

Financial Management Policy

Introduction The City of Friendswood assumes an important responsibility to its citizens and customers to carefully account for public funds, to manage City finances wisely and to plan for the adequate funding of services desired by the public.

The main goal of this Policy is to help the City achieve a long-term, stable and positive, financial condition. The City's financial management, as directed by this Policy, is based on the foundation of integrity, prudent stewardship, planning, accountability and full disclosure.

The purpose of the Policy is to provide guidance for planning and directing the City's daily financial affairs. This Policy provides a framework in pursuit of the following objectives.

Financial Objectives

Revenues

- Design and administer a revenue system that will assure a reliable, equitable and sufficient revenue stream to support desired City services.

Expenditures

- Identify priority services, establish and define appropriate service levels and administer the expenditure of available resources to assure fiscal stability and the effective and efficient delivery of these services.

Fund Balance/Retained Earnings

- Maintain the fund balance and retained earnings of the various operating funds at levels sufficient to protect the City's credit worthiness, as well as its financial position, during times of emergency.

Capital Expenditures and Improvements

- Annually review and monitor the condition of the City's capital equipment and infrastructure, setting priorities for its replacement and renovation based on needs, funding alternatives and availability of resources.

Debt Management

- Establish guidelines for debt financing that will provide needed capital equipment and infrastructure improvements, while minimizing the impact of debt payments on current and future revenues.

Investments

- Invest the City's operating cash to ensure its safety, provide necessary liquidity and maximize yield. Return on investment is of least importance compared to the safety and liquidity objectives.

Intergovernmental Relations

- Coordinate efforts with other governmental agencies to achieve common policy objectives, share the cost of providing governmental services on an equitable basis and support appropriate favorable legislation at the state and federal levels.

Grants

- Aggressively investigate, pursue and effectively administer federal, state and foundation grants-in-aid, which address the City's current priorities and policy objectives.

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Economic Development

- Initiate, encourage and participate in economic development efforts to create job opportunities and strengthen the local economy and tax base.

Fiscal Monitoring

- Analyze financial data and prepare reports that reflect the City's financial performance and economic condition.

Accounting, Auditing and Financial Reporting

- Comply with prevailing federal, state and local statutes and regulations. Conform to generally accepted accounting principles as promulgated by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB), American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) and the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA).

Internal Control

- Maintain an environment to provide management with reasonable assurance that assets are safeguarded against loss from unauthorized use or disposition.

Risk Management

- Prevent and/or reduce financial impact to the City of claims and losses through prevention and transfer of liability.

Budget

- Develop and maintain a balanced budget (defined as a term signifying budgeted expenditures being offset by budgeted revenues), which presents a clear understanding of goals, service levels and performance standards. The document shall, to the extent possible, be "user-friendly" for citizens.

I. Revenues

The City shall use the following guidelines to design and administer a revenue system that will assure a reliable, equitable and sufficient revenue stream to support desired City services.

Balance and Diversification in Revenue Sources

- The City shall strive to maintain a balanced and diversified revenue system to protect the City from fluctuations in any one source due to changes in economic conditions, which adversely impact that source.

User Fees

- For services that benefit specific users, where possible, the City shall establish and collect fees to recover the full direct and indirect cost of those services. City staff shall review user fees on a regular basis to calculate their full cost recovery levels, to compare them to the current fee structure and to recommend adjustments where necessary.

Property Tax Revenues/Tax Rate

- The City shall endeavor to reduce its reliance on property tax revenues by revenue diversification, implementation and continued use of user fees and economic development. The City shall also strive to stabilize its tax rate and minimize tax rate increases.

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Utility/Enterprise Funds User Fees

- Utility rates and enterprise funds user fees shall be set at levels sufficient to cover operating expenditures, meet debt obligations, provide additional funding for capital improvements and provide adequate levels of working capital.

Administrative Services Charges

- The City shall prepare a cost allocation plan annually to determine the administrative services charges due the General Fund from enterprise funds for overhead and staff support. Where appropriate, the enterprise funds shall pay the General Fund for direct services rendered.

