



THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF WASAGA BEACH

SECTION NAME: Financial Management	POLICY NUMBER: 4-16
POLICY: Property Tax Billing and Collection Policy	REVIEW DATE: March 2031
EFFECTIVE DATE: March 26, 2026	REVISIONS:
	ADMINISTERED BY: Deputy Treasurer

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline the responsibilities and procedures that shall ensure a timely, accurate and efficient billing and collection of property taxes.

It shall establish consistent guidelines to be followed and shall streamline activities involved in the billing and collection of property taxes.

It shall provide an open and transparent framework that can be used as a reference document for staff, Council and the public.

2.0 SCOPE

This policy establishes key aspects of the billing and collection processes related to property taxes in accordance with the Municipal Act, the Assessment Act and the Municipal Affairs Act.

The Town of Wasaga Beach water/wastewater billing and collection process is covered under a separate policy and is not impacted by this tax collection policy. However, in the case when outstanding water/wastewater balances are transferred to the actual tax roll, this policy shall apply to those amounts that have been added.

This policy shall be reviewed at least every four years, or more frequently as legislation changes.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions shall apply:

Arrears – Outstanding property taxes that remain unpaid after the due date.

Authorized Third Party – An individual or entity other than the registered property owner who has been granted written authorization by the property owner, in a form acceptable to the Chief Financial Officer or delegate, to receive information or act on the property owner's behalf with respect to a property tax account.

Due Date – The date by which payment for a property tax bill must be received to avoid penalties or interest.

E-Billing – The delivery of property tax bills to an account holder through email in lieu of paper billing. Enrollment in e-billing does not relieve the account holder of responsibility to review and pay bills by the applicable due date.

Fees and Charges By-law – A by-law passed by Council that sets out the rates for municipal services including NSF fees and administrative charges.

Final Bill – The property tax bill issued following Council's approval of the annual operating and capital budget and passage of the tax rate by-law.

Interest / Penalty – A monthly charge, calculated as a percentage, applied to overdue property tax account balances in accordance with the Municipal Act.

Interim Bill – The property tax bill issued at the beginning of the applicable year, prior to Council's approval of the annual operating and capital budget and passage of the tax rate by-law, based on a percentage of the previous year's taxes.

Lien – A legal claim registered against a property for unpaid property taxes, providing the Town with a priority security in accordance with the Municipal Act.

MPAC (Municipal Property Assessment Corporation) – The Municipal Property Assessment Corporation, a not-for-profit corporation established under the *Municipal Property Assessment Corporation Act, 1997*, responsible for assessing and classifying properties in Ontario for municipal and education taxation purposes.

Municipal Act – The *Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c. 25*, as amended from time to time, which governs the authority and responsibilities of municipalities in Ontario.

NSF (Non-Sufficient Funds) Fee – A fee applied to an account when a payment is returned by a financial institution due to non-sufficient funds, closed accounts, stopped payments or other reasons in accordance with the Town's Fees and Charges By-law.

PAP (Pre-Authorized Payment Plan) – A payment method in which the Town withdraws property tax payments directly from a property owner's bank account on scheduled dates upon completion of a PAP agreement form.

Property Owner – The individual(s), partnership, or corporation listed as the legal owner of a property in the Ontario Land Registry system.

Returned Payment – Any payment made to the Town that is returned or reversed by a financial institution for any reason, including but not limited to non-sufficient funds, closed accounts, invalid account information or stopped payments.

Supplementary and Omitted Billings – Property tax billings issued as a result of a Supplementary Assessment under Section 311 or and Omitted Assessment under Section 312 of the Municipal Act, as determined by MPAC, to add or correct assessment that was not previously included on the tax roll and results in additional property taxes owing for the applicable taxation year(s).

Tax Arrears Certificate – A certificate registered on title under the Municipal Act when a property tax account becomes eligible for tax sale proceedings.

Taxes – Property taxes levied by the Town under the authority of the Municipal Act, including any amounts added to the tax roll in accordance with legislation.

Town – The Corporation of the Town of Wasaga Beach, including its officers, employees and agents where the context requires.

