

Property Tax 101 – Week 10: I think I am paying too much property tax. Is there anything I can do?

Unfortunately by the time you receive your tax bill, there is little you can do, but there are some things to check on your bill. Check your bill to be sure you are receiving the exemptions you are entitled to; check the fair cash value to see if it makes sense; confirm the property address to be sure you are looking at the right tax bill. If all of this information is correct, then your bill is probably correct as well. You may need to look to your taxing districts for answers.

The tax rates applied to your bill are determined by your taxing districts. They meet regularly to set budgets and issue levies to request money from the County Clerk. These meetings must be published in a local newspaper, and must be open to the public. You have a right to attend these meetings to find out what the money they receive is used for. Attending these meetings regularly, expressing your concerns, and holding board members accountable at the ballot box may be your best, and possibly the only means of controlling how much tax you must pay.

There are limits that govern the rate at which levies can increase. The Property Tax Extension Limit Law (PTELL) slows the growth of revenues to taxing districts when property values are increasing faster than the rate of inflation. Increases in property tax extensions are limited to the lesser of 5%, or the increase in the national Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the year preceding the levy year. For more details, go to <http://tax.illinois.gov/Publications/PIOs/PIO-62.pdf>.

Prior to tax bills being mailed out, you can take your concerns to Board of Review. Assessment complaints are accepted during the 30 days following publication of assessments in the local newspaper. Assessment Complaint forms and Rules & Procedures can be found at the county website, www.jeffersoncountyillinois.com, under Resource Center and then Applications & Forms.

“If you have any questions, or would like more information, please contact our office at 618-244-8010. We are here to help in any way we can.”

Next week: Real Estate Tax Cycle