Revenue Estimates for Budgeting

- In order to maintain a stable level of services, the City shall use a conservative, objective and analytical approach when preparing revenue estimates. The process shall include analysis of probable economic changes and their impacts on revenues, historical collection rates and trends in revenues. This approach should reduce the likelihood of actual revenues falling short of budget estimates during the year, which otherwise could result in mid-year service reductions.

Revenue Collection and Administration

- The City shall maintain high collection rates for all revenues by keeping the revenue system as simple as possible to facilitate payment. In addition, since a revenue source should exceed the cost of producing it, the City shall strive to control and reduce administrative costs. The City shall pursue to the full extent allowed by state law all delinquent taxpayers and others overdue in payments to the City.

II. Expenditures

The City shall use the following guidelines to identify necessary services, establish appropriate service levels and administer the expenditure of available resources to assure fiscal stability and the effective and efficient delivery of services.

Current Funding Basis

- The City shall operate on a current funding basis. Expenditures shall be budgeted and controlled so as not to exceed current revenues.

Avoidance of Operating Deficits

- The City shall take immediate corrective action, if at any time during the fiscal year, expenditure and revenue estimates are such that an operating deficit is projected at year-end.

Maintenance of Capital Assets

- Within the resources available each fiscal year, the City shall maintain capital assets and infrastructure at a sufficient level to protect the City's investment, to minimize future replacement and maintenance costs and to continue acceptable service levels.

Periodic Program Reviews

- Periodic program review for efficiency and effectiveness shall be performed. Programs not meeting efficiency or effectiveness objectives shall be brought up to required standards, or be subject to reduction or elimination.

Purchasing

- The City shall make every effort to maximize any discounts offered by creditors/vendors. The City will follow state law and the City of Friendswood Purchasing Manual concerning formal bidding procedures and approval by the City Council. For purchases where competitive bidding is not required, the City shall obtain the most favorable terms and pricing possible.
- The City Manager, or his designee, shall have the authority to approve and sign contracts and/or purchases for budgeted goods or services that do not exceed the state law bid limitation of \$50,000. Contracts or purchases for items in excess of the state law bid limit shall be placed on a Council agenda for action authorizing the Mayor, or his designee's, signature.

III. Fund Balance/Working Capital/Net Assets

The City shall use the following guidelines to maintain the fund balance and retained earnings of the various operating funds at levels sufficient to protect the City's creditworthiness as well as its financial position from unforeseeable emergencies.

General Fund Unassigned Fund Balance

- The City shall strive to maintain the General Fund unassigned fund balance at a minimum of 90 days of prior year audited operating expenditures.
- Any unassigned funds after the fiscal year-end audit will be allowed to accumulate to build this 90-day reserve.
- After the General Fund has gathered sufficient resources, additional unassigned funds will be allowed to accumulate for future General Fund capital improvements.

Unrestricted Net Assets of Other Operating Funds; Water and Sewer Working Capital

- In other operating funds, the City shall strive to maintain a positive unrestricted net position to provide sufficient reserves for emergencies and revenue shortfalls. The minimum working capital in the Water and Sewer Fund shall be 90 days of prior year audited operating expenses.
- Any unrestricted funds after the fiscal year-end audit will be allowed to accumulate to build this 90-day reserve.
- After these funds have gathered sufficient resources, additional unrestricted funds will be allowed to accumulate in working capital for future utility/operating fund capital improvements.

Use of Fund Balance/ Working Capital

- Fund Balance/ Working Capital may be used in one or a combination of the following ways:
 - Emergencies,
 - One-time expenditures that do not increase recurring operating costs;
 - Major capital purchases; and
 - Start-up expenditures for new programs undertaken at mid-year, provided such action is considered in the context of multiyear projections of program revenues and expenditures.