Treasury Department – The department within the Town of Wasaga Beach responsible for financial functions including billing, collection, and account management.

4.0 BILLING AND COLLECTION PROCEDURES

4.1 Issuance of Property Tax Bills

Property tax bills shall contain all required information under Section 343(2) of the Municipal Act, and any other information deemed necessary by the Chief Financial Officer or designate.

Property tax bills will be issued to the property owner in accordance with section 5 of this policy.

Property owners whose taxes are paid through a mortgage holder or who are enrolled in a preauthorized payment plan will receive copies of interim and final property tax bills for information purposes only, as payments are remitted through those arrangements.

4.2 Interim Billing

As provided for in the Municipal Act, an interim property tax bill shall be issued for each property included on the returned tax assessment roll.

The interim tax bill shall be calculated as fifty percent (50%) of the previous year's taxes billed and shall be payable in two (2) installments.

The interim bill shall be issued prior to the end of February with installment due dates on March 15 and May 15.

4.3 Final Billing

Following Council's approval of the annual operating and capital budget and passage of the property tax rate By-law, a final property tax bill shall be issued for each property on the tax assessment roll.

The amount due on the final bill shall be calculated as the assessed property value multiplied by the applicable tax rate for the taxation year, less the amount billed on the interim bill. This amount due will be adjusted for any arrears or credit balances on the account at the time of billing.

The final tax bill may include additional charges authorized by legislation or municipal by-law, including but not limited to encroachment fees, property standards charges and local improvement charges.

The final bill shall be issued prior to the end of June with installment due dates on July 15 and September 15.

4.4 Supplementary and Omitted Billings

The Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) may provide the Town with supplementary and/or omitted assessment values in accordance with Sections 33 and 34 of the Assessment Act for the current tax year and up to two (2) prior taxation years where:

- land has been omitted from the assessment roll,
- the use of the property changes,
- property is improved due to construction, an addition or renovation.

MPAC issues notice of supplementary and/or omitted assessments directly to the property owner. It is the property owner's responsibility to ensure that their contact information is kept current with MPAC. Subsequent to issuing that notice, MPAC will provide a summary report of supplementary and/or omitted assessments to the Town.

The Town will bill the current property owner for supplementary and omitted property assessments. Supplementary and omitted tax bills shall be calculated by multiplying the applicable assessment value by the tax rate for the relevant year. Where the assessment applies to only a portion of the year, the taxes shall be prorated accordingly.

Supplementary and omitted tax bills shall be payable in two (2) instalments as indicated on the issued bill and are payable in addition to any amounts owing on interim or final tax bills.

For properties enrolled in a preauthorized payment plan, supplementary and omitted billings shall be handled as follows:

- Due Date Plans – the installment amounts will be withdrawn from the authorized bank account on the due date noted on the bill.
- Monthly Plans - amounts will not be automatically adjusted for supplementary bills unless requested in writing and must otherwise be paid separately.

5.0 DELIVERY OF BILLS AND NOTICES

5.1 Delivery

Property owners will receive their property tax bills through mail unless they have made an election to receive them through e-billing and have provided a valid email address. Arrears notices and other related correspondence will be received by mail.

The Town will deliver property tax billings to Canada Post and email electronic tax billings to property owners with no less than twenty-one (21) calendar days prior to the applicable due date.

5.2 Delivery Address

It is the property owner's responsibility to notify the Town in writing of any mailing address changes and/or email billing address changes.

Section 343(6) of the Municipal Act identifies that bills shall be sent to the property owner's last known residence or place of business or to the premises where the charges are payable for, unless the property owner or their lawyer directs otherwise. This direction continues until it is revoked in writing.

Any changes in mailing and/or email address changes will be processed within 10 business days of receipt.

5.3 Deemed Received

Any tax bill, arrears notice, or other related correspondence sent by ordinary mail, is considered delivered to and received by the addressee unless the notice is returned by Canada Post.

Any tax bill sent out through e-billing is considered delivered to and received by the addressee.

