

**TOWN OF BEDFORD**  
**OPERATING POLICY MANUAL**

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Chapter: Finance

Issue (Effective) Date: July 1, 2017

Approval Date: June 13, 2017

Approved By: Town Council

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**OPERATING AND CAPITAL BUDGET PROCESS**

**Section 1. PURPOSE**

This policy is to document the Operating and Capital Budget process of the Town of Bedford (“Town”). The purpose of this policy is to promote efficiency and effectiveness in the management and operation of all Town programs with the utilization of available financial resources by the adoption of a balanced annual operating budget for the fiscal year. It is the responsibility of all elected officials, Town management, department heads, and employees to exercise good stewardship in the management of public funds and resources according to State statutes, Town policies and approved budgets. The primary objective of this policy is to provide accountability to the Town’s citizens by carefully accounting for public funds, managing funds wisely, and by planning for the provision of services. The operating and capital budgets are developed on an annual basis, with the capital budget based upon a five-year capital improvement plan, and are intended to provide conceptual standards for financial decision-making, enhance consistency in financial decisions, and establish parameters for administration to use in directing the daily financial operations of the Town.

**Section 2. POLICY**

- A. The Town’s budget shall conform to all the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia as they relate to the adoption, amendment, and control of the budget. In addition, all policies set forth in this document are designed to provide for and enhance the financial stability of the Town.
- B. The Town will exercise budgetary control by adhering to the Code of Virginia §15.2-2503 requirement to adopt an annual balanced budget by formal resolution for the following funds:
  - 1. General Fund, in which a balanced budget is achieved when the amounts available from taxation and other sources including amounts carried over from prior fiscal years, equals the total appropriations for expenditures and reserves.
  - 2. Enterprise Funds, in which a balanced budget is achieved when the amounts available from fees, charges and investment earnings including amounts carried over from prior fiscal years, equals the total appropriations for expenditures and reserves.
  - 3. Capital Improvement Funds, in which a mixed use of the above sources of funding by each respective Fund including amounts carried over from prior fiscal years, equals the total appropriations for expenditures.
- C. The Town will maintain a budgetary control system to ensure adherence to the budget and will use a budget/encumbrance control system to ensure proper budgetary control.
- D. The budget shall clearly delineate the sources of funding for each year’s expenditures. Any one-time revenues or use of unassigned fund balance will be used for one-time, non-recurring expenditures such as capital assets, equipment, special studies, debt reduction, and reserve contributions. Restricted or committed fund balances may only be used for the purpose so stated.

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- E. The Town shall account for the General Fund using the modified accrual basis of accounting, under which revenue is recognized in the accounting period in which it becomes available and measurable, while expenditures are recognized in the accounting period in which they are incurred. The Town shall account for the Enterprise Funds using the full accrual basis of accounting, under which revenues are recorded when earned and expenses are recorded when incurred. Because the appropriated budget is used as the basis for control and comparison of budgeted and actual amounts, the basis for preparing the budget is the same as the basis of accounting.
- F. Public involvement shall be encouraged in the annual budget decision-making process through public hearings, public outreach, and the dissemination of accessible information. Public participation efforts will allow the Town to improve performance by identifying public needs, priorities and service delivery expectations. Increased public involvement will allow the Town to be more responsive to community needs, thereby increasing the value that the public receives from Town government.

**G. Budget Adoption:**

- 1. Before commencement of the annual budget process, the Director of Finance, in consultation with the Town Manager, shall develop recommended budget parameters and the budget calendar. Budget parameters will include allowable increases in operating budgets, projected wage increases, targets for borrowing in accordance with the Town's debt and capital improvement budget policies, anticipated changes in revenue sources or tax base growth, and other factors.
- 2. Certain elements of budgets that are common across departments shall be calculated and/or monitored on a centralized basis to ensure comparability and budgetary control, i.e., Town incurred utility charges, liability insurance, salaries and benefits.
- 3. The Director of Finance shall be responsible for coordination and initial review of department budget submissions. Following initial review, the Director of Finance will work with the Town Manager, to develop a budget. In accordance with Code of Virginia §15.2-2508, meetings will be held with departments to review their budget requests prior to finalizing the budget.
- 4. The budget, consisting of the Manager's recommendations on department requests, shall be submitted to Town Council for its consideration and in accordance with Code of Virginia §15.2-2504 shall include:
  - i. A brief budget message which shall outline significant highlights of proposed budget requests per fund for the fiscal year, shall set forth the reasons for any major changes in expenditure and revenue items from the previous fiscal year, and shall explain any major change in financial policy;

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- ii. Synopsis of the budget showing a summary of all revenues and expenditures for each department of each fund;
- iii. Fund graphs and budget summaries;
- iv. Revenue summary including actual, budgeted, and proposed;
- v. Departmental expenditure summary including mission, description, goals, financial summary, services, significant program impacts by department;
- vi. Line item detail for each department by fund;
- vii. Debt service;
- viii. Capital Improvement Program (CIP) including summary and line item detail;
- ix. Community Agency funding;
- x. Position classification and pay scale data.

