

## **Appendix U**

### **Financial Policies**

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The Municipality of Anchorage has established financial policies to achieve and maintain a positive long term financial condition. These policies provide guidelines for current activities as well as future programs.

#### **Funding Sources**

The Municipality will try to maintain a diversified and stable funding system to shelter it from unforeseeable short-run fluctuations in any funding source.

The Municipality will estimate its annual funding sources by an objective, analytical process, wherever practical. The Municipality will project revenues for the next year and will update this projection annually. Each existing and potential funding source will be examined throughout the year and the budget will be adjusted during the initial budget preparation and at first quarter budget revision, where reasonable.

Each year the Municipality will recalculate the full costs of activities supported by user fees to identify the impact of inflation and other cost increases.

Federal grant funds will be used to supplement, not replace local funds for grant related activities, per the grant agreements.

#### **Tax Limit (Tax Cap)**

In October 1983, the voters of Anchorage passed an amendment to the Charter known as the Tax Limit (or tax cap). While some think of it as a property tax cap, it actually sets a limit on how much all taxes can increase from one year to the next. Other taxes collected by the Municipality that are under the tax cap are on automobile registration, tobacco, aircraft registration and motor vehicle rental.

Proponents of the tax cap recognized that it was important that taxes be allowed to increase (although controlled) in order to keep up with demands of a growing community. Growth in taxes under the tax cap is permitted by annual adjustments for inflation, population, and new investment in the community. Voters also increase the tax cap when they approve general obligation bonds and corresponding increased operations and maintenance costs, both of which are disclosed bond propositions on the ballot.

In 2003, a substantive change to the tax cap was made by the Mayor and Assembly when they decided to exclude payments by municipal-owned utilities and enterprises. From 1984 to 2003, utility and enterprise payments were considered payment-in-lieu-of-taxes (PILT) and accordingly, fell under the tax cap. From a property taxpayer point of view, the practical effect of this was that these payments reduced the amount of property taxes that could be collected – every dollar paid in a PILT meant a dollar less in property taxes could be collected.

The 2003 change excluded utility and enterprise PILT payments from the tax cap. At the same time, the Mayor and Assembly substantially increased how much utilities and enterprises were to pay in PILTs. Since utility and enterprise PILT revenue was no

longer included in the total tax calculation, municipal government got more money to spend.

This prompted a citizen initiative (Proposition 9) in 2009 to return the tax cap to how it originally worked. The initiative passed with 60% of the vote and utility and enterprise PILT payments were again included in the tax cap's calculation. This change, which was phased-in over three years, resulted in approximately \$20 million in property tax savings annually.

Since property taxes are a major funding source for the Municipality, preparing a preliminary tax cap for the initial budget is a key step toward balancing the budget. During First Quarter Budget Amendment process, the tax cap is finalized for the year and the budget is balanced accordingly.

#### Intra-governmental Charges (IGCs)

These are charges for services provided by one Municipal organization to another. For example, the Maintenance and Operations Division maintains all general government buildings. Maintenance costs are budgeted in Maintenance and Operations and charged out to the appropriate users. By using an intra-governmental charge system, the full cost of a program – including overhead – is associated to a program. This system also allows general government departments/agencies to properly charge Municipal utilities, grants, and capital projects for services provided, resulting in a funding source for general government that is used to balance the budget.

#### **Fund Balance**

Fund balance is generally defined as the difference between a fund's assets and liabilities. The Municipality has a policy to maintain an amount equal to 10 percent of current year expenditures for unrestricted fund balance.

Two fund balance reserves are calculated during the First Quarter Budget Amendment process:

The largest reserve is designated for bond rating purposes and consists of 10 percent of current year expenditures. This reserve assures bond rating agencies that if there was a substantial decrease in the Municipality's revenue, funding still would be available to pay debt service (this reserve helps keep down the interest rate of the Municipality has to pay when it borrows funds through issuing bonds).

The second reserve is for operating emergencies and consists of between 2 to 3 percent of current year expenditures. This reserve provides funding to pay unanticipated obligations such as legal settlements.

Fund balance is determined at the close of the prior fiscal year (typically mid-March) and the current year reserves are then set during the First Quarter Budget Amendment process. If additional fund balance is required to achieve the necessary reserves, the budget will be balanced to accommodate the use of funds. If there is more than sufficient fund balance to achieve the necessary reserves, the excess fund balance may be used as a funding source to balance the budget.

### **Capital Improvement**

The Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is a six-year plan that guides the Municipality's capital improvement plans into the future. Each year it is updated and serves as the starting point for developing the current year Capital Improvement Budget (CIB).

