



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on December 9, 2019

Unhappy Taxpayers Vote to Get Rid of ... Their Village!

The 5,000 folks who used to live in Amelia, Ohio, take their Declaration of Independence seriously: “Whenever any form of government becomes destructive of [its obligation to protect the rights of its citizens to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness], it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it.”

After a series of apparent governmental overreaches, the township voted two-to-one in early November to abolish it. After the votes were verified, Amelia officially dissolved on November 25, leaving the mayor, several police officers, and other government officials without jobs.



The overreaches included a refurbishing of an old manse for the government’s new offices at a cost of several hundred thousand dollars. It was claimed by government officials that this would cost less than building a new building.

But locals were annoyed when they learned that the refurbishing included fancy chandeliers, elegant brass fittings for the front door, and a gazebo.

Those locals had long been chafing under various levels of taxation. According to the Tax Foundation, the average couple living in Amelia was paying \$1,400 a year in state income tax, \$780 in state sales tax, \$130 in local sales tax, and \$3,300 in property taxes.

But many of them were pushed over the edge when they learned in early July that the village council had passed a one-percent income tax without the usual three-day public hearing required by law. For Ed McCoy, a local salesman, this was the final straw: “That’s just too many layers of fat. The best way to get rid of that fat is to start at the bottom.”

For Todd Hart it meant the sudden end to his position as mayor. He complained, “This all got way out of hand.”

Essential services to the residents without a village will be split between Batavia Township and Pierce Township, suburbs located about 10 miles east of Cincinnati.

The *New York Times* said the fight to dissolve the village, which has been going on for some time among citizens in Amelia, “shows what can happen when polarized voters decide that their government is so broken that it simply shouldn’t exist.” William Howell, a political science professor at the University of Chicago, agreed: “That you would have this kind of violent reaction against the introduction of a 1 percent tax suggests a deep-seated aversion to government generally.”

Although the dissolution of Amelia is just one of an estimated 130 such dissolutions between 2000 and 2011, it is the first generated by governmental dissatisfaction. The others reflected sharp declines in population or annexing by nearby cities.



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The spirit of freedom from government overreach is one of the unique foundations of the American Republic that remains in place today, at least among the former citizens of Amelia, Ohio.

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