



COMPREHENSIVE FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICY STATEMENTS

Approved November 2013
Amended November 2014
Amended June 2016



***City of Fredericksburg
Comprehensive Financial Management
Policy Statements***

Table of Contents

	Page
Comprehensive Financial Management Policy Statements – Purpose & Objectives	1
I. Accounting, Auditing and Financial Reporting	2 - 3
II. Budget and Long Range Financial Planning	4 - 6
III. Revenues	7 - 8
IV. Expenditures	9 - 10
V. Reserves	11 - 13
VI. Capital Expenditures and Improvements	14 - 15
VII. Debt	16 - 19
VIII. Cash Management and Investments	20 - 21
IX. Grants and Intergovernmental Revenues	22 - 23
X. Financial Consultants	24 - 25

Comprehensive Financial Management Policy Statements

Purpose

The Comprehensive Financial Management Policy Statements assembles all of the City's financial policies into one document. These statements are the tools used to ensure that the City is financially able to meet its current and future service needs. The individual statements contained herein serve as guidelines for both the financial planning and internal financial management of the City.

Municipal resources must be wisely used to ensure adequate funding for the services, public facilities, and infrastructure necessary to meet immediate and long-term needs. These policy statements safeguard the fiscal stability required to achieve the City's objectives and ensure long-term financial health.

Objectives

- A. To guide City Council and management policy decisions that have significant fiscal impact.
- B. To employ balanced revenue policies that provide adequate funding for services and service levels.
- C. To maintain appropriate financial capacity for present and future needs.
- D. To maintain sufficient reserves so as to maintain service levels during periods of economic downturn.
- E. To promote sound financial management by providing accurate and timely information on the City's financial condition.
- F. To protect the City's credit rating and provide for adequate resources to meet the provisions of the City's debt obligations on all municipal debt.
- G. To ensure the legal use of financial resources through an effective system of internal controls.
- H. To promote cooperation and coordination with other governments and the private sector in financing and delivery of services.

I. ACCOUNTING, AUDITING, AND FINANCIAL REPORTING

The City will maintain accounting practices that conform to generally accepted accounting principles and comply with prevailing federal, state, and local statutes and regulations. The City will provide for, prepare and present regular reports that analyze and evaluate the City's financial performance and economic condition.

A. *Accounting Practices and Principles*

The City will maintain accounting practices that conform to generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) as set forth by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB), the authoritative standard setting body for units of local government. All City financial documents, except monthly interim financial reports, including official statements accompanying debt issues, Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports and continuing disclosures statements, will meet these standards. Monthly interim financial reports are on a cash basis and will be reported as budgeted. At year-end, the general ledger and financials will be converted to GAAP and GASB.

B. *Financial and Management Reporting*

1. Interim Financial Reports will be provided monthly to management and City Council that explain key economic and fiscal developments and note significant deviations from the budget. These reports will be distributed monthly by the end of each month for the prior month.
2. Semi-annually, departments will report on program measures and indicators as compared to target and last year to the Finance Department. A semi-annual report will be submitted to the City Manager and City Council, highlighting significant variations.

C. *Annual Audit*

Pursuant to the City Charter the City Council shall cause an annual audit to be made of the books and accounts of each and every department of the City. A complete audit in accordance with standards set by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants shall be made at the end of each fiscal year, and at such other times as may be necessary, by an Independent Certified Public Accountant who shall be selected by the City Council. The audit report shall be filed with the City Council, presented at a City Council meeting, and shall be available for public inspection. A summary of the audit shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation of the City of Fredericksburg.

D. *Signature of Checks*

Pursuant to the City Charter, all checks shall have two authorized signatures. Signatures may be affixed on all City checks via facsimile signatures, either with a signature plate used with a check signing machine or with a secure laser check printing system.

E. *Compliance with Council Policy Statements*

The Financial Management Policy Statements will be reviewed bi-annually and updated, revised or refined as deemed necessary. Policy statements adopted by City Council are

guidelines, and occasionally exceptions may be appropriate and required. Exceptions will be identified, documented, and approved by the City Council before exception is granted.

II. BUDGET AND LONG RANGE FINANCIAL PLANNING

These guidelines for budgeting will help to ensure a financially sound City and to establish a long-range financial planning process that assesses the long-term financial implications of current and proposed operating and capital budgets.

A. *Balanced Budget*

The City Manager shall file annually, a structurally balanced budget for the ensuing fiscal year with City Council pursuant to the prevailing state and local law. A structurally balanced budget is further defined as recurring revenues funding recurring expenditures and adherence to fund balance policies. Short-term loans will be avoided as budget balancing techniques.

B. *Current Funding Basis (Recurring Revenues)*

The City shall budget and operate on a current funding basis. Recurring expenditures shall be budgeted and controlled so as not to exceed current revenues. Recurring expenses will be funded exclusively with recurring revenue sources to facilitate operations on a current funding basis.

