



LITTLE COMPTON TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION

• • NEWSLETTER • •

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E-Mail: Taxpayers@cox.net Web: www.LCTaxpayers.com

October 27, 2012 Vol. XIII, No. 2

Officers

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1st Vice Chair: Kevin Healey
2nd Vice Chair: George Crowell
Sec/Treas: Roger Lord

SPECIAL EDITION - ELECTIONS & THE SCHOOL

This special newsletter focuses on the November 6th election and the school project that started with \$100,000 in fire safety repairs/upgrades and, for a while, had a staggering price tag of \$45 Million. The project went from a 2/3 rebuild to a major renovation where it stands today. But it hasn't gone smoothly. See the related article inside this newsletter.

ELECTION: On Tuesday, November 6, 2012, local, state, congressional, and presidential elections will be conducted. This is your chance to change the course of the town, Rhode Island, and Washington. If you think we are experiencing bad economic times now, watch how bad things can really get if you vote for "more of the same" with those politicians who have enslaved our children with indebtedness. The following SAMPLE ballot has our voting recommendations for trying to balance the budget and restore freedom.

Sample Ballot

<p>STRAIGHT PARTY To vote a "Straight Ticket" complete the arrow pointing to the party of your choice.</p> <p>DEMOCRAT ←</p> <p>MODERATE ←</p> <p>REPUBLICAN ←</p> <p>PRESIDENTIAL ELECTORS FOR:</p> <p>President Vice President Barack OBAMA Joe BIDEN DEMOCRAT ←</p> <p>President Vice President Mitt ROMNEY Paul RYAN REPUBLICAN ←</p> <p>President Vice President Gary JOHNSON James P. GRAY Libertarian ←</p> <p>President Vice President Virgil GOODE Jim CLYMER Constitution ←</p> <p>President Vice President Ross C. "Rocky" ANDERSON Luis J. RODRIGUEZ Justice ←</p> <p>President Vice President Peta LINDSAY Yari OSORIO Socialism and Liberation ←</p> <p>President Vice President Jill STEIN Cheri HONKALA Green ←</p> <p>Write-in ←</p> <p>SENATOR IN CONGRESS SIX Year Term Vote for 1</p> <p>Sheldon WHITEHOUSE DEMOCRAT ←</p> <p>B. Barrett HINCKLEY, III REPUBLICAN ←</p> <p>Write-in ←</p>	<p>REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS DISTRICT 1 TWO Year Term Vote for 1</p> <p>David N. CICILLINE DEMOCRAT ←</p> <p>Brendan P. DOHERTY REPUBLICAN ←</p> <p>David S. VOGEL Independent ←</p> <p>Write-in ←</p> <p>SENATOR IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY DISTRICT 12 TWO Year Term Vote for 1</p> <p>Louis P. DIPALMA DEMOCRAT ←</p> <p>Write-in ←</p> <p>REPRESENTATIVE IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY DISTRICT 71 TWO Year Term Vote for 1</p> <p>Dennis M. CANARIO DEMOCRAT ←</p> <p>Write-in ←</p> <p>TOWN MODERATOR TWO Year Term Vote for 1</p> <p>Write-in ←</p> <p>TOWN CLERK TWO Year Term Vote for 1</p> <p>Carol A. WORDELL REPUBLICAN ←</p> <p>Write-in ←</p>	<p>TOWN COUNCIL TWO Year Term Vote for any 5</p> <p>Charles N. APPLETON, JR. REPUBLICAN ←</p> <p>Fred M. BODINGTON, III REPUBLICAN ←</p> <p>Paul J. GOLEMESKE REPUBLICAN ←</p> <p>Gary S. MATARONAS REPUBLICAN ←</p> <p>Robert L. MUSHEN REPUBLICAN ←</p> <p>Write-in ←</p> <p>Write-in ←</p> <p>Write-in ←</p> <p>Write-in ←</p> <p>TOWN TREASURER AND COLLECTOR OF TAXES TWO Year Term Vote for 1</p> <p>Mary-Jane M. HARRINGTON DEMOCRAT ←</p> <p>Robert H. GOFF, JR. REPUBLICAN ←</p> <p>Patrick MCHUGH Independent ←</p> <p>Write-in ←</p> <p>SCHOOL COMMITTEE FOUR Year Term Vote for any 2</p> <p>Thomas C. ALLDER, JR. REPUBLICAN ←</p> <p>Peg BUGARA REPUBLICAN ←</p> <p>Lynn A. BROUSSEAU LEBREUX Independent ←</p> <p>Micah J. SHAPIRO Independent ←</p> <p>Write-in ←</p> <p>Write-in ←</p> <p>ASSESSOR OF TAXES SIX Year Term Vote for 1</p> <p>Leonard A. DUCKWORTH REPUBLICAN ←</p> <p>Write-in ←</p>
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We recommend voting as shown on the left. It's in your best interest.

