

Fiscal Policy Guidelines

For:



Moore County, North Carolina

FISCAL POLICY GUIDELINES

**Moore County, North Carolina
Amended July 15, 2014**



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FISCAL POLICY GUIDELINES - OBJECTIVES

This fiscal policy will influence and guide the financial management practice of Moore County, North Carolina. A fiscal policy that is adopted, adhered to, and regularly reviewed is recognized as the cornerstone of sound financial management. Effective fiscal policy:

- Contributes to the County's ability to insulate itself from fiscal crisis,
- Enhances short term and long term financial credit ability by helping to achieve the highest credit and bond ratings possible,
- Promotes long-term financial stability by establishing clear and consistent guidelines,
- Directs attention to the total financial picture of the County rather than single issue areas,
- Promotes the view of linking long-run financial planning with day to day operations, and
- Provides the County Staff, the County Board of Commissioners and the County citizens a framework for measuring the fiscal impact of government services against established fiscal parameters and guidelines.
- This policy will be reviewed annually by County staff and any changes approved by the Board of Commissioners.

To these ends, the following fiscal policy statements are presented.

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CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT BUDGET POLICIES

1. It is the responsibility of the County Board of Commissioners to provide for the capital facilities necessary to deliver municipal services to the citizens of the County, as well as facilities for the Moore County Public School and Sandhills Community College systems.
2. The County will consider all capital improvements in accordance with an adopted Capital Improvement Plan.
3. The Capital Improvement Plan is inclusive of Capital Improvements (renovations), Capital Replacement (vehicles and heavy equipment) and Major Capital Projects (new buildings).
4. The County will develop a ten-year Capital Improvement Plan and review and update the plan annually. The Moore County Public Schools and the Community College System will submit their respective ten-year capital improvement requests annually and will provide a prioritization for the improvements within their request for the County Commissioner's review.
5. The County will enact an annual capital budget based on the ten-year Capital Improvement Plan, while considering changes in population, changes in real estate development, or changes in assumptions in the capital budget projections.
6. The County, in consultation with the Moore County Public School and Community College Systems, will coordinate development of the capital improvement budget with development of the operating budget. Future operating costs associated with new capital improvements will be projected and included in operating budget forecasts.
7. The Capital Improvement Plan will include the estimated costs for the County to maintain all County, Public School and Community College assets at a level adequate to protect the public's welfare and safety, the County's capital investment and to minimize future maintenance and replacement costs. A maintenance and replacement schedule will be developed and followed based upon these estimates.

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8. The County, in consultation with the Moore County Public School and Community College Systems, will identify the estimated costs and potential funding sources for each capital project proposal before it is submitted for approval.

9. The County will adopt the most cost effective financing consistent with prudent financial management.

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DEBT POLICIES

1. The County will confine long-term borrowing to capital improvements or projects that cannot be financed from current revenues except where approved justification is provided.
2. The County will take a balanced approach to capital funding utilizing debt financing, capital reserves and pay-as-you go funding that will provide the least financial impact on the taxpayer. Pay-as-you-go funding will come from budgeted appropriations.
3. When the County finances capital improvements or other projects by issuing bonds or entering into capital leases, it will repay the debt within a period not to exceed the expected useful life of the project. Target debt ratios will be annually calculated and included in the review of financial trends.
4. Net debt as a percentage of estimated market value of taxable property shall not exceed 2.0%. Net debt is defined as any and all debt that is tax-supported.
5. Should the ratio of debt service expenditures as a percent of total governmental fund expenditures exceed 15.0% staff must request an exception from the Board of Commissioners stating the reason and length of time.
6. The County will retire tax anticipation debt, if any, annually and will retire bond anticipation debt within six months after completion of the project.
7. Payout of aggregate outstanding tax-supported debt principal shall be no less than 55.0% repaid in 10 years.

(Note: Excludes Enterprise Fund Debt which is assumed to be Self-Supporting)

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RESERVE POLICIES

1. Unassigned General Fund Balances will mean funds that remain available for appropriation by the County Board after all considerations for future expenditures, required restrictions defined by State statutes, and previous Board commitments have been calculated. The County will define these remaining amounts as “available fund balances.”
2. Available fund balances at the close of each fiscal year should be at least 15.0% of the Total Annual Operating Budget of the County with a Targeted Policy equal to 20.0%.
3. The County Board may, from time-to-time, utilize fund balances that will reduce available fund balances below the 15.0% policy for the purposes of a declared fiscal emergency or other such global purpose as to protect the long-term fiscal security of Moore County. In such circumstances, after available fund balances have been calculated as part of closing-out a fiscal year, the Board will adopt a plan as part of the following year’s budget process to restore the available fund balances to the policy level within 36 months from the date of the budget adoption. If restoration cannot be accomplished within such time period without severe hardship to the County, then the Board will establish a different but appropriate time period.
4. Monies in excess of a 15.0% available fund balance will be transferred to a Capital Reserve Fund for future use for a specific purpose within a specified time frame except as provided for in the Resolution for Funding for Dempsey Hall Student Center Expansion and Deferred Maintenance Cost for Sandhills Community College, adopted by the Moore County Board of Commissioners on June 17, 2014, effective July 1, 2014, and attached hereto and incorporated by reference herein as if fully set forth as Exhibit A.

