

Council Authorizes Refunds To Late Taxpayers Until Jan. 23

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St. Charles County, Missouri - The County Council passed an emergency bill Wednesday, giving St. Charles County taxpayers a temporary reprieve from fines and interest for payment of real estate property taxes after Dec. 31.

In a special emergency session, the Council enacted a measure by a 6-1 vote allowing taxpayers to pay their bills by 5 p.m. Jan. 23 without incurring fines or interest penalties and also authorized refunding any money paid in fines or interest penalties after the due date.

The Council felt this action was necessary because property tax bills did not go out on time, and some people said they couldn't get them paid by the due date.

Following state statute, the County cannot change the due date of Dec. 31, but it could forgive the fines and interest.

County Collector Michelle McBride said the tax bills were in the mail on Dec. 19. Normally, they would have been mailed by Dec. 2. A glitch in the new computer software caused the delay.

McBride told the Council she didn't think this bill was necessary because taxpayers already "have up to three years to appeal" any fines or interest penalties.

The Council disagreed. "This is a goodwill gesture on the part of the County," said Councilman Joe Cronin, District 1.

Council Chairman Joe Brazil, District 2, said "all we're trying to do is give the people this extra grace period they deserve."

Councilman Terry Hollander, District 5, said "in no way does this bill diminish the effort of those who paid their bills on time."

Councilman Jerry Daugherty, who voted against the bill, said he didn't think the bill "was fair to those who made the effort" to pay on time.

Councilwoman Nancy Matheny said she wanted to point out that the bill makes it clear that anyone who pays their taxes after Jan. 23 will incur the penalties and interest back to Jan. 1.

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