President: Are you better off today than you were 4-years ago? Vote Romney! He is the only candidate who can restrain runaway spending and truly help the taxpayers.

Congress: Barry Hinkley for Senate and Brendan Doherty for House. Sen. Whitehouse and Rep Cicilline have contributed significantly to your financial demise and your reduced standard of living.

Senator: Sen. Louis DiPalma is part of the "establishment" in the General Assembly. He often times votes in favor of bills that do not serve Little Compton very well. Examples: Binding Arbitration and tolling the Sakonnet River Bridge. He introduced the EBEC bill without even reading it. We cannot endorse Lou DiPalma. He is running unopposed.

Representative: Dennis Canario is a relatively unknown, but he has come out against the Sakonnet River Bridge Toll and promises to bring restraint to RI spending.

Moderator: Nobody is running! Use your best judgment for a write-in candidate.

Town Clerk: Carol Wordell is a Town treasure. She more than deserves your vote.

Town Council: This group of 5 councilors has done an excellent and responsible job over the years. Keep them on!

Treasurer: We are endorsing Bob Goff because he's the most accomplished and professionally qualified of the candidates running for Town Treasurer. Bob is a CPA, retired from a long professional career in the field of finance, currently serves on the Budget Committee putting in countless hours, and also serves as Tax Assessor. Public institutions are more complex than ever before and the requirements for accuracy, control, and efficiency have never been higher. During the past three years, the annual Audits of the Town have been unfavorable in the control of money area, i.e. the Treasurer's office. Problems that have been cited have not been corrected. The town has two budget systems, one for the school and one for the town. Both must have better coordination and improvements. The need has been a requirement, long recognized but not addressed. Bob is the most qualified candidate to see that accomplished.

(continued next page)

These endorsements and this newsletter have been paid for by the Little Compton Taxpayers Association and have not been authorized by any candidate or candidate's committee. Contact us at the address shown above if you have any questions.

Endorsements (continued from Page 1):

Tax Assessor: Appointed by Town Council. We've heard no complaints. Give him a try.

School Committee: Because the School Committee controls over 60% of the budget, a bit more space is allocated to those endorsements.

YOU DESERVE BETTER!

Vote Tom Alder and Peg Bugara for School Committee:

- Tom is a small business owner in the construction field, a plus for the School Committee regarding school facility construction and maintenance.
- Tom has worked tirelessly as Chairman of the School Building Committee.
- Tom has demonstrated the ability to work with the School Committee, Budget Committee, Town Council, and the Rhode Island Department of Education. (RIDE)
- Peg is a retired professional with a Master of Education Degree.
- Peg knows what works and what doesn't in educating children.
- Peg has a proven track record working with parents, teachers and administrators to improve student performance.

Lynn Brousseau LeBreux and Micah Shapiro have NOT EARNED YOUR SUPPORT for re-election:

- Brousseau and Shapiro supported the rejected \$45-Million school building proposal.
- Brousseau ignored State law and had to pay \$500 for failing to file the State Ethics Disclosure Report in a timely fashion.
- Brousseau and Shapiro flaunted State law four years in a row by failing to earn the required 6 professional development credits to improve their understanding of School Committee issues.
- Brousseau abused her authority while acting on behalf of certain staff, parents, and citizens. Instead of sending persons through the proper "chain of command" she interfered with the day-to-day operation of the school, usurping the duties and authority of the administration.
- Brousseau and Shapiro voted not to renew the contract and terminated the prior Superintendent, who did an outstanding job for Little Compton and the Schools.
- Brousseau was quoted in the Tiverton/Little Compton Patch, regarding the story about a woman who allegedly stole large amounts of money from the LC Little League as Treasurer. She said; "Under the circumstances I would have done the same thing and so would 90% of the population." We strongly disagree with that characterization of LC citizens and have much concern about her being a part of managing our \$7-Million school budget.

Ballot Questions: There are seven Ballot issues on the official Election Ballot for the State of Rhode Island. The unanimous position of the Board of Directors of the LCTA is that we do not support any of these Questions. The Questions run the gamut of Casino Gambling to Affordable Housing Grants.

The State is broke and we are in the middle of the slowest recovery from the worst recession in modern history. We do not believe that it is either wise or prudent for the State to increase the burden on taxpayers to the tune of more than 209 million dollars before interest. And gambling attracts organized crime.

