

Financial Policies and Budget Preparation

The City Council has adopted policies in all areas of financial management, which guide the preparation, adoption, amendment, and administration of the Operating Budget, the Capital Budget, and the Capital Improvements Plan. Below is a listing of those policies in the areas of:

- Operating Budget Policies
- Capital Budget Policies
- Revenue Policies
- Reserve Policies
- Cash Management and Investment Policies
- Risk Management Policies
- Debt Policies
- Accounting, Auditing, and Financial Reporting Policies

Operating Budget Policies

The City Council shall hold an annual Budget Retreat each Spring in order to establish priorities for funding in the next fiscal year and a Planning Session in the Fall to discuss long-range major capital improvements.

The City shall adopt a balanced budget annually. A balanced budget is a basic budgetary constraint intended to ensure that a government does not spend beyond its means. A budget is balanced when the sum of estimated net revenues and appropriated fund balances is equal to appropriations. Any subsequent amendment must identify the revenues or other financing sources. The City will strive to maintain current fund balances in its operating funds and to meet the reserve targets established under the “Reserve Policy” section of this document.

The City will continue to pay competitive wages and fringe benefits in order to attract and retain quality personnel.

All Enterprise Funds shall be self-supporting from their fees and charges, with no subsidy from the General Fund. By the same token, the General Fund shall receive no subsidy from any Enterprise Fund. This does not prohibit the normal Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) required from Cleveland Utilities.

The Fleet Management Fund should reflect the true costs to provide maintenance for city-owned vehicles, as well as outside governmental agencies contracting vehicle maintenance with the city. The City Council shall review annually the hourly rate and mark-up on parts and gasoline required to support the operation.

The Solid Waste Management Fund should reflect the true costs to provide residential and commercial garbage collection, disposal and recycling; bulk (white goods) collection and disposal; and leaf collection and disposal. The City Council shall evaluate annually the extent to which each service is supported by service charges rather than a subsidy from the General Fund.

The Cleveland City School System (CCS) shall be given an increase in City funding over the current fiscal year's budgeted revenue estimate from the City, that is equal to the estimated percentage increase in the Local Taxes portion of the General Fund Revenues for the following fiscal year. The computation of this increased percentage shall not include any revenue increase due to increased property or sales tax rates which are earmarked for specific purposes. This will assure that the school system receives a reasonable inflationary increase for the portion of their Budget funded by the City. The City is not in a position to provide funding beyond this level and still have adequate financial resources for the other needs of the community. The increases necessary to cover inflationary increases in the CCS Budget currently funded by the Federal, State, and County governments must be obtained from those sources each year.

The City shall aggressively pursue improvements in technology and work methods that will improve service levels and/or reduce operating costs.

The City will not reduce the level of service of any program, activity, or function in FY2011. Recycling will continue to be made available to the citizens of Cleveland at regional recycling centers.

The City shall use one-time revenues only for capital items or to build reserves, instead of operating expenditures.

The City shall raise property taxes only when absolutely necessary to balance the Budget and maintain adequate reserves.

All appropriations and expenditures shall be made in full compliance with applicable State laws and the City's Purchasing Manual.

The City will follow the Budget Preparation Calendar shown at the end of this section.

The City Manager and Director of Finance shall prepare an annual Budget which meets the requirements to receive the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award from the Government Finance Officers Association. The City received this award for the first time in 1998.

Capital Budget Policies

The City shall adopt a Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) annually which will include the next fiscal year's Capital Budget. Improvements requested for the next five years are included in the city's Capital Improvement Needs Inventory (CINI).

The City shall make every effort not to add additional programs and services until both the Operating Budget and the CIP are adequately funded.

The City shall provide resources from current revenues to fund an adequate maintenance and replacement schedule for infrastructure and equipment.

The City will aggressively pursue state and federal funding, as well as other sources of funding for capital improvements.

Revenue Policies

The City will budget revenues conservatively so that the chance of a revenue shortage during the year is remote. This also will help finance contingencies and Budget amendments that were unforeseen when the Budget was first adopted.

The City will review annually all fees and charges to assure that they maintain their inflation-adjusted purchasing power.

Since different revenue sources impact classes of taxpayers differently, the City Council recognizes that the only way to minimize these different impacts is to have a diversified revenue system. These impacts will be considered in making any needed adjustments to the various sources of revenue.

The City will make every effort not to become too dependent on one source of revenue in order to minimize serious fluctuations in any year.

The City will consider market rates and rates of comparable cities in the region when changing tax rates, fees, and charges. The City will make every effort to maintain its favorable comparative position with other Tennessee cities in this regard, which has contributed to our economic development success.

All cash donations to any department or agency of the City shall be deposited with the City Clerk's Office. All purchases using such donations must be budgeted and will comply fully with the City's purchasing policies. The City cannot accept donations on behalf of an outside agency or group. Donations of equipment or supplies may be made directly to a department or agency of the City. Donated equipment meeting the definition of a fixed asset must be reported to the Purchasing Agent, for tagging and listing as a fixed asset.