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- Should such use reduce the balance below the appropriate level set as the objective for that fund, the City shall take action necessary to restore the unassigned fund balance or working capital to acceptable levels within three years.

IV. Capital Expenditures and Improvements

The City shall annually review and monitor the condition of the City's capital equipment and infrastructure, setting priorities for its replacement and renovation based on needs, funding alternatives and availability of resources.

Capital Improvements Planning Program

- The City shall annually review the Capital Improvements Planning Program (CIP), the current status of the City's infrastructure, replacement and renovation needs and potential new projects and update the program as appropriate. All projects, ongoing and proposed, shall be prioritized based on an analysis of current needs and resource availability. For every project, all operation, maintenance and replacement costs shall be fully costed. The CIP shall also present the City's long-term borrowing plan, debt payment schedules and other debt outstanding or planned, including general obligation bonds, revenue bonds and certificates of obligation.

Replacement of City Vehicles

- The City shall annually prepare a schedule for the replacement of its vehicles. Within the resources available each fiscal year, the City shall replace these assets according to this schedule.
- The Vehicle Replacement Fund will purchase all City vehicles that cost less than \$50,000. Departments will then make annual contributions to this fund, based on the life expectancy of their equipment, to replace the funds used to purchase vehicles.
- Vehicles and heavy equipment that cost more than \$50,000 may be funded by one of the capital expenditure financing methods discussed below.

Capital Expenditures Financing

- The City recognizes that there are several methods of financing capital items. It can budget the funds from current revenues; take the funds from fund balance/working capital, as allowed by the Fund Balance/working capital Policy; utilize funds from grants; or it can borrow the money through some form of debt instrument. Debt financing includes general obligation bonds, revenue bonds, certificates of obligation and capital lease agreements.

Capitalization Threshold for Tangible Capital Assets

The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) recommends that "best practice" guidelines be followed in establishing capitalization thresholds for tangible capital-type items. Accordingly, the following criteria shall be established with the adoption of this policy.

- Individual items costing \$5,000 or more will be capitalized and depreciated according to Governmental Accounting Standards Board rules. This amount will be adjusted as changes are recommended in GFOA's "best practices" guidelines.
- Tangible capital-type items will only be capitalized if they have any estimated useful life of at least five years following the date of acquisition.
- Capitalization thresholds will be applied to individual items rather than to groups of similar items (e.g., desks and tables).
- Adequate control procedures at the department level will be established to ensure adequate control over noncapitalized tangible items.

V. Debt Management

The City shall use the following guidelines for debt financing used to provide needed capital equipment and infrastructure improvements, while minimizing the impact of debt payments on current and future revenues.

Use of Debt Financing

- Debt financing, to include general obligation bonds, revenue bonds, certificates of obligation and capital lease agreements, shall only be used to acquire capital assets.

Amortization of Debt

- Amortization of debt shall be structured in accordance with a multi-year capital improvement plan. The term of a debt issue will never exceed the useful life of the capital asset being financed.

Affordability Targets

- The City shall use an objective, analytical approach to determine whether it can afford to assume new debt beyond the amount it retires each year. This process shall compare generally accepted standards of affordability to the current values for the City. These standards shall include debt per capita, debt as a percent of taxable value and debt service payments as a percent of current revenues and current expenditures. The process shall also examine the direct costs and benefits of the proposed expenditures as determined in the City's annual update of the Capital Improvements Planning Program. The decision on whether or not to assume new debt shall be based on these costs and benefits and on the City's ability to afford new debt as determined by the aforementioned standards.

Sale Process

- The City shall use a competitive bidding process in the sale of debt unless the nature of the issue warrants a negotiated bid.

Rating Agencies Presentation

- Full disclosure of operations and open lines of communication shall be made available to the rating agencies. City staff, with assistance of financial advisors, shall prepare the necessary materials and presentation to the rating agencies.

Continuing Disclosure

- The City is committed to continuing disclosure of financial and pertinent credit information relevant to the City's outstanding issues.

