



## **Frequently Asked Questions: Property Taxes**

### **When is the City's taxation year?**

The taxation year is the same as the calendar year, January 1 – December 31. Property taxes are due July 31<sup>st</sup> of each year.

### **Is there any discount for paying early?**

No. The City eliminated the discount for prepayment in 2015.

### **Why did the City get rid of the tax discounts?**

Originally tax discounts were implemented to help improve the City's cash flow in the early months of the year. This is no longer much of an issue with utility revenue and some grant revenue coming in quarterly.

In 2013 a change to legislation meant that the City could not discount the school portion of tax bills. Also, a recent change in accounting software will make the administration of tax discounts troublesome.

In 2014 tax discounts cost the City \$40,000 in foregone revenue. Even if the City used its entire line of credit (\$1 million) for the first six months of the year, the interest costs would only amount to \$12,000. If the City is foregoing revenue from some tax payers, that burden is spread amongst all tax payers.

### **When are tax notices mailed out?**

Tax notices are mailed at the end of May or beginning of June of each year. If you have not received your notice by mid-June please contact City Hall to ensure we have the correct mailing address on file for you.

### **How can I pay my taxes?**

#### **In Person**

Payments can be made at City Hall (120 1<sup>st</sup> St East) on weekdays between 8:30AM and 4:30PM. We accept cash, cheque or debit card. Unfortunately, we do not accept credit card payments.

#### **By Mail**

Cheques can be mailed to Box 610, Meadow Lake, SK S9X 1Y5. Your cheque must be received on or before the deadline of July 31<sup>st</sup>, otherwise penalties will be applied. Cheques can be postdated to July 31<sup>st</sup>, but should be mailed early enough to ensure they arrive in time.

#### **Online Banking**

You also have the option to pay your bill through online banking. Currently, the City is set up with CIBC, Credit Union and the Royal Bank. Search for 'Meadow Lake' under payees, and you should find Meadow Lake (City) – Taxes. You will be asked for the account number you are paying. Please use the Assessment Number shown on your tax notice, which will appear in the following format: 123456789.01. Please use only the first 9 digits as your account number (i.e. 123456789).

Although on-line banking payments have worked very well for us, there can be errors resulting from people selecting the wrong payee, or keying in a wrong tax or utility account number, or giving us a tax number when they really wanted to pay their utility bill. If you notice an error, please contact us as soon as possible so we can trace your payment.

### **What happens if I don't pay my taxes?**

If your current year's taxes remain unpaid after July 31<sup>st</sup>, you will be charged a penalty of 1% August 1. A 1% penalty will be added on September 1, October 1, November 1, and December 1. On January 1, a 9% penalty will be added to any accounts still outstanding.

If your taxes are unpaid after December 31, your property will be declared in arrears and the City will begin tax enforcement proceedings in accordance with *The Tax Enforcement Act*. Your property's address and outstanding amount will be included in a newspaper advertisement of tax accounts in arrears. If your account is still in arrears 60 days after the advertisement is published, the City will register a tax lien on your property. This action gives the City the authority to pursue taking title of your property.

**Why are my taxes different from my neighbours?**

Each property is assessed according to the guidelines established by *The Cities Act* and the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Association (SAMA). Properties have different assessments based on these guidelines. Things such as size, construction quality, style, condition or effective age of any buildings on your property can influence your property's fair tax value.

**Why do I pay school taxes when I don't have children or am a senior?**

The prosperity and general wellbeing of society, or the community we live in, is directly related to the education of its people. For that reason the costs of education are deemed to be the responsibility of all citizens. Your education, for example, if received in Canada, was largely paid for by the previous generation of taxpayers. People who do not own property contribute indirectly through their rental or lease payments.

Provincial legislation specifies that the funds for schools are to be collected by municipalities. However, while the City collects school taxes, the education mill rates are set by the province.

**My taxes are too high, can I appeal?**

You cannot appeal your taxes or your tax rate. You can only appeal your assessment to the Board of Revision if there is an error. For more information on assessments, please view the Assessment FAQs.