

City of Bastrop, Texas

Financial Management Policy

Approved
September 8, 2020



I. Purpose Statement

The overriding goal of the Financial Management Policy is to enable the city to achieve a long-term stable and positive financial condition while conducting its operations consistent with the Council-Manager form of government established in the City Charter. The watchwords of the city's financial management include integrity, prudent stewardship, planning, accountability, and full disclosure.

The purpose of the Financial Management Policy is to provide guidelines for the financial management staff in planning and directing the city's day-to-day financial affairs and in developing recommendations to the City Manager.

The scope of the policies spans accounting, auditing, financial reporting, internal controls, operating and capital budgeting, revenue management, cash management, expenditure control and debt management.

II. Accounting, Auditing, And Financial Reporting

A. Accounting – The City of Bastrop finances shall be accounted for in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles as established by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board. The fiscal year of the City shall begin on October first of each calendar year and shall end on September thirtieth of the following calendar year. This fiscal year shall also be established as the accounting and budget year. Governmental fund types use the modified accrual basis of accounting, revenues are recognized when susceptible to accrue (i.e., when they are measurable and available. Expenditures are recognized when the related funds liability is incurred, if measurable, except for principle and interest on general long- term debt, which are recorded when due.

Proprietary fund types are accounted for on a full accrual basis of accounting. Under this method, revenues are recorded when earned and expenses are recorded at the time liabilities are incurred

B. Funds – Self-balancing groups of accounts are used to account for city financial transactions in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. Each fund is created for a specific purpose except for the General Fund, which is used to account for all transactions not accounted for in other funds. Governmental funds are used to account for the government's general government activities and include the General, Special Revenue, Debt Service and Capital Project funds.

C. External Auditing – The city will be audited annually by outside independent auditors. The auditors must be a CPA firm of national reputation and must demonstrate that they have the breadth and depth of staff to conduct the city's audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards, generally accepted government auditing standards, and contractual requirements. The auditors' report on the city's financial statements including any federal grant single audits will be completed within 120 days of the city's fiscal year end, and the auditors' management letter will be presented to the city staff within 150 days after the city's fiscal year end. An interim management letter will be issued prior to this date if any materially significant internal control weaknesses are discovered. The city staff and auditors will jointly review the management letter with the City Council within 60 days of its receipt by the staff.

The budget document presented to Council will be in compliance with Article VI Section 6.02 of the City Charter.

A copy of the proposed budget shall be filed with the City Secretary, at the Public Library and available on the City's website when it is submitted to the City Council in accordance with the provisions of the City Charter Article VI Section 6.03.

At the Council meeting at which time the budget is submitted, the Council shall, in conformance with the requirements of state law, cause to be published the date, time, and place of a Public Hearing. At this hearing, interested citizens may express their opinions concerning items of expenditure, giving reasons for wishing to increase or decrease any such items. This is in accordance with the provisions of the City Charter Article VI Section 6.04.

After a public hearing, the Council shall analyze the budget, making any additions or deletions considered appropriate, and shall, at least three (3) days prior to the beginning of the fiscal year, adopt the budget by a favorable vote. This in accordance with the provisions of the City Charter Article VI Section 6.05.

On final adoption, the budget shall be in effect for the budget year. Final adoption of the budget by City Council shall constitute the official appropriations of proposed expenditures for the year and shall constitute the basis of the official levy of the property tax as the amount of tax to be assessed and collected for that tax year. This in accordance with City Charter Article VI Section 6.06.

B. Balanced Budgets – An operating budget will be balanced, with current revenues, inclusive of beginning resources, greater than or equal to current operating expenditures/expenses.

C. Planning – The budget process will begin with a Staff Budget Retreat followed by a Council Budget Workshop to provide direction to the City Manager on goals of the organization. From Jan. – April, each Department Director will enter their line item budgets into the budget software. Starting in June, meetings are scheduled with the City Manager, Chief Financial Officer and Department Directors, to review their draft budgets. A summary of this draft budget is presented to City Council by the City Manager, at a Budget workshop. There will be several more Council budget workshops as the City Manager and staff work through estimating revenue and making the necessary expense cuts to prepare a balanced budget for final approval.

D. Reporting – Periodic financial reports are available within INCODE to enable the department managers to manage their budgets and to enable the Finance Department to monitor and control the budget as approved by the City Council. Summary monthly financial reports will be presented to the City Council within 45 days after the end of each month, if council meetings do not interfere with reporting requirement. Such reports will include current year revenue and expenditure budgets and year-to-date actual figures for all major funds.

E. Control – Operating Expenditure Control is addressed in another section of the Policies.

F. Performance Measures – Where appropriate, performance measures and productivity indicators will be used as guidelines and reviewed for efficiency and effectiveness. This information will be included in the final budget document.

F. Cost/Benefit of Abatement – The city will use due caution in the analysis of any tax, fee, or water and wastewater incentives that are used to encourage development. A cost/benefit (fiscal impact) analysis will be performed as a part of such analysis and presented to the appropriate entity considering using such incentive.

G. Diversification and Stability – In order to protect the government from fluctuations in revenue source due to fluctuations in the economy, and variations in weather (in the case of water and wastewater), a diversified revenue system will be sought.

H. Non-Recurring Revenues – One-time revenues will not be used for ongoing operations. Non-recurring revenues will be used only for non-recurring expenditures. Care will be taken not to use these revenues for budget balancing purposes.

