

Rutherford County, Tennessee

Fund Balance Policy

Purpose

- The County hereby establishes and will maintain reservations of Fund Balance as defined herein in accordance with Governmental Accounting Standards Board Statement No. 54 Fund Balance Reporting and Governmental Fund Type Definitions. This Policy shall apply to the County's General Fund and all governmental funds. Fund Balance shall be composed of restricted, committed, assigned, non-spendable and unassigned amounts.
- Fund Balance information is used to identify the available resources to repay long-term debt, reduce property taxes, add new governmental programs, expand existing ones or enhance the financial position of the County in accordance with policies established by the County Commission.

Definitions

- **Fund Balance** refers to the difference between assets and fund liabilities in the governmental funds balance sheet and is referred to as fund equity.
- **Restricted Fund Balance** – Amounts that can be spent only for the specific purposes stipulated by external resource providers such as grantors or enabling legislations. Restrictions may be changed or lifted only with the consent of the resource providers.
- **Committed Fund Balance** – Amounts that can be used only for the specific purposes determined by a formal action of the County Commission, the County's highest level of decision making authority. Commitments may be changed or lifted only by the County Commission taking the same formal action that imposed the constraint.
- **Assigned Fund Balance** – Amounts that the County intends to use for a specific purpose the intent shall be expressed by management.
- **Non-Spendable Fund Balance** – Amounts that are not in a spendable form such as inventory or are required to be maintained intact (e.g. principal of an endowment fund).
- **Unassigned Fund Balance** – The residual classification for the general fund and includes amounts that are not contained in the other classifications. Unassigned amounts are the portion of fund balance which is not obligated or specifically designated and is available for any purpose.

Reservations of Fund Balance

1. Restricted Fund Balance General Fund

Restricted Fund Balances represent revenues whose use is constrained or restricted by external parties such as creditors, grantors, contributors, or laws or regulations of other governments; or imposed by law through constitutional provisions or enabling legislation. The current property tax levy is considered restricted in all funds except the General Fund. Rutherford County receives the following examples of revenues in the General Fund that are restricted. This list is not intended to be all inclusive.

- a. Local Development Tax
- b. Alcohol & Drug Treatment
- c. Litigation Tax
- d. Drug Court
- e. Sex Offenders Registry
- f. Courtroom Security
- g. Victims Assistance
- h. Computer System – Register of Deeds
- i. Automation – Circuit Clerk, Criminal Court, General Sessions, Juvenile Court, Chancery, Sheriff, and County clerk
- j. Federal Grants, restricted to purpose
- k. State Grants, restricted to purpose

2. Committed Fund Balance General Fund

The County Commission hereby establishes the following committed fund balance reserves in the General Fund. Others may be established through the action of the Board of Commissioners.

- a. Monies received from renting the facilities at Lane Agri-Park are committed to provide maintenance to the Agri-Park property and facilities.
- b. Donations received by the Rutherford County Pet & Welfare Services (PAWS) are committed to provide improvements to their program or facility.

3. Assigned Fund Balance General Fund

The County Commission hereby establishes the following assigned fund balance reserve in the General Fund.

- a. Designated Carry Forward
The designated carry forward balance reserve is assigned by the County as set forth in the annual budget and any amendments thereto to provide funds for differences if any between budgeted revenues and expenditures.

4. Non-Spendable fund Balance General Fund

The County Commission hereby establishes the following non-spendable fund balance reserve in the General Fund

a. **Prepaid Items**

The prepaid reserve is established to indicate those amounts relating to prepaid items that are not in a spendable form.

Minimum Level of Unassigned Fund Balance – General Fund

The General Fund unassigned fund balance will be maintained at a level sufficient to provide for the required resources to meet operating cost needs, to allow for unforeseen needs of an emergency nature, and to permit orderly adjustment to changes resulting from fluctuations of revenue sources. Given that current property tax collections do not begin until the fourth month of the fiscal year, and based on guidance provided by the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA), Rutherford County will maintain at least Fifteen Percent (15.0%) of the next year's budget in the unassigned fund balance of the General Fund.

Any amounts remaining in the fiscal year-end unassigned fund balance in excess of Fifteen (15.0%) of the approved subsequent year's budget will be available for appropriation by the County Commission to cover such items as revenue shortfalls and unanticipated expenditures, and to ensure stable tax rates. The County Commission will attempt whenever possible to avoid appropriating such funding for recurring expenses.

