

STATUTORY BUDGET REQUIREMENTS

Kansas statutes require that an annual operating budget be adopted for the general fund, special revenue funds (unless exempted by a specific statute), debt service funds, and business funds. Statute requires the budget to *balance*, meaning that estimated revenues plus unencumbered cash equals expenditures in all appropriated funds for a fiscal year.

All budgets are prepared using the regulatory cash basis further modified by the encumbrance method of accounting – that is, commitments evidenced by documents such as purchase orders and contracts in addition to disbursements and accounts payable are all recorded as expenditures although the actual funds have yet to be released to the billing source.

Furthermore, the statutes provide for the following sequence and timetable in adoption of budgets:

- a. June 15 – By this date, County Clerks must provide the estimated assessed valuations and revenue neutral rate to taxing districts. K.S.A. 79-5a27 and K.S.A. 79-2988(a).
- b. July 20 – This is the last day to notify the County Clerk of intent to exceed the revenue rate. K.S.A. 79-2988(b)(2).
- c. August 10 thru September 10 – Notice of Revenue Neutral Rate Hearing and/or Budget Hearing must be published at least 10 days prior to the hearing in the local newspaper and on the website. K.S.A. 79-2988(b)(3)
- d. August 20 – This is the earliest day that a Revenue Neutral Rate Hearing and a Budget Hearing can be held. K.S.A. 79-2988(b)(3).
- e. September 20 – This is the last day to hold a Revenue Neutral Hearing AND Budget Hearing. K.S.A. 79-2988(b)(3).
- f. October 1 – This is the last day to certify to the County Clerk the amount of ad valorem tax to be levied and the last day to certify the budget. If the budget is not filed by 5:00p.m. on this date, the County Clerk must use the ad valorem levy from the prior taxing year. K.S.A. 79-2988(e)(1) and K.S.A. 79-2930.

Amending the Budget

Supplemental appropriations and transfers among budget categories occasionally modify original appropriations. In order to amend the budget, the proposed amendment must appear in the official City newspaper at least 10 days prior to a public hearing.

Citizens also may address the City Commission at the hearing. After the hearing the Commission may then vote to amend the budget. Approved amendments are then submitted to the State Division of Accounts & Reports for record.

Public Participation

Kansas law requires the opportunity for public input and participation throughout the budget process. All budget meetings and City Commission meetings are open to the public and are advertised as such. All meetings are encouraged and publicized using the City's social media platforms and website.

Citizen participation in local government need not be limited to the budget process. It is the right of all citizens to participate in the governing organizations that affect them. Among other avenues,

citizens may wish to become involved through their elected representative(s), by attending public meetings, or directly by giving input, serving on an advisory board, committee, or the governing body.

BUDGETARY AND FINANCIAL PLANNING POLICIES

The City of Arkansas City's Budgetary and Financial Planning policies establish the basic framework for the financial management of the City. These policies will guide the development of budgetary programs and costs throughout the budget cycle by both Administrative Staff and the City Commission, and provide consistent treatment from year to year. The written policy, as presented, reflects desired practices, which should be reviewed annually. All of the following policies were adopted by the City Commission as part of the Governing Body Handbook.

OVERALL BUDGET POLICIES:

1. The City will maintain a multi-year planning approach to the budget cycle, including at least a three-year projection of operating costs, a ten-year cycle for operating capital replacement, and a five-year Capital Improvement Program for Infrastructure enhancement/replacement.
2. The budget will focus primarily on program costs rather than on fund costs. However, for the purposes of compliance with accounting principles, fund information will be included.
3. The City will operate on a balanced budget.
4. The overall goal is to maintain the quality of service desired by the community at the minimum cost possible. Proposed reductions in current year costs will be considered only if they will not result in future cost increases.
5. All funds of the City will be reported in the Annual Budget, including the funds not subject to the Budget Law or the formal appropriations process. Non-budgeted or non-appropriated funds will be disclosed, as a minimum, to the extent of prior year's actual revenue, expense, and fund balances, and current year-to-date revenue and expense.
6. Interfund transfers will be permitted so long as they are planned (budgeted) and the City Commission has approved of the transfer during the budget process. Interfund transfers should not exceed 15% of the anticipated revenue of the fund providing the transfer. Transfers that are in the nature of reimbursement of cost are excluded from the policy.

