



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: TREASURER

File #: 20-168

Board Meeting Date: 3/24/2020

Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors
From: Sandie Arnott, Treasurer-Tax Collector
Subject: Temporary closure of certain Treasurer-Tax Collector's Office locations

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a resolution closing the walk-in property tax payment locations of the Office of the Treasurer-Tax Collector during the period of the Health Officer's shelter-in-place order.

BACKGROUND:

In an effort to slow the spread of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) and preserve critical health care capacity across the region, the San Mateo County Health Officer, along with the public health officers of Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco, and Santa Clara counties announced a legal order on March 16, 2020 (the "Order"), directing residents to shelter in place for three weeks beginning March 17th. The Order directs County residents to stay home, limiting activity, travel, and business functions to only the most essential needs.

The County thereafter announced that it would significantly modify the way its public-facing services would be provided during the term of the Order. Consistent with this directive, the County's social distancing guidelines, and CDC guidance, the Treasurer-Tax Collector has announced the closure of its Redwood City, South San Francisco, and Half Moon Bay locations with respect to the acceptance of walk-in tax payments. Assuming the Order terminates on April 7th, the public-facing property tax collection desks at those locations will re-open on April 8th. Throughout the period of the shelter-in-place order, the Treasurer-Tax Collector will continue to accept property tax payments by remote means including electronic payment capabilities such as eCheck, home banking, online and phone credit card payments, as well as checks and money orders via mail and walk-up dropbox.

DISCUSSION:

The second installment of countywide property taxes for fiscal year 2019-20 is due on April 10th. Should the Order be extended and the aforementioned walk-in property tax collection desks remain closed beyond April 10th, many taxpayers may miss the deadline for payment thereby incurring penalties and interest. The Treasurer-Tax Collector does not have the authority to extend the second

installment deadline, which is set forth in State law.

Revenue & Taxation Code Section 2619 provides that each date on which a county's offices are closed shall be deemed a legal holiday for tax payment purposes provided that such closures are pursuant to an ordinance or resolution adopted by the county's Board of Supervisors. As such, to the extent this Board adopts a resolution confirming the closure of the walk-in property tax payment locations of the Office of the Treasurer-Tax Collector during the period of the Health Officer's shelter-in-place order, and should that order extend past the April 10th deadline, such second installment payments will not be deemed late. The Treasurer-Tax Collector has indicated that, in accordance with Revenue & Tax Code section 2619, tax payments will be accepted without penalty on the next business day the office is open to the public following the termination or expiration of the Order.

This resolution has been reviewed and approved by County Counsel as to form.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Pursuant to Revenue & Taxation Code Section 4701 *et seq.*, the County distributes the property tax levies on the secured roll for all other taxing entities and, in turn, receives all penalties and interest on late tax payments. Such penalty and interest amounts received by the County will likely decrease to the extent that the April 10th deadline is extended but the calculation of such amounts cannot be determined at this time.