Minutes – Executive Policy Committee – December 9, 2020

REPORTS

Item No. 20 Discount(s) to be allowed for the Prepayment of 2021 Realty, Personal Property and Business Taxes

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

The Executive Policy Committee concurred in the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service and recommended to Council:

1. That prepayment discounts be given on payments received by the Assessment and Taxation Department during the months of January and February 2021 at the following discount rates:

Realty & Personal Property Tax - payable at par up to June 30th	Face Value Discount Rate	Equivalent Annual Discount Rate
January	0.058%	0.15%
February	0.047%	0.15%
Business Tax – payable at par up to May 31st		
January	0.046%	0.15%
February	0.035%	0.15%

2. That, pursuant to Subsection 334(3) of The City of Winnipeg Charter, Council enact the Taxes – Discounts for Prepayments By-law (draft by-law attached as Schedule A) to provide prepayment discounts of the City's 2021 Realty, Personal Property and Business Taxes in accordance with Recommendation 1 of this Report.

3. The 2021 advertising of the prepayment discounts be limited to the City of Winnipeg website.

4. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by Councillor Gillingham,

That the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service be concurred in and forwarded to Council.

Yea:	Bowman, Allard, Browaty, Gillingham, Gilroy, Mayes, Rollins	7
Nay:		0

Carried

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Title: Discount(s) to be allowed for the Prepayment of 2021 Realty, Personal Property and Business Taxes

Critical Path: Executive Policy Committee – Council

AUTHORIZATION

Author	Department Head	CFO	CAO
T. Austin	K. Shields	P. Olafson, Interim CFO	M. Ruta, Interim CAO

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Administration Report requests approval for the 2021 equivalent annual discount rate the City of Winnipeg is offering to property and business owners who elect to pay their taxes in advance of the annual due dates in accordance with Section 334(3) of the City of Winnipeg Charter.

The City's estimated rate of return for the short-term investment is 0.18% and the six-month rate available to the taxpayer at RBC is 0.15% and based on these rates Assessment and Taxation Department is recommending an annual equivalent discount rate of 0.15%, anything lower would result in the taxpayer receiving a better rate at their own financial institution.

Setting the discount rate at 0.15% will be near cost recovery, with the program expecting to result in a deficit of $97 which can be covered within budget.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That prepayment discounts be given on payments received by the Assessment and Taxation Department during the months of January and February 2021 at the following discount rates:

Realty & Personal Property Tax - payable at par up to June 30th	Face Value Discount Rate	Equivalent Annual Discount Rate
January	0.058%	0.15%
February	0.047%	0.15%
Business Tax – payable at par up to May 31st		
January	0.046%	0.15%
February	0.035%	0.15%

2. That, pursuant to Subsection 334(3) of The City of Winnipeg Charter, Council enact the Taxes – Discounts for Prepayments By-law (draft by-law attached as Schedule A) to provide prepayment discounts of the City's 2021 Realty, Personal Property and Business Taxes in accordance with Recommendation 1 of this Report.

3. The 2021 advertising of the prepayment discounts be limited to the City of Winnipeg website.

4. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

REASON FOR THE REPORT

Subsection 334(3) of *The City of Winnipeg Charter* permits the City to provide for the allowance of discounts when taxes are prepaid, as stated below:

> *334(3) Council may pass by-laws in respect of real and personal property taxes and business taxes*
>
> *(c) providing that, when taxes are paid other than by installments, discounts at rates prescribed in the by-law may be allowed on amounts that are prepaid on account of those taxes by dates specified in the by-law.*

Council annually adopts a by-law establishing a discount rate that will financially benefit the City and, at the same time, provide an investment opportunity for taxpayers.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

If approved, the City will offer an annual equivalent discount rate of 0.15% on tax payments made in advance. This recommendation results in a small deficit of $97 and this amount can be covered within budget.

HISTORY/DISCUSSION

The proposed discount rates are based on information received from the Financial Services Branch of Corporate Finance, which considers 0.18% as the City’s short-term investment interest rate for 2021, which is lower than 2020. A discount rate of approximately 0.15% is considered to be fair to both the City and to the taxpayer.

The accelerated cash flow generated by the prepayment of realty, personal property and business taxes increases the City’s short-term investment opportunities for the period January to June. The investment income earned historically exceeds the tax discount given and the costs associated with administering the program, however as the interest rates are much lower due to COVID the department is recommending to continue to offer the program but with scaled back advertising in order to reduce costs. Based on these factors the Assessment and Taxation Department is projecting that there will be a small deficit in 2021.