Regardless of the property owner's choice of delivery method, it is the responsibility of the property owner to contact the Town immediately if they do not receive their property tax bill.

Failure to receive a property tax bill does not exempt a property owner from paying the property taxes by the due date or any penalty and interest added as a result of late payment.

6.0 CHANGE OF OWNERSHIP AND ACCOUNT CONFIDENTIALITY

6.1 Ownership Changes

Property ownership changes on property tax accounts will be updated only after the change has been completed and registered with the Ontario Land Registry system.

It is the responsibility of the property owner and/or their lawyer to forward a copy of the registered transfer document to the Treasury Department. Ownership changes will not be processed from any information source other than the registered transfer document.

The address indicated on the transfer document will be used as the mailing address for the account unless notification is received in writing as noted in Section 5.2 of this policy.

6.2 Account Confidentiality and Authorized Access

The Town shall not disclose account balances, billing history, payment activity, or any other account-specific information to any person other than the registered property owner.

Disclosure of account information to a third party shall only be permitted where the Town has received a signed Power of Attorney for Property or a completed authorization form signed by the registered property owner, authorizing the release of information to the named individual or organization.

The acceptance of a payment by a third party does not, in itself, constitute authorization to disclose account information.

Confidential account information shall not be released to unauthorized parties, including but not limited to family members, tenants, or agents, unless proper authorization has been provided.

7.0 ASSESSMENT ADJUSTMENTS, REBATES AND ASSESSMENT ROLL CHANGES

7.1 Section 357 and 358 Applications - Tax Reductions

Applications made under Sections 357 and 358 of the Municipal Act must be received by the Town on or before the last day of February of the year following the year to which the application relates.

Applications must be completed in full and include all required supporting documentation.

Treasury staff shall review applications for completeness and eligibility and forward approved applications to MPAC for processing, where applicable.

Any resulting assessment or tax adjustments shall be applied to the property tax account within one (1) month of receiving confirmation or direction from MPAC.

7.2 Write-Offs and Rebates Resulting from Assessment Changes

The Town shall receive notifications of changes in assessment or tax class from MPAC from time to time.

Upon receipt of such notification, the Town shall process the related assessment and property tax adjustments within one (1) month, subject to whether the final billing for the affected taxation year has been issued.

These adjustments are processed to ensure the accuracy and balancing of the Collector's Roll in accordance with the amended Assessment Roll.

7.3 Severances and Consolidations of Properties

From time to time, property owners may apply for severances under the authority of the Planning Act. Where a severance is approved, MPAC will provide divided assessment values for the newly created parcels.

Under the authority of Section 356 of the Municipal Act, the Treasurer may divide the assessment roll to reflect the severed parcels and allocate property taxes accordingly.

Upon receipt of divided assessment information from MPAC, the Town shall monitor the returned assessment roll to ensure the severance is reflected in the subsequent taxation year.

The Town may not recalculate property taxes for partial taxation years resulting from severances. It is the responsibility of the property owner and/or their legal representatives to address the allocation of taxes between vendors and purchasers as part of the property transfer process.

Property consolidations are processed by MPAC at the written request of the property owner. Property owners are responsible for contacting MPAC directly to request consolidation.

8.0 PAYMENT OPTIONS

8.1 Accepted Payment Methods

The following payment methods are accepted for property taxes:

1. In person: during regular business hours at the Administration Building (30 Lewis Street, Wasaga Beach) by cash, cheque, post dated cheque, debit card and credit card;
2. After hours: cheques may be dropped into the after-hours mailbox located outside the east entrance of the Administration Building;
3. Mail: cheques may be mailed; however, they must be received on or before the due date in order to avoid interest / penalty;
4. Website: through the Town's online portal using a credit card, fees may apply;
5. Online banking: through the property owner's financial institution using telephone or internet banking. Processing time to transfer a payment to the Town's account can be up to 3 business days. Payment must be received in the Treasury Department on/before the due date to avoid interest / penalty;
6. In person banking: in person at most Canadian financial institutions. Processing time to transfer a payment to the Town's account is at least 3 business days. The payment must be received in the Treasury Department on/before the due date to avoid penalty and interest;
7. Pre-Authorized Payments (PAP): the Town offers two standard PAP plans available to property owners who are not in arrears. A completed PAP agreement must be submitted and approved to begin the enrollment process.

