

## What provisions or mechanism are needed to facilitate the recovery of unpaid taxes and/or fees?

### Responses

Cut services and tying it to property tax.

Through income tax.

Get money from provincial government - like from social services, etc.

Garnish wages using poll tax.

More power to get unpaid fees, and needs to be simplified (less hassle and less expensive).

Charge interest on unpaid taxes.

Ability to garnish wages.

Need better process for poll tax (some people get lost).

May be beneficial to have a staff member that is solely responsible for collecting taxes.

Municipalities given more power in credit recovery.

Provide a discount for people who pay all their arrears.

Give timeline to pay fees and if no compliance then cut services.

Get unpaid fees and taxes out of wages.

Privacy concerns get in the way of getting unpaid fees and taxes.

Tie it all together with driver's licenses - when you go to renew your license and you owe something, you can't get a license until you pay up.

Water shut-off is an effective means to collect unpaid taxes and fees.

We have all the necessary tools to recover taxes and fees.

Discontinue other essential services? There aren't a lot of options.

When it comes to vacant land, you can only go back so many years and the town can only recoup so much - that shouldn't be. All money should go to the town.

It would need to be something that would inconvenience the tax payers. (i.e. refuse to issue permit)

What can the legislation do beyond what municipalities are doing now?

Garnish wages.

A lot of people agreeing with connecting it all together in one system and if you don't pay up, you don't access other government services (driver license, salmon license, moose license, whatever).

You can garnish wages for poll tax. Do it for property tax too.

Sometimes judges are too lenient. Put them in jail. Seize their property.

Garbage collection. People not paying fee. If you refuse to collect garbage, they will just give it to their neighbour.

MAE needs to give municipalities training and information to help them find the solutions.

Change tax structure to include garbage fees and other fees in property tax. Some municipalities already do this.

Government should have an agency that we can use to collect money (like a collections agency).

Poll tax needs to be eliminated.

Derelict buildings and people aren't paying taxes. The demolition and clean-up is billed to account. Have the ability to put a lien on property for property tax but not for other costs the town incurs to enforce orders - (i.e. demolition of derelict building).

Taxpayers should not be responsible for covering costs.

Government is going to have get serious about a few issues. Fee collection is definitely one.

Cutting off services is the most impactful on recovery of unpaid taxes and fees.

If given the option to cut off other services, do communities have the capacity to enforce this? Depends on the community and what the issue is.

Garnishing wages.

Difficult to collect business taxes outside of small claims courts. If the property isn't owned by the business owner, it's difficult to collect the business tax.

Not a problem for us – 100% paid.

The threat of small claims court works well but is a lot of work when you have to use it – process could be simplified for communities.

Provide notices for payments and warnings of penalties.

Offer payment plans.

Garnish wages, freeze accounts, talk to residents to work out a payment plan.

Should all be connected to the property (taxed to the property).

Shut off water to property.

Send out letter and give 30 days' notice, if they still don't pay turn off the water.

Collection is generally really good.

Water shut off really works.

If property is sold unpaid taxes can be taken from the sale of the home.

LSD has no authority and no way to get money owing (let Municipal Affairs know so that person forced to pay). They are really suffering and having difficulty getting monies owed (most you can do is stop garbage collection).

Rental properties are a problem in some areas. Tried to access money form sales but they refused to pay. Challenged to go to court.

When residents file income tax, can municipality collect taxes? Maybe should have a provincial law to support this.

LSD can go to small claims to collect money or collections agency but that is expensive and not always helpful.

Put a lien against the property.

Towns are finding this challenging so maybe Municipal Affairs can provide options.

Can be costly if we have to go to court.

Tax sales should be easier and more clear cut because it is an expensive option.

How do you garnish wages from residents who are collecting a pension?

Write letters of shut off x3 and directors of finance allow for provisions when financial hardship present. Will do low monthly payments.

LSD - should be able to post who is not paying.

Provincial & federal government has higher authority (i.e. ability to garnish wages). Towns need more authority.

Tie unpaid taxes/fees to vehicle licensing or some fee that is paid annually or regularly so that there is more pressure to pay.

