contribution for schools in the previous fiscal year."

This means that if the Liberals/LCCF get their way at the Financial Town Meeting in May and boost the school budget by 4% whether needed or not, the taxpayers must fund at least that amount in the following year. It's like a ratchet where it can only go one way - up!

DON'T LET THEM WIN THIS!

ATTEND THE FTM
MAY 19, 2015
7:00 PM, GYM

In 1973 there were 500 students with 29 teachers. Today there are 34 teachers for 243 students! This is a large amount of Teacher inflation! Students down by over 50%, but teachers up by 17%. And each teacher's average cost to the taxpayer is \$102,000 at Wilbur & McMahon. Here is the effect of that situation.

GRADE	Students, 1st Class	Students, 2nd Class
K	11	11
1	12	13
2	9	10
3	12	12
4	13	13
5	15	15
6	15	19
7	19	19
8	25	-

Total: 243 Students

Each of these classes has its own teacher. Little Compton has the smallest class sizes in the state of Rhode Island. And note that next year, the 8th grade is replaced by the 7th grade, the 7th grade is replaced by the 6th grade, and so on. In looking at the table above, it is easy to see where this is heading after a few years. It really calls for trimming the staff, but the Liberals/LCCF mantra is "We must maintain quality in spite of plummeting enrollment." The taxpayers take it on the chin unless they put a stop to it at the Financial Town Meeting. Our students do very well. More money does not equate to better performance.

Finally, it is projected that there will be 357 students in the 2015/2016 school year (all grades K thru 12) with a requested budget of \$6,842,094. This calculates out to:

■ \$19,166 per Student! ■

This is an astonishing amount and is second only to Block Island which has a unique situation.

It has gotten out of control!

Elections: Budget Committee, Beach Commission

In addition to setting the FY 16 budget and tax rate, there are also two important elections.

There are three seats open for the Budget Committee. The LCTA follows their work and meetings and recommend **George M. Crowell** and **D. Craig Curtis** for re-election. Both are veterans of the budget process.

There are three seats open for the Beach Commission with six running. The LCTA recommends **Patrick R. Griffin** and **William F. Ryan** -- both long-time veterans of the Beach Commission.

From The Chairman

First, it's very important that all of us be at the FTM on Tuesday, May 19th. Based on the recent Budget Committee meeting, the ultra-liberals/LCCF might try to move the tax rate up to the legal maximum of 4% providing more money to the Schools and other Strokes. Ridiculous!!! They pushed the School's budget from a 0.95% increase to 1.74%. With a decreasing school population, 0.95% is more than enough.

Second, your Taxpayer's Association is likely to make a motion to return the School's appropriation to 0.95%. We are researching several ways to do that. With any motion that is controversial, we will request a paper ballot so your vote will be anonymous. You will be voting your conscience and pocketbook without others glaring at you for how you voted. We may also move to decrease the \$1.3-Million surplus. The school rehab bond is in place and there are no big projects on the horizon.

Third, LCTA Newsletters are expensive. A generous contribution to offset the printing and mailing would be greatly appreciated.

Fourth, we send out e-Newsletters at critical times (it's faster), plus we update our Web site often (www.LCTaxpayers.com). From our website, click on the icon at the top and please forward your E-mail address, so you can get our e-Newsletters. We never give it to anyone.

See you Tuesday, May 19th.



Need a Ride to the gym? For some of you, it may be difficult to get to the Financial Town Meeting due to lack of transportation. But it is very important for you to attend to protect your financial interests. All you have to do is make a reservation with Stay at Home to get picked up and returned. To make a reservation, call Margaret Tirpaeck at 401-835-2454. Check out their website as it offers quite a bit: www.stayathomeinlittlecompton.org



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**** TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER ****

LITTLE COMPTON TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP FORM (Vol. XVI, No. 1)

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SUGGESTED CONTRIBUTION: \$15 (Single) \$25 (Family) \$ _____ (Other)

Mail this form and your contribution to:

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