OPERATING BUDGET POLICIES:

1. The City will strive to maintain its present service levels for all services within existing parameters as adjusted for the normal growth in the tax base.
2. The City will maintain a financial and budgetary control system to ensure adherence to the budget and awareness of the financial environment. Monthly budget reports will be prepared and submitted to the City Commission and all operating departments.
3. The City will attempt to avoid layoffs in actions to balance the budget. Necessary personnel reductions will be made through attrition, if possible.
4. The City will focus cost reduction efforts on major cost centers and items outside of "core services".
5. Business funds will be self-supporting, including indirect and overhead costs.

DEBT FINANCING POLICY

1. The Debt Financing Management Policy sets forth comprehensive guidelines for the financing of capital expenditures. It is the objective of the policy that;
 - The City obtains financing only when necessary.
 - The process for identifying the timing and amount of debt or other financing is as efficient as possible.
 - The most favorable interest rate and other related costs are obtained.

- When appropriate, future financial flexibility is maintained.

Debt financing, which includes general obligation bonds, special assessment bonds, revenue bonds, temporary notes, lease/purchase agreements, and other City obligations permitted to be issued or incurred under Kansas law, shall only be used to purchase capital assets that cannot be acquired from either available current revenues or fund balances. The useful life of the asset or project shall exceed the payout schedule of any debt the City assumes.

2. RESPONSIBILITY

The primary responsibility for developing debt financing recommendations rests with the City Manager. In developing such recommendations, the City Manager may be assisted by the Finance Department, Financial Advisor and Bond Counsel.

3. GENERAL

Debt financing will not be considered appropriate for any recurring purpose such as current operating and maintenance expenditures. The City will use debt financing only for capital improvement projects and unusual equipment purchases, and only when the new project meets at least one of the following circumstances:

- When the project is included in the City's capital improvement program.
- When the project involves acquisition of equipment that cannot be purchased outright without causing an unacceptable spike in the property tax rate.
- When the project is the result of growth-related activities within the community that require unanticipated and unplanned infrastructure or capital improvements by the City.
- When the project's useful life, or the projected service life of the equipment, will be equal to or exceed the term of the financing.
- When there are designated revenues sufficient to service a debt, whether from project revenues, other specified and reserved resources, or infrastructure cost sharing revenues.

The following criteria will be used to evaluate pay-as-you-go versus debt financing in funding capital improvements:

Factors which favor pay-as-you-go financing include circumstances where:

- The project can be adequately funded from available current revenues and excess fund balances.
- The project can be completed in an acceptable timeframe given the available revenues.
- Additional debt levels could adversely affect the City's credit rating or repayment sources, or significantly violate the City's financial policies herein.
- Market conditions are unstable or suggest difficulties in marketing a debt.

Factors which favor long-term debt financing include circumstances where:

- Revenues available for debt issues are considered sufficient and reliable so that long-term financing can be marketed with an appropriate credit rating, which can be maintained.
- Market conditions present favorable interest rates and demand for City debt financing.
- A project is mandated by state or federal government and current revenues or excess fund balances are insufficient to pay project costs.

- A project is immediately required to meet or relieve capacity needs and existing unprogrammed cash reserves are insufficient to pay project cost.
- The life of the project or asset financed is ten years or longer. For lease purchases, the life of asset meets or exceeds the term of lease.

4. MAXIMUM AMOUNTS OF DEBT FINANCING

The City will not engage in debt financing unless the proposed obligation, when combined with all existing debts, will result in debt ratios throughout the life of the proposed obligation that are less than the following benchmarks:

- **Statutory Limitation:**
The total amount of debt pledged as general obligations of the City shall not exceed thirty percent (30%) of the assessed valuation of taxable tangible property within the City, as authorized under **K.S.A. 10-308**.
- **Debt Service Coverage:**
The City will maintain annual debt service requirements at a level that does not exceed a prudent percentage of annual revenues, ensuring sufficient capacity to fund operations and maintain financial flexibility.
- **Overall Affordability:**
Before any new debt issuance, the City will evaluate the long-term affordability of existing and proposed debt obligations to ensure ongoing compliance with statutory and policy benchmarks.