5. The budget review process will include Town Council participation in the development of each segment through budget work sessions and will allow for citizen participation in the process through public hearings on the proposed budget. In accordance with Code of Virginia §15.2-2506, required notice of the hearings will be published in the official newspaper of the Town and shall include:
  - i. The time and location where copies of the budget are available for public inspection,
  - ii. The time and location, not less than two (2) weeks after such publication, for a public hearing on the proposed budget, and
  - iii. A complete synopsis of all revenue and operating expenses by fund.
6. After the public hearing, Council may adopt the budget with or without amendments. In amending the proposed budget, it may add or increase programs or amounts and may delete or decrease any programs or amounts, except expenditures required by law or for debt service, provided that no amendment to the proposed budget shall increase expenditures to an amount greater than the estimated income (including the use of available Fund Balance).
7. Town Council shall adopt the proposed budget on or before the 20<sup>th</sup> day of the last month of the fiscal year currently ending. If it fails to adopt the proposed budget by this date, the amounts appropriated for operations for the current fiscal year will be deemed adopted for the ensuing fiscal year on a month-to-month basis, with all items in it pro-rated accordingly, until such time as Council adopts a budget for the ensuing fiscal year. Adoption of the budget will constitute appropriation of the amounts specified therein as expenditures from the funds indicated and will constitute a levy of the property tax therein proposed.
8. A copy of the adopted budget will be filed in the Town Municipal Offices and will also be available on the Town's website.

**H. Budget Amendments:**

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1. In accordance with Code of Virginia §15.2-2507, the Town may amend the adopted budget for supplemental appropriations and emergency appropriations. Town Council may authorize supplemental appropriations for the year if the Town Manager certifies that there are available revenues and/or fund balance in excess of those estimated in the budget.
2. It is the policy of the Town to amend a fund's budget for roll-overs, re-appropriations, emergencies, federal and state mandates, or other circumstances which could not be anticipated, and only if sufficient funds are available; a budget may not be amended simply because additional revenues become available.
3. In the event of a public emergency affecting life, health, property or the public peace, Council may make emergency appropriations and to the extent that there are no available unappropriated revenues to meet such situations, Town Council may, by such ordinance, authorize the issuance of emergency notes, which may be renewed as necessary.
4. By statute, any budget amendment that exceeds one (1) percent of the total expenditures shown in the currently adopted budget must first publish a notice of a public hearing stating the governing body's intent to amend the budget including a brief synopsis of the proposed amendment at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting date. After providing that public hearing during such meeting, Town Council may adopt the proposed budget amendment.

**I. Budget Monitoring:**

1. The Annual Budget, being an intricate part of maintaining the financial stability of the Town, and acting as the Financial Plan directing the Town in both long-range planning and everyday operations, it is essential that timely reports are generated to inform Town Council and management staff of the Town's financial progress. The Finance Division will submit to the Town Council, Town Manager and Department Heads on a monthly basis, an overview report of budget to actual, both revenue and expense for all Funds and/or Departments. Any significant changes will be described in detail with any necessary recommended corrective action. Should Finance realize a financial problem exists or trends warrant closer analysis, the Director of Finance is required to inform Town Council and the Town Manager as soon as a situation is detected.

**Section 3. OBJECTIVES**

- A. The primary objectives of the Operating and Capital Budget Process shall be as follows:
  1. To conform to all the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia as they relate to the adoption, amendment, and control of the budget.
  2. To establish budget priorities in order to underline organizational goals and community vision to provide direction.
  3. To determine short and long term capital needs that are essential to Town operations.

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4. To ensure sound revenue and resource forecasting based upon qualitative and quantitative methods for conservative and realistic estimates.
5. To ensure that spending follows a plan, supports organizational objectives, stays within preset limits, and does not exceed available funds.

**Section 4. PROCEDURES**

A. Town Council:

1. Approve Operating and Capital Budget Process Policy.
2. Manage operating and capital budget process through maintaining budgetary control throughout the budget adoption and ongoing operating budget process ensuring that the Town adheres to the requirements of the Code of Virginia and Town policies.

B. Town Staff:

1. Coordinate department and capital budget requests, including explanations and justifications of specific requests.
2. Coordinate and evaluate revenue estimations, expenditure estimations, and financial impacts of budget requests.
3. Ensure compliance with applicable budgetary statutes.
4. Administer policies and procedures regarding the annual budget process and the ongoing daily operations of the budget.
5. Prepare monthly financial reports that monitor financial results.
6. The Town Manager is authorized to adjust this policy in response to evolving governmental practices where necessary.

**Section 5. REVISIONS**

A. This policy was approved and adopted by the Town Council on June 13, 2017.

Revisions

Original-June, 2017