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BUDGET DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

1. The County Budget Process begins with a Board of Commissioners Retreat to be held no later than January 31st of each year.
2. The Budget Process will be compliant with the North Carolina Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act.
3. One-time or other special revenues will not be used to finance continuing County operations but instead will be used for funding special projects.
4. The County will pursue an aggressive policy seeking the collection of current and delinquent property taxes, utility, license, permit and other fees due to the County.

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CASH MANAGEMENT / INVESTMENT POLICIES

1. It is the intent of the County that public funds will be invested to the extent possible to reduce the dependence upon property tax revenues. Funds will be invested with the chief objectives of safety of principal, liquidity, and yield, in that order. All deposits and investments of County funds will be in accordance with N.C.G.S. 159.
2. The Chief Financial Officer will establish a Cash Management Program that maximizes the amount of cash available for investment. The Program shall address at a minimum; Accounts Receivable/Billings, Accounts Payable, Receipts, Disbursements, Deposits, Payroll and Debt Service Payments.
3. Up to one-half (50%) of the appropriations to Non-County Agencies and to non debt-supported capital outlays for County Departments can be encumbered prior to December 31. Any additional authorization shall require the County Manager's written approval upon justification. The balance of these appropriations may be encumbered after January 1, upon a finding by the County Manager that there is a reasonable expectation that the County's Budgeted Revenues will be realized.
4. The County will use a Central Depository to maximize the availability and mobility of cash for all funds that can be legally and practically combined.
5. Cash Flows will be forecasted and investments will be made to mature when funds are projected to be needed to meet cash flow requirements.
6. Liquidity: No less than 20% of funds available for investment will be maintained in liquid investments at any point in time.
7. Maturity: All investments will mature in no more than thirty-six (36) months from their purchase date.
8. Custody: All investments will be purchased "payment-verses-delivery" and if certificated will be held by the Finance Officer in the name of the County. All non-certificated investments will be held in book-entry form in the name of the County with the County's third party Custodian (Safekeeping Agent).
9. Authorized Investments: The County may deposit County Funds into: Any Board approved Official Depository, if such funds are secured in accordance with NCGS-159 (31). The County may invest County Funds in: the North Carolina Capital Management Trust, US Treasury Securities, US Agency Securities specifically authorized in GS-159 and rated no lower than "AAA", and

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Commercial Paper meeting the requirements of NCGS-159 plus having a national bond rating.

10. Diversification: No more than 5% of the County's investment funds may be invested in a specific company's commercial paper and no more than 20% of the County's investment funds may be invested in commercial paper. No more than 25% of the County's investments may be invested in any one US Agency's Securities.
11. Allocation: Investment income will be allocated to each participating fund or account based on a fair and equitable formula determined by the Chief Financial Officer. The County will maintain segregated accounts with the North Carolina Capital Management Trust for each of the fund types.
12. Reporting: Not less than twice a year the Chief Financial Officer will report to the Manager on the Cash Flow Forecast for the ensuing twelve months. The Chief Financial Officer also will report on the interest earned in the past six months and on the current investment portfolio including: type of investment, purchase date, price, par amount, maturity date, coupon rate, and any special features. The Chief Financial Officer will also provide a Financial Summary inclusive of Investment Reporting to the Board of Commissioners as requested.

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ENTERPRISE FUNDS

The County maintains Enterprise Funds (primarily water and wastewater) that are self-sustaining for both operational and capital purposes. The Enterprise Funds will adhere to the County's Fiscal Policy with any exceptions being reported in this section.

- These policies will allow for orderly expansion of services and to allow operation within the financial framework insuring efficiency while providing necessary services.
- They promote long-term financial stability.
- They insure future viability by guaranteeing rates that maintain constant in conjunction with inflation.

Budget Policies:

- Enterprise Funds will develop a fifteen-year capital improvement plan, which will be reviewed and updated annually.
- Any improvements required to meet new regulatory requirements or to meet changes in the service demands will be included in the annual budget request.
- Service rates will be reviewed annually as part of the budget process.
- Service rates will be adjusted based upon the December Consumer Price Index for Southeastern United States.
- Service rates will be adjusted as necessary due to debt service obligations.
- Each Enterprise Fund will maintain a retained earnings level that is no less than an amount equal to 8% of its operating expenses.
- Each Enterprise Fund will maintain a Capital Reserve Fund sufficient to meet future capital needs.
- Individual projects costing over \$500,000 will be financed.
- Individual projects costing under \$500,000 will be appropriated from either retained earnings or the Capital Reserve Fund.

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Debt Policies:

- Enterprise Funds will limit long-term borrowing to individual projects costing over \$500,000.
- Each Enterprise Fund is responsible for its own debt service.

Amended this day, July 15, 2014 by the County of Moore Board of Commissioners.

Larry R. Caddell, Chairman

Moore County Board of Commissioners

Laura M. Williams, Clerk to the Board