Debt Refunding

- City staff and the financial advisor shall monitor the municipal bond market for opportunities to obtain interest savings by refunding outstanding debt. A proposed refunding of debt, for interest cost savings, should provide a present value benefit as a percent of refunded principal of at least 3%.

Continuing Compliance with Federal Tax Covenants

- **Arbitrage Compliance**

Federal income tax laws generally restrict the ability to earn arbitrage in connection with the Obligations. The Responsible Person (as defined below) will review the Closing Documents periodically (at least once a year) to ascertain if an exception to arbitrage compliance applies.

- Procedures applicable to Obligations issued for construction and acquisition purposes. With respect to the investment and expenditure of the proceeds of the Obligations that are issued to finance public improvements or to acquire land or personal property, the Issuer's City Manager (such officer, together with other employees of the Issuer who report to such officer, is collectively, the "Responsible Person") will:
 - Instruct the appropriate person who is primarily responsible for the construction, renovation or acquisition of the facilities financed with the Obligations (the "Project") that (i) binding contracts for the expenditure of at least 5% of the proceeds of the Obligations are entered into within 6 months of the date of closing of the Obligations (the "Issue Date") and that (ii) the Project must proceed with due diligence;
 - Monitor that at least 85% of the proceeds of the Obligations to be used for the construction, renovation or acquisition of the Project are expended within 3 years of the Issue Date;
 - Monitor the yield on the investments purchased with proceeds of the Obligations and restrict the yield of such investments to the yield on the Obligations after 3 years of the Issue Date;
 - Monitor all amounts deposited into a sinking fund or funds pledged (directly or indirectly) to the payment of the Obligations, such as the Interest and Sinking Fund, to assure that the maximum amount invested within such applicable fund at a yield higher than the yield on the Obligations does not exceed an amount equal to the debt service on the Obligations in the succeeding 12 month period plus a carryover amount equal to one-twelfth of the principal and interest payable on the Obligations for the immediately preceding 12-month period; and
 - Ensure that no more than 50% of the proceeds of the Obligations are invested in an investment with a guaranteed yield for 4 years or more.
- Procedures applicable to Obligations with a debt service reserve fund. In addition to the foregoing, if the Issuer issues Obligations that are secured by a debt service reserve fund, the Responsible Person will:
 - Assure that the maximum amount of any reserve fund for the Obligations invested at a yield higher than the yield on the Obligations will not exceed the lesser of (1) 10% of the principal amount of the Obligations, (2) 125% of the average annual debt service on the Obligations measured as of the Issue Date, or (3) 100% of the maximum annual debt service on the Obligations as of the Issue Date.

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- Procedures applicable to Escrow Accounts for Refunding Issues. In addition to the foregoing, if the Issuer issues Obligations and proceeds are deposited to an escrow fund to be administered pursuant to the terms of an escrow agreement, the Responsible Person will:
 - Monitor the actions of the escrow agent to ensure compliance with the applicable provisions of the escrow agreement, including with respect to reinvestment of cash balances;
 - Contact the escrow agent on the date of redemption of obligations being refunded to ensure that they were redeemed; and
 - Monitor any unspent proceeds of the refunded obligations to ensure that the yield on any investments applicable to such proceeds are invested at the yield on the applicable obligations or otherwise applied (see Closing Documents).
- Procedures applicable to all Tax-exempt Obligation Issues. For all issuances of Obligations, the Responsible Person will:
 - Maintain any official action of the Issuer (such as a reimbursement resolution) stating the Issuer's intent to reimburse with the proceeds of the Obligations any amount expended prior to the Issue Date for the acquisition, renovation or construction of the facilities;
 - Ensure that the applicable information return (e.g., IRS Form 8038-G, 8038-GC, or any successor forms) is timely filed with the IRS; and
 - Assure that, unless excepted from rebate and yield restriction under section 148(f) of the Code, excess investment earnings are computed and paid to the U.S. government at such time and in such manner as directed by the IRS (i) at least every 5 years after the Issue Date and (ii) within 30 days after the date the Obligations are retired.
- Private Business Use
Generally, to be tax-exempt, only an insignificant amount of the proceeds of each issue of Obligations can benefit (directly or indirectly) private businesses. The Responsible Persons will review the Closing Documents periodically (at least once a year) for the purpose of determining that the use of the facilities financed or refinanced with the proceeds of the Obligations (the "Project") do not violate provisions of federal tax law that pertain to private business use. In addition, the Responsible Persons will:
 - Develop procedures or a "tracking system" to identify all property financed with tax-exempt debt;
 - Monitor and record the date on which the Project is substantially complete and available to be used for the purpose intended;
 - Monitor and record whether, at any time the Obligations are outstanding, any person, other than the Issuer, the employees of the Issuer, the agents of the Issuer or members of the general public has any contractual right (such as a lease, purchase, management or other service agreement) with respect to any portion of the facilities;

