



LITTLE COMPTON TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

PO Box 455, Adamsville, RI 02801

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May 11, 2016 Vol. XVII, No. 1

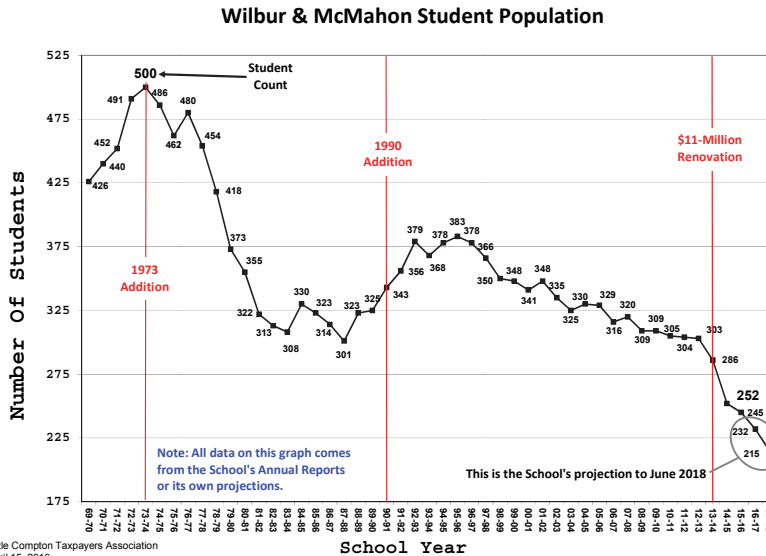
Officers

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The Financial Town Meeting: As is customary, the Taxpayers Association would like to apprise you of several aspects of the budget to be voted on at this year's Financial Town Meeting (FTM) on May 17th. Needless to say, the requested budget is up again - by 2.1% over the current budget. It has not ever gone down in recent memory.

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, heating oil, 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.

The School Budget: The Budget Committee initially voted to level-fund the Schools. Subsequently, they restored the School's initial request (additional \$85,866 town's share) for a written agreement that the School's surplus would be capped at \$225,000 annually. The School Committee and Budget Committee would review the surplus annually. Anything above the agreed upon surplus would go to reduce the Town's School Bond payment."



We think that both the "Surplus Agreement" and a level-funded budget should happen now. Why? The student population at Wilbur McMahon continues its precipitous fall (see chart in center of this page). This year the count is 245 students and is projected to drop to 232 and then 215 in the next two years. Next year in Grades K → 5 there will be a number of classes with only 9, 10, 11, 12 or 13 students. Out of 12 classes, none are above 13 using the Administration's numbers. Those class sizes are much less than Barrington, East Greenwich, Jamestown, Portsmouth and the rest of the State. Almost all educational experts define low class size as between 19 and 22. Additionally, because of these class sizes, Little Compton's per pupil cost is over \$19,000 (highest in State with the exception of Block Island). And the School continues to finish its fiscal years with significant surpluses because we give them too much money.

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. We believe that the town should hire seasoned professional negotiators for future contracts. That's what the unions do. Why shouldn't we do the same?

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. 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!

It's simple: Some classes need to be combined now and the School budget needs to be level-funded now.

The \$800K Burden: The Town is owed about \$881,176 in delinquent taxes as of April 27, 2016. \$340,845 of this is prior year taxes and \$179,303 is for late charges including interest. According to the Treasurer/Tax Collector, "Prior years delinquent taxes excluding penalty (I waive interest to those on payment plans and those who have had a difficult time) amount to \$340,844.75." It is only fair that everybody pays a fair share. But perhaps this indicates that taxes are too high and helps to explain why the student population has dropped so much.

The Town Budget: Spending is up again. It's hard to recall a time when it went down. But there is good news associated with the budget for fiscal year 2017 (July 1, 2016 thru June 30, 2017). The good news is that the tax rate will actually go down by 8 cents per thousand – from the current \$5.75 down to \$5.67 per thousand. Increased revenues and taxes from new homes make this possible.

Ag Trust Tax: Townsman Larry Anderson has generated a proposal to lower the Agricultural Conservancy Trust transfer-tax rate from 4% down to 3% and change the exemption to \$225,000. This will save the taxpayers a substantial amount of money when selling homes. We support Mr. Anderson's proposal which will appear as a stroke at the Financial Town Meeting on May 17th, but we would like to go even further and increase the exemption to \$300,000.

(More on other side)



Little Compton Taxpayers Association
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 Adamsville, RI 02801

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From the Chairman: Your Little Compton Taxpayers Association needs your help. First, we need you to be at the Financial Town Meeting (FTM) on May 17th at 7:00 PM in the school gym. Second, we need your E-mail address, which we keep confidential, for our expanding eNewsletter which provides important and timely Little Compton news. We can get eNewsletters out much faster than regular mailed Newsletters. Note: you can request being added to our eNewsletters on our website at the top of the page (www.LCTaxpayers.com). Third, our work for you is costly. We attend and film all important Town meetings as a public service (see videos on Cox), maintain a robust website (see www.LCTaxpayers.com), send out eNewsletters, and publish Newsletters (School Bond, FTM, and Election Newsletters). Printing and postage to deliver to every mailbox in town is expensive. Please send a donation to help us continue our work for you. New members are also welcome. Use the membership form on the right.

LCTA MEMBERSHIP / CONTRIBUTION FORM

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

Mailing 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
 PO Box 455
 Adamsville, RI 02801



Don't Forget!

Financial Town Meeting - May 17, 2016

BUDGET COMMITTEE ELECTIONS: There are two positions on the Budget Committee up for reelection at the Financial Town Meeting. John McJennett, Stephen Bristol, and Jeff Snyder are excellent, well-qualified candidates.