Municipal departments prepare a comprehensive list of capital projects that are needed. Projects for this "Needs List" are proposed to departments by staff, the Municipal Administration, and others such as community councils, municipal boards and commissions, and Assembly members. Projects are scored against criteria such as the project's impact on safety, economic benefits, level of public support, if it is mandated, readiness and technical feasibility.

Gather community input, each spring OMB sends out a survey to community councils to solicit their comments on CIP projects as well as ideas to new projects in their area. This feedback is integrated into the prioritization process along with the other criteria.

### **Investment**

It is the policy of the Municipality to invest public funds in a manner that provides the highest investment return consistent with preservation of capital while meeting the daily cash flow demands of the Municipality. Investment decisions shall be guided by the Municipal Code, the Operating Policy and Procedures for investment of Municipal funds, as modified from time to time by the Chief Fiscal Officer.

The Chief Fiscal Officer shall obtain the services of such investment managers, advisors, custodians and other professionals as are reasonably prudent and necessary to manage and invest all Municipal Funds. The Chief Fiscal Officer shall solicit input from the Investment Advisory Commission members prior to the final selection of any service providers. For an investment manager, advisor, custodian or other professionals contracted under the provisions of this section, Assembly approval is not required. The Chief Fiscal Officer shall report within 90 days to the Assembly, by Assembly Informational Memorandum, on contracts entered into to include, but not limited to, the duties to be performed by the contractor and the compensation paid.

### **Debt**

No general obligation bonded indebtedness may be incurred unless authorized by the Assembly and ratified by a majority vote of those in the municipality voting on the question, except that refunding bonds may be issued without an election. General obligation debt of service areas must receive dual majority votes.

Tax, revenue, and grant anticipation notes shall be repaid within 12 months from their date of issuance. When the taxes, revenues or grants anticipated are not received within this time, the Assembly may renew the notes for a period not to exceed six months.

Debt service (principal, interest and fees related to borrowing) is included in the operating budgets. Debt service related to voter-approved bonds is included in the tax limit, thus is guaranteed to be funded.

### **Reporting and Audit**

The Chief Fiscal Officer shall submit to the Assembly on an annual basis reports addressing portfolio performance and compliance. The annual report shall address the use of investment consultants and external money managers, the use of derivatives, securities lending activities and bank lines of credit. The report shall also include compliance with the requirements regarding portfolio diversifications, maximum holdings by type of authorized investment, and portfolio performance compared with portfolio benchmarks.

The Assembly shall provide for an annual independent audit of all municipal accounts by a certified public accountant. The audit shall be completed within 90 days following the close of the fiscal year.

### **Budget**

It is illegal to expend money outside of the budget. AMC (Anchorage Municipal Code) 6.30.050 prohibits any contract, agreement, or other obligation, ordinance, resolution or order involving the expenditure of money, unless the Chief Fiscal Officer has certified that the money required for the expenditure has been appropriated for that purpose. AMC 6.10.040 requires the Mayor to submit a proposed budget for the next fiscal year to the Assembly at least 90 days before the end of the current fiscal year. And, AMC 6.10.070 allows the Assembly to increase or decrease, add or delete; but requires them to approve a budget and appropriate the necessary resources by ordinance at least 21 days prior to the end of the current fiscal year; otherwise, the Mayor's proposal becomes the budget and appropriation.

### Accountability for Results

In early 2010 the Municipality launched an initiative by which departments report on the effectiveness of programs. This accountability initiative, called "Anchorage: Performance. Value. Results. (PVR)" reports the "return on investment" to citizens of their tax dollars in terms of services. It is not sufficient for programs to spend money and do a lot of activities without accountability to the results from that spending.

Report results to citizens, the budget includes the PVR framework for each department and division that includes its purpose, services, goals, performance measures and data that communicates how well the goals are being achieved. Performance measure information will be updated throughout the year and can be viewed at [www.muni.org](http://www.muni.org).

### Transparency in Budgeting

In addition to the inclusion of reports about program performance measurement, the operating budget document also provides significant detail on spending at the department and division level. This includes detailed breakdown on the components of salary and benefit spending (over 50 percent of the entire budget); details regarding the revenue that supports each department and division, and the types of positions that deliver services.

#### Balanced Budget

The Municipality is required to have a balanced budget, a budget in which revenues and funding sources and expenditures and funding uses are equal. The Municipality may use fund balance to supplement unexpected revenue shortfall when needed, in order to achieve a balanced budget. The mayor shall notify the Assembly in writing within 21 days if a projected revenue shortfall in aggregate exceeds one percent of the total general government operating budget. The notice shall be delivered to the municipal clerk's office for distribution to the Assembly.

