

OTTAWA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

OPERATING BUDGET POLICY

I. POLICY

The Ottawa County Board of Commissioners supports principles of budgeting, management, and accounting which promote the fiscal integrity of the County, clearly enhance the County's reputation for good stewardship, and which explain the status of County operations to the citizens and tax payers of Ottawa County. Systems and procedures will be implemented by Ottawa County to implement this policy, in accordance with the Ottawa County Strategic Plan.

II. STATUTORY REFERENCES

The Board of Commissioners may establish such rules and regulations regarding the business concerns of the County as the Board considers necessary and proper. See: MCL 46.11(m); 46.71, Act 156 of 1851, as amended. See also the specific statutory requirements of the Uniform Budgeting and Accounting Act, MCL 141.421a et seq.

III. COUNTY LEGISLATIVE OR HISTORICAL REFERENCES

Board of Commissioners Policy Adoption Date and Resolution Number: 06/13/95

Board of Commissioners Review Date and Resolution Number: 09/25/01

Name and Date of Last Committee Review: _____

Related Policies: _____

OPERATING BUDGET POLICY

PROCEDURE

1. County Budget Philosophy

a. Alignment with Strategic Plan: The County Board regularly reviews and updates the County's strategic plan which serves as a guide for County operations. Since the budget is the main tool for implementation of the Strategic Plan, the budget, to the extent possible, will be consistent with the goals and objectives of the strategic plan.

b. Prudence: As stewards of taxpayer dollars and to promote stability, the budget will be prepared using conservative, but realistic estimates. The County will also avoid budgetary procedures such as accruing future years' revenues or rolling over short-term debt to balance the current budget at the expense of future budgets.

The County will include a contingency amount in the budget for unforeseen and emergency type expenditures. The amount will represent not less than 1% and not more than 2% of the General Fund's actual expenditures for the most recently completed audit (e.g., 2006 audit used for the 2008 budget). All appropriations from contingency must have Board approval.

c. Balancing the Budget: In accordance with Public Act 621, no fund will be budgeted with a deficit (expenditures exceeding revenues and fund balance). Prudence requires that the ongoing operating budget be matched with ongoing, stable revenue sources in order to avoid disruption of services. The County will make every effort to avoid the use of one-time dollars and fund balance to balance the budget. Instead, cash balances and one-time revenues should only be used for one-time expenditures such as capital improvements.

2. Budget Formulation

a. Responsibility: The Administrator will assume final responsibility for the preparation, presentation and control of the budget, and shall prepare an annual budget calendar and budget resolution packet for each fiscal year.

b. Budget Basis: The budget will be prepared on the same basis as the County's financial statements. The governmental funds will be based on modified accrual and the proprietary funds (budgeted in total only) will be based on full accrual. The County's legal level of control is by line item.

c. Schedule: The annual budget process will be conducted in accordance with the following budget calendar:

County of Ottawa Budget Calendar

- Mid March Equipment and Personnel Request Forms sent to department heads.
- March 31 Department requests for equipment and personnel submitted to Fiscal Services Department.
- April 1 Performance Measures sent to department heads for updating.
- April 30 Performance Measures returned to Fiscal Services Department.
- First Tuesday in May
- Finance Committee approves the Resolutions of Intent to Increase Millage Rates, Distribution of the Convention Facility Tax and Distribution of the Cigarette Tax. *The County operating levy under consideration is for the current budget year. The 911 and Parks levies under consideration are for the next budget year.*
- Board reviews Truth-in-Taxation Calculation, the Resolutions of Intent to Increase Millage Rates and sets the date for public hearing.
- Third Monday in May
- Budget packets distributed to departments.
- Third Tuesday in May
- Finance Committee approves the Resolutions to Approve the Millage Rates and forwards them to the Board.
- Fourth Tuesday in May
- Board holds a public hearing and approves the millage rates.
- Third Monday in May-
- Mid June Departments develop individual budgets. The Fiscal Services Department available to provide any needed assistance in completing budget documents.
- Mid June Departments submit completed budget requests and narratives to the Fiscal Services Department.

Mid June - Fiscal Services Department summarizes budgets and prepares
July 31 documents for Administrative review.

Mid July - Administration and Fiscal Services Director meet with Department Heads
Mid August in preparation of a proposed budget.

First Tuesday in September

Finance Committee presented with preliminary review of the General
Fund budget

Third Tuesday in September

Finance Committee preliminary review of the budget; approval of the
Salary and Fringe Benefits Adjustments.

Fourth Tuesday in September

Board sets the date for the public hearing on the County Budget for second
Tuesday in October, receives preliminary overview of budget and
approves the Salary and Fringe Benefit Adjustments.

