

FISCAL POLICY

Policies for Fiscal Control:

- **Balanced Budget.** As required by law, it is the fiscal policy of the City of Memphis to balance the budget. In other words, total revenue are equal to total expenses.
- **Financial Management.** The City will manage and account for its Operating and Capital Budgets in accordance with principles and standards set forth by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) and Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP).
- **Accounting Method (Basis of Budgeting).** The City will maintain its accounting records for general governmental operations on a modified accrual basis, with revenues recorded when available and measurable and expenditures recorded when services or goods are received and the liabilities incurred. Accounting records for proprietary fund types and similar trust funds will be maintained on the accrual basis, with all revenues recorded when earned and expenses recorded at the time liabilities are incurred, without regard to receipt of payment of cash. For governmental-type funds, revenues and expenditures are also monitored internally on a “budgetary” basis to ensure compliance with legal limitations. The City budgets on a “modified accrual plus encumbrances” basis, which treats encumbrances as expenditures at the time the funds are encumbered.
- **Internal Accounting Controls.** The City will develop and manage its accounting system to provide reasonable assurance regarding: (1) the safeguarding of assets against loss from unauthorized use or disposition; and (2) the reliability of financial records for preparing financial statements and maintaining accountability for assets. “Reasonable assurance” recognizes that (1) the cost of a control should not exceed the benefits likely to be derived; and (2) the evaluation of costs and benefits requires estimates and judgments by management.
- **Audits.** The City will ensure the conduct of timely, effective, and periodic audit coverage of all financial records and actions of the City, its officials and employees in compliance with local, State, and Federal law.

Policies for Revenue and Program Funding:

- **Revenue Projections.** The City will estimate revenues in a conservative manner in order to minimize the adverse impact of a revenue shortfall.
- **Property Tax Rates.** The City will maintain stable tax rates that avoid wide annual fluctuations as economic and fiscal conditions change.
- **Intergovernmental Revenue.** The City will aggressively seek a fair share of available State and Federal financial support unless conditions attached to that assistance are contrary to the City’s interest.
- **Cash Management.** The City will maintain sophisticated and aggressive cash management and investment programs in order to achieve maximum financial return on available funds. Cash will be pooled and invested on a daily basis at best obtainable rates; investments will be generally limited to federal debt instruments, fully collateralized repurchase agreements, or highest quality bankers’ acceptances and commercial paper.

Policies for Expenditures and Allocation of Costs:

- **Contents of Budgets.** The City will include in the Operating Budget all programs and facilities not specifically eligible for inclusion in the Capital Improvement Program.

- **Expenditure Growth.** The City will budget expenditures for necessary and essential public purposes only, holding expenditure growth to levels consistent with realistic prospects for the community's ability to pay, both in the upcoming fiscal year and in the ensuing years as well.
- **Allocation of Costs.** The City will balance the financial burden of programs and facilities as fairly as possible between the general taxpayers and those who benefit directly, recognizing the common good that flows from many public expenditures, the inability of some citizens to pay the full costs of certain benefits, and the difficulty of measuring the relationship between public costs and public or private benefits in some services.
- **Expenditure Reduction.** The City will seek expenditure reductions whenever possible through efficiencies and through the reduction or elimination of programs, policies, and practices which have outlived their usefulness.
- **Public Investment in Infrastructure.** The City will, within available funds, plan and budget for those facilities and infrastructure necessary for a healthy economy and for support of public programs determined to be necessary for the quality of life desired by its citizens.
- **Procurement.** Toward the most cost-effective procurement of goods and services, the City will purchase them, directly or indirectly, through a competitive process except when an alternative method of procurement is specifically authorized by law.

Policies for Debt Management:

- **Debt Management.** The City will minimize debt service costs through the judicious use of available debt instruments, consistent with the desirability of maintaining stable current tax rates and distributing the costs of certain long-lived facilities among all users, present and future.
- **Debt Incurrence.** The City will limit the amount of new general obligation debt it will plan for and issue in any six-year period to that which can be supported by the community under conservative fiscal and economic projections and to that which will maximize the likelihood of sustaining the City's "A" credit rating, and ultimately restoring the "AA" rating.

Policies for Governmental Management:

- **Productivity.** The City will measure and seek to increase the productivity of City Programs in terms of quantity and quality of services relative to resources expended, through program evaluation, employee training and incentives, and other strategies.
- **Risk Management.** The City will control its exposure to financial loss through a combination of commercial and self-insurance; will self-insure against all but highest cost risks; and will aggressively control its future shares among agencies through loss history.
- **Employee Compensation.** The City will seek to provide equitable pay among comparable jobs and City agencies and between employees in collective bargaining units and those outside of such units, and will seek to contain the growth of compensation costs through organizational efficiencies and productivity within the workforce.
- **Pension Funds.** The City will, through judicious management and diversified investment, assure the security of the assets of the Employees Retirement System toward its solvency and regular benefits for future as well as present retirees and will continue to evaluate the accrued liability and adjust the funding rate when necessary.

- **Surplus Property.** The City will maximize the residual value of land parcels or buildings declared excess to current public needs through efforts at public reuse, lease to appropriate private organizations, or sale toward returning them to the tax base of the City. Deposition of goods that have become obsolete, unusable, or surplus to the needs of the City will be made through bid, auction or other lawful method to the purchaser offering the highest price except under circumstances as specified by law.
- **Resource Management.** The City will seek continued improvement in its budgetary and financial management capacity in order to achieve the best possible decisions on resource allocation and the most effective use of budgeted resources.