#### Reports

The Chief Fiscal Officer shall provide financial reporting on a monthly basis to the Assembly, with an executive summary, as determined in June of each year. On a quarterly basis, monthly reporting shall include the additional reporting requested by the Assembly. Reported positive or negative variances of five percent or more for expenses by department and one percent or more for revenues in aggregate for all general government funds within the one hundred series of accounts shall be noted with specificity in the executive summary (AMC 6.40.015).

#### Six-Year Fiscal Program

At least 90 days before the end of the fiscal year of the Municipality, the Mayor shall submit to the Assembly, with recommendations from the planning commission, a six-year program for public services, fiscal policies and capital improvements of the Municipality. The program shall include estimates of the effect of capital improvement projects on maintenance, operation and personnel costs. The Assembly shall hold at least one public hearing on the six-year program prior to adoption (AMC 13.02).

## Budget Procedures

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The Municipality's budget process has four areas of focus:

### General Government Operating

Day-to-day operation of programs and services—from paying police officer salaries, to maintaining parks, and plowing snow. The primary source of revenue required to support the operating budget comes from property taxes. The budget is presented for a calendar year, in line with the Municipality's fiscal year.

### General Government Capital

Plan for additional funding for improvements to the Municipality's infrastructure, such as roads, park construction and repairs, and new fire stations. The main source of funds to pay for these improvements is new voter-approved bonds, which are a financing tool similar to a loan that is paid back over time with interest. Payment of these bond proceeds is called debt service and is included in the operating budget. The plan is presented for a calendar year, in line with the Municipality's fiscal year.

### Enterprise and Utilities Operating and Capital

Anchorage Water and Wastewater and Anchorage Hydropower utilities and Solid Waste Services, Port of Anchorage, and Merrill Field enterprises. Each entity has its own operating and capital budgets, which are paid for by ratepayers or users of their respective services. The budgets are presented for a calendar year, in line with the Municipality's fiscal year.

### Anchorage School District

Budget year runs from July 1 to June 30. The budget is proposed by the School Superintendent and approved by the School Board. In the spring, it is submitted to the Anchorage Assembly for their approval, which is limited to approval of the budget's bottom line.

### **Budget Planning and Timeline**

The Mayor is required to submit the proposed general government, enterprise and utilities operating and capital budgets to the Assembly 90 days prior to the end of the fiscal year (October 2<sup>st</sup>).

Prior to that (120 days prior to the end of the fiscal year), the Administration is required to provide preliminary information on the budget, revenues, Tax Cap, and major reorganizations.

Key Dates in Budget Process	
Summer	Preliminary budget information gathered
September 2	Preliminary budget information to Assembly
October 2	Mayor proposed budgets
October, November	Assembly deliberates, holds public hearings
December	Deadline for Assembly approval
April	Finalize budget revisions, set property tax rates
May 15	Property tax bills in mail

Preparation of the budget starts much earlier. A preliminary planning phase gets underway in the summer. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) works with

departments to review their programs and responsibilities, assess what is being done during the current year, and begins to make plans for the next budget year. Some considerations during this phase are:

- Contractually obligated increases, such as labor contracts and health insurance premiums;
- New facilities that will open during the next fiscal year that will require staff, supplies, and other operating expenses;
- New responsibilities or programs required by Federal, State or local laws;
- New or changed programs to meet community needs or interests;
- Programs that can be eliminated because they are ineffective, no longer required, or desired; and/or
- Efficiencies and savings that can be achieved through organizational management.

During this period of time, OMB also reviews projected revenue information in order to get an early indication of the Municipality's ability to afford current spending levels and/or the potential need for reductions.

#### **Balanced Budget**

The Municipality is required to have a balanced budget, a budget in which revenues and financing sources and expenditures and financing uses are equal. This, coupled with the Tax Cap, requires an early estimate of both expenditures and revenues. Once this revenue/spending assessment is made, each department is given guidance for developing its preliminary budget proposal. Such guidance includes general direction from the Mayor regarding his/her program priorities.

#### **Mayor Proposes/Assembly Appropriates**

The Mayor submits the proposed operating and capital budgets to the Assembly in early October, the Assembly holds public work sessions at which the Administration and department directors discuss the Mayor's proposal.