The 2020 accelerated cash flow generated by the prepayments of realty, personal property and business taxes was:

2020 Prepayments	$2,394,388
Less: 2020 Actual Discount	7,145
Cost to administer	2,500
	$2,384,743

Using the 2020 actual prepayment information, with the City's 2021 expected short-term investment interest rate of 0.18%, the following represents the interest income that could be expected in 2021 from depositing the tax prepayments:

2021 Projected Investment Income from Prepayments

	Estimated Prepayments (Based on 2020)	# of months invested	2021 Projected Investment Income
January			
Realty and Personal Property Tax	$2,016,024	5	$1,512
Business Tax	57,762	4	35
February			
Realty and Personal Property Tax	320,602	4	192
Business Tax			
2021 Projected Gross Income	$2,394,388		$1,739
less: Discounts and administration costs			1,836
2021 Projected Net Income			**($97)**

As in 2020, this program will be offered as a customer service initiative with full information on the Assessment and Taxation website. However, in order to save costs, there will not be an advertisement placed in the Winnipeg Free Press newspaper. By avoiding this additional cost, the department is projecting deficit of $97. This amount can be covered within budget. In addition, the 311 Customer Contact Centre will be prepared to handle phone calls on this program beginning in January 2021.

It is recommended that Council adopt a by-law to provide for prepayment discounts received by the Assessment and Taxation Department during the months of January and February 2021 at the following discount rates:

Realty & Personal Property Tax - payable at par up to June 30th	Face Value Discount Rate	Equivalent Annual Discount Rate
January	0.058%	0.15%
February	0.047%	0.15%
Business Tax – payable at par up to May 31st		
January	0.046%	0.15%
February	0.035%	0.15%

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Financial Impact Statement

Date: November 12, 2020

Project Name:

First Year of Program **2021**

Discount(s) to be allowed for the Prepayment of 2021 Realty, Personal Property and Business Taxes

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Capital					
Capital Expenditures Required	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Less: Existing Budgeted Costs	-	-	-	-	-
Additional Capital Budget Required	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Funding Sources:					
Debt - Internal	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Debt - External	-	-	-	-	-
Grants (Enter Description Here)	-	-	-	-	-
Reserves, Equity, Surplus	-	-	-	-	-
Other - Enter Description Here	-	-	-	-	-
Total Funding	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Total Additional Capital Budget Required	$ -				
Total Additional Debt Required	$ -				
Current Expenditures/Revenues					
Direct Costs	$ 1,836	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Less: Incremental Revenue/Recovery	1,739	-	-	-	-
Net Cost/(Benefit)	$ 97	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Less: Existing Budget Amounts	97	-	-	-	-
Net Budget Adjustment Required	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -

Additional Comments: Using the 2020 actual prepayment information, with the City's 2021 expected short-term investment interest rate of 0.18%, the interest income that could be expected in 2021 from depositing the tax prepayments is approximately $1,739. However, after applying the projected tax discounts and administrative costs, the projected deficit is $97. Despite the net loss, this program will still proceed as a customer service initiative. Based on past experience, it is expected that 2,500 - 3,500 property owners will take advantage of the 2021 Prepayment Discount program. This program is included in the annual budget submission for the Assessment and Taxation Department.

Electronically signed by T. Yanchishyn
Tanis Yanchishyn
Manager of Finance (Campus)
Corporate Finance Department

CONSULTATION

This Report has been prepared in consultation with:

Financial Services Branch of Corporate Finance Department
Legal Services (as to legal issues and by-law preparation)

OURWINNIPEG POLICY ALIGNMENT

The discount(s) to be allowed for the Prepayment of Realty, Personal Property and Business Taxes is generally aligned with strategies in OurWinnipeg Policy 01-3 Direction 1.

WINNIPEG CLIMATE ACTION PLAN ALIGNMENT

N/A

SUBMITTED BY

Department: Assessment and Taxation
Division: Taxation and Finance
Prepared by: Tim Austin, Manager of Taxation and Finance Services
Date: November 19, 2020
File No: N/A

Attachments:

Schedule A – Draft By-law

Schedule A

THE CITY OF WINNIPEG

BY-LAW NO. /2020

A By-law of THE CITY OF WINNIPEG to provide for discounts where real or personal property taxes or business taxes are prepaid in 2021.

THE CITY OF WINNIPEG, in Council assembled, enacts as follows:

1 The Tax Collector of The City of Winnipeg shall, during the months of January and February 2021, accept monies in prepayment of real or personal property taxes or business taxes from any taxpayer whose account is not in arrears and who has not applied for and been accepted to the Tax Instalment Payment Plan, at the following discount rates:

(a) during the month of January 2021:

(i) for Real or Personal Property Taxes, a discount rate of 0.058%; and

(ii) for Business Taxes, a discount rate of 0.046%, and

(b) during the month of February 2021:

(i) for Real or Personal Property Taxes, a discount rate of 0.047%; and

(ii) for Business Taxes, a discount rate of 0.035%.

2 At the time of payment, the taxpayer shall designate the tax account to which the prepayment is to be applied and the Tax Collector shall apply the payment only towards taxes levied in 2021 on the designated account.

3 The Tax Collector may accept tax prepayments for any account to a maximum value equivalent to the amount of the 2020 taxes.

DONE AND PASSED, this day of , 2020.

_____
Mayor

_____
City Clerk

Approved as to content:

_____
City Assessor

Legally reviewed and certified as to form:

_____
For Director of Legal Services and
City Solicitor