From: Susan Reneau
To: John Engen; Grp. City Council and City Web Site; Ginny Merriam; tylergernant@missoulacounty.us; Jessica Miller
Subject: RE: Give all property taxpayers a break if the courthouse is closed to taxpayers.
Date: Thursday, October 29, 2020 5:39:34 PM

Thanks, John. My focus is keeping our businesses open, our roads clear, and our police and fire department fully funded. As a property owner on a fixed income now, an increased real estate value to my house means higher taxes. There can't be affordable housing in Missoula if the city council and you increase additional services that property owners have to pay for. Remember the long-time property owners on fixed income and residents with a low income that all pay property taxes.

Our government offices need to be open to all of us so business can be conducted. It is not right that we are charged for use of a credit card to pay any amount of a tax bill, as I said before. I am sure next year, my tax bill will exceed $3,000 every six months. That "free" bus service that no one rides isn't free. With the reduction of students at the University of Montana that use the bus service, the "free" bus service needs to be reduced or eliminated, and many of us wonder how we taxpayers can afford electric new buses when no one rides them.

Parks that everyone enjoys but only property owners pay for are not free. The parks we have now are expensive to maintain and are maintained by property owners' tax payments.

All things to think about that are on my mind as a property tax payer. I'm not lucky. I worked hard for what I have, as have all the others that own property. Have concern for them and mercy when you think of creative new services and projects funded by us property owners.

Thanks again.

Susan Campbell Reneau

From: John Engen <EngenJ@ci.missoula.mt.us>
Sent: Thursday, October 29, 2020 4:28 PM
To: Susan Reneau <bluemountain@montana.com>
Cc: Grp. City Council and City Web Site <Council@ci.missoula.mt.us>; Ginny Merriam <MerriamG@ci.missoula.mt.us>; tylergernant@missoulacounty.us; Jessica Miller <MillerJ@ci.missoula.mt.us>
Subject: Re: Give all property taxpayers a break if the courthouse is closed to taxpayers.

Good afternoon, Ms. Reneau, and thanks for your note.

I've copied Tyler Gernant, Missoula County's Clerk and Recorder, who I know will appreciate hearing your concerns with regard to processing tax payments and can address them directly.

With regard to your general remarks concerning property taxes, thank you. We continue to do our best to balance increasing expectations of service, community priorities as expressed by residents and voters, increasing expenses and sensitivity to rising costs of home ownership as a function of property taxes.

John

--
John Engen
Mayor
City of Missoula
435 Ryman Street
Missoula, Montana 59801
jengen@ci.missoula.mt.us
Office: 406-552-6001

On Oct 28, 2020, at 10:25 AM, Susan Reneau <bluemountain@montana.com> wrote:

Dear City Council and Mayor Engen,

I started trying to pay my half-year property taxes, which this time totals $2,381.37 for the last six months. It is due Nov. 30. First I tried to pay online. The computer option gives you messages that you can't get through to process your tax payment. I logged onto the Missoula County government website.

Then I tried to call the property tax office. I learned that the phone lines can only handle 15 calls at a time before it cuts you off and disconnects your call. The voice mail system is an additional frustration to even get to the property tax office to then get disconnected. I finally reached a lovely lady in the department after calling the court system who transferred me to the property tax office to avoid the phone system that cuts me off. She explained the phone system and payment options to me so that's how I know what's happening.

Since property taxpayers can't make an appointment to pay taxes in person and the electronic and phone systems are not working properly for the volume of people trying to pay their taxes, you as our government officials need to fix this.

Walmart and Costco are open for thousands of shoppers to mill about, but property tax payers can't walk into the government offices they pay for to pay their taxes so your government services can function. That's ironic, don't you think?

I recommend that appointments be allowed to pay their property taxes in person if they can't get onto the computer server to do this or get through on the phone. I also recommend that you do not charge 3% service fee (a penalty) if a property taxpayer wants to pay by VISA or MasterCard if their tax bill is more than $3,000.

By charging property taxpayers more money to use a credit card when the government offices are shut down, you further stress out and anger the very people that fund your government programs and services. Any property owner that has to pay $3,000 or more in taxes to Missoula County government should NOT be charged an additional 3% service fee if they use a credit card.

This doesn't impact me but it impacts many of my friends and even people I don't know. Elderly and or other people that don't have computers or know how to pay online are not able to pay by computer and need to pay by phone, but if the phones don't work, they become very stressed and angry. I know life isn't fair, but this isn't fair to them.

Next year, I am sure, I will have a tax bill much higher than my current six-month bill, so I'll be in this same boat. NOTHING is free in this world City Council, and the add-on programs and services you approve that are not the basics like roads and law and order are paid for by property owners that pay the taxes that keep going up.

You as elected officials responsible for managing the Missoula City budget and working with the Missoula County officials, efforts must continue to reduce the tax bill to ALL property owners if you truly believe in affordable housing.

Sincerely,

Susan Campbell Reneau
4 Martha's Court
Missoula, MT 59803

719-661-4037

Messages and attachments sent to or from this e-mail account pertaining to City business may be considered public or private records depending on the message content. The City is often required by law to provide public records to individuals requesting them. The City is also required by law to protect private, confidential information. This message is intended for the use of the individual or entity named above. If you are not the intended recipient of this transmission, please notify the sender immediately, do not forward the message to anyone, and delete all copies. Thank you