The computation of these ratios will use the following variables:

- Per capita measures will be based on the most recent annual estimate of City population produced by the State of Kansas for the year in question.
- Direct debt will be the total of all then outstanding General Obligation and special assessment bonded debt plus all authorized but unissued bonded debt plus the amount of debt financing being proposed.
- Estimated appraised valuation will be the total estimated valuation of all real and personal property located within the City of Arkansas City for the year in question as estimated by the Cowley County Appraiser.
- Annual debt service will be the total principal and interest payments due on direct debt in the year in question plus the estimated maximum annual principal and interest payment on the proposed long term obligation.
- Budgeted expenditure will be the total original adopted budget of the General Fund and debt service fund for the year in question.

5. STRUCTURE AND TERM OF DEBT FINANCING

City debt will be structured to achieve the lowest possible net interest cost (NIC) to the City given market conditions, the urgency of the capital project, and the nature and type of any security provided. City debt will be structured in ways that will not compromise the future flexibility to finance projects. Moreover, to the extent possible, the City will not issue long-term debt with maturity periods greater than 10 years. In addition, the City will issue debt so that it is tiered, as one issue matures, any required additional debt will be issued. Types of financing include, but not limited to the following:

General Obligation Bonds

- The City shall use an objective analytical approach to determine whether it can afford to issue new bonds for City facilities beyond what it retires each year (see Assumption of Additional debts below). Generally, this process will compare a

variety of measures of debt benchmarks relative to key demographic data of the City.

- The decision on whether or not to assume new general obligation bonds shall, in part, be based on (a) costs and benefits, (b) the current conditions of the municipal bond market, and (c) the City's ability to assume new general obligation bonds as determined by the aforementioned benchmarks.
- NOTE: The provisions of this section also apply to the issuance of any private activity bonds.

Revenue Bonds

- The City may issue bonds secured solely by dedicated non-ad valorem revenue streams if doing so will yield clearly identifiable advantages. For the City to issue revenue bonds, a primary objective will be to minimize risk through the use of adequate coverage requirements while remaining in compliance with overall debt management policy objectives. The City will adhere to, and where necessary, take actions to ensure compliance with all outstanding revenue bond covenants.

Special Assessment Bonds

- The City shall maintain a watchful attitude over the issuance of special assessment bonds for benefit district improvements. The City will only cost share in a benefit district in unusual circumstances where the project will benefit the City at large. Participation in the project will require the approval of the City Commission after a public hearing explaining the benefits that the City will receive. The City will not pay more than 50% of any proposed costs related to a benefit district. Further, it will be the responsibility of the City Manager and staff to analyze each special assessment bond issue for indications that future special assessments will equal or exceed the annual principal and interest payments of such bonds.

Assumption of Additional Debts

- The City shall not assume more debt than it retires each year without conducting an objective analysis of the community's ability to assume and support additional debt service payments and of the probable impact of the additional debt on the City's bond ratings.

Asset Life

- The City will consider debt financing for the acquisition, replacement, or expansion of physical assets (including land) only if a capital project has a useful life longer than the term of the bond issue supporting it. Debt will be used only to finance capital projects and equipment, except in case of unforeseen emergencies. Debt will not be issued for periods exceeding the useful life or average useful lives of the project or projects to be financed.

Length of Debts

- City debts will be amortized for the shortest period consistent with a fair allocation of costs to current and future beneficiaries or users, and in keeping with other related provisions of this policy. The City normally shall issue bonds with a maximum life of 10 years or less for general obligation bonds, Public Building Commission bonds, and revenue bonds, and for special assessment bonds. Exceptions to this rule may be made when it is deemed financially prudent.