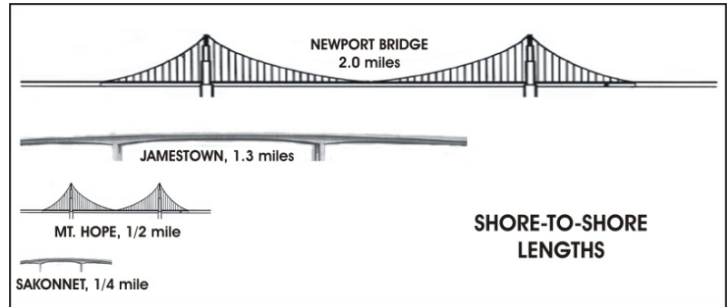
We feel that our members should take the time to review individual issues which may or may not impact their lives and make an appropriate decision.

Sakonnet River Bridge Tolls: Due to years of neglect on the part of the RI Department of Transportation, the Sakonnet River Bridge needed a replacement. In September 2012, the new bridge opened and cars began to pass. At the urging of Governor Lincoln Chafee, the General Assembly's Fiscal Year 2013 budget included a very unfair provision: the new bridge was transferred to the Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge

Authority (RITBA) which promptly decided that the bridge must have a toll to pay for its maintenance...

...as well as maintenance of other roads and bridges throughout the state!

The Sakonnet River Bridge has been dubbed "the working man's bridge" because of the high percentage of people traveling each way daily to get to work. For out-of-state travelers, the toll is projected to be \$4 each way which amounts to over \$2000 per year with or without an EZPass device. Rhode Islanders with an EZPass will pay 83¢ each way or over \$400 per year. Looking at the figure below which shows the scaled lengths of the 4 main bridges, it is clearly unfair that the smallest of the bridges, the Sakonnet River Bridge, will get tolled at the same rate as the largest bridge, the Newport Bridge, and will support the rest of Rhode Island's transportation systems despite what they say!



MAKE NO MISTAKE! THIS IS A TAX!

With the exception of Rep. Dan Reilly (R-Middletown, Newport, Portsmouth), Sen. Walter Felag (D-Bristol, Tiverton, Warren), and Rep. Dan Gordon (R-Little Compton, Portsmouth, Tiverton), all our local senators and representatives voted to let this happen by voting for the state's Fiscal Year 2013 budget.

Here are the senators & representatives who voted yes:

- Sen. Ottiano, Bristol, Portsmouth
- Sen. DiPalma, Ltl Compton, Portsmouth Tiverton
- Sen. Paiva-Weed, Newport
- Rep. Malik, Barrington, Warren
- Rep. Morrison, Bristol, Warren
- Rep. Gallison, Bristol, Portsmouth
- Rep. Edwards, Portsmouth, Tiverton
- Rep. Jackson, Middletown, Newport
- Rep. Ruggiero, Jamestown, Middletown
- Rep. Martin, Newport

Remember these people when you vote on November 6th. And don't forget Governor Chafee in two years from now when he comes up for reelection.

A group called **STOP** (Sakonnet Tolls Opposition Panel) has formed on the East Bay to pressure elected officials and the Governor to avoid tolls on the bridge. **STOP** includes people from Little Compton, Tiverton, Bristol, Middletown, Portsmouth, the Tea Party, RI Statewide Coalition, and others. Five members of the Little Compton Taxpayers Association are part of this group.

What should happen? Get rid of the RITBA and its \$3-Million in salaries/benefits, transfer the bridge back to the Dept of Transportation (DOT), fix the RI budget, and seek federal funding (something Doherty and Hinkley have pledged to do, but both Cicilline and Whitehouse want nothing to do with it).

**BE SURE TO VOTE
NOVEMBER 6, 2012
SCHOOL GYM**

School Renovation

This project has stirred up more anxiety in Little Compton than any other project in recent memory. The project has been under study for 7 years and yet not a single item of construction has started. We find this very disappointing given the amount of time and money that has been sunk into the project. This article provides some background on where we've been, what went wrong, where we are today, and analysis of our options.

Where We've Been

The project started with a Fire Marshall's inspection of the school that occurred back in August 2005. A number of Code violations were uncovered. This provoked thought on the part of the School Administration and School Committee as to what else might be wrong. To answer that question, an architect was hired to look at what might be wrong. That was Mount Vernon Architects working during the winter of 2006.

Mount Vernon found numerous problems that stem from years of neglected maintenance on the building and Code violations that were created from poorly thought out additions to the building. The problems were estimated to be in the vicinity of \$11-Million.

The School Committee decided to embark on a now 7-year trip to correct the problems. But rather than just repair/correct the problems, the Committee decided to think BIG and look at either a completely new school or the demolition of most of the existing facility followed by rebuilding and renovation of what was left after demolition. They formed a slow-moving "Facilities Needs Committee" in December 2006 to determine what must be done and hired JCJ Architects from Connecticut in November 2007 to do the preliminary design. At one point, the estimated cost of the project reached \$45-Million including interest on the loan. The Facilities Needs Committee far exceeded its charter and started designing rather than just specifying the educational and facility needs of the building.

