

Request for Decision

Title	Request to Waive Tax Penalty
Proposed Motion	That Council adhere to Policy ADM-Tax-2 and deny the request to waive the tax penalty related to Roll 1800.80.
Administrative Recommendation	Administration recommends that Council deny the request to waive the tax penalty on Roll # 1800.80 as tax payers receive ample notice of the annual June tax payment deadline.
Previous Council Direction	April 26, 2016 – Motion # 134/16 Council gave third reading to Bylaw 1366/16 2016 Taxation Rates.
Report	<p><u>Background Information</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sturgeon County municipal taxes are due the last working day of June every year. • County residents are made aware of this date as it is provided on their tax notices annually and also posted on Sturgeon’s County Website. • Payments for 2016 must be postmarked on or before June 30 or received at Sturgeon County Centre before the end of business, 4:30 p.m. on June 30 to avoid penalty charges. • Late penalty charges for the 2016 tax year are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 6% of current levy July 1, 2016 ○ 6% of current levy August 1, 2016 ○ 12% of total owing March 1, 2017. • There are 23 roll numbers with Fort McMurray addresses in the 2016 taxation year and out of this number, 3 remain unpaid with penalties. • Tax penalties are in place to ensure timely payment of property taxes. • The County offers a Tax Installment Payment Plan (TIPP) that allows property owners in Sturgeon County to pay their property tax in monthly installments throughout the year rather than a single payment. The intent is to break residents’ property taxes into more manageable amounts, making it easier to budget and ensure taxes are paid on time. • On September 7, 2016, Administration received a request from a taxpayer to make a presentation to Council requesting a refund of the tax penalty of \$316.78 issued on roll # 1800.80 • The amount represents penalties levied on July 1 and August 1 of 2016. • The taxpayer indicates an inability to make arrangements to pay the taxes owing on time due to a delay in mail forwarding to their new address after the fires in Fort McMurray, Alberta, that started May 2, 2016.

- The taxpayer received the tax notice on September 2, 2016, at their new address in Edmonton.
- The taxpayer's account is paid in full, including all the related penalties.
- County Council, at its discretion, may waive property taxes or any associated penalties however Administration is recommending against that option to ensure consistency.

External Communication

- **Tax notices mailed** message
 - Promoted on Sturgeon County Website Homepage May 16 – 31, 2016
 - Advertising in the Free Press & Redwater Review May 27, 2016
Free Press FYI
 - Road Signs – week of May 22, 2016
- **Tax Payment Due** message
 - Promoted on Sturgeon County Website Homepage June 15 – 30, 2016
 - Advertising in the *Free Press* and *Redwater Review* June 21 and 28, 2016, Free Press FYI
 - Road Signs – week of June 21, 2016
- Social Media/Tweets were added to programmed tweets throughout May and June 2016.

Relevant Policy/Legislation/Practices:

- Section 344 of the *Municipal Government Act* provides for Council to impose a penalty for non-payment of taxes in the current year.
- Policy ADM-Tax-2: Tax penalties will not for any reason be cancelled unless a proven human or machine error is made by Sturgeon County staff.
- Penalties on Unpaid Municipal Taxes Bylaw 805/95
- Following the June 2013 Flooding in Calgary and southern Alberta, there was a directive from Minister of Municipal Affairs to provide leniency on payment of taxes and penalties. No such advice has been received from Municipal Affairs.

Implication of Administrative Recommendation


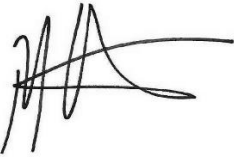

Strategic Alignment:

Strong Local Governance & Regional Leadership –

The imposition of penalty on owed taxes is consistent with legislation, policies and procedures and Goal 1.2 – *Sturgeon County is financially stable and fiscally responsible*, is met.

Organizational:

No additional work is required other than a letter informing the taxpayer of Council's decision.

