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## Aldermen approve hike in landlord penalties

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Keeping with their promise to crackdown on negligent landlords in the city, last night the full Board of Mayor and Aldermen approved raising fines for ordinance violations.

The vote will raise fines from \$100 to \$200 for a first offense, from \$200 to \$300 for a second offense, and from \$300 to \$500 for a third offense.

Aldermen hope that the increased penalties will convince landlords to comply with city ordinances that govern trash, fire codes, and other quality of life issues.

"This is not something the good landlords have to worry about," said Ward 11 alderman Henry Thibault. "It's the bad landlords we're going after."

The vote was 13-1, with

only Ward 5's Ed Osborne casting a ballot against the measure because he questioned its effectiveness.

"We're still running around with fines that have no teeth," Osborne said. "If they can get away with not paying the fines, it doesn't matter how much we charge them."

The increases are one part of several recommendations from a community service committee associated with NeighborWorks Greater Manchester to crack down on non-compliant landlords.

After increasing the fines, aldermen voted unanimously to send a letter to state lawmakers asking them to allow the city to take control of a property if ordinance fines go unpaid.

As legislation currently stands, the city only has the power to place a lien on a private property if the owner fails to pay taxes.