



For Immediate Release

April 21, 2020

Contact

Name: David Unze

Email: david.unze@co.sherburne.mn.us

Phone: (763) 765-3773

SHERBURNE COUNTY ANNOUNCES PROPERTY TAX PAYMENT RELIEF IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The Sherburne County Board of Commissioners, in coordination with the County's Auditor-Treasurer, took action earlier today to provide temporary relief to residents and businesses that have been directly or indirectly impacted by the economic pressures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

On a unanimous 5-0 vote, the County Board acted to abate the majority of penalties associated with late payment of property taxes through July of 2020.

In doing so, the County Board recognized that, as a result of unemployment, lost or reduced wages and the loss of business income, prompt payment of property taxes may be a major economic pressure for many County residents and businesses come this May.

"Imposing the full penalty for late payment of property taxes in 2020 would simply be unjust and unreasonable," noted Board Chair Felix Schmiesing. "While we wanted a uniform statewide plan to help out our property taxpayers, we simply couldn't wait any longer for the State Legislature to act."

In emphasizing the County's desire to at least coordinate similar programs amongst neighboring central Minnesota counties, Schmiesing concluded: "If St. Paul does decide to do something, we will re-evaluate and adjust our local programs accordingly."

In taking this action, Sherburne County is striking a balance between helping out those residents and businesses seeking property tax payment relief with the critical cash flow needs of local schools, cities and taxing districts dependent upon property tax revenues.

"As this COVID-19 pandemic continues to play out," explained Auditor-Treasurer Diane Arnold, "it is becoming increasingly clear that the financial implications to Sherburne County residents and businesses, as well as its local schools and municipalities, are significant and growing."

Minn. Stat. § 279.01 allows for a County Board, with the concurrence of the County Treasurer, to abate penalties for late payment of property taxes. The County today acted to reduce penalties for late payment on all but utility and railroad real and personal property, as follows:

- Reduced to 1% the penalty for unpaid taxes between May 16, 2020 and June 30, 2020; and
- Reduced to 2% the penalty for unpaid taxes between July 1, 2020 and July 31, 2020.

Consideration of specific requests for abatement of taxes or adjustment of property values will still be considered on a case-by-case basis, pursuant to state law. Additional information on this process can be found at <https://www.co.sherburne.mn.us/162/Abatements>.

For additional information, contact County Administrator Bruce Messelt at (763) 765-3001 or email at Bruce.Messelt@co.sherburne.mn.us.