

SECTION 1 POLICIES

This section includes the Mayor's budget message; the Mayor's budget transmittal letter to the City Council; a brief explanation of the strategic planning effort, including the City Council's Strategic Priorities; the long-range Financial Policies; and the ordinances adopting the Budget and Capital Plan.



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FINANCIAL POLICIES

1. STRATEGIC PLANNING

- a. All planning activities, strategies and studies should be comprehensive and integrated on a City-wide basis.
- b. Plans, strategies and studies shall encompass multi-year time frames and be updated annually.

2. OPERATING BUDGET

- a. The City of Tulsa shall comply with the provisions of the *Oklahoma Municipal Budget Act, 11 O.S. Supp. 1979, Sections 17-201 through 17-216*. It shall be the responsibility of the Mayor through the Department of Finance to ensure compliance and the timely preparation of the City of Tulsa's annual budget.
- b. The budget will provide for adequate maintenance of the capital plant and equipment and for their orderly replacement.
- c. The City will maintain a budgetary control system to help it adhere to the budget.
- d. The City administration will prepare regular reports comparing actual revenues and expenditures to budgeted amounts.
- e. Each year the City will update revenue and expenditure projections for the next five years. Projections will include estimated operating costs of future capital improvements that are included in the capital budget.
- f. The City will project its equipment replacement and maintenance needs for the next several years and will update this projection each year. From this projection a maintenance and replacement schedule will be developed and followed.
- g. It shall be the goal of the City that current operating revenues will be sufficient to support current operating expenses and in no case shall more than five percent (5%) of the operating budget be supported using prior year's fund balances.
- h. Adjustments to Water, Sewer, Stormwater and Solid Waste Disposal service rates and fees shall be examined on an annual basis as an integral part of the City's budgetary process.

3. RISK MANAGEMENT

- a. The City will operate a risk management program to provide for protection against loss and a reduction in exposure to liability. Such program shall include an employee safety training program to minimize financial losses to the City.
- b. The City will establish a self-insurance program to provide for protection against major losses and will purchase excess coverage insurance to cover catastrophic losses where appropriate.

4. PROCUREMENT AND PURCHASING

- a. The City of Tulsa shall operate a consolidated Purchasing and Procurement System.
- b. The City's Purchasing and Procurement System shall encourage full and open competition on all purchases and sales.
- c. The operation of the City's Purchasing and Procurement System and Surplus Property Disposal System shall be based upon competitive bidding whenever possible.

5. REVENUES

- a. The City will estimate its annual revenues by an objective and analytical process.
- b. It shall be the goal of the City that all Enterprise Funds shall be self-supporting.
- c. The City will establish all user charges and fees at a level related to the cost of providing the services.
- d. Credit and Collection
 - i. The City of Tulsa will neither begin business activity nor continue to engage in business activity with an entity that owes the City funds from a delinquent debt.

- ii. Extended credit may be granted by the City for certain obligations. If payment is not timely, the City reserves the right to refuse future credit as well as take necessary legal action to obtain payment of the debt and collection costs.
- e. The City will try to maintain a diversified and stable revenue system to shelter it from short-run fluctuations in any one revenue source.
- f. Categorical federal and state grant revenues shall only be used to finance limited-time-period operations and/or one-time capital.
- g. Enterprise Funds will transfer annually a payment in lieu of taxes to the General Fund as defined by ordinance.

6. CAPITAL BUDGET AND IMPROVEMENTS

- a. The City of Tulsa's Capital Improvements Program shall be a five-year program and shall be updated annually. All departments' needs shall be considered in the plan.
- b. The City shall maintain a balanced mix of financing for funding capital projects, including pay-as-you-go, grants and debt, without excessive reliance on any one source.
- c. No capital project which does not comply with the provisions of and is not contained in the currently approved Capital Improvements Program shall be funded.
- d. The City will coordinate development of the capital improvement budget with development of the operating budget. Future operating costs associated with new capital improvements will be projected and included in operating budget forecasts.
- e. Capital projects will be scheduled based on the following criteria:
 - i. The project has been certified by the Planning Commission as being in accordance with City plans.
 - ii. The project will alleviate a service deficiency or replace a deteriorated and/or non-functioning facility.
 - iii. Federal or state law requires it to be done.
 - iv. Federal or state matching funds are available for the project.
 - v. A Federal or state agency will construct the facility at no cost to the City.
 - vi. The project will encourage economic development.
 - vii. The project is needed to solve an emergency situation.
 - viii. The project will improve the quality of life in the City's neighborhoods.
- f. Public hearings will be held before deciding what projects to include in any multi-year capital program which requires approval by the electorate.
- g. The CIP has been developed based on Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) recommended best practices. <https://www.gfoa.org/capital-planning-policies>
- h. The CIP has coordinated with the Tulsa Planning Office to assess the CIP for conformance with the Comprehensive Plan and to prioritize projects which support Land Use Policies 5.5 and 13.3 in particular.