- Unless specific compelling reasons exists, there shall be no “balloon” bond repayment schedules, which consist of low annual payments and one large payment of the balance due at the end of the term. There shall be at least interest paid in the first fiscal year after a bond sale and principal repayment starting no later than the second fiscal year after the bond issue.

Call Provisions

- Call provisions for bond issues shall be made as short as possible consistent with the lowest interest cost to the City. Unless specific compelling reasons exist all bonds shall be callable only at par.

Debt Structuring

- At a minimum, the City will seek to amortize general obligation bonds with level principal and interest costs over the life of the issue. Pushing higher costs to future years in order to reduce short-term budget liabilities will be considered only when natural disasters or extraordinary or unanticipated external factors make the short-term cost of general obligation bonds prohibitive.

Variable Rate Debts

- The City may choose to issue bonds that pay a rate of interest that varies according to pre-determined formula or results from a periodic remarketing of the securities, consistent with state law and covenants of preexisting bonds, and depending on market conditions.

6. DEBT ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCING

Audit

- An independent audit will be performed annually, with the report issued within compliance of the Omnibus Disclosure Undertaking as regulated by the Federal Securities Exchange Commission that has been adopted by the City.

Bond Counsel

- The City will utilize external bond counsel for all debt issues. All debts issued by the City will include a written opinion by Bond Counsel affirming that the City is authorized to issue the debt, stating that the City has met all Federal and State constitutional and statutory requirements necessary for issuance, and determining the federal income tax status of the debt.

Bond & Interest Fund

- All payment of general obligation bonds and special assessment bonds shall be from the City's Bond & Interest Fund. The fund balance in the Bond & Interest Fund will be maintained at a level equal to or greater than the total principal and interest payable from that Fund for the upcoming semi-annual debt service payment. Furthermore, the fund balance will be managed to eliminate or minimize arbitrage rebate liability.

Competitive Sale of Debts

- The City, as a matter of policy, shall seek to issue its general or revenue bond obligations in a competitive sale unless it is determined that such a sale method will not produce the best results for the City. In such instances where the City, through a competitive bidding for its bonds, deems the bids received as unsatisfactory or does not receive bids, it may, at the election of the City Commission, enter into negotiation for sale of the bonds.

Credit Enhancements

- Credit enhancement (letters of credit, bond insurance, etc.) may be used if the costs of such enhancements will reduce the net debt service payments on the bonds or provide other significant financial benefits to the City.

Financial Advisor

- The City will retain an external financial advisor. For each City bond sale the financial advisor will provide the City with information on pricing and underwriting fees for comparable sales by other issuers.

Lease/Purchase Agreements

- The use of lease/purchase agreements in the acquisition of vehicles, equipment and other capital assets shall be considered carefully relative to any other financing option or a “pay-as-you-go” basis. The lifetime cost of a lease typically will be higher than other financing options or cash purchases. Nevertheless, lease/purchase agreements may be used by the City as funding options for capital acquisitions if operational or cash-flow considerations preclude the use of other financing techniques.

Negotiated Sale of Debts

- Where a negotiated sale process is determined to be in the best interests of the City, the City will use a competitive process to select its investment banking team.

Temporary Notes

- Use of short-term borrowing, such as temporary notes, will be undertaken only if the transaction costs plus interest on a debt are less than the cost of internal financing, or available cash or reserves are insufficient to meet both project needs and current obligations.

Underwriter's Counsel

- City payments for underwriter's Counsel will be authorized for negotiated sales by the Finance Department on a case-by-case basis depending on the nature and complexity of the transaction and the needs expressed by the underwriters.

7. REFUNDING OF DEBTS

Periodic reviews of all outstanding debts will be undertaken to determine refunding opportunities. Refunding will be considered (within federal tax law constraints) if and when there is a net economic benefit of the refunding or the refunding is essential in order to modernize covenants essential to operations and management.

