

Budget Control Policy

Scope: CITYWIDE

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Council Motion 2016-0121

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I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the City makes informed fiscal decisions that take into account the full costs, in terms of dollars and service impacts, of implementing spending increases during the fiscal year. To maintain a structurally balanced budget, any spending increases must be accompanied by compensatory revenue increases or spending decreases that clearly identify the associated opportunity costs.

2. BACKGROUND

The service plan for the City is based on an annual budget as required by the City Charter and by good financial and operational practices. Budgeting on an annual basis provides time to review all revenue sources, develop solutions to previously identified problems, and to discuss and decide on policies and priorities. An annual budget process also provides time for management to plan and more efficiently and effectively implement changes incorporated into the budget. Making significant mid-cycle changes outside of the orderly budget process can lead to poor decision-making due to incomplete information and to inefficient and ineffective operations or service delivery.

3. POLICY

3.1 Annual Budget Development

The annual budget process will be the method used by the City to develop its service delivery priorities and the level and type of resources required to fund those services.

Before the City undertakes any changes that would create fixed ongoing expenses, the cost implications of such changes will be projected for current and future years.

3.2 Budget Amendments

Changes to the budget and to service levels during the fiscal year will be minimized. Changes during the fiscal year will generally be limited to technical adjustments, emergency funding, unforeseen circumstances, time-sensitive opportunities or issues, or new grants or awards. The creation of a new program, a higher service level, or other increases in expenditures, without associated revenues or reimbursements, during mid-budget cycle is discouraged. Changes outside of the annual budget process should only be considered during the midyear budget review.

Unexpected revenue shortfalls or other significant issues that may create a budget shortfall during the fiscal year are to be reported to the City Council with recommendations by the City Manager as to whether a mid-year budget adjustment should be made.

Budget amendments shall be considered and adopted by the Council except for where authority has been delegated as prescribed within the adopted Budget Resolution.