

Subject: Please see below for an important message from Auditor Walder

From: "Most, Tammy" <TMost@gcauditor.com>

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To: "Kristina Port" <kport@russelltownship.us>, Gary Gabram <ggabram@russelltownship.us>, Jim Mueller <jmueller@russelltownship.us>, "K Walder (kwald@russelltownship.us)" <kwald@russelltownship.us>

Dear Fellow Elected Officials:

As Geauga County Auditor, I have been asked recently, "what can be done to help people that have been economically affected by the pandemic with regard to their real estate property taxes?" In reality, there is a lot that can and should be done to assist people during this pandemic. Unfortunately, the County Auditor has very limited, if any, authority to enact remedy. However, I do fully support and recommend that every taxing authority (county entities like parks, libraries, mental health boards, jobs and family services department, department on aging, county sales tax, schools, townships, villages, and the city) consider a one-year suspension on collecting any levied or inside millage revenue earmarked for projects or expenses that can be responsibly delayed until our populace can recover.

Therefore I strongly encourage you to review your entity's specific set of financial circumstances and consider leveraging your authority to take this unprecedented but responsible step to provide short term, temporary aid to taxpayers. If county auditors had the authority, I would certainly take this action. While authority to provide residents with this relief rests with the taxing authorities, I strongly support this initiative, and will do my part to be a resource to other local governments to follow suit to best help the people of Geauga County.

I have instructed my staff to reach out to the Ohio Department of Taxation to investigate the possibility of offering mid-year tax relief should entities determine that they can temporarily suspend collection of some tax. The Ohio Department of Taxation has referred my request to their legal staff for consideration.

Thank you all for your service and continued efforts during this unprecedented time.

Best Regards,

Chuck Walder

Geauga County Auditor

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