City staff and the financial advisor shall monitor the municipal bond market for opportunities to obtain interest savings by refunding outstanding debts. As a general rule, current refundings will be undertaken only if the present value savings of a particular refunding will exceed 3% of the refunded principal. As a general rule, advance refundings will be undertaken only if the present value savings of a particular refunding will exceed 4% of the refunded principal.

Refunding issues that produce a net present value savings of less than targeted amounts may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Refunding issues with negative

savings will not be considered unless a compelling public policy objective is served by the refunding.

8. CONDUIT FINANCINGS

The City may sponsor conduit financings in the form of Industrial Revenue Bonds for those activities (i.e., economic development, housing, health facilities, etc.) that have a general public purpose and are consistent with the City's overall service and policy objectives as determined by the City Commission.

All conduit financings must insulate the City completely from any credit risk or exposure.

9. ARBITRAGE LIABILITY MANAGEMENT

It is the City's policy to minimize the cost of arbitrage rebate and yield restriction while strictly complying with the law.

General

- Federal arbitrage legislation is intended to discourage entities from issuing tax-exempt obligations unnecessarily. In compliance with the spirit of this legislation, the City will not issue obligations except for identifiable projects with very good prospects of timely initiation. Temporary notes and subsequent long-term bonds will be issued timely as project contracts are awarded so that debt issues will be spent quickly.

Responsibility

- Because of the complexity of arbitrage rebate regulations and the severity of non-compliance penalties, the advice of Bond Counsel and other qualified experts will be sought whenever questions about arbitrage rebate regulations arise.

10. CREDIT RATINGS

Rating Agency Relationships

- The City's Financial Advisor shall be responsible for maintaining relationships with the rating agencies that currently assign ratings to the City's various debts. This effort shall include providing periodic updates on the City's general financial condition along with coordinating meetings and presentations in conjunction with a new debt issuance.

Use of Rating Agencies

- The City Manager shall be responsible for determining whether or not a rating shall be requested on a particular financing and which of the major rating agencies shall be asked to provide such a rating.

Minimum Long-Term Rating Requirements

- The City's minimum rating requirement for its direct, long-term, debt obligations is a rating of "AA" or higher. If a given debt cannot meet this requirement based on its underlying credit strength, then credit enhancement may be sought to ensure that the minimum rating is achieved. If credit enhancement is unavailable or is determined by the City's Financial Advisor to be uneconomical, then the obligations may be issued without a rating.

Rating Agency Presentations

- Full disclosure of operations and open lines of communication shall be provided to rating agencies used by the City. City staff, with assistance of the City's

Financial Advisor, shall prepare the necessary materials and presentation to the rating agencies.

Financial Disclosure

- The City is committed to full and complete primary and secondary financial disclosure, and to cooperating fully with rating agencies, institutional and individual investors, City departments and agencies, other levels of government, and the general public to share clear, comprehensible, and accurate financial information. The City is committed to meeting secondary disclosure requirements on a timely and comprehensive basis.
- Official statements accompanying debt issues and continuous disclosure statements will meet, unless operating under a waiver, the standards articulated by the Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB), the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), and Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). The City's Financial Advisor shall be responsible for ongoing disclosure to established national information repositories and for maintaining compliance with disclosure standards promulgated by state and national regulatory bodies.

11. RESERVES

-
- **General Fund:**
The City will maintain an unassigned fund balance in the General Fund equal to **60 days** of annual operating expenditures. This reserve provides for cash flow needs, emergency response, and unforeseen revenue declines.
- **Enterprise Funds:**
Each enterprise fund (e.g., Water, Wastewater, Sanitation, Stormwater) will maintain reserves sufficient to cover a minimum of **90 days** of operating expenses.
- **Debt Service Funds:**
Debt service funds shall maintain reserves in accordance with bond covenants or debt agreements, ensuring timely payment of principal and interest.
- **Special Revenue Funds:**
Reserve targets will be established based on the specific purpose and revenue stability of each fund.
- **Capital Improvement Funds:**
The City will maintain adequate reserves within capital funds to support ongoing and future infrastructure projects, promote pay-as-you-go financing where practical, and minimize reliance on debt issuance.