We need tools for recovery such as fees for not paying taxes. Maybe need to utilize provincial government resources.

Collection agency not working well.

Ability to seize accounts - would need government assistance to do this.

Other exemptions (polling question) for charities or non-profits.

Water shut off is the most effective tool for recovery of unpaid taxes.

Hard to enforce taxation where there is no property, particular business tax recovery.

Poll tax is difficult to collect and therefore they would not attempt to utilize it.

Feel they have the tools for effective taxation recovery because they use property tax.

Voluntary assignment of wages – authorize employers to deduct an amount from employees pay and send to town.

Online payments through local banks – town council can make arrangements with their local banking institution.

Water cut-offs (if their water is not already turned off).

Most towns not having major collection issues.

Make it required to collect property tax and take away all the oversight.

Put a lien on the property.

Biggest challenge in collecting is a lack of money in the community; times when people can't afford to pay.

Connect to other government services (i.e. drivers licence, moose licence, etc.).

Collection policy with warning letters with subsequent disconnection of services, and subsequent sale of property. All of these work to some degree.

Having everything rolled into one tax (property tax) and cutting off services for arrears is very effective.

If you don't pay your taxes you don't get your licence!

Needs to be some way to garnish wages or somehow connect it to license renewal.

When services are not provided (or have alternate services) cutting off is not effective.

Court system tends to be too time consuming, especially when a favourable decision is not guaranteed.

Nothing will ever be as helpful as discontinuation of services.

Municipalities Act at present allows for liens. This is helpful.

Extend statute of limitations for garnishment of wages.

Fine system may be helpful, but if they are not paying it may not be.

Streamline the Court system.

Tax exemption - provincial government needs to stop double dipping.

Cut services.

Challenges for poll tax have come about since Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour stopped paying municipalities directly on behalf of income support recipients.

Poll taxes should be eliminated.

Reinstating of direct payment to municipalities on behalf of income support recipients would be a great help.

Tools that are in place are effective.

Poll tax is more trouble than it is worth.

Tax sale process is not quick enough to respond in some cases.

Income support should come with a condition that information must be provided to the municipality for the purposes of taxation.

Poll tax - micromanagement and feels disrespectful.

Other tools (like garnishing of wages) may be too expensive to implement.

A staff member for collection of taxes is helpful when towns have the resources to fund such a position.

Taxes should be able to be tied to permits; outstanding taxes should inhibit permits being processed.

Offer incentives to pay up.

Having the tool of garnishing wages may be helpful, but there is a role to play in protecting citizens in that process as well.

Regional service board could provide taxation collection assistance for towns.

Allow paying of taxes using credit cards - good incentive to get points.

Taxes are too high.

Many communities just have one clerk working part-time. The best way to collect is ongoing monitoring; not immediate and random action. This is why personnel designation is required.

Civil action is an effective tool for recovery.

Taxes too high to live in this province and stay here - can't afford to live here.

All property should be subject to property tax, regardless of where it is located.

Land auction on vacant land does not allow for clear title; municipality should have the ability to provide clear title with sale.

The fact that the legislation does not govern everyone will continue to cause problems.

Everyone should be contributing some fair amount to the municipalities.

Municipalities should be allowed to attend public auctions.

Provincial government should not be overriding municipal planning decisions.

Garnish wages or cut services such as water.

Statement of claim, liens, tax sales for municipalities.

Do not have to cut services very often as just the threat seems to work. Many people do get the threat.

Town will work with the people and send notification letter. If a person can make agreement with the town we will work with them and set timeline to pay.

LSDs cut services for unpaid fees, but this option is not always available.

As long as they come in to deal with the issue the town makes arrangements for payment plan.

Difficult to collect when few services provided.

Publicise the names of those who don't attempt to pay taxes after multiple warnings.

Have used garnishment of wages for poll tax. Do poll and property tax. Garnishment of wages is good for poll tax as we cannot cut services for this.

Both taxes help bring in money - we need anyway we can.

Get property tax from home owner and poll tax from someone else in house.

What can you do if you only have poll tax? If they have well and septic and do not pay, cut off other services.

