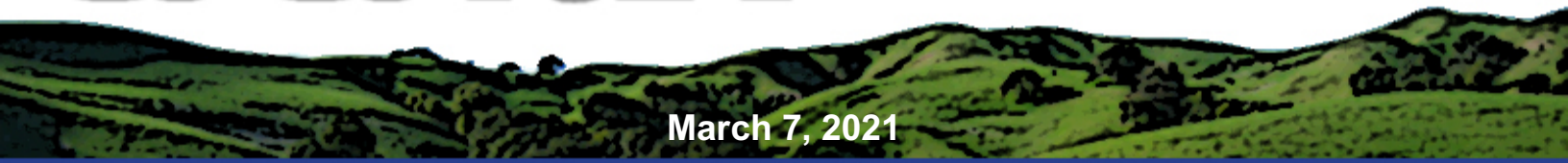


# CoCoTax

Promoting accountable, cost-effective and efficient government and opposing unnecessary taxes and spending



March 7, 2021

- CoCoTax Officers**
- Susan Pricco**  
President
  - James Pezzaglia**  
1<sup>st</sup> Vice President
  - Ryder Brose**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President
  - Paul Bleeg**  
Treasurer/Secretary
  - Honorable Mike McGill**  
Past President
  - Denise Sheehan**  
Business Manager

## CoCoTax President's Report – March 7, 2021

My days as Contra Costa Taxpayers Association president are coming to a close and I have to take a look back at my term. Clearly, this was not what I had envisioned. I miss the face-to-face kinship and interaction with my Executive Team, Board of Directors and members. But just two short years ago, we did not have an active Facebook page, Twitter presence, Speaker series, YouTube channel or a regular newsletter. I am also proud of our more vibrant, redesigned and functional website.

We concluded our first report by the **Pension Committee** and are nearing a conclusion to our second committee report. Re-creating our structure put committees on hiatus for the most part, but we were able to strengthen our ties with other taxpayer advocacy organizations across the Bay Area and the state.

The **November 2020** election was a doozy for us. Lively debate over support or opposition to measures, collecting signatures, collaborating & submitting ballot arguments, coordinating approaches and strategies took a toll on us on many a late night. But this is what needs to be done to give a voice to the taxpayer.

Financially, we have squeezed by. As costs rise for us and our ability to increase funding has had to become more creative, we remember that our ability to function is totally dependent on your donations. We scrutinize the use of every penny as closely as we wish our legislators and other public officials would. Your dues cover just a portion of our needs, your most generous donations keep us alive and energized.

Taxes are a necessary part of our free society, but excessive and wasteful taxation is not. Where the line is drawn will always be the essential and critical conversation. Please continue to be part of that dialog, in terms of donations, focus and outreach as well.

So, my friends, I close with my favorite phrase – ***“be safe, be happy and be well-informed.”***



**Susan L Pricco**  
President, Contra Costa Taxpayers Association  
*“Good government at affordable cost”*

### Contact CoCoTax

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 On Facebook:  
**Contra Costa Taxpayers Association**



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## Message from Pete Laurence

### Rent Controls and COVID requirements

In Contra Costa County, about 70% of homes and condominiums are occupied by owners and about 30% are rentals. With inflation, everything costs more and tends to increase – cars, clothes, food, housing, and hopefully, wages also. Just like renting a car or a hotel room, the consumer pays for the usage of it, be it for a few days, weeks or a year, but avoids the real costs of ownership like cash down payment, closing costs, property taxes and upkeep.

The main difference is that the Owners have risks from storms, fires, upkeep or possibly damage from bad tenants, but the renting/leasing parties utilize the asset often worth more than \$500,000 with only the first month rent and security deposit.

Rent controls by state and local governments make the landlord keep the property safe and in decent shape but does not help the owner if the tenant trashed the property or stops paying the rent, other than through the required legal and arduous unlawful detainer (eviction) process. Such a tenant usually does far more damage than the amount of the security deposit. However, those controls further strained rental property owners by modifying or freezing evictions.

The health emergency of “COVID-19” is hurting everybody financially with lay-offs, shorter hours, or even to work “at home”, so state politicians passed the 31-page SB-91. It boils down to this – tenants can pay less than the full rent or no rent at all and landlords cannot use the “eviction” process, which is always difficult, but now even worse. A recent opinion article in the East Bay Times <https://www.mercurynews.com/2021/03/02/opinion-overregulation-forcing-california-mom-and-pop-housing-providers-to-give-up/>, covers much of this new law, and notes that 70% of the owners have mortgages that they must pay regardless of the tenant’s situation.

Landlords are now questioning how much longer they can hold onto their investment with all the new levels of bureaucracy and moratoriums. Because of such governmental controls, I have half of my rentals locally, and the other half out of state. Some were sold to “Owner Occupants”, but this bureaucratic meddling results in fewer available California rentals!

Some investors are working with the tenants, keeping tabs on how much of the rent they can pay and the growing deficit that “may” be caught up when we all get through this pandemic. As an investor, I counsel others to “work with the people” (landlords and tenants) and hopefully we can all become stabilized in the near future.



**Pete Laurence**  
Executive Team Member  
Contra Costa Taxpayers  
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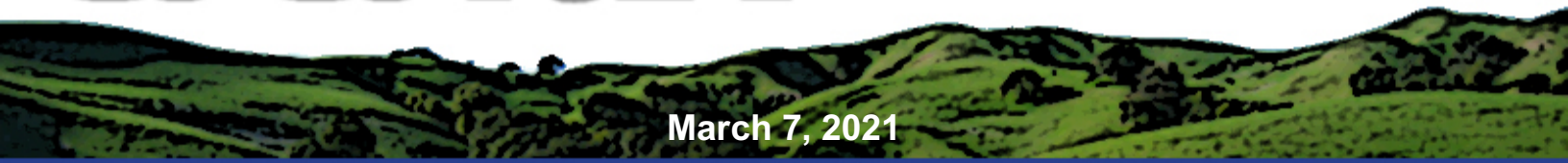


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## CoCoTax Lunchtime Speaker Series via ZOOM!

Friday, March 19, 2021 at NOON

We are pleased and privileged to present **RUSSELL WATTS**, Contra Costa County Treasurer/Tax Collector. He will tell you everything you need to know about new policy and procedural changes in Contra Costa tax issues. With his office having been closed for in-person services, he has also been asked about how the coronavirus pandemic has affected the financial and service aspects of the County.

You won't want to miss this. Zoom link will be provided with your registration. Register at <https://www.cocotax.org/events> or call (925) 289-6900. Members are free, non-members \$5.



**Russell V. Watts**  
Contra Costa County  
Treasurer/Tax Collector

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