

Rume Ogbobine

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: August 13, 2021 12:14 PM
To: Rocky View Tax Section
Cc: Division 8, Samantha Wright
Subject: [EXTERNAL] - Tax Penalty Appeal for [REDACTED]

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August 13, 2021

Rockyview County

Attention: Council Members and Tax Department

Re: Tax Penalty Appeal for [REDACTED]

This letter is to request an exemption from the tax penalty at [REDACTED] My reasons are that:

- We definitely did not receive the tax bill in the Canada Post mail
- We had significant family matters ongoing at the time, and
- Rockyview County did not make us aware of what the bill amount was in any other way, either at the time of the tax assessment or through any reminders that easily could have been sent.
- When we received the notice in mid-July stating what our tax bill was, and what the penalty was, we paid it immediately

To the first point, we pay our bills immediately when they arrive in either email or the regular mail. We have a very good system to ensure important mail is not misplaced, and we simply did not receive this piece of mail.

We had family issues going on at the time, that might have distracted us from inquiring about the lack of a bill (close family member having glioblastoma and brain surgery on June 16, for which they likely only have months to live, a new grandson born in late April and hospitalized in May, and another granddaughter due in early July). To be clear, these only would have distracted us from not inquiring why we didn't get a bill. If we would have got the bill, we definitely have a system that would have ensured that it was paid.

To the third point, we do not feel it is reasonable that Rockyview makes no effort to remind its taxpayers, whom the Council serves, of the bill payment amount and date. The only other correspondence is the tax assessment early in the year, however it neither makes us aware of the amount, nor offers what to do in case the mail doesn't arrive. The County Tax Department has made me aware, upon us inquiring, that in the year 2020, the County collected over \$1,500,000 in penalties alone. That means over 2000 property owners are affected, and that is a high percentage of homeowners especially considering some are on the TIPP program. This should give Council members great concern! It is very obvious that the County has an issue with property owners not paying taxes on time. Clearly one of the biggest reasons for property owners not able to pay bills on time is mail not arriving – either due to Canada Post or the County's internal systems. Having talked with other property owners in Rockyview, it is not uncommon for mail to go missing, and that is documented. Furthermore, Rockyview Tax Department makes no effort to register mail of such importance,

when they clearly make no effort to remind owners of taxes due. This is even though they have access to our email addresses or could send out a second letter in June as a reminder. While the County may perceive that they have the legal right to charge an onerous fee while making no effort to ensure mail arrives, or remind its constituents, that would not be the proper and right position to take. In the business I was in prior to retirement, on something legal but potentially controversial we would ask ourselves "how would it look if this was written up in the newspaper?". This would not look good if described in a newspaper article. And it's not what we expect of our elected Council members. Finally, when we did receive the tax notice and penalty, we paid it immediately. This is what we do with all our bills.

I feel strongly about this request, and trust you find it appropriate to exempt us from the tax penalty. We await your response.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted signature block]