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- Monitor and record whether, at any time the Obligations are outstanding, any person, other than the Issuer, the employees of the Issuer, the agents of the Issuer or members of the general public has a right to use the output of the facilities (e.g., water, gas, electricity);
 - Monitor and record whether, at any time the Obligations are outstanding, any person, other than the Issuer, the employees of the Issuer, the agents of the Issuer or members of the general public has a right to use the facilities to conduct or to direct the conduct of research;
 - Monitor and record whether, at any time the Obligations are outstanding, any person, other than the Issuer, has a naming right for the facilities or any other contractual right granting an intangible benefit;
 - Monitor and record whether, at any time the Obligations are outstanding, the facilities are sold or otherwise disposed of; and
 - Take such action as is necessary to remediate any failure to maintain compliance with the covenants contained in the Order related to the public use of the Project.
- **Record Retention**

The Responsible Person will maintain or cause to be maintained all records relating to the investment and expenditure of the proceeds of the Obligations and the use of the facilities financed or refinanced thereby for a period ending three (3) years after the complete extinguishment of the Obligations. If any portion of the Obligations is refunded with the proceeds of another series of tax-exempt Obligations, such records shall be maintained until the three (3) years after the refunding Obligations are completely extinguished. Such records can be maintained in paper or electronic format.
 - **Responsible Persons**

Each Responsible Person shall receive appropriate training regarding the Issuer's accounting system, contract intake system, facilities management and other systems necessary to track the investment and expenditure of the proceeds and the use of the Project financed or refinanced with the proceeds of the Obligations. The foregoing notwithstanding, each Responsible Person shall report to the Council whenever experienced advisors and agents may be necessary to carry out the purposes of these instructions for the purpose of seeking Council approval to engage or utilize existing advisors and agents for such purposes.

VI. Investments

The City's cash shall be invested in such a manner so as to ensure the absolute safety of principal and interest, to meet the liquidity needs of the City and to achieve the highest possible yield in accordance with the City's Investment Policy. Interest earned from investment shall be distributed to the City's funds from which the money was provided.

VII. Intergovernmental Relations

The City shall coordinate efforts with other governmental agencies to achieve common policy objectives, share the cost of providing government services on an equitable basis and support appropriate favorable legislation at the state and federal levels.

Interlocal Cooperation in Delivery of Services

- In order to promote the effective and efficient delivery of services, the City shall work with other local jurisdictions to share on an equitable basis the costs of services, to share facilities and to develop joint programs to improve service to its citizens.

Legislative Program

- The City shall cooperate with other jurisdictions to actively oppose any state or federal regulation or proposal that mandates additional City programs or services and does not provide the funding necessary for implementation.

VIII. Grants

The City shall seek to obtain and effectively administer federal, state and foundation grants-in-aid that address the City's current and future priorities and policy objectives.

Grant Guidelines

- The City shall seek to obtain those grants that are consistent with priority needs and objectives identified by Council.

Indirect Costs

- The City shall recover indirect costs to the maximum amount allowed by the funding source. The City may waive or reduce indirect costs if doing so will significantly increase the effectiveness of the grant.

