



COVID-19 Property Tax Financing Program Policy

Title

1. This Policy is entitled the “COVID-19 Property Tax Financing Program Policy.”

2. **Objective:**

The Town of Oxford is concerned about the health and safety of residents. The Town of Oxford recognizes that facilitating the payment of property taxes in installments will better allow Nova Scotians to follow the public health directives endorsed by the Government of Nova Scotia. This Policy responds to that need by establishing a one-time property tax installment payment program (the “Program”) for owners of residential and commercial properties negatively affected by the COVID-19 global pandemic.

3. **Authority:**

Sections 111 and 112 of the *Municipal Government Act* give Council the authority to provide for the payment of taxes by installments.

Section 113 of the *Municipal Government Act* allows Council to charge interest for non-payment of taxes when due, at a rate determined by policy.

4. **Scope:**

4.1 Residential - The following owners of residential property are eligible to participate in the Program:

4.1.1 An owner of a residential property that is the owner’s primary residence, where the owner has experienced financial hardship through a significant reduction in income

due to the State of Emergency declared by the Government of Nova Scotia in response to COVID-19, demonstrated through receipt of Provincial or Federal program assistance, or a Record of Employment (ROE) demonstrating layoff from employment after March 1, 2020;

4.1.2 An owner of a residential property where the owner was a registered Tourism Operator with Tourism Nova Scotia for the 2019 tourist season (excluding AirBNBs);

4.2 Commercial - The following owners of commercial property are eligible to participate in the Program:

4.2.1 An owner of a taxable commercial property where the property has a total taxable 2020 property assessment value equal to or less than \$2 Million and where the owner's business or building located on the property has experienced financial hardship through loss of revenue related to the State of Emergency, demonstrated through the following:

4.2.1.1 A comparison of the total business sales for the months of March, April, and May in 2019 and 2020, showing a reduction of sales in the amount of 30% or more from that period in 2019 to 2020.

4.2.2 An owner of a taxable commercial property who has experienced financial hardship through loss of revenue related to the State of Emergency, regardless of the assessed value, where:

4.2.2.1 The owner of the property is a tourism operator registered under the *Tourist Accommodations Registration Act* and the property is used for tourist accommodations (e.g., hotels, motels, bed and breakfasts);

4.3 Exclusions: Regardless of sections 4.1 and 4.2 of this policy, the following are not eligible to participate in the Program:

4.3.1 Property owners who have not experienced financial hardship through loss of revenue related to the State of Emergency;

4.3.2 Property owners who have received compensation from Business Interruption Insurance towards the payment of property taxes;

4.3.3 Properties occupied by daycare centres in receipt of federal or provincial funding, or those in receipt of other emergency funding;

4.3.4 Properties used for landfill, pipeline, managed forest, parking, and commercial vacant land;

4.3.5 Properties for which there is an active tax agreement with the Town of Oxford through legislation or bylaw;

4.3.6 Properties owned by non-profit organizations that are funded by the Town of Oxford or that are partially exempted from property tax;

4.3.7 All properties managed under payment-in lieu-programs.

4.4 General Requirements

4.4.1 Installments shall be payable by the person, company or other entity assessed for the property for the current fiscal year.

4.4.2 In order for taxes for a property to qualify for the Program, the taxes for the property must not be in arrears at the time of application.

4.5 Application

4.5.1 Property owners wishing to apply to participate in the Program for a property must complete and submit to the Town of Oxford an application through the online portal located at <https://nspropertytaxprogram.ca/>.

4.4.3 The application deadline to participate in the Program for the Town of Oxford is June 30th, 2020.

5. **Administration**

5.1 Tax Installments

5.1.1 For applications meeting the Program criteria set out above, property tax payments normally due between June 1st, 2020 and September 30th, 2020 for approved properties may be paid in installments as follows.

5.1.2 For each property, Program participants will pay tax installments as follows:

5.1.2.1 Payments of \$25 per month for six months, payable on or before the last day of each month, commencing in the month the property tax payment is normally due. For further clarification, minimum monthly payments are

due by the last day of each month beginning in June through to and including November 2020.

5.1.2.2 Following these six months at \$25 per month, monthly payments equal to 1/24th of the balance of the amount eligible for the Program plus interest as set out below. These monthly payments are payable on or before the last day of each month and continue for 24 months.

5.1.4 The rate of interest for the Program will be 1.35% per year.

5.1.5 Interest on amounts owing under the Program will be calculated commencing on the date the property tax payment is normally due and continuing until all installments have been paid.

5.2 Terms of the Program

5.2.1 The Senior Accountant, or their delegate, shall approve qualifying applicants.

5.2.2 Payments under the Program must remain in good standing with the Town of Oxford throughout the duration of the Program.

5.2.3 Default in payment of an installment when due will result in the following:

5.2.3.1 The balance of outstanding taxes on the applicable property and interest will become immediately due and payable; and

5.2.3.2 The outstanding taxes and interest then owing will become subject to the municipality's regular rate of interest for overdue taxes of 1.5% per month, compounded to equal 18% per year.

5.2.4 All amounts owing and payable on the property tax account that are not included in the Program (i.e. other valid written payment arrangements) are due on their normal dates and any amounts not paid when due will be subject to the Town's regular rate of interest for overdue taxes of 1.5% per month, compounded to equal 18% per year.

5.2.5 Payments received by the Town from a property owner will first be applied to any installments due under the Program, in priority to any other taxes or other amounts owing by the owner to the Town of Oxford.

6. Responsibilities

6.1 Council will:

6.1.1 Monitor the implementation and administration of this policy and make any amendments required for the effective and efficient operation of the Program.

6.2 The Chief Administrative Officer will:

6.2.1 Be responsible for the administration and implementation of this policy and the Program; and

6.2.2 Identify necessary amendments to this policy in consultation with Council and managerial staff and make recommendations accordingly to Council.

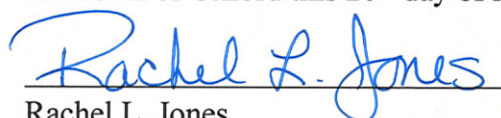
7. **General Provisions**

Payments received by mail and/or through online banking are deemed to be paid **on the date received by the Town**. Property owners must allow sufficient mailing and/or electronic processing time to ensure payments are received by the Town of Oxford on or before the due date.

Certification

I, Rachel L. Jones, Chief Administrative Officer of the Town of Oxford, do hereby certify that the policy, of which the foregoing is a true copy, was duly passed at a duly called meeting of the Town Council of the Town of Oxford held on the 19th day of May 2020.

GIVEN under the hand of the Chief Administrative Officer and the corporate seal of the Town of Oxford this 20th day of May 2020.



Rachel L. Jones
Chief Administrative Officer