

RATEPAYERS AWARDED COSTS FOR TAX LEGAL CHALLENGE

BULYEA, SK.—After 4 months, termination of the administrator, a government inspection, ignoring a legal challenge from a large group of ratepayers on 2018 tax notices, installation of a government appointed Supervisor to oversee Council activities, five, day-long, secret meetings on the budget and the Minister's approval of new division boundaries, RM of McKillop Council FINALLY mailed 2018 tax notices. Most ratepayers began receiving the notices the week of December 17th. Due date for payment of 2018 RM taxes is December 31st.

On December 20th Deron Kuski, MLT Aikins, represented over 400 ratepayers in Court arguing for an award of costs from the RM Council. We requested the Court to order the RM to pay costs as the legal challenge brought was for the benefit of all ratepayers in the RM even though only 400 of them participated and paid for the legal action to secure the lower and more fairly distributed taxes. After ignoring our Court application, requesting 2 adjournments and refusing to accept any of our offers to settle (while not providing any counter-proposals), RM Council on December 10th voted in a public meeting to defend the position of the RM in Court and request the RM be awarded costs from the ratepayers who mounted the legal challenge.

An excerpt from Judge Keene's decision of December 28th,

Despite the well-presented argument on behalf of the applicants [ratepayers] for fixed costs, I find that I am not persuaded that this is the type of chamber application [that] requires such an award. I am in agreement with the respondent [RM's lawyer Merrilee Rasmussen] that costs should be awarded in the usual fashion based on a review of the tariff. I will exercise my discretion and fix costs which is set at a total of \$1,500 payable to the applicants [ratepayers].

Earlier in his decision Keene writes,

Understandably council's actions were a concern to some of the rate payors [sic]. Their taxes were about to go up a lot. Council appears to have essentially sought and received professional advice that in hindsight may have been incorrect.

60 Sleeps to a New Council!

Now that the legal challenge of the 2018 tax mess is behind us let's not forget that GOOD GOVERNANCE by our publicly elected Council would never have created this tax nightmare in the first place. **VOTE for a NEW, IMPROVED RM Council in the NEW, IMPROVED electoral boundary divisions in February 2019.**

RPA would like to take this opportunity to thank all the ratepayers supporting the need for good governance in the RM of McKillop.

Have a Happy New Year!

This is really a moral victory
for the ratepayers in the RM of McKillop.

We believe the RM Council attempted
to ignore our concerns about their illegal and
outrageous 2018 tax hikes.

If ratepayers hadn't legally challenged
the RM Council nothing would have changed
and residential property owners
would have remained the primary target
of the tax hikes.

The Court of Queen's Bench Judge affirmed
our efforts with the award of tariff costs.

SHOULD I PAY MY 2018 RM TAXES?

Taxes are due by December 31st, 2018 ~Two weeks from date of mailing. Council did not extend the due date or provide pre-payment discounts.

For all property tax amounts outstanding as of January 1st a penalty of 1% per month is applicable.

Some ratepayers have suggested they will not pay 2018 taxes until after the February 27th election. They would rather pay the late penalty than hand over their hard earned money to the current Council responsible for the 2018 tax fiasco and its ongoing overspending.

The Rural Municipality of McKillop No. 220 lies along the east shore of Last Mountain Lake, north of Lumsden. There are 732 permanent residents and approximately 2,000 ratepayers in the RM. The RM 220 RPA is a citizen's group dedicated to ensuring fair taxes, minimizing waste, reducing spending, and holding RM Council accountable.

If you have any questions or can help please contact us at rm220rpa@gmail.com, www.rpa220.ca or visit us on Facebook