

OTTAWA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

DEBT MANAGEMENT POLICY

I. POLICY

Debt financing is an important tool for municipalities in meeting their service obligations to the public. However, used inappropriately, debt financing can cause serious, long-term problems that significantly affect on-going operations. It is important for municipalities to have appropriate guidelines in place to avoid the potential pitfalls of debt financing.

The intent of this policy is to establish parameters and guidance for the issuance, management, monitoring, assessment and evaluation of all debt obligations of the County.

II. STATUTORY REFERENCES

State of Michigan Constitution of 1963, Article VII, Section 11
Public Act 34 of 2001, the Revised Municipal Finance Act
Public Act 470 of 2002, the Agency Reporting Act

III. COUNTY LEGISLATIVE OR HISTORICAL REFERENCES

Board of Commissioners Policy Adoption Date and Resolution Number: _____

Board of Commissioners Review Date and Resolution Number: _____

Name and Date of Last Committee Review: _____

Related Policies: _____

DEBT MANAGEMENT POLICY

PROCEDURE

1. Conditions for Debt Issuance

In order to maintain a high credit rating and provide accountability to the taxpayers, debt issuance is subject to current conditions. Specifically, debt issuance is limited to the following conditions:

- a. Debt financing may be used to finance the construction or acquisition of infrastructure and other capital assets for the purpose of meeting its service obligations to the public.
- b. Debt (short-term or long-term) will not be issued to finance current, on-going operations of the County except in the case of an extreme financial emergency which is beyond its control or reasonable ability to forecast.
- c. The County may issue debt to refund outstanding debt when indicated by market conditions or to remove a restrictive covenant imposed by the bonds to be refinanced.
- d. The County may guarantee debt issued by the County's component units for the construction or acquisition of infrastructure and other capital assets for the purpose of meeting its service obligations to the public.
- e. Every proposed bond issue to be financed by County funds will be accompanied by an analysis to ensure that the new issue combined with current debt does not negatively impact the County's debt capacity and conformance with County debt policies.
- f. An internal feasibility analysis will be prepared for each debt proposal to be financed by County funds which analyzes the impact on current and future budgets to ensure that the County's operating budget can absorb the additional costs.

2. Limitations on Debt Issuance

The County faces both legal restrictions on debt issuance as well as self-imposed limitations.

- a. The County will comply with the State of Michigan Constitution of 1963, Article VII, Section 11, which states "No County shall incur indebtedness which shall increase its total debt beyond 10% of its assessed valuation."
- b. The County will comply with the provisions of the State of Michigan Public Act 34 of 2001, the Revised Municipal Finance Act.

- c. The County will manage debt in a manner than ensures the long-term financial integrity of the County.
- d. The maximum maturity of the issue will not exceed the expected useful life of the project.
- e. Exclusive of the debt service payments for the Ottawa County Central Dispatch Authority (which has a separate funding source), direct debt will not be issued if it will cause the total annual debt service payments to exceed 10% of the revenue sources that cover them. These revenue sources include the general operating levy, the interest, penalties, and collection fees earned by the Delinquent Tax Revolving Fund, and other identified sources.
- f. Additional debt will not be issued or guaranteed if doing so may jeopardize the County's current bond rating.

3. Debt Issuance Process and Maintenance

The County will issue debt in the manner providing the best financial benefit and maintain its obligation to the purchasers in an efficient and responsible manner.

- a. The County may sell bonds with a competitive bid process or as a negotiated sale. Certain issue specific conditions or market conditions may exist that necessitate a negotiated sale.
- b. Credit enhancements (e.g., insurance) may be considered if the projected benefits equal or exceed the additional cost.
- c. The County will comply with all disclosure requirements of the Securities Exchange Commission.
- d. The County will comply with State of Michigan Public Act 470 of 2002, the Agency Reporting Act.
- e. The County will make every effort to maintain or improve its bond rating.
- f. Debt Service payments will be made for all issues on or before the due date.
- g. Debt Service payments will be made via electronic funds transfer in order to enhance the security and timeliness of payments and to maximize the investment return on County funds.

REVIEW PERIOD

The County Administrator will review this Policy at least once every two years, and will make recommendations for changes to the Planning & Policy Committee.