7. LONG TERM BORROWING

- a. General Obligation and Revenue Bonds shall only be issued for capital improvements and maintenance, or expenditures related thereto. Revenue bonds shall be used to finance capital improvements wherever possible. No operating expenses shall be funded using any form of long-term financing.
- b. Bond borrowing shall be planned, and the details of the plan shall be incorporated into the five-year Capital Improvements Program.
- c. The outstanding indebtedness of the City of Tulsa shall in total not exceed such levels as to cause the City's credit rating to be impaired and in all cases the City shall take such actions and adopt such policies and procedures as necessary to maintain a rating equal to at least AA for general obligation debt. In no event shall the net general obligation debt exceed twenty-five percent (25%) of the net assessed market valuation of the taxable property of the City of Tulsa as established by the County Assessor.
- d. Projects financed through the issuance of debt shall not be financed for a period that exceeds the expected useful life of the project and in no event shall the term of any debt exceed twenty-five (25) years.

- e. Refunding of outstanding debt shall only be considered when present value savings of at least four percent (4%) of the principal amount of the refunded bonds are produced, unless restructuring of debt or a bond covenant revision is necessary to facilitate the ability to provide services or issue additional debt in accordance with established debt policy and limitations.
- f. Bond sales shall be structured to achieve level debt service payments to the extent possible taking into consideration the costs of such financings. Either variable or fixed rate financing may be used, subject to applicable laws, depending on the cost benefit to the City of each option.
- g. Interest earnings from general obligation bond proceeds shall be deposited in the General Fund.
- h. Competitive sale shall be used for all general obligation debt issuances of the City of Tulsa.
- i. Negotiated or competitive sale may be used for revenue bonds.

8. INVESTMENTS AND DEPOSITS

- a. It shall be the objective of the City of Tulsa to pool and invest public funds in accordance with current legislation and the Charter of the City of Tulsa. Criteria for investing shall adhere to the following order of priority: (1) Safety, (2) Liquidity, (3) Yield.
- b. Responsibility for the investment program of the City shall be vested with the Director of Finance who shall establish an investment program consistent with an adopted investment policy.
- c. The City will establish a cash flow management system which includes the preparation of a cash flow analysis of all funds on a regular basis. Disbursement, collection, and deposit of all funds will be scheduled to ensure maximum investment return and cash availability subject to the City's investment policies. The cash flow management system shall ensure the City can offset significant downturns in revenues which could not have been reasonably foreseen and provide sufficient working capital and cash for daily financial needs.
- d. The City will make arrangements with banks on a contractual basis for a specified period of time with specified fees for each service rendered.

9. RESERVES

- a. The City shall establish and maintain an operating reserve in the General Fund to provide for unanticipated expenditures of a non-recurring nature or to meet unexpected increases in service delivery costs. The reserve, per ordinance, is to maintain an emergency operating reserve of ten percent (10%), unless during the annual budget process the Mayor and City Council agree that the reserve cannot prudently be maintained at 10%. Prior to allocating funds from the reserve for unanticipated expenditures, the Mayor shall prepare an analysis and present it to the City Council.
- b. The City may establish and maintain operating reserves in its enterprise funds to pay for expenses caused by unforeseen emergencies or shortfalls caused by revenue declines.
- c. The City shall establish an Economic Stabilization Reserve as directed by the City Charter. This reserve shall be used to assist in limiting the amount of reduction required in the General Fund budget during times of declining revenues. Defined criteria have been established within the charter for allocation to the reserve and withdrawal from the reserve.

10. ACCOUNTING

- a. The City of Tulsa's accounting systems shall be operated and maintained in accordance with generally accepted principles and standards as promulgated by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board.
- b. The City's accounting and financial transactions shall be audited annually by a recognized independent certified public accounting firm and such audit results shall include a management letter detailing areas where improvement is needed. A firm to perform such audit shall be chosen not more than once every five (5) years.
- c. The City shall prepare and issue an official Comprehensive Annual Financial Report no later than six (6) months following the fiscal year-end in accordance with Government Finance Officer's Association and Governmental Accounting Standards Board principles and standards.
- d. The City of Tulsa shall establish and maintain an accounting control environment to help ensure proper authorization for financial transactions and proper procedures for safeguarding assets.

- e. The City will comply with bonded debt covenants requiring yield restrictions on certain investments and accounts in compliance with *Internal Revenue Code, Section 148 - Arbitrage*.

11. TRUSTS AND AUTHORITIES

- a. Unless otherwise provided by the operation of law, all Trusts and Public Authorities which receive funding from the City of Tulsa shall conform to the City's Financial Policies and Procedures where applicable.

12. PENSION FUNDS

- a. The pension funds of the Municipal Employees' Retirement Plan shall be managed by the Pension Board as set forth in City Ordinance and Oklahoma Statute.
- b. The City's annual budget will provide for adequate funding for the Municipal Employees' Retirement System.
- c. Investments shall be made in conformance with an investment policy adopted by the Municipal Employees' Pension Board.