Grant Review

- The City shall review all grant submittals requiring an in-kind match requirement to determine their potential impact on the operating budget, and the extent to which they meet the City's policy objectives. If there is a cash match requirement, the source of funding shall be identified and approved prior to application.
- Prior to submission, all grant requests will be reviewed by Administrative Services to ensure the benefits to the City exceed the administrative costs incurred throughout the life of the grant.

Grant Program Termination

- The City shall terminate grant-funded programs and associated positions as directed by the City Council when grant funds are no longer available, unless alternate funding is identified.

IX. Economic Development

The City shall initiate, encourage and participate in economic development efforts to create job opportunities and strengthen the local economy and tax base.

Commitment to Expansion and Diversification

- The City shall encourage and participate in economic development efforts to expand Friendswood's economy and tax base, to increase local employment and to invest when there is a defined, specific long-term return. These efforts shall not only focus on new areas, but on established sections of the City where development can generate additional jobs and other economic benefits.

Tax Abatements

- The City of Friendswood is committed to the promotion of quality development in all parts of the City. On a case-by-case basis, the City will give consideration to providing tax abatement on the increment in value added to a particular property by a specific development proposal, which meets the economic goals and objectives of the City.
- The tax abatement shall not apply to any portion of the inventory or land value of the project.
- Tax abatement may be offered on improvements to real property owned by the applicant and/or on new personal property brought to the site by the applicant.
- Tax abatement will not be ordinarily considered for projects which would be developed without such incentives unless it can be demonstrated that higher development standards or other development and community goals will be achieved through the use of the abatement.

Increase Non-Residential Share of Tax Base

- The City's economic development program shall seek to expand the non-residential share of the tax base to decrease the tax burden on residential homeowners.

Coordinate Efforts With Other Jurisdictions

- The City's economic development program shall encourage close cooperation with other local jurisdictions to promote the economic well being of this area.

X. Fiscal Monitoring

Reports shall be prepared and presented on a regular basis that analyze, evaluate and forecast the City's financial performance and economic condition.

Financial Status and Performance Reports

- Monthly reports shall be prepared comparing expenditures and revenues to original and amended budgets, for the month and fiscal year-to-date. Explanatory notes will be included, as needed.

XI. Accounting, Auditing and Financial Reporting

The City shall comply with prevailing local, state and federal regulations. Its accounting practices and financial reporting shall conform to generally accepted accounting principles as promulgated by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB), American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) and the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA). The City Council shall select an independent firm of certified public accountants to perform an annual audit of its accounting and financial reporting practices.

XII. Internal Control

The Director of Administrative Services is responsible for developing citywide, written guidelines on accounting, handling of cash and other financial matters. The Director of Administrative Services will assist Department Directors as needed, in tailoring these guidelines into detailed written procedures to fit each department's specific requirements.

Each Department Director is responsible to ensure that good internal controls are followed throughout his or her department, that all guidelines on accounting and internal controls are implemented and that all independent auditor internal control recommendations are addressed.

XIII. Risk Management

The City will utilize a safety program, an employee health program and a risk management program to prevent and/or reduce the financial impact to the City due to claims and losses. Transfer of liability for claims through transfer to other entities through insurance and/or by contract will be utilized where appropriate. Prevention of loss through the safety program and the employee health program will be employed.

XIV. Operating Budget

The City shall establish an operating budget that shall link revenues and expenditures to City Council goals, service and performance standards.

Any transfer of intradepartmental appropriations shall be authorized, in writing, by the City Manager. No transfer more than \$50,000 shall be authorized by the City Manager without prior approval of the City Council. Written justification shall be attached to each request to the City Manager for a transfer of appropriation and, if authorized, the written justification shall be attached to the City Manager's written authorization. All applicable bidding and purchasing laws shall be followed. New capital projects or projects not otherwise provided for in the budget shall not be funded through transfers.