I. Property Tax Revenues – For every annual budget, the City shall levy two property tax rates: Maintenance/Operations and Interest/Sinking (debt service). The debt service levy shall be sufficient for meeting all principle and interest payments associated with the City's outstanding general debt obligations for that budget year. The debt service levy and related debt service expenditures shall be accounted for in the Debt Service Fund. The maintenance and operations levy shall be accounted for in the General Fund. The City will adhere to state law when calculating these tax rates. Property shall be assessed at 100% of the fair market value as appraised by the Bastrop Central Appraisal District. Reappraisal and reassessment shall be done regularly as required by State law. A 97% collection rate will serve as a minimum goal for tax collection, with the delinquency rate of 4% or less. The 97% rate is calculated by dividing total current year tax collections for a fiscal year by the total tax levy for the fiscal year.

All delinquent taxes will be pursued as part of the collection contract the City has with the Bastrop County Tax Assessor/Collector.

J. User-Based Fees – For services associated with a user fee or charge, the direct and indirect costs of that service will be offset by a fee where possible. There will be an annual review of fees and charges to ensure that fees provide adequate coverage of costs and services.

K. General and Administrative Charges – A method will be maintained whereby the General Fund can impose a charge to the enterprise/ proprietary funds for general and administrative services (overhead allocation) performed on the funds' behalf. The details will be documented and said information will be maintained in the Finance Department.

L. Utility Rates – The city will strive to review utility rates annually and, if necessary, adopt new rates to generate revenues required to fully cover operating expenditures, meet the legal restrictions of all applicable bond covenants, and provide for an adequate level of working capital needs. This policy does not preclude drawing down cash balances to finance current operations. However, it is best that any extra cash balance be used instead to finance capital projects.

M. Interest Income – Interest earned from investment of available monies that are pooled will be distributed to the funds monthly in accordance with the claim on cash balance of the fund from which monies were provided to be invested.

VIII. Asset Management

A. Investments – The city's investment practices will be conducted in accordance with the City Council approved Investment Policies.

B. Cash Management – The timing and amount of cash needs and availability shall be systematically projected in order to maximize interest earnings from investments.

C. Investment Performance – A quarterly report on investment performance will be provided by the Chief Financial Officer to the City Council in accordance with the City's Investment Policy.

D. Fixed Assets and Inventory – The City of Bastrop's Purchasing Policy defines Fixed Assets and "Minor Capital Outlay" items as items with a value over \$1,000 and with a life expectancy of two (2) or more years. Asset control will be conducted in accordance with the City Council approved Purchasing Policy Sec. IV which includes annual inventory count, proper disposal and security measures. The Finance Department has procedures in place to capture these types of purchases, make sure they are added to the Fixed Asset List and be placed on the insurance. All departments should have procedures in place for proper maintenance of all city assets.

IX. Financial Condition and Reserves

A. No Operating Deficits – Current expenditures should be paid with current revenues. Deferrals, short-term loans, or one-time sources should be avoided as budget balancing technique. Reserves will be used only for emergencies on non-recurring expenditures, except when balances can be reduced because their levels exceed guideline minimums.

B. Operating Reserves – Failure to meet these standards will be disclosed to the City Council as soon as the situation is recognized and a plan to replenish the ending resources over a reasonable time frame shall be adopted. This should be followed by a plan to mitigate the re-occurrence of this type of shortfall in the future.

1. The General Fund ending fund balance will be maintained at an amount up to three months' worth of estimated expenditures or at a level of 25% of budgeted operating expenditures.
2. The Enterprise/ Proprietary Funds will be maintained at a minimum level of 35% of budgeted operating expenditures.
3. Fund balances which exceed the minimum level established for each fund may be appropriated for non-recurring capital projects.

C. Risk Management Program – The City Council adopts an Investment Policy annually that outlines the investment strategy guidelines with the first goal being the safety of public funds. These policies mitigate the risk associated with investing these public funds.

D. Loss Financing – All reasonable options will be investigated to finance losses. Such options may include risk transfer, insurance, and risk retention. Where risk is retained, reserves will be established based on a calculation of incurred but not reported claims, and actuarial determinations and such reserves will not be used for any purpose other than for financing losses.

XII. Grants/Funding Requests Financial Management

A. Grant Solicitation – Each department is responsible for researching and applying for grants that support needs within their department. The purpose of this policy is to ensure grant funding is solicited with prior approval of the City Manager. The grant application should only be made with input from pertinent departments. The grants should be cost beneficial and meet the city's objectives. Communication will be made with City Council to keep them informed on what grants are being solicited.

B. Grant Acceptance – All grants awarded to the City of Bastrop must be accepted by action of the City Council. If the grant opportunity is identified early enough for inclusion in the annual budget, it shall be identified and budgeted in revenue and expenditure accounts. If the grant is accepted but has not been included in the annual budget, a budget amendment shall be requested to reflect the revenues and expenditures associated with the grant.

C. Responsibility – Departments will oversee the day to day operations of grant programs, will monitor performance and compliance, and will also keep the Finance Department informed of significant grant-related plans and activities. Finance Department staff members will serve as liaisons with grantor financial management personnel, will prepare invoices, and will keep the books of account for all grants.

D. Funding Requests from Partner Organizations – These organizations are identified as the Bastrop Economic Development Corporation and Visit Bastrop. The City Council will be informed of a funding request from a Partner Organization through an agenda item at a public meeting.

XIII. Annual Review and Reporting

A. Annual Review - These Policies will be reviewed administratively by the City Manager at least annually, prior to preparation of the operating budget.

B. Reporting - The Chief Financial Officer will report annually to the City Manager on compliance with these policies.


Tracy Waldron, Chief Financial Officer


Paul Hofmann, City Manager

History of Financial Policies:

Previously Approved 9/23/14

Previously Approved 10/25/16

Previously Approved 5/9/17

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