June 28, 2011

**City acts to advise taxpayers of cheques cashed early, apologizes for error**

The City of Campbell River wishes to advise taxpayers that due to human error, a number of post-dated cheques for tax payments might be cashed early.

*“It has come to our attention that a batch of post-dated cheques was switched with current-day cheques, and, while we notified the bank as soon as we caught the error, we are aware that some cheques have been or are likely to be cashed – and we are very sorry about this. We recognize the inconvenience this could cause for people,”* says Laura Ciarniello, General Manager of Corporate Services.

When people pay property taxes at City Hall, the current-date cheques and cash are sorted separately from those post-dated to July 4. Late last week, two batches of cheques were mixed up, and the post-dated batches were sent to bank.

*“As soon as the City realized error, we phoned the bank and asked them to stop processing those cheques. Unfortunately, those batches had already been sent to the clearing house in Victoria and could not be stopped,”* Ciarniello explains.

*“Approximately 200 people and businesses are involved, and we cannot be certain that the banks will catch the date mix-up, so we want to let people know that, in some cases, unfortunately, the cheques might be cashed early,”* she says.

*“Because the banks have a responsibility to review and verify the dates on cheques, we hope that many of these cheques will be returned to the City for processing after July 4,”* Ciarniello says. *“We also want to assure people, that, if the bank does catch the date mix-up and returns the cheque to us, there will be no penalty if the cheque arrives after the July 4 date as this was our mistake.”*

Ciarniello says the City isdoing its best to rectify this situation and working to notify the people involved.

*“In cases where a cheque has been cancelled and sent back to the City, people will have to re-issue their payment, ideally by July 20. We are also letting people know that the City will cover bank charges related to this error,*” she says.

While the cheque sorting procedure had been reliable in the past, Ciarniello says she has reviewed the incident with employees, and the department has taken steps to prevent this from happening again.

People are welcome to call the City’s Finance Department with questions at 250-286-5719.

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