The two plans are:

- monthly program – an estimate is made of the upcoming annual charges and withdrawn in 6 equal payments from January to June with the payment amount recalculated after the final property tax bill is issued for the remaining payments from July to October, or

- instalment due date plan - withdraws the payments as shown on the property tax bill on the due dates (four withdrawals each year).

Full details of plan options and terms are on the PAP Plan form.

Credit card payments are subject to applicable surcharge or convenience fees and may be subject to transaction limits established by the Town from time to time. The maximum accepted per billing cycle is \$10,000.00.

8.2 Returned Payments

Payments that are returned by the bank for any reason will be subject to an NSF fee as set out in the Town's Fees and Charges by-law schedule.

If a property is enrolled in a PAP and their payment fails to clear the bank, notice of the returned payment will be mailed to the mailing address on file. An attempt to repull the payment amount plus the NSF fee will be made on the thirtieth (30th) day of the same month or the next business day if the thirtieth is on a weekend or holiday. The property may be removed from the PAP program in accordance with the PAP agreement terms for repeated returned payments.

8.3 Application of Payments

In accordance with Section 347(1) of the Municipal Act, payments shall first be applied against penalty and interest charges owing in respect of property tax balances according to the length of time the charges have been owing, with charges imposed earlier being discharged before charges imposed later.

Payment shall then be applied against the property taxes owing according to the length of time they have been owing, with those imposed earlier being discharged before taxes levied later.

Section 341 of the Municipal Act provides that a municipality may apply refunds from appeals to any current tax liability. The Town shall apply any refund resulting from an appeal, request for reconsideration, or other legislative reduction first to the taxpayer's account to reduce any outstanding balance. A taxpayer may request in writing a refund of any remaining credit balance.

8.4 Payment(s) made to the wrong account

In the instance where a property owner has made a payment to an incorrect account number, or to their water/wastewater account instead of the property tax account (or vice versa), they should contact the Town immediately to request that the payment be transferred to the correct account.

Any interest / penalties that have been accrued on the account will be reversed if the Treasury Department is informed within three (3) months of the error. Interest / penalties may apply to the incorrect account once the payment has been transferred.

An administrative fee will be charged to the tax account in accordance with the Fees & Charges by-law for each payment transfer.

9.0 INTEREST / PENALTY

9.1 Interest / Penalty Charges

Interest / penalty charges shall be assessed at the rate of 1.25%, or the highest rate allowed under the Municipal Act, and will be added to all past due accounts on the 2nd business day of the month following a due date and monthly thereafter until paid.

Interest / penalties on property tax charges will not be compounded and will only be added to accounts with balances over \$20.00

9.2 Adjustment to Interest and Penalties

Late payment charges (interest and penalties) shall not be waived, reduced or cancelled, except in the limited circumstances expressly permitted under the Municipal Act. Adjustments may be made only in the following circumstances:

1. Taxes are adjusted under Sections 354, 357, 358 of the Municipal Act;
2. Taxes are adjusted following a decision of the Assessment Review Board;
3. Taxes are adjusted in accordance with a decision of a court of competent jurisdiction; or
4. The interest or penalty was charged as a result of error or omission made by Treasury staff.

No other requests for adjustment shall be considered. In accordance with the Municipal Act, the Town has no authority to grant interest and penalty adjustments outside of the above circumstances.

10.0 TAX ARREARS COLLECTION

10.1 Arrears Collection

It is the property owner's responsibility to ensure that all balances of property tax accounts are paid in full and on time.

Any past due balances are disclosed on property tax bills and arrears notices, including Interim bills mailed in February and Final bills mailed in June.

Arrears notices shall be mailed in April and October of each year for any property tax account with a past due balance exceeding \$20.00.

