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Property Tax Appeals

Minnesota Property Tax Appeals Amid COVID-19: Important Deadline Change

Legal Update

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By Thomas R. Wilhelmy and Judy S. Engel

The Minnesota Legislature has extended the deadline to file property tax appeals in connection with 2020 property taxes from April 30, 2020 to **May 30, 2020** in response to the current COVID-19 pandemic and related “stay-at-home” directives by the CDC, local departments of health and state executive orders. Unfortunately, the statutorily required tax petition filing process continues to be antiquated and cumbersome, requiring personal service of paper copies of the petition on four separate county officials before e-filing the petition with the district court in the county in which the property is located. The process will be significantly hampered this year by the COVID-19 emergency and the closure of most, if not all, county offices to public access at this time.

Fortunately, the property tax department at Fredrikson & Byron is operating at full capacity and is monitoring and tracking the status of each county and its policies with regard to filing 2020 tax appeals. We have developed a process to accomplish service in light of these challenging and unusual conditions, but we do anticipate that the process may take longer than typical to complete. If you have any properties you would like us to review for a possible 2020 appeal, please contact us as soon as possible. That will provide assurance that we have sufficient time to carefully review the case, make our recommendations and complete the appeal filing process in a timely manner.

Nearly all published sources predict the COVID-19 emergency to cause immediate and significant downward pressure on the market value of nearly all commercial, industrial and apartment properties—regardless of property type. With that in mind, carefully consider whether your property should be considered for a pay 2020 appeal. Since the fair market value is likely to decrease significantly in the future, your case for future appeals will be made even stronger. The sooner an appeal is filed, the more likely it will be placed at the front of the line for tax court scheduling orders, deadlines and settlement discussions. An appeal filed in the near term will likely accelerate its resolution.

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Please also note that the first one-half 2020 property tax payments continue to be due in Minnesota no later than **May 15, 2020**—even amid the current COVID-19 pandemic. Despite being closed to the public, most counties continue to accept property tax payments by U.S. Mail or through electronic means. Please check each county website for specific information and instructions.

We will keep you updated with any additional relevant information as it becomes available during this time of rapidly changing conditions. We wish that you all stay healthy and safe!

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