Minimum Level of Assigned Fund Balance – General Debt Service Fund

It is the practice of the County to pay the principal and interest requirements on the County's debt obligations from the Debt Service Fund. Each year the Finance Director of the County shall determine or estimate the principal and interest requirements of the County and recommend sources of revenues to meet these actual or projected requirements. Additionally, it shall be the policy of the County to begin each fiscal year with a balance of cash or investments in the Debt Service Fund in a conservatively calculated amount adequate to meet (1) cash flow needs, (2) budgeting contingencies, (3) emergency contingencies, (4) variable rate volatility contingencies plus (5) future forecasted needs.

- **Cash flow Requirement Component.** The majority of local County revenues come from property taxes. Property taxes levied for a specific fiscal year are generally collected in the second half of that fiscal year. For this reason, it is common for the County to expend more than it collects during the first half of the fiscal year. For this reason, it shall be the policy of the County to begin each fiscal year with a sum of cash or investments equal to the debt service fund requirements scheduled to be expended during the first six months of the next fiscal year. This amount will typically equal six months of interest expense on the

County's total indebtedness unless the County schedules principal payments in the first six months of the fiscal year.

Generally, except for short-term capital outlay notes, the County will not schedule principal payments in the first six months of the fiscal year.

- **Budget Contingency Component.** By their very nature, budgeted revenues are estimated revenues. Certain sources of revenues are more volatile and less predictable than other types of revenues. For example, property tax collections are generally more stable than sales tax collections. It shall be the policy of the County to begin each fiscal year with a sum of cash or investments, as shall be reflected in the fund balance, equal to 10% of budgeted property tax revenues and 20% of other budgeted revenues in order to provide protection from unforeseen budgeting shortfalls.
- **Emergency Contingency Component.** The Budgeting Contingency is intended to protect the County from one-time shortfalls in budgeted revenues. It is recognized, however, that severe economic downturns in the local or national economy or the occurrence of natural disasters such as tornadoes can have a severe effect on property valuations, tax collection rates and sales and business taxes. It shall be the policy of the County to begin each fiscal year with a sum of cash or investments equal to the Budgeting Contingency as an Emergency Contingency balance.
- **Variable Rate Contingency Component.** The County can enter into variable rate loan agreements with either its own Public Building Authority or with other Public Building Authorities. Under certain circumstances, and in accordance with State Law, it may also be possible for the County to issue variable rate obligations directly. In the event that the County incurs variable rate liabilities, the County will (1) budget conservatively for the projected variable rate expense (i.e. current rate plus two percent (2%)) and (2) maintain an amount equal to two percent (2%) of the variable rate indebtedness to provide a measure of protection from variable rate volatility.
- **Growth Component.** Each year the County shall update a five-year capital improvement plan for the County. As part of this process, the County shall estimate the future debt service associated with new indebtedness projected in relation to the capital improvements plan. These projections shall provide a source of data from which to project the additional fund balance needed in the Debt Service Fund over the next five years. It shall be the policy of the County to take future needs into consideration when determining the amount needed in the assigned fund balance and to use only that portion of fund balance in excess of the minimum required amount, if needed, to balance the annual debt service fund budget or to provide for other capital improvement needs of the County.

- **Debt Service Fund Draws and Fund Replenishment.** In the event that the County draws down the Debt Service Fund for the purpose of addressing any of the circumstances described above (i.e. shortfalls in budgeted revenues, emergencies, or unforeseen variable rate expenses, then the County shall commit to replenishing the Debt Service Fund to an appropriate level within two fiscal years.

Disbursement of Fund Balance Reserves

- Rutherford County reduces restricted amounts first when expenditures are incurred for purposes for which both restricted and unrestricted (committed, assigned, or unassigned) amounts are available. Rutherford County reduces committed amounts first, followed by assigned amounts, and then unassigned amounts when expenditures are incurred for purpose for which amounts in any of those unrestricted fund balances classifications could be used.

Annual Review and Determination of Fund Balance Reserve Amounts

- Compliance with the provisions of this policy shall be reviewed as a part of the annual budget adoption process and amounts of restricted, committed, assigned, non-spendable, the minimum level of unassigned fund balance in the General Fund and the minimum level of assigned fund balance in the Debt Service Fund shall be determined during this process.

Approved by the Rutherford County Commission, June 28, 2010