Six Days Prior to Public Hearing

Deadline for the publication of the public hearing notice on the budget.

Second Tuesday in October

Board holds the public hearing on the budget and receives the formal
Budget Presentation.

Third Tuesday in October

Finance Committee reviews Resolution to Approve the County Budget,
Insurance Authority Budget and the Apportionment Report.

Fourth Tuesday in October

Board adopts the County Budget, the Insurance Authority Budget and the
Apportionment Report.

d. Required Budget Data: Department heads and other administrative officers of budgetary centers will provide necessary information to the Administrator for budget preparation. Specifically, departments will be asked to provide equipment and personnel requests with explanatory data, goals, objectives and performance data, substantiating information for each account, and performance measures, both historical and projected.

e. Budget Document: The County will prepare the final budget document in accordance with the guidelines established the Government Finance Officers Association Distinguished Budget Award Program and on a basis consistent/t with principles established by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board.

3. Amendments to the Budget

Budgets for the current year are continually reviewed for any required revisions of original estimates. Proposed increases or reductions in appropriations in excess of \$50,000, involving multiple funds, or any amendment resulting in a net change to revenues or expenditures are presented to the Board for action. Transfers that are \$50,000 or less, within a single fund, and do not result in a net change to revenues or expenditures may be approved by the County Administrator and Fiscal Services Director. Budget adjustments will not be made after a fund's fiscal year end except where permitted by grant agreements. All budget appropriations lapse at the end of each fiscal year unless specific Board action is taken.

All unencumbered appropriations lapse at year-end. However, the appropriation authority for major capital projects, capital assets and previously authorized projects (i.e., the encumbered portions) carries forward automatically to the subsequent year. All other encumbered appropriations lapse at year-end.

4. Long-term Financial Planning

As part of the annual budget process, five year revenue and expenditure estimates will be provided for the General Fund. The estimates will assess the long-term impacts of budget policies, tax levies, program changes, capital improvements and other initiatives. This information may then be used to develop strategies to maintain the County's financial standing. If a structural deficit (operating revenues do not cover operating expenditures) is identified, or projected, the Administrator will develop and bring before the Board a deficit elimination plan to address the problem.

In addition, the County will support efforts that control future operating costs. The County will strive to fully fund the County's financing tools to benefit all current and future residents of Ottawa County. The following funds have been identified as financing tools of the County:

2271 Solid Waste Clean-up Fund: This fund was established from monies received by Ottawa County from the settlement of litigation over the Southwest

Ottawa Landfill. These monies are to be used for the clean-up of the landfill. The fund's goal is to use the interest generated from the principal to cover ongoing annual costs of the landfill clean-up.

2444 Infrastructure Fund: This fund was established to provide financial assistance to local units of government for water, sewer, road, and bridge projects that are especially unique, non-routine, and out-of-the ordinary. Money is loaned to municipalities for qualifying projects at attractive interest rates.

2450 Public Improvement Fund: This fund is used to account for monies set aside for public improvements. The fund's goal is to provide sufficient dollars to fund the County's major capital projects.

2570 Stabilization Fund: This fund was established pursuant to Act No. 30 of the Public Acts of 1978 to assure the continued solid financial condition of the County. Use of funds are restricted for but not limited to:

- a. cover a general fund deficit, when the County's annual audit reveals such a deficit.
- b. prevent a reduction in the level of public services or in the number of employees at any time in a fiscal year when the County's budgeted revenue is not being collected in an amount sufficient to cover budgeted expenditures.
- c. prevent a reduction in the level of public services or in the number of employees when in preparing the budget for the next fiscal year the County's estimated revenue does not appear sufficient to cover estimated expenses.
- d. cover expenses arising because of natural disaster, including a flood, fire, or tornado.

2980 Employee Sick Pay Bank: The purpose of the Employee Sick Pay Bank Fund is to pay for the County's accrued liability which was a result of discontinuing the accumulation and payoff of employee sick days.

5160 Delinquent Tax Revolving Fund: The Delinquent Tax Revolving Fund is used to pay each local government unit, including the County, the respective amount of taxes not collected as of March 1 of each year. After many years of waiting for this fund to mature, the treasurer now avoids costly issuances of Delinquent Tax Anticipation Notes (now referred to as General Obligation Limited Tax Notes) and pays schools, local units and the County in a timely fashion. An annual evaluation is made to determine if it is beneficial for the County to issue general obligation limited tax notes versus using cash on hand. As a financing tool, the fund also covers the principal and interest payments on four bond issues.

6450 Duplicating Fund

6550 Telecommunications Fund

6641 Equipment Pool Fund: These funds are used to provide ongoing funding for equipment replacement. They help stabilize the operating budget by avoiding the peaks and valleys that can occur with equipment purchases.

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.