It was at this point that the Taxpayers Association began a concerted effort to stop the insanity and simply fix what was wrong with the existing facility using the original Mount Vernon study as a baseline. The school's administration, the School Committee, and the Facilities Needs Committee largely ignored what we had to say and was ready to saddle each of the town's 1500 families with a \$21,000 bill over 20 years of a loan (assumes a 30% subsidy from RIDE at that time)!

The plan was to be subsidized by the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) if their rules were followed. That means that strings were attached. Between those strings and the Facilities Needs Committee's desire to build the equivalent of the Taj Mahal, the project cost was astronomical for a small town such as Little Compton.

RIDE required the submittal of a "Stage I" package by a certain date in order to subsidize the project. JCJ Architects failed to follow RIDE's guidelines and submitted an incomplete package to RIDE, but RIDE accepted it and kept the project alive.

JCJ was promptly fired as a result of what could only be called incompetence. The Facilities Needs Committee was dissolved in late 2009 to make way for a "Building Committee" which still is in operation to this day. This new committee consisted of 20 people, an untenable size by any measure. The Building Committee continued the work of its predecessor and brought on a new architect - Durkee, Brown, Viveiros & Werenfels or "Durkee-Brown" for short.

Durkee-Brown was the least qualified of the bidders and had the highest bid. No big deal! The Building Committee picked them anyway and the School Committee authorized it. We said at that time that Durkee-Brown would gain experience through mistakes made at the town's expense. It is no secret that those "mistakes" have occurred as this project is currently in trouble.

The demolition/rebuild approach continued despite warnings from the Taxpayers Association that the State of Rhode Island didn't have enough money to fund its share (now up to 40%). Didn't matter, the request went in anyway. The "new" school would have more floor space than the current school despite their own demographer's study saying student population would drop by 20% over the next 10-years. **WE ARE ALREADY SEEING THIS DECLINE!**

The final blow came in a letter from the General Assembly to the Board of Regents on May 12, 2011: "*In light of the State's current fiscal condition, we are asking that the Board not act on any of the construction and renovation projects currently under review by RIDE until further direction from the General Assembly.*" It couldn't be clearer than this! It's what the Taxpayers Association had been saying for a very long time.

Rising to the occasion, the Town Council indicated that it would not endorse the project unless the cost of construction was kept below \$10-Million. The Building and School Committees now had to re-work the entire project to renovation at approximately the same cost that the original Mount Vernon study came up with 5 years earlier. **If this decision had been made back then, the renovation would have been completed by now!**

Plans were redrawn resulting in a construction cost of \$9,659,925 which met the Town Council's limit and the request for proposals went out. Unfortunately, the lowest bid was \$10,260,000 which is approximately \$600,000 too high! During all this, Durkee-Brown Architects assured the town that the bids would come in lower than the estimate. **WRONG!** This is one of those mistakes they made at the town's expense.

On May 1, 2012, 86% of the taxpayers approved a not-to-exceed authorization to spend \$11,310,000 on this project (\$7,500 per family over 20 years). The current price tag is \$11,894,312. Clearly a shortfall.

Making matters worse, the renovation project assumed a phased approach where the children would still attend class in the building while the construction was underway. A decision was made to move the children to temporary facilities during construction and shave one year off the time schedule. This was one of the few decisions that was good. But the cost of doing this was never considered! The approach was to use the three churches at the Commons for one school year while construction was done. One of the churches declined due to inadequate toilet facilities and a heavy schedule of usage of the targeted rooms. Then there was emotional objection of splitting the children into multiple facilities. Solution: Erect temporary classrooms on Veterans Field for one school year. They awarded the classroom module contract to ModSpace Inc. who originally said Veterans Field was OK only to declare it NOT OK after award. That caused a shift to the Peckham Lot - more expensive. Cost: \$1,024,605.

Where We Are Today

Between the school surplus and removing a few items from the project, there is currently a funding shortfall of:

\$518,917

The cost and feasibility of temporary classroom modules is prohibitively expensive and a contract with a contentious contractor supplying the modules is making things difficult.

Did this just happen? No it did not. It comes from 7-years of arguing, incompetent architects, stubbornness, reckless thinking, irresponsible financial planning, and the belief that there was no limit to how much the taxpayers could be further burdened.

The Building Committee has reopened the prospect of using the churches and a single classroom module in order to save money and reduce the current deficit. **We sincerely hope they can accomplish that because we DO NOT support going back to the town to ask for more taxpayer money!** Enough is enough.

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**** TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER ****

LITTLE COMPTON TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP FORM (Vol. XIII, No. 2)

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(For couples, please provide both first names)

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Local Home Address → Check if year-round address

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CITY/TOWN _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____

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

Mail this form and your contribution to: Little Compton Taxpayers Association
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