Reserve Policies

The City Council recognizes the need to set reserve amount targets for every operating fund of the City. The targets for those funds using the modified accrual basis of accounting are set as the percentage that the undesignated fund balance is to the budgeted expenditures and transfers to other funds. The targets for those funds using the accrual basis of accounting are set as the percentage that the working capital is to the budgeted operating expenses. The targets are as follows:

Fund Title	Undesignated Fund Balance (or Working Capital) as a % of Expenditures (or Operating Expenses) And Transfers to Other Funds
General Fund	25%
Solid Waste Management Fund	5%
State Street Aid Fund	5%
Debt Service Fund	25%
Fleet Management Fund	5% Working Capital
Drug Enforcement Fund	5%
School General Fund	3%
School Food Service Fund	10%
Library General Fund	10%
Storm Water Fund	5%

The City Manager and Director of Finance are directed to prepare Budgets that result in every target being met by June 30, 2012.

These reserve targets shall be reviewed annually by the City Manager and Director of Finance, who shall report to the City Council on their continued adequacy.

Cash Management and Investment Policies

The City will make all deposits of cash within the time period required by State law.

The City will aggressively pursue all revenues due, including past due bills, court tickets and fines, using whatever legal means are available.

The City will pay all obligations on or before the due date.

The City will continue the current cash management and investment policies, which are designed to emphasize safety of capital first, sufficient liquidity to meet obligations second, and the highest possible yield third. Those policies are as follows:

The City operates with one consolidated checking account and one payroll account to handle all the funds, operating and capital. This does not include any accounts for Cleveland Utilities, the Cleveland Public Library, or the Cleveland City Schools, which maintain their own accounting systems and bank relationships. The services were rebid for a three-year contract beginning July 1, 2007.

The bank bid assures the City no service fees, free wire transfers, monthly statements, full collateralization per State requirements, and a rate on all money kept overnight pegged to a percentage of the federal funds rate. Consolidation of bank accounts makes investment decisions easier, and reduces staff time needed to reconcile monthly bank statements.

The Director of Finance makes a twelve month cash flow projection, and from that develops a schedule of long-term investments. These investments could be any type authorized by State law. However, the City Council has limited it to Certificates of Deposit. In an effort to provide an equal opportunity among the city's local banks, yet receive the maximum yield, each local bank is allowed to submit a sealed bid for any monies to be invested.

Should there not be enough interest from local banks, the Director of Finance is authorized to put the remainder in the State investment pool. The State investment pool's rates are set in a similar fashion to the City's program, so there should be no loss of yield.

Risk Management Policies

The City will minimize potential losses through employee safety training, inspections of the workplace, risk analysis, and Tennessee OSHA compliance. The City's Safety Committee will assist the part-time Safety Director in this.

A drug testing program shall continue for all potential employees, as well as random testing of all federally-required employees.

The City will continue to participate in the Tennessee Municipal League's (TML) Risk Management Pool for virtually all necessary coverages, including General Liability, Automobile Liability, Errors and Omissions, Property, Boiler and Machinery, Inland Marine, Special Events and Worker's Compensation. The Cleveland Municipal Airport Authority also carries a policy on the airport through the City. The City will continue to be a reimbursing employer for unemployment claims.

Annual inspections of premises and work practices shall be performed by the risk management staff of the TML Pool, and the City will correct any deficiencies noted.

Debt Policies

The City will issue bonds and capital outlay notes only for capital improvements and moral obligations.

The City will not issue notes or bonds to finance operating deficits. Adequate reserves will be maintained to assure this does not become necessary. No bond or note will be issued to purchase a fixed asset which has a shorter useful life than the term of the debt instrument.

The City will issue general obligation bonds or capital outlay notes for necessary general government projects and Cleveland City Schools projects. Cleveland City Schools may be required to budget the debt service for some smaller projects. Any new school construction not covered by the State or Bradley County will be budgeted within the City's Debt Service Fund or repaid by Cleveland City Schools. Cleveland Utilities shall pay from its fees and charges all the debt service payments on any general obligation bond issued on its behalf.

No debt will be issued which would increase the outstanding amount of debt above ten (10%) percent of the total assessed value of property within the City. The outstanding amount of debt in this calculation shall not include debt issued for improvements in the electric and water/wastewater systems, because that debt will be repaid from charges for services, not from property taxes.

The City will maintain at least 70% of its outstanding debt (bonds and notes) at a fixed interest rate, with the remaining portion being variable rate debt. Synthetically fixed rate debt will be considered as variable rate debt in calculating this percentage.

A firm source of revenue must be identified by the City Council before any bond or capital outlay note is issued.

Accounting, Auditing, and Financial Reporting Policies

The City will maintain its accounting records in full accord with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) as promulgated by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board.

The City Council will receive a monthly finance report showing Income Statements and all investments.

The City shall have a qualified certified public accounting firm conduct an independent audit annually.

The City Manager and Director of Finance shall prepare a Comprehensive Annual Financial Report each year which meets the requirements of the Government Finance Officers Association's Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. The City of Cleveland has received this award every year since FY 1988.