

## City Council delivers relief options for Penticton residents and businesses

(Penticton, BC – April 24, 2020) – City Council has agreed upon a package of relief options for Penticton residents and business owners who have been impacted by COVID-19.

Council reviewed various options during its April 23 special meeting, while taking into consideration the findings of two City-issued resident and business surveys. They decided upon a package that will include a 60-day property tax deferral, a one-time grant for property taxes, utility relief, and a neutral business tax multiplier, among others.

“Many of you throughout our community have been hit hard financially. We hear you and we are deeply grateful for all the feedback you have provided as we work toward our city’s relief and recovery. We are here to support you and to ensure our economy comes out of this stronger and more connected than ever before,” said Penticton Mayor, John Vassilaki.

Relief options include:

- **Property taxes:** A one-time grant equivalent to 2.9 per cent will be applied, effectively reducing the 2020 property tax increase to 0 per cent. In addition, all taxpayers have been granted a 60-day, penalty-free grace period on payments to Sept. 30, 2020.
- **Utility relief:** The traditional 10 per cent early payment discounted rate will be applied on all utility invoices (electric, water and sewer) for all customers, regardless of whether the payment is made on time. In addition, the City will follow up with the Government of B.C. regarding a request for electrical subsidy funding, which would enable the City to match BC Hydro’s three-month credit.
- **Building permit fees:** These fees will be waived for homeowner renovation projects up to \$100,000 in construction value until October 2020 in a bid to encourage home building projects.
- **Business licences:** Late penalties will be waived on licences and enforcement of delinquent accounts suspended until October 2020.
- **Vacant buildings:** This Good Neighbour Bylaw requirement has been temporarily suspended for buildings that aren’t occupied due to COVID-19.
- **Development cost charges:** The planned July 1, 2020 Development Cost Charge increases have been postponed to 2021.
- **Business tax multiplier:** A neutral effect will be applied to the tax amount so everyone sees the same percentage change.

“Although Council has approved a 60-day property tax deferral, we encourage those unaffected financially by COVID-19 to still make their property tax payments by July 31, 2020,” said Chief Financial Officer, Jim Bauer. “This will help maintain the financial health of the City so we can continue to provide the essential services that our community requires.”

### **Option to defer property taxes**

The City would like to remind homeowners about the option to defer property taxes through the Government of B.C.’s Property Tax Deferment program. This is a low-interest loan that is available to people [over the age of 55](#) as well as [families with children](#).

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### **Contacts:**

Jim Bauer  
Chief Financial Officer  
City of Penticton  
250-490-2480

Philip Cooper  
Communication Manager  
City of Penticton  
250-490-2583