C. *Use of Non-Recurring Revenues*

Non-recurring revenue sources, such as a one-time revenue remittance of fund balance in excess of policy can only be budgeted/used to fund non-recurring expenditures, such as capital purchases or capital improvement projects. This will ensure that recurring expenditures are not funded by non-recurring sources.

D. *Tax Rate*

The City Manager will recommend a tax rate that the City finances require in order to operate efficiently, yet effectively, and pay its debt.

E. *Pay As You Go Capital Projects*

The transfer from the City's General Fund and the City's Utility Fund to fund pay-as-you-go capital projects will be budgeted when financially feasible and when projects are identified as needed. The transfer will be based on the financial health of each fund with the long-term goal of adequately funding rehabilitation and providing infrastructure to accommodate future growth.

F. *Revenue Estimating for Budgeting*

1. In order to protect the City from revenue shortfalls and to maintain a stable level of service, the City shall use a conservative, objective, reasonable and analytical approach when preparing revenue estimates. The process shall include historical collection rates, trends, and probable economic changes. This approach is intended to reduce the likelihood of actual revenues falling short of budget estimates and should avoid mid-year service changes.
2. The City, whenever possible, will seek outside sources of revenue, such as federal, state,

and local grants, in order to leverage local dollars.

G. Budget Preparation

1. Department Directors have primary responsibility for formulating budget proposals. New or expanded services should support City Council goals, City Manager priority direction and department goals. The City Manager and Departments are charged with implementing the goals and priorities once they are approved.
2. All competing requests for City resources will be weighed within the formal annual budget process.
3. Actions on items that come up through-out the year with significant financial impacts should be withheld until they can be made in the full context of the annual budget process and long-range plan, unless unforeseen circumstances present themselves.
4. The Budget will be presented in a way that clearly communicates to the public the City's proposed level of services and capital projects planned for the coming year.

H. Budget Management

The City Council shall delegate authority to the City Manager in managing the budget after it is formally adopted by City Council. The City Manager may further delegate levels of authority for the daily operations of the budget. Expenditures/expenses are legally adopted by the fund level. Expenditures/expenses should not exceed the adopted budget, plus subsequent changes approved by the City Council.

Transfers between funds must gain formal approval by the City Council.

I. Amended Budget

In order to preserve fund balances/ending balances based on projected revenues and expenditures/expenses for the current fiscal year, the City Council may periodically amend the budget during the year as needed. Under provisions of Texas State law and the City's operating procedures, the operating budget may be adjusted or amended. If the amendment will create a new line item, or increase total overall spending, the City Council must declare an emergency before passing the order to amend the budget. The emergency ordinance should explain the emergency and show the revenue or expenditure items affected.

J. Performance Measurement

Performance measures will be utilized and reported in department budgets. The City will maintain a measurement system that reports trends and comparisons to targets and previous year as a management tool to monitor and improve service delivery.

K. Operating Deficits

The City shall take immediate corrective action if at any time during the fiscal year expenditure and revenue estimates are such that "net income" is lower than budgeted. Corrective actions include:

- Deferral of capital equipment purchases

- Deferral of pay-as-you go capital improvements
- Expenditure reductions
- Deferral of certain positions
- Hiring freezes
- Freeze merit increases
- Use of fund balance
- Use of volunteers
- Increase fees
- Reduce work hours with subsequent reduction in pay
- Eliminate positions which may require laying-off employees if there are not other vacant positions for which they are qualified.

Short-term loans as a means to balance the budget shall be avoided.

The use of fund balance, which is a one-time revenue source, may be used to fund an annual operating deficit, only with a subsequent approval by City Council of a plan to replenish the fund balance if it is brought down below policy level. Reserve requirements are addressed in Section V.

L. *Long-Range Financial Plans*

1. The City shall develop and maintain a five-year Financial Forecast and Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for each major operating fund, in conjunction with the annual budget process.
2. The forecast should enable current services and current service levels provided to be sustained over the forecast period. Operating impacts from completed capital improvement projects in the City's Five-Year CIP shall be included in the forecast. Commitments/obligations already made that require future financial resources shall also be included.
3. The forecasts should identify the impact to property taxes and utility rates.
4. Major financial decisions should be made in the context of the Long-Range Plan. The forecast assesses long-term financial implications of current and proposed policies, programs, and assumptions that develop appropriate strategies to achieve the City's goals. The forecast will provide an understanding of available funding; evaluate financial risk; assess the likelihood that services can be sustained; assess the level at which capital investment can be made; identify future commitments and resource demands; and identify the key variables that may cause a change in the level of revenue.

III. REVENUES

The City will design, maintain and administer a revenue system that will assure a reliable, equitable, diversified and sufficient revenue stream to support desired City services.

A. *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 local economic conditions, which may adversely impact that source.

B. *User Fees – General Fund*

1. For services that benefit specific users, the City shall establish and collect fees to recover the costs of those services. Where services provide a general public benefit, the City shall recover the costs of those services through property and sales taxes.
2. At a minimum, the City will strive to cover direct costs.
3. User fees should be reviewed, at a minimum every two years and adjusted to avoid sharp changes.
4. Factors in setting fees shall include but not be limited to market and competitive pricing, effect of demand for services, and impact on users, which may result in recovering something less than direct, indirect, and overhead costs.
5. The City may set a different fee for residents versus non-residents.
6. All user fees should be adopted by City Ordinance and included in the Annual Fee Schedule.

C. *User Fees – Enterprise Funds*

1. Utility rates and other Enterprise Fund user fees shall be set at levels sufficient to cover operating expenditures (direct and indirect), meet debt obligations and debt service coverage, provide funding for capital improvements, and provide adequate levels of working capital.
2. The City may set a different fee for residents versus non-residents.
3. The Five-Year Financial Plan (rate model) and proposed operating budget shall serve as the basis for rate change considerations.
4. When necessary, the Five-Year Financial Plan (rate model) will be built around smaller rate increases annually versus higher rate increases periodically.
5. Utility rates will be reviewed annually by the City Council.

D. *One-Time/Unpredictable Revenue Sources*

1. One-time, unpredictable revenue sources should not be used for ongoing expenses/expenditures.
2. One-time, unpredictable revenue sources will be used for one-time purchases such as increase in fund balance requirements, capital equipment purchases, capital improvements, etc.

E. *Revenue Collection*

The City shall maintain high collection rates for all revenues by monitoring monthly receivables. The City shall follow an aggressive, consistent, yet reasonable approach to collecting revenues to the fullest extent allowed by law for all delinquent taxpayers and others overdue in payments to the City.

Revenues actually received will be compared to budgeted revenues by the Director of Finance and any variances considered to be material will be investigated. This process will be summarized in the monthly financial report. (See Financial and Management Reporting)

F. *Write-off of Uncollectible Receivables (excludes property taxes, court fines and warrants)*

1. Receivables shall be considered for write-off as follows:
 - a. State statute authorizing the release or extinguishment, in whole or in part, of any indebtedness, liability, or obligation, if applicable.
 - b. Accounts outstanding and identified as uncollectible, and where all attempts to collect have been taken.
2. Accounts shall be written-off annually near fiscal year-end. Upon approval, accounts will be forwarded to a credit reporting agency.
3. The write-off of uncollected accounts is a bookkeeping entry only and does not release the debtor from any debt owed to the City.

G. *Bond Revenue Coverage Requirements*

The City shall meet the required legal revenue coverage requirements as set forth in all bond rate covenants.

IV. EXPENDITURES

The City will identify services, establish appropriate service levels and administer the expenditure of available resources to assure fiscal stability and the effective and efficient delivery of those services.

A. *Maintenance of Capital Assets*

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

B. *Periodic Program/Services Reviews*

The City Manager and staff shall undertake periodic reviews of City programs and services for both efficiency and effectiveness. Programs or services determined to be inefficient and/or ineffective shall be recommended through the annual budget process to be reduced in scope or eliminated.

C. *Purchasing*

All City purchases of goods and services shall be made in accordance with state and federal laws.

The following shows a summary of approval requirements for purchases.

Dollar Limits:	Procurements:	Requirements:
Under \$5,000	Under the small purchase limit	No competitive bids and City credit cards may be used.
\$5,000 up to \$50,000	Within informal bid limit	A minimum of three informal competitive bids required unless exempted.
\$10,000 and above	Within City Manager's approval	In addition to the requirements above, the City Manager must approve the purchase.
\$50,000 and above	In excess of the informal bid limit	Formal solicitations, which includes public notices, required unless exempted. Council approval required.

D. *Budget*

The City Manager, in coordination with each department head is responsible for insuring that total expenses in each fund do not exceed the adopted annual budget.

Budgeted Capital Items

If the bid received for a capital item varies from the budgeted amount by \$10,000 or more, any savings cannot be reallocated to new capital items without Council approval. In addition, the City Manager will report to Council any expenditure that varies by more than \$10,000.

E. *Contracts and Change Orders*

Contracts and related change orders must follow the City Purchasing Policies and State Law. In accordance with State Law, change orders are limited to 25% of the total contract amount. Change orders greater than \$50,000 require the same Council approvals as the original contracts.

V. RESERVES

The City will maintain the fund balance and working capital of the various operating funds at levels sufficient to protect the City's credit worthiness as well as its financial position during emergencies or economic fluctuations. In addition, the City may accumulate Fund Balances for a specific purpose and for unexpected financial opportunities.

A. *General Fund Unrestricted Fund Balance*

- The City shall maintain the General Fund unrestricted fund balance to no less than 3 months of regular General Fund operating expenditures.
- Excess fund balance levels may be used to fund emergencies, nonrecurring expenditures or major capital purchases that cannot be accommodated through the current year's budgeted revenues with Council approval.
- Funds accumulated for a specific purpose should be identified as such in the City's Financial Statements.
- Methods used to replenish fund balances that fall below required levels include an increase in property tax revenues and a decrease in budgeted expenses as economic conditions allow. The City should seek to replenish fund balance levels within 1 to 2 years of use.

B. *Tourism Fund*

- A minimum of 30 days of operating expenditures will be reserved within the fund balance. These funds are designated to be used to offset any potential revenue shortfall that occurs during the fiscal year and should be replenished in the following fiscal year's budget.

C. *Utility Enterprise Funds/Unreserved Working Capital*

- The City shall maintain a working capital sufficient to provide for reserves for emergencies and revenue shortfalls. A cash equivalent operating reserve will be established and maintained at 3 months of the current year's budget appropriation for recurring operating expenses. The Power Purchases and Transmission Provider Fees are not included in this contingency reserve.

The cash operating reserve is derived by dividing the total cash equivalents balance by recurring operating expenses.

- Excess fund balance levels may be used to fund emergencies, nonrecurring expenditures or major capital purchases that cannot be accommodated through the current year's budgeted revenues with Council approval. Should such use reduce balances below the level established as the objective for that fund, restoration

recommendations will accompany the request/decision to utilize said balances.

- Funds accumulated for a specific purpose should be identified as such in the City's Financial Statements.
- Methods used to replenish fund balances that fall below required levels include an increase in rates and a decrease in budgeted expenses as economic conditions allow. The City should seek to replenish fund balance levels within 1 to 2 years of use.

The City shall not use proceeds or reserves from an Enterprise fund except for expenditures within the purpose of the fund, unless those expenditures have been approved for other purposes as part of the adopted budget.

Any other Enterprise fund transfers, advances, or formal loans outside of the normal budget process, will require a public hearing and an amendment to the previously adopted budget.

A transfer is defined as movement of funds with no obligation or repayment. An advance on the other hand has an obligation to be repaid, but with no specific terms. A formal loan would carry an obligation to be repaid with specific terms.

D. Other Enterprise Funds/Unreserved Working Capital

- Excess fund balance levels may be used to fund emergencies, nonrecurring expenditures or major capital purchases that cannot be accommodated through the current year's budgeted revenues with Council approval.
- Funds accumulated for a specific purpose should be identified as such.
- Methods used to replenish deficit fund balances will be discussed and approved by the City Council.

The City shall not use proceeds or reserves from an Enterprise fund except for expenditures within the purpose of the fund, unless those expenditures have been approved for other purposes as part of the adopted budget.

Any other Enterprise fund transfers, advances, or formal loans outside of the normal budget process, will require a public hearing and an amendment to the previously adopted budget.

A transfer is defined as movement of funds with no obligation or repayment. An advance on the other hand has an obligation to be repaid, but with no specific terms. A formal loan would carry an obligation to be repaid with specific terms.

E. *Solid Waste Fund*

The City's objective is to create restricted reserves of \$1,000,000 to fund future cell development. Annual loan repayments from the Golf Fund to the Solid Waste Fund will be restricted reserves designated for Landfill Closure expenditures. In addition, a cash equivalent operating reserve will be established and maintained at 3 months of the current year's budget appropriation for recurring operating expenses.

F. *EMS – Emergency Medical Services*

The City does not require an EMS fund balance reserve since the EMS Fund is supported by the General Fund.

G. *Debt Service Fund Unreserved Fund Balance*

The City shall maintain the Debt Service fund balance reserve as required by bond ordinances or covenants.

H. *Internal Service Fund/Health Insurance Fund*

The City shall maintain the Health Insurance fund balance to no less than 3 months of regular operating expenditures. Methods used to replenish fund balances that fall below required levels include an increase in health insurance premiums. The City should seek to replenish fund balance levels within 1 to 2 years of use.

For reporting purposes GASB #54 establishes fund balance classifications that comprise a hierarchy based primarily on the extent to which a government is bound to observe constraints imposed upon the use of the resources reported in governmental funds. The requirements will improve financial reporting by providing fund balance categories that will be more easily understood.

1. Nonspendable - identifying amounts (such as inventory)
2. Restricted - includes amounts that can only be used for a specific purpose stipulated by the constitution, external resource providers, or through enabling legislation
3. Committed - includes amounts that can only be used for a specific purpose determined by the City Council
4. Assigned - includes amounts that can be used for a specific purpose but do not meet the criteria to be classified as "restricted" or "committed"
5. Unassigned - includes all spendable amounts not contained in other classifications

VI. CAPITAL EXPENDITURES AND IMPROVEMENTS

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

A. *Capitalization Threshold for Tangible Capital Assets*

1. Tangible capital items should be capitalized only if they have an estimated useful life of 2 years or more following the date of acquisition or significantly extend the useful life of the existing asset and cannot be consumed, unduly altered, or materially reduced in value immediately by use and have a cost of not less than \$5,000 for any individual item.
2. The capitalization threshold of \$5,000 will be applied to individual items rather than to a group of similar items. (i.e.: desks, chairs, etc.)
3. Accurate inventories of all tangible items will be maintained to ensure proper stewardship of public property.

B. *Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)*

1. The City shall annually prepare a five-year capital improvement plan based on the needs for capital improvements and equipment, the status of the City infrastructure, replacement and renovation needs, and potential new projects. Capital projects are improvements or additions to the City's physical plant/facilities/infrastructure and become a part of the City's asset inventory. Capital projects can be further categorized into land, buildings, improvements other than buildings, and infrastructure, which includes roads, sidewalks, bridges, utility lines, physical plants, etc. Capital costs typically consist of preliminary design, final design, and construction, and may involve the acquisition of land or easements. For purposes of the CIP Plan, a Capital Improvement Project should generally exceed a cost of \$25,000.
2. For the most part, projects in the CIP should be based upon master plans or developer agreements. This ensures that the City's CIP, which is the embodiment of the recommendations of these individual planning studies, is responsive to the officially stated direction of the City as contained in the Comprehensive Plan and supporting master plans. Examples of these supporting documents are: Water and Wastewater Plans, Thoroughfare Plan, Parks Master Plan, Trail Plan, Municipal Facilities Plan, etc.
3. For every project identified in the CIP, a project scope and project justification will be provided. Also, project costs shall be estimated, funding sources identified and annual operation and maintenance costs computed.
4. The City Manager is charged with recommending a Capital Improvement Plan to City Council. The CIP shall be filed and adopted in conjunction with the annual budget.
5. Annually, through the budget process and at year-end, projects are to be reviewed. For those identified as complete, any remaining funds will close to fund balance. Funds remaining from bond proceeds will only be used in accordance with the legal use of those funds.
6. Appropriations for capital projects are for the life of the project; therefore re-appropriation of capital funding for each fiscal year for budgeted projects is not

necessary.

C. *Infrastructure Evaluation and Replacement/Rehabilitation*

Utilities, street lighting, streets and sidewalks, municipal facilities and other infrastructure are fundamental and essential functions for public health and safety, environmental protections and the economic well being of the City. As a result, the City's CIP should be focused on ensuring that infrastructure is replaced as necessary to protect the City's investment, to minimize future replacement and maintenance costs, and to maintain existing levels of service and accommodate growth.

1. High priority should be given to replacing/rehabilitating capital improvements prior to the time that they have deteriorated to the point where they are hazardous, incur high maintenance costs, negatively affect property values, or no longer serve their intended purpose.
2. The decision on whether to repair, replace or to rehabilitate an existing capital asset will be based on which alternative is most cost-effective, which would include life-cycle costing, and provides the best value to the City.

D. *Replacement of Capital Assets on a Regular Schedule (Fleet, Fire Trucks, and High-Tech)*

The City shall annually prepare a schedule for the replacement of its fleet, fire trucks, and high technology capital assets. Funding for the replacement of these assets will be accomplished through the annual budget process, within the resources available each fiscal year. A variety of funding options will be explored, including but not limited to cash on hand and lease/purchase, based upon a determination of what would be in the best interest of the City.

E. *Capital Expenditure Financing*

The City recognizes that there are three basic methods of financing its capital requirements: Funding from current revenues; funding from fund balance; or funding through the issuance of debt. Types of debt and guidelines for issuing debt are set forth in the Debt Policy Statements.

F. *Pay-As-You-Go Capital Improvements*

1. The City will pay cash for capital improvements within the financial affordability of each fund versus issuing debt when funding capital improvements and capital purchases. This will reduce/minimize the property tax and utility rate impacts on Fredericksburg citizens.
2. The City will seek out and use grant funding sources for capital improvements in order to leverage City funding and to minimize property and utility rate impacts.

G. *Capital Improvements/Project Reporting*

A summary/status report on the City's various capital projects will be prepared monthly and available to the City Manager and to City Council.

VII. DEBT

The following guidelines for debt financing will provide needed facilities, land, capital equipment and infrastructure improvements while minimizing the impact of debt payments on current and future revenues.

A. *Use of Debt Financing*

Debt financing, to include general obligation bonds, revenue bonds, certificates of obligation, certificates of participation, lease/purchase agreements, and other obligations permitted to be issued or incurred under State and Local laws, shall only be used to purchase capital assets that cannot be prudently acquired from either current revenues or fund balance and to fund infrastructure improvements and additions. Debt will not be used to fund current operating expenditures.

The City will pay cash for capital improvements within the financial affordability of each fund versus issuing debt when funding capital expenditures and capital improvements, which shall include but not be limited to sales tax, utility system revenues, developer fees, inter-local agreements, and state and federal grants.

B. *Affordability*

The City shall use an objective analytical approach to determine whether it can afford to issue general-purpose debt, both General Obligation and Certificates of Obligation, and any other financing permitted by state law. The process shall include an internal feasibility analysis for each long-term financing which analyzes the impact on current and future budgets, which would include the tax and utility rates. The process shall also include the benefits of the proposed projects. The decision on whether or not to issue new debt shall be based on the benefits of the project, current conditions of the municipal bond market, and the City's ability to "afford" new debt.

C. *Types of Long-Term Debt*

1. General Obligation Bonds (GO)

General Obligation bonds require voter approval and are secured by a promise to levy taxes in an amount necessary to pay annual debt service.

- a. General Obligation bonds must be issued for projects that are in accordance with the wording in the bond proposition.

2. Certificates of Obligation

Certificates of Obligation may be issued without voter approval to finance any public works project or capital improvement, as permitted by State law. It is the City's policy to utilize Certificates of Obligation to finance public improvements in certain circumstances and only after determining the City's ability to assume additional debt. Circumstances in which Certificates might be issued include, but are not limited to the following.

- a. The City may issue CO's when there is insufficient funding on a general obligation bond-financed capital improvement.
- b. The City may issue CO's when "emergency" (urgent, unanticipated) conditions require a capital improvement to be funded rapidly.
- c. The City may issue CO's for projects when the City can leverage dollars from others to reduce the City's capital cost for a community improvement.
- d. The City may issue CO's for projects when there is no other adequate funding source available, the project is determined to be in the best interest of the City, and where a determination is made that waiting for the next bond referendum or having a bond referendum for a small amount of money or a small number of projects is impractical and where public notice versus a voted bond referendum is deemed acceptable by the City Council.
- e. The City may issue CO's if it would be more economical to issue Certificates of Obligation rather than issuing revenue bonds; and

3. Revenue Bonds

Revenue bonds are generally payable from a designated source of revenue. They do not require voter approval.

For the City to issue new revenue bonds, revenues, as defined in the ordinance authorizing the revenue bonds in question, shall meet the bond coverage ratio as defined in the ordinance. Annual adjustments to the City's rate structures for Enterprise Funds will be made as necessary to maintain the coverage factor.

D. *Debt Structures*

The City shall normally issue bonds with a life not to exceed 25 years for general obligation bonds and 30 years for revenue bonds, but in no case longer than the useful life of the asset. The City shall seek level or declining debt repayment schedules and shall seek to retire 90% of the total principal outstanding within 20 years of the year of issuance. There should be no debt structures that include increasing debt service levels in subsequent years, with the first and second year of a bond payout schedule the exception or as special situations may warrant. There shall be no "balloon" bond repayment schedules, which consists of low annual payments and one large payment of the balance due at the end of the term. There shall always be at least interest paid in the first fiscal year after a bond sale and principal payments starting generally no later than the second fiscal year after the bond issue.

The City will issue debt based on a fixed rate and will limit use of variable-rate debt due to the potential volatility of such instruments.

E. *Debt Refunding*

The City's financial advisor shall monitor the municipal bond market for opportunities to obtain interest savings by refunding outstanding debt. As a general rule, the net present value savings of a particular refunding should exceed 3.0% of the refunded maturities unless (1) a debt restructuring is necessary or (2) bond covenant revisions are necessary to facilitate the ability to provide services or to issue additional debt or (3) the refunding is combined with a new debt issuance

F. *Interest Earnings on Debt Proceeds*

Debt interest earnings will be limited to funding changes to the bond financed Capital Improvement Plan in compliance with the voted propositions, cost overruns on bond projects, or be applied to debt service payments on the bonds issued.

G. *Bond Elections*

1. Timing of general obligation bond elections shall be determined by the inventory of current authorized, unissued bonds remaining to be sold and the Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan.
2. The total dollar amount of bond election propositions recommended to the voters should typically not exceed the City's estimated ability to issue the bonds within a 7 year period.
3. An analysis showing how the new debt combined with current debt impacts the City's tax rate and debt capacity will accompany every future bond issue proposal.

H. *Sale Process*

The City shall use a competitive bidding process in the sale of debt unless the nature of the issue warrants a negotiated sale. The City will utilize a negotiated process when the issue is, or contains, a refinancing that is dependant on market/interest rate timing, if the interest rate environment or market/economic factors may affect the bond issue, or if the nature of the debt is unique and requires particular skills from the underwriters involved. The City shall award the bonds based on a true interest costs (TIC) basis. However, the City may award bonds based on a net interest cost (NIC) basis as long as the financial advisor agrees that the NIC basis can satisfactorily determine the lowest and best bid.

I. *Underwriting Syndicates*

The City's financial advisor shall attempt to involve qualified and experienced firms, which consistently submit ideas to the City and financial advisors and actively participate in the City's competitive sale in its negotiated underwritings. In conjunction with the City, the City's financial advisor shall recommend the structure of underwriting syndicates, which will be optimal for the type and amount of debt being issued.

J. *Bond Ratings*

Full disclosure of operations and open lines of communications shall be maintained with the rating agencies. Credit ratings will be sought from one or more of the nationally recognized municipal bond rating agencies, as recommended by the City's financial advisor.

The City will continually strive to maintain or increase the City's current bond ratings by prudently managing its funds and by reviewing and monitoring financial policies, budgets, forecasts and the financial health of the City.

K. *Covenant Compliance*

The City will comply with all covenants stated in the bond ordinance, including providing for annual disclosure information and providing for material event notices.

L. *Arbitrage Rebate Monitoring and Reporting*

Arbitrage is the interest earned on the investment of bond proceeds above the interest paid on the debt. The City will maintain a system of recordkeeping and reporting to meet the arbitrage rebate compliance requirement of the IRS regulation. The recordkeeping shall include tracking project expenditures, interest earned on the bonds, calculating rebate payments, and remitting any rebatable earnings to the federal government in a timely manner in order to preserve the tax-exempt status of the outstanding debt. Arbitrage rebate calculations will be performed annually on all debt issues and the liability recorded for any positive arbitrage. Due to the specialized nature of the calculations, this function will typically be outsourced.

M. *Lease/Purchase Agreements*

The City will use lease/purchase agreements for the acquisition of equipment when it is cost-effective and provides for attractive terms. All lease purchase agreements must be approved by City Council regardless of the dollar amount.

VIII. CASH MANAGEMENT AND INVESTMENTS

The City will maintain cash and investments in such a manner so as to ensure the absolute safety of principal, to meet the liquidity needs of the City, and to achieve the highest possible yield.

A. *Investment Management*

1. All aspects of cash/investment management shall be designed to ensure safety and integrity of the City's financial assets.
2. Cash/Investment management activities shall be conducted in full compliance with prevailing local, state, and federal regulations. (See City's Investment Policy and Strategy)
3. The City will utilize competitive quotes from approved broker/dealers, affording no special advantage to any individual or corporate member of the financial or investment community.
4. The City will only do business with City authorized broker/dealers and/or financial institutions as approved by Council and who have executed a written certification of their review of the City's Investment Policy.
5. The City shall design and establish policies relating to a variety of cash/investment management issues, such as the eligibility and selection of various broker/dealers, safekeeping requirements, collateral requirements, delivery versus payment requirements, weighted average maturity requirements and other such aspects of the program, which necessitate standard setting in pursuit of appropriate prudence and enhanced protection of assets. (See City's Investment Policy)
6. Investments of the City shall be made with the exercise of judgment and care which persons of prudence, discretion, and intelligence exercise in the management of their own affairs, not for speculation, but for investment.

B. *Investment Strategy*

The City of Fredericksburg maintains a consolidated portfolio in which it pools its funds for investment purposes. The City's investment program seeks to achieve safety of principal, adequate liquidity to meet cash needs, and reasonable yields commensurate with the preservation of principal and liquidity. (See City's Investment Strategy)

C. *Interest Income*

Interest earned from investments shall be distributed to the funds from which the funds were provided.

D. *Arbitrage Investments*

Investment on bond proceeds will be made with safety of principal and liquidity in mind, but with a competitive rate of return. If there is positive arbitrage, the rebatable earnings will be sent to the IRS, as necessary.

E. *Depository*

The City will select its official bank through a formal bidding process in order to provide the City with the most comprehensive, flexible, and cost-effective banking services available. The City will at a minimum, bid depository services every eight years. The City will review the financial health of the City's depository annually to include but not be limited to earnings, assets, capital, and liquidity.

F. *Collateralization of Deposits*

1. The City shall have pledged collateral held at an independent third-party institution and evidenced by a written receipt.
2. The value of the pledged collateral should be marked to market monthly and shall be at least 102 percent of par or market value of the investments, whichever is greater.
3. Substitutions of collateral shall meet the requirements of the collateral agreement. Collateral shall not be released until the replacement collateral has been received, if the release of the collateral should result in the value being under 102 percent of par value.
4. The pledge of collateral shall comply with the City's investment policy.

IX. GRANTS AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVENUES

The City will seek, apply for, and effectively administer federal, state and local grants, which support the City's current priorities and policy objectives. The City should take advantage of opportunities to enhance service delivery through intergovernmental cooperation, shared revenues, and grants.

A. *Grant Guidelines*

1. The City shall apply and facilitate the application for only those grants that are consistent with the objectives and high priorities identified by Council and management.
2. Grant funding will be considered to leverage City funds. Inconsistent and/or fluctuating grants should not be used to fund ongoing programs and services.
3. The potential for incurring ongoing costs, to include assumptions of support for grant-funded positions from local revenues, will be considered prior to applying for a grant.

B. *Grant Review Process*

1. A uniform grants pre-application process will be utilized to assure the City has all the information necessary to make a decision regarding a potential grant. Information to be provided should include but not be limited to:
 - a. The grant being pursued and the use to which it would be placed.
 - b. The objectives or goals of the City which will be achieved through the use of the grant.
 - c. The local match required, if any, plus the source of the local match.
 - d. The increased cost to be locally funded upon termination of the grant.
2. All grant agreements will be reviewed by the appropriate City staff, including Finance, Legal, HR, and the sponsoring department, to ensure compliance with state, federal, and City regulations.
3. The City Manager shall approve all grant submissions and City Council shall approve all grant acceptances over \$50,000.

C. *Budgeting for Grant Expenditures*

Annually via the budget process, departments will submit for possible funding, known grant opportunities. These grant opportunities will be prioritized and ranked along with all other supplemental requests. If approved, the expenditure and associated revenue will be appropriated in the Grant Fund. If there are grant opportunities that arise during the year and are received by the City, the budget will be amended via the projections, if the City can fund the local match required.

D. *Grant Termination and/or Reduced Grant Funding*

1. In the event of reduced grant funding, City resources will be substituted only after all program priorities and alternatives are considered during the budget process, unless the City is obligated through the terms of the grant to maintain the positions, services, or equipment.
2. The City shall terminate grant-funded programs and associated positions when grant funds are no longer available, and it is determined that the program no longer supports City goals and/or is no longer in the best interest of the City, unless the City has obligated itself through the terms of the grant to maintain the positions, services, or equipment.

X. FINANCIAL CONSULTANTS

The City will employ qualified financial advisors and consultants as needed in the administration and management of the City's financial function. These areas include but are not limited to audit services, debt administration, delinquent tax collection attorney, and financial modeling. The principal factors in the selection of these consultants will be experience/expertise, ability to perform, the services offered, references, and methodology to name a few. In no case should price be allowed to serve as the sole criterion for the selection.

A. *Selection of Auditors*

At least every eight years, the City shall request proposals from qualified firms, including the current auditors if their past performance has been satisfactory. The City Council shall select an independent firm of certified public accountants to perform an annual audit of the accounts and records, and render an opinion on the financial statements of the City.

It is the City's preference to rotate auditor firms every eight years at the maximum, to ensure that the City's financial statements are reviewed and audited with an objective, impartial, and unbiased point of view. The rotation of the audit firm will be based upon the proposals received, the qualifications of the firm, and the firm's ability to perform a quality audit.

However, if through the proposal and review process, management and the Audit Committee select the current audit firm, then, it is the City's preference that the lead audit partner be rotated as well as the lead reviewer after a maximum of eight years.

B. *Arbitrage*

1. The City shall calculate positive/negative arbitrage on each bond issue annually. While the City is responsible to ensure that the records are in order, the calculations made, reporting completed, and filings made, the actual arbitrage calculation and reporting shall be contracted out to a qualified firm.
2. Requests for proposals and statement of qualifications are to be solicited at least every seven years. There is not a requirement for rotation.

C. *Delinquent Tax Collection Attorney*

1. Due to the nature and expertise required, the City shall hire a delinquent tax collection attorney to collect delinquent taxes, represent the City in filing bankruptcy claims, foreclose on real property, seize personal property, and represent the City in court cases and property sales.
2. Requests for proposals and statement of qualifications are to be solicited at least every seven years. There is no requirement for rotation.

D. *Bond Counsel*

Bond Counsel to the City has the role of an independent expert who provides an objective legal opinion concerning the issuance and sale of bonds and other debt instruments. As bond counsel are specialized attorneys who have developed necessary expertise in a broad range of practice areas, the City will always use a consultant for these services. Generally, bonds are not marketable without an opinion of nationally recognized bond counsel stating that the bonds are valid and binding obligations stating the sources of payment and security for the bonds and that the bonds are exempt from Federal income taxes.

E. *Financial Advisory Services*

The City issues various types of securities to finance its capital improvement program. Debt structuring and issuance requires a comprehensive list of services associated with municipal transactions, including but not limited to: method of sale; analysis of market conditions; size and structure of the issue; coordinating rating agency relations; evaluation of and advice on the pricing of securities, assisting with closing and debt management; calculation of debt service schedules; and advising on financial management. As financial advisors to governmental entities have developed the necessary expertise in a broad range of services, the City will use a consultant for these services.

F. *Depository Bank*

Pursuant to State law, the City may approve a depository contract whose term does not exceed five years. There is no requirement for rotation. The City will select its official banking institution through a formal process based on best value in order to provide the City with the most comprehensive, flexible, and cost-effective banking services available.