If taxes and fees aren't being paid for certain services then the council reserves the right to shut off the service temporarily.

Wage garnishing would be effective.

If unable to cut services, you could cut collection of garbage, but that can cause problems too.

MAE can change the process so communities can go directly to the employer to collect poll tax.

Biggest issue for us is UIAs. Waste management is done for the whole area. If I don't pay my garbage fee, my services get cut off, but for UIAs, they do not pay the fee, no issue. Therefore we should incorporate everyone. Everyone should be paying something.

Communities need to know that they can go to employers to garnish wages.

LSDs have people doing work for people. You can go after town for not paying, but for UIAs it's too hard to go after each individual.

(i.e. Port aux Basques collects garbage, if town does not pay, you can go after town but if UIA there's no penalty.

MAE needs more training on recovery options.

If you live in UIA and pay no taxes, your income tax should be increased to make up for not paying property tax.

Town should have capacity to use other options if available.

Think there should be more support from provincial government to help collect.

There should be interest/lean involved with unpaid taxes and fees, and if not their wages should be garnished.

A lot of poll tax is written off.

Can take people to court. It works. If someone doesn't pay, you need to get a judgement to get payment. This takes time, therefore provincial government should help (i.e. agreement with NL power to cut power if people on well and septic).

Councils need more advice on recovery of taxes.

There should be collection agency that is run by the provincial government to go out and recover the unpaid taxes and fees.

Should work same way as poll taxes - garnish the wages of the tax payers.

Tie it to driver licenses and other provincial government renewals.

Tax collection in small communities with local relations makes it very difficult to make this decision and live in the community.

Cut off water to the household - need to make a payment plan.

Tax sale of a property timelines should be shortened, right now it is very lengthy.

Better clarification of how to do a tax sale, needs to be simplified.

Lawyer fees are costly.

Step by step process provided in the legislation to help eliminate the lawyer fees.

Need some other recourse. Maybe the province could collect through income tax/moose license renewal.

Businesses in the municipalities should be taking the poll taxes from wages. Put poll taxes on personal income tax bill.

How do you get the LSD to pay their fair share? Province has to do something to get them to pay.

Need something in the Act to include all expenses to remove dilapidated buildings.

Need to be charged to the taxpayer.

Tools on recovery - attach to your personal income tax.

Universal mill rate will not work for everyone.

Cannot compare small towns to be the small mil rates.

Take unpaid taxes and fees to court (small claims - but does cost).

Cut services (cut water).

Should be able to withhold services (water).

Fines for non-payment.

Charging interest on outstanding fees - seems to be working well.

Payment plan for people that have difficulty paying.

Land tax sales (even the threat - putting the sign up).

Garnished wages.

Ability to garnish wages to recover delinquent taxes.

Providing services to unincorporated areas and if they do not pay we have no way or authority to collect - so need better process.

More tools/support in the tax sale process.

Insurance company pays fees if fire department services unincorporated areas.

Set timelines and/or a tax amount owing threshold that would trigger recovery of assets.

Need more supports and money to be able to use additional tools to collect unpaid fees and taxes (ex. more money for another part-time clerk).

Need more tools in identifying ownership of properties.

Onus should be but on individuals to establish ownership of municipal property.

Collection agency.

Credit recovery company - works.

Disconnect services (water for places that have that option).

Cut water to outstanding clients.

Current legislation provides options - execution is the issue.

Paying online helps, incentives to pay early and payment plans.

Appropriate property.

Being vigilant.

Options are there currently - capacity to use can be the issue.

Legislation pretty good as is right now.

3 tier notice - very effective.

Property tax should be required to collect across the board.

None of the municipalities at my table collect poll taxes and do not want to go back to it or feel indifferent about it.

Tax sales for commercial but currently not residential - would like to collect taxes with sales on residential.

Have a payment review board.

Assessment agency - municipalities should have more control over process (i.e. have it in-house and do it ourselves or be more recent with assessments).

Options? Depends what they are and capacity to use them.

Communities represented at this table had very high collection rate.

LSD - maybe provide option to do volunteer work to "pay" especially if having financial hardship.