#### **Public Comment**

The budget books are put on the Office and Management and Budget's website, as well as the Mayor's website, for the public to view. The Assembly is required to hold two public hearings on the Mayor's proposed budget, which is the official opportunity for the public to comment and the Assembly to consider amendments. These are usually held during October and November. The Anchorage Charter requires that the Assembly approve the budget 21 days before the end of the year (by December 10). But if for some reason they still have not reached agreement, the Charter was amended to allow the Assembly and Mayor to continue to work. Once agreement is reached, that budget is known as the "Approved Budget."

#### **Veto Process**

The Mayor has the ability to strike or reduce an appropriation in the operating or capital budget within 7 days from Assembly action. The Assembly then has 21 days from the Mayor's veto to override his/her action and must have a super-majority of 8 Assembly members to be successful. If a veto is sustained, the Mayor's action is implemented.

#### **First Quarter Budget Amendments**

During the spring following the budget's approval, the Administration finalizes the prior year's spending numbers and firms up revenues available to support the current year

budget, including final tax cap. This process, called “First Quarter Budget Amendments,” takes place in April and May and results in the Assembly’s approval of a “Revised Budget.”

Unlike the proposed budget process in the fall that requires two public hearings, the first quarter amendment process only requires one public hearing and usually is at the Assembly meeting that follows the Mayor’s introduction of the proposed amendments.

Based on these final spending decisions for general government, the Assembly then sets the tax rates for each service area. The Municipality’s schedule is to mail tax bills on May 15<sup>th</sup> with the first half payment due June 15<sup>th</sup> (state law requires that taxpayers be provided notification a minimum of 30 days before taxes are due).

### **Budget Monitoring, Controls and Amendments**

The budget allocates spending among several categories: labor (salaries and benefits); non-labor (supplies, travel, contracts, etc); contributions; debt service; and depreciation and amortization. Each department, enterprise and utility is responsible for managing and monitoring their respective budget at these category levels. Actual expenditures may not exceed direct budget appropriations at the individual department levels and function budget appropriations at the enterprise, utility and general government fund levels. Spending reports are provided monthly to the Assembly which reflect labor, overtime, and non-labor expenditures compared to budget. Quarterly, the spending reports, contributions to nonprofit organizations, and travel are provided to the Assembly.

The Assembly may, by resolution, reduce or increase appropriations during the course of the fiscal year. A resolution reducing or increasing appropriations by an amount in excess of \$500,000 shall be subject to a public hearing, as per AO 2020-29 updated Anchorage Municipal Code 6.10.085.B.1.a on April 28, 2020.

The Office of Management and Budget is authorized to transfer budget amounts within departments.

Revisions that change the total expenditures of any department, or fund, must be approved by the Assembly. Appropriations that are not expended, encumbered, or designated to be carried over, lapse at the end of the fiscal year.

Departments, enterprise and utilities also monitor their program performance measures throughout the year to ascertain if goals are being met.



**Municipality of Anchorage**  
**Operating & Capital Budgets -- General Government / Utilities / Enterprises**  
**2021 Budget Preparation Calendar (Preliminary) - May 2020**

Action	Date	Category
Community Council Surveys Available Online - typical schedule is March 1, but delayed in 2020 due to new website roll-out	May 1	Capital
Rollover of QuesticaBudget prior-year revised to budget-year proposed operating and capital	June	All
Questica budget available to departments	June 1	All
OMB request CIB/CIP projects from Departments, including expiring Utility/Enterprise capital project closes	June 1	Capital
OMB distributes Mayor's funding guidance and priorities to departments	June 12	Operating
Community Council surveys due	June 15	Capital
All Department preliminary capital budget changes to CIB due to OMB	June 29	Capital
OMB review, analyze, compile preliminary CIB to Mayor	June29-July10	Capital
Mayor's first preliminary review of list of projects	July 13-15	Capital
Send preliminary Enterprise/Utility CIB to Finance for fund certification	July 15-17	Utl/Ent
All departments submit proposed changes to operating budgets to OMB	July 20	Operating
CIB discussion with Mayor	July 20-24	Capital
AEDC to provide data for Six-Year Fiscal Program	July 24	Operating
OMB compiles summaries of department operating budget changes for Mayor review	July 21-31	All
Mayor's decisions on proposed CIB/CIP to OMB	Aug 3	Capital
Treasury and Public Finance to provide to OMB preliminary revenue projections	Aug 5	Operating
Public Finance to provide fund balance, bond rating and projection, and financial strategies data for Six-Year Fiscal Program	Aug 7	Operating
Treasury to provide revenue data for Six-Year Fiscal Program	Aug 7	Operating
Planning & Zoning Commission preview of preliminary working draft CIB/CIP for GG by coordinating with Departments	Aug 10	Capital
Mayor meets with Departments Heads	Aug 3-14	Operating
Service Area budgets due to OMB	Aug 14	Operating
O&M projections due to OMB (OMB to send out file prior to this date)	Aug 14	Operating
Public Finance to provide OMB: review of utility/enterprise 8 year summaries, revenue/expense statements, and statement of cash sources and uses with focus on: debt, debt/equity ratios, cash pool, cash pool earnings, etc.	Aug 14	Utl/Ent
Initial assessed value projection due to OMB from Prop. Appraisal	Aug	Operating
Preliminary Tax Cap Calculation by OMB to Mayor	Aug 14	Operating
OMB finalizes Proposed CIB/CIP book and Assembly documents	Aug 14	Capital
OMB submits Six-Year Fiscal Program to Mayor	Aug 17	All
Mayor's final decisions on operating budget	Aug 21	Operating
OMB run IGCs	Aug 21	Operating
<b>("120 Day Memo")</b> Mayor's Preliminary budget information to Assembly and online (revenues, tax limit, service priorities, reorganizations, utility/enterprise business plans, update to utility/enterprise strategic plans, and proposed CIPs)	Sept 1	(A) All

