

# ROCHESTER AREA

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## CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

December 11, 2020

Olmsted County Commissioners

RE: Request to Reconsider Hardship Abatement Policy for Commercial Property Taxes

Dear County Commissioner,

On behalf of the Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce, I write with deep appreciation for your decision on December 3, 2020 to once again extend the temporary abatement of the penalty and interest for late commercial property tax payers. I sincerely hope you view the payment by almost 3,000 of the 3,420 commercial property tax payers as affirmation of the good faith you have shown with your decision to extend the property tax payment deadline without payment or interest.

The main purpose of my letter today is to respectfully request that you reconsider and vote yes for the hardship abatement policy for commercial/industrial properties financially impacted by COVID-19 as defined in Resolution No. 20-226. I am asking that you revisit this decision with a view toward the sectors of our economy which have been most impacted by COVID – namely hospitality, restaurants and bars, and retail. I think these sectors might reflect the majority of the 300 outstanding payments.

During the discussion on this issue, there was some discussion about hesitancy about picking winners and losers. I suggest that COVID has de facto picked winners and losers – the economic impact of the pandemic has been uneven and is likely reflected in the list of currently outstanding commercial property tax payments. A vote to support the hardship abatement policy will help this disproportionate impact on certain sectors of our economy.

In closing, I strongly and respectfully urge your reconsideration of the hardship abatement policy for the remaining commercial/industrial property owners – less than 10% of the total - who have yet to and are very likely unable to pay their full commercial property tax bill at this time. Please approve the hardship abatement policy as defined in Resolution 20-99 requiring good faith payment, consultation with staff, and development of a repayment plan for the property owner.

I would be pleased to meet with you, or provide additional information, to support or amplify this urgent request.

Sincerely,



Kathleen Harrington

President

Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce