

CITY OF KELLER

Financial Management Policies

1. Purpose of Policies.

1.1 The City of Keller (the City) is committed to sound financial management through integrity, prudent stewardship, financial planning and accountability, full disclosure, and communication. Financial Management Policies will enable the City to achieve and maintain a stable, positive financial condition, while also providing guidelines for the day-to-day planning and operations of the City's financial affairs.

1.2 The City will establish and maintain a high standard of accounting practices. The City's accounting system shall conform to generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP), as prescribed by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) for governmental entities.

1.3 The City will prepare and maintain in a current status written administrative procedures relating to each financial management area. The City Manager, department directors, and managers are responsible for ensuring that good internal controls are maintained and followed throughout their respective City departments, that all management directives or internal control recommendations are implemented in a timely manner, and that all independent auditor recommendations are addressed.

1.4 The City will pursue transparency with regard to disclosure of financial information. Accordingly, the City will seek to attain the highest Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts Transparency award without placing any unnecessary burdens on staff. A primary focus of financial transparency is the ability for citizens to review the City's financial information online. At a minimum, online information will include annually adopted budgets, comprehensive annual financial reports, and check registers.

1.5 These financial management policies shall remain in effect until amended by the City Council. The City Council shall review the policies annually, and amend as necessary.

2. Operating Budgets.

2.1 Annual estimates of revenue in both the general fund and enterprise funds shall be based on historical trends and a reasonable expectation of growth. A conservative approach shall be observed in estimating revenues, so that revenue estimates will not be overstated. Annual Water and Wastewater Enterprise Fund revenues shall be budgeted on the basis of a normalized year, with reasonable estimates of customer growth, not on the basis of forecasted above-average rainfall (wet year) or below-than-average rainfall (dry year).

2.2 The adoption of an operationally balanced budget shall be required. An operationally balanced budget shall be defined as a budget in which on-going revenues equal or exceed on-going expenditures and one-time expenditures may be funded with undesignated fund balance. In addition, current resources (current revenues plus undesignated fund balances) will equal or exceed current expenditures (on-going plus one-time expenditures) for each individual fund.

2.3 At the end of each fiscal year, the City shall establish a goal that the fund balances of each fund be within requirements of the Fund Balance Policy.

2.4 The City should endeavor to maintain a diversified and stable revenue base in order to prevent overall revenue shortfalls as a result of periodic fluctuations in any one revenue source. Each existing and potential revenue source will be re-examined annually.

2.5 The City shall use non-recurring resources and fund balances to fund non-recurring expenditures. Recurring expenditures shall be funded with recurring revenues only.

2.6 User charges, rates and fees shall be established at a level related to the cost of providing the services. These charges, rates and fees shall be reviewed not less than annually in order to determine the appropriate level of funding anticipated to support the various related activities. In order to mitigate the magnitude of rate increases necessary for the Water and Wastewater Enterprise Fund, an independent cost of service study will be conducted at least every three (3) years to review rate methodology and ensure revenues will meet future obligations. The cost of service study shall include operating costs, anticipated capital improvements and use of associated impact fees, provision for an adequate level of working capital, and requirements necessary to meet all current and future revenue bond covenants.

2.7 Rates for water and wastewater enterprise activities shall be maintained at levels sufficient to ensure that annual revenues will be available to pay all direct and indirect costs of the enterprise activities, including costs of operation, capital improvements, maintenance, and principal and interest requirements on outstanding debt, and interest and sinking fund and reserve fund requirements. The City recognizes an obligation to provide water and wastewater services to customers as economically as possible, while also maintaining the fiscal integrity of the Water and Wastewater Enterprise Fund; therefore, the City will seek to pass through (recover) increases in water supply costs and wastewater treatment services from customers of the City of Keller.

2.8 Net earnings of enterprise funds for any fiscal period should be adequate to meet all bond covenants, especially the debt coverage ratio. Net earnings shall be defined to include non-operating revenues available for debt service, excluding depreciation and transfers to other funds.

2.9 Enterprise funds shall adequately compensate the General Fund (and other applicable funds) for administrative and/or management services provided to the enterprise funds. Transfers from enterprise activities to the general fund for administrative services shall not exceed the estimated costs incurred by the General Fund in providing such services. Payments in-lieu-of-taxes and franchise fee payments shall be paid by enterprise funds to other appropriate funds. The basis for each transfer shall be fully identified each year in the proposed budget.

2.10 A proposed budget for all budgeted funds shall be submitted to the City Council by the City Manager on or before August 15 of each year, for the ensuing fiscal year. [*Keller Charter, Section 8.02*]. The City Manager's proposed budget shall be filed in accordance with State law including filing with the Office of the City Secretary and at the Keller Public Library, and on the City's website.

2.11 Unless otherwise noted in the annual budget document, annual fixed-dollar budgets will be adopted for all funds except capital funds, grant funds, donation funds, impact fee funds, Council approved operating project funds and trust funds for the period beginning October 1 and ending September 30 of the following year. Funds which are funded by non-reoccurring and/or expected revenue sources such as grants, donations, and impacts shall be considered non-budgeted funds. Budgets for capital and Council approved operating project funds are adopted based upon the anticipated time line for completion of the project, also known as the project life basis, and not a fiscal year basis.

2.12 All budget appropriations (except for project life funds) lapse at fiscal year-end (September 30) and the City shall strive to minimize any encumbrances at year-end. Any encumbered appropriations at year-end may be re-appropriated by a budget amendment in the ensuing fiscal year.

2.13 All budgets shall be adopted on a basis of accounting consistent with GAAP, as applied to governmental entities, with the exception of Enterprise and Internal Service Funds. Revenues are budgeted as they become measurable and available. Expenditures are charged against the budget when they become measurable, or when a liability has been incurred and the liability is expected to be liquidated with available current resources. For Enterprise and Internal Service Funds, depreciation is not budgeted, and capital improvements and debt service principal payments are budgeted as expenditures/expenses.

2.14 The budget shall be maintained at the legal level of control which is the department within the individual fund. Expenditures may not exceed the legal level of control at the department level within an individual fund without approval of the City Council. The City Manager is authorized to transfer appropriations within a department or between departments in an individual fund in accordance with these policy guidelines.

2.15 Authority to transfer appropriations *within* a fund or department. The City Manager may approve transfers of available appropriations between general classifications of expenditures within the same fund, provided the transfer amounts do not result in a net increase in total appropriations for the fund.

2.16 Authority to transfer appropriations *between* a fund. Transfers of available appropriations in general classifications of expenditures between funds, shall be approved only by the City Council.

2.17 Increase in total appropriations and use of contingency funds. The City Council shall also approve any budget modification(s) resulting in a net increase in appropriations, or any proposed use of contingency funds [*Keller Charter, Section 8.12*].

2.18 The City will strive to receive and retain the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award presented annually by the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA).

2.19 Budgets of Enterprise and Internal Service Funds are prepared on a working capital basis, whereby depreciation expenses are not budgeted and capital outlay and debt service principal payments are budgeted as expenses. Reserves of Enterprise and Internal Service Funds will be disclosed using working capital as defined in the Fund Balance Policy, rather than retained earnings.

2.20 Budgets of Enterprise and Internal Service Funds shall be self-supporting, i.e., on-going revenues equal or exceed on-going expenditures (excluding depreciation) and one-time expenditures may be funded with working capital.

2.21 Budgets shall integrate performance measures, goals and objectives, service levels and productivity measures where appropriate, and provide a means of measuring and monitoring performance, goals and productivity.

2.22 New positions and programs funded in annual budgets will be disclosed at their full annual cost in the initial and subsequent years of funding, or at the respective full-time equivalent costs for new positions. Even if the positions and/or programs are anticipated to begin mid-year, the full annual costs, or the full-time equivalent costs for new positions, will be disclosed in the budget. Positions temporarily vacant will also be disclosed at their full annual cost in the annual budget.

2.23 When possible, replacement funds shall be created to ensure the ability to make timely replacements.

3. Capital Improvements.

3.1 The City will develop and maintain a comprehensive five-year plan for capital improvements. This plan shall be presented to and reviewed by the City Council annually. Capital improvements for planning purposes shall be considered as all land, land improvements, building projects, infrastructure (i.e., streets, water and wastewater improvements) and equipment exceeding one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) in cost.

3.2 All capital improvements should be made in accordance with the five-year plan as adopted or reviewed by the City Council.

3.3 The City Council shall adopt an annual capital budget that is based on the five-year capital improvement plan. This capital budget shall identify the sources of funding for each capital project authorized for the ensuing fiscal year. Assessments and pro-rata charges may be applied where applicable to fund capital projects.

3.4 The City's capital improvement program shall be coordinated with the operating budgets. Operating costs associated with each capital improvement project will be identified in the capital budget and included in the appropriate operating budget if the project is authorized.

3.5 Interest earnings on bond proceeds shall be credited to the appropriate bond fund and will be used to help with future debt management.

3.6 For capital budgeting purposes, capital improvement projects for facilities (fire stations, libraries, City Halls, etc.) will not only reflect cost of acquisition or construction of the facility, but shall also reflect the annual operating costs of staffing, equipping, operating and insuring of the facility in the impacted operating fund. The City shall not finance annual operating costs with the issuance of debt, per Section 4.1.

3.7 The City will measure the condition of our infrastructure, and the degree to which the City is meeting infrastructure replacement needs. The City will budget to make timely infrastructure repairs and replacements to avoid additional repairs and/or long-term damage.

3.8 The City Council may establish, by resolution, policies and procedures for prioritizing capital project improvements, establishing a reserve therefore, and the funding thereof in accordance with the provisions of the City's Financial Management Policies.

4. Debt Management.

4.1 Long-term debt shall not be incurred to finance on-going operations. Long-term debt shall be defined as debt requiring more than five years to retire. Short-term or interim debt shall be defined as debt requiring five years or less to retire, and may be used to fund purchases of machinery, equipment (including office equipment) and vehicles.

4.2 When any debt is issued to finance capital improvements, the City shall retire the debt within a period not to exceed the expected useful life of the projects or improvements being financed. When possible the debt should not exceed 15 years unless the expected asset life is beyond 50 years.

4.3 Total debt service requirements (principal and interest) in any fiscal year should generally not exceed twenty-five percent (25%) of the City's total operating expenditures/expenses (excluding capital projects funds).

4.4 Total direct general obligation debt service requirements shall not exceed fifteen percent (15%) of the assessed value of taxable property.

4.5 The City shall maintain good communications with the major bond rating agencies concerning the City's financial condition, and shall follow a policy of full disclosure in every financial report and official bond statement. The City will maintain sound fiscal management practices to maintain and improve current bond ratings.

4.6 Interest and sinking fund and/or debt reserve balances shall be maintained in accordance with the City's most restrictive bond ordinances and/or covenants.

4.7 Use of impact fee revenue for debt will be evaluated during each budget year. The amount of impact fees being used for debt service shall be fully disclosed in the annual budget.

4.8 Debt issuance is costly, time-consuming and should be done no more than once a year if possible.

4.9 The percentage of the tax rate designated for debt service purposes should not exceed forty percent (40%) of the total tax rate.

5. Financial Reporting.

5.1 An annual independent financial audit shall be performed by a properly licensed independent public accounting firm, and results of this audit will be presented to the City Council by March 31 of the following year in the form of a Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR), in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) and GFOA requirements, unless delayed by extenuating circumstances and an extension has been granted by GFOA.

5.2 The City will strive to receive and retain the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting awarded annually by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA).

5.3 Timely interim financial reports will be produced for department managers for internal purposes. Departmental reports comparing budget to actual amounts shall be prepared by the Finance Department in a timely manner.

5.4 Financial reports including capital project updates shall be prepared on at least a quarterly basis and made available to the City Council in a condensed format. After presentation of the report to the City Council, the report shall be made available for public inspection.

5.5 Every three to five years, the City will issue requests for proposal to choose an auditor for a period not to exceed five years.

6. Purchasing.

6.1 The City Manager shall be responsible for maintaining a written purchasing policy in accordance with State statutes and City Ordinances. The policy shall be approved by City Council.

7. Cash and Investments.

7.1 The Director of Finance or designee shall be responsible for maintaining written administrative procedures for all areas of cash and investments, in accordance with State statutes, City ordinances and these policies.

7.2 The City will enter into a depository agreement with one or more banks for a specified period of time and specified fees for banking services. The term of each depository agreement shall not exceed five (5) years unless otherwise approved by the City Council.

7.3 Collection, deposit and disbursement of all funds will be scheduled to ensure maximum cash availability and investment earnings.

7.4 The City's first and foremost investment objective shall be safety of principal. To meet this objective, the City will seek to obtain a competitive, or market rate-of-return on investments, consistent with the City's investment policy.

8. General Policies.

8.1 The City Manager is authorized to write off bad debt accounts less than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) which have been delinquent for more than one hundred twenty (120). These accounts will be aggressively pursued for collection by any lawful and available means. Accounts which are in bankruptcy status, involving a claim of one thousand dollars (\$1,000) or less, which require the City to make an election to the bankruptcy court, will be referred to the City Manager, with a recommendation by the City Attorney. The City Manager shall report all bad debt write-offs of note to City Council. All accounts involving write-offs greater than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) shall be referred directly to City Council for write off, or further recommended action.

8.2 The City shall follow a policy of aggressively pursuing the collection of current and delinquent ad valorem taxes, and shall strive to maintain a current ad valorem tax collection rate equal to or exceeding ninety-seven percent (97%) of the current levy. In addition, the City will aggressively pursue collection of other debts owed to the City, e.g., water bills, ambulance billings, etc.

8.3 Sound appraisal procedures and practices will be monitored by the City in order