2021 Proposed General Government Operating Budget  
**Municipality of Anchorage**  
**Operating & Capital Budgets -- General Government / Utilities / Enterprises**  
**2021 Budget Preparation Calendar (Preliminary) - May 2020**

Action	Date	Category
OMB completes GG operating and utility/enterprise budget books and Six-Year Fiscal Program	Sept 7-11	All
OMB completes assembly documents for GG operating and utility/enterprise budgets and Six-Year Fiscal Program	Sept 14-18	All
<b>OMB submits budgets</b> and Six-Year Fiscal Program to Assembly and online (NLT October 2)	Oct 2	(B) All
Assembly worksession, Overview & Highlights of Proposed Budgets	Oct 9	All
Planning & Zoning Commission recommendations on CIB/CIP;	Oct 12	Capital
Formal introduction of Mayor's budgets to Assembly	Oct 13	All
Assembly Worksession - General Government Operating & Capital	Oct 16	All
Assembly Worksession - Utilities/Enterp. Budgets & Legislative Program	Oct 23	Utl / Ent / Leg
<b>Assembly Public Hearing # 1</b> on proposed budgets	Oct 27	(C) All
<b>Assembly Public Hearing # 2</b> on proposed budgets {Note this is a Wednesday, due to Nov 3 as national elections}	Nov 4	All
Assembly Worksession - Assembly proposed amendments	Nov 13	All
Administration prepares S-Version	Nov 12-16	All
Assembly Meeting - Assembly amendments and adoption of budgets	Nov 17	(D) All
OMB upload adopted budget into financial system for budget year use	Nov 18	Operating

**Note:** All dates are subject to change.

**(A)**

6.10.040.A. Submittal and adoption of municipal operating and capital budget. **September**

**At least 120 days before the end of the fiscal year the Mayor shall submit to the Assembly the following:**

1. A preliminary general government capital budget/capital program and utilities capital budget/capital program.
2. Proposed utility business plans and update to utility strategic plans.
3. Preliminary general government revenue plan, tax limitation, and administration service priorities.
4. Major departmental consolidations, reorganizations or establishments necessitating changes to Chapter 3.10 or 3.20, pertaining to executive organization, and required by proposed budgets for the next fiscal year.

**(B)**

**Section 13.02. Six-Year Fiscal Program. October**

At least 90 days before the end of the fiscal year of the municipality the mayor shall submit to the assembly, with recommendations from the planning commission, a six-year program for public services, fiscal policies and capital improvements of the municipality. The program shall include estimates of the effect of capital improvement projects on maintenance, operation and personnel costs. The assembly shall hold at least one public hearing on the six-year program prior to adoption.

**Section 13.03. Operating and capital budget. October**

At least 90 days before the end of the fiscal year of the municipality the Mayor shall submit to the Assembly a proposed operating and capital budget for the next fiscal year. The form and content of the budget shall be consistent with the proposed six-year program. The Mayor shall submit with the budget an analysis of the fiscal implications of all tax levies and programs.

**(C)**

**Section 13.04. Budget hearing.**

The Assembly shall hold at least two public hearings on the proposed operating and capital budget for the next fiscal year, including one hearing at least 21 days after the budget is submitted to the Assembly, and one hearing at least seven but not more than 14 days prior to the adoption of the budget.

**(D)**

**6.10.040.B. Submittal and adoption of municipal operating and capital budget.**

The general government capital budget/capital program will be adopted at least 21 days prior to the end of the fiscal year of the municipality.