	<p><u>Financial:</u></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="529 149 1008 226"> <tr> <td>July 1 Penalty (6%)</td> <td>\$ 158.39</td> </tr> <tr> <td>August 1 Penalty (6%)</td> <td>\$ 158.39</td> </tr> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - July 1 Penalty (\$158.39) represents 6% of the total taxes levied on Roll # 1800.80 for the 2016 taxation year. - August 1 Penalty (\$158.39) represents 6% of the total taxes levied on Roll # 1800.80 for the 2016 taxation year. 	July 1 Penalty (6%)	\$ 158.39	August 1 Penalty (6%)	\$ 158.39
July 1 Penalty (6%)	\$ 158.39				
August 1 Penalty (6%)	\$ 158.39				
<p>Alternatives Considered</p>	<p>That Council refund tax penalty.</p>				
<p>Implications of Alternatives</p>	<p><u>Strategic Alignment:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May not align with Sturgeon County Policies. <p><u>Organizational:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration will process the credit to the tax account. <p><u>Financial:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not materially impact budget. 				
<p>Follow up Action</p>	<p>1. Finance will send a letter to the taxpayer informing them of Council's decision.</p>				
<p>Attachment(s)</p>	<p>1. Request for Presentation form 2. Tax Penalties Policy ADM-Tax-2</p>				
<p>Report Reviewed by:</p>	<p> Manager, Financial Services</p> <p> Rick Wojtkiw, GM Corporate Support</p> <p> Peter Tarnawsky, County Commissioner – CAO</p>				

Strategic Alignment Checklist

Vision: Sturgeon County: a diverse, active community that pioneers opportunities and promotes initiative while embracing rural lifestyles.

Mission: Provide quality, cost effective services and infrastructure to meet the diverse needs of the Sturgeon County community, while improving competitiveness and sustainability.

Focus Areas	Not consistent	N/A	Consistent
Strong Local Governance and Regional Leadership			
<i>We promote consistent and accountable leadership through collaborative and transparent processes (Strategic Plan, pg. 27 MDP)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Consistent with neighborhood role (see MDP), master plans, policies</i> 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Considers fiscal stability and sustainability</i> 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Has a positive impact on regional and sub-regional cooperation</i> 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Respect the Natural Environment			
<i>We acknowledge the importance of a healthy environment and will minimize and monitor our impact on ecosystems (Strategic Plan, pg. 27 MDP)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Compliance with Provincial and Federal regulations and/or legislation</i> 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ensure effective environmental risk management</i> 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community Identity & Spirit			
<i>We will build upon our strengths, where together we will create an inclusive, caring community (Strategic Plan, (Strategic Plan, pg. 27 MDP)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Promotes and/or enhances residents' identification with Sturgeon County</i> 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Enhances service provision through community partnerships</i> 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Supports Sturgeon County's cultural history</i> 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Planned Growth and Prosperity			
<i>We encourage varied and integrated enterprises that enhance our strong economic base, while balancing the needs of the community and natural environment. (Strategic Plan, pg. 27 MDP)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Does the proposal align with the Integrated Regional Growth Strategy (map/policies) pg. 26 MDP</i> 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Considers cumulative costs and long-term funding implications</i> 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Targets growth around current or planned infrastructure</i> 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintain and Enhance Strong Communities			
<i>We are committed to a safe, secure community, where our residents are respected and provided with access to opportunities. (Strategic Plan, pg. 27 MDP)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Positive impact on residents' quality of life</i> 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Supports and promotes volunteer efforts</i> 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Provides programs and services that are accessible to all residents</i> 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Operational Excellence			
<i>We have the organizational capability to deliver consistent and defined levels of service to all stakeholders in a professional, efficient, and cost effective manner</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Staff have the knowledge, skills and capability to perform their jobs</i> 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Streamlines operational processes and policies</i> 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Promotes engagement and professional interaction with stakeholders</i> 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Considers a cost-structure which allows Sturgeon County to remain competitive within a regional, national and global context</i> 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>