10.2 Properties Eligible for Tax Sale

Pursuant to Section 349(1) of the Municipal Act, property taxes may be recovered with costs as a debt due to the Town from the original owner and/or any subsequent owner of the assessed land. Property taxes constitute a special lien on the property with priority over any other claim, except a claim by the Crown.

Property tax accounts that are more than two (2) years in arrears are eligible for tax sale proceedings in accordance with the Municipal Act.

10.3 Payment Arrangements Prior to Tax Sale

Payment arrangements may be entered into with a property owner whose account is in arrears, provided such arrangements are made prior to the registration of a Tax Arrears Certificate.

Payment arrangements must include all tax arrears, current taxes, and accrued or estimated interest / penalties sufficient to ensure that payment in full is realized within a specified period of time not exceeding thirty-six (36) months.

Interest / penalties shall continue to accrue during the term of any payment arrangement until the account is paid in full.

Payment arrangements shall require payment by pre-authorized payment plan or by post-dated cheques. Additional payments may be made at any time during the repayment period.

No third-party payment shall be refused where sufficient information is provided to properly apply the payment to the account. Confidential account information shall not be disclosed to unauthorized third parties.

Where two (2) consecutive payments are returned, or where two (2) payments are returned within a six (6) month period, the payment arrangement shall be deemed void without further notice, and the account shall proceed to tax sale proceedings.

10.4 Commencement of Tax Sale Proceedings

Where payment arrangements are not entered into for a property tax account that is more than two (2) years in arrears, the Town shall commence tax sale proceedings in accordance with the Municipal Act.

In November of each year, notices shall be mailed to property owners, at the current mailing address on file, whose accounts will be eligible for tax sale as of January 1 of the following year, outlining deadlines for payment or for entering into a payment arrangement. Notices will be considered delivered to and received by the addressee unless the notice is returned by Canada Post. Failure to receive the notice will not change the timeline of this process.

Where payment arrangements are not entered into by the specified deadline, a Tax Arrears Certificate shall be registered against the property. The Town may engage an external firm to process statutory notices and related requirements.

10.5 Post-Registration and Extension Agreements

Following registration of a Tax Arrears Certificate, no partial payments shall be accepted unless an extension agreement is in place.

The property owner shall have one (1) year from the date of registration of the Tax Arrears Certificate to pay the account in full with one payment, including all taxes, penalties, interest, and legal and administrative costs, or to enter into an extension agreement. Note that once the Tax Arrears Certificate is registered, partial payments cannot be accepted.

For the purposes of administering municipal tax sale procedures, Council authorizes the Treasurer or designate to enter into extension agreements in accordance with the Municipal Act and the Town of Wasaga Beach delegation by-law.

An extension agreement may be requested by the property owner, their spouse, mortgage holder, or legal agent prior to the expiry of the one-year redemption period. Upon execution of an extension agreement, the tax sale process shall be suspended until the terms of the agreement are fulfilled.

Where an extension agreement is defaulted, the tax sale process shall recommence from the point at which it was suspended.

10.6 Sale of Property for Tax Arrears

Where, at the end of the applicable period, the property tax account has not been paid in full and no extension agreement is in place, the Municipal Act provides that the property may be sold by sealed tender or public auction.

The Town's preferred method of sale is by sealed tender. Where a public auction is used, it shall be conducted in accordance with Section 379 of the Municipal Act.

11.0 DISCRETIONARY AUTHORITY

The Chief Financial Officer, or designate, has the authority to exercise discretion in exceptional or unusual circumstances in the application of these policies where unusual circumstances are apparent. The guiding principles for this discretion shall be ensuring legislative requirements are met, ensuring fairness to all property owners, and that the overall best interests of the Town are met. The Town is not authorized to waive or reduce interest or penalty charges except as expressly permitted in this policy, as these charges, once applied are treated as taxes owing and subject to the Municipal Act legislative requirements.

12.0 INTERPRETATION AND CONFLICT

In the event of a conflict between this Policy and any applicable legislation or by-law, including the Municipal Act, 2001 or the Town's Fees and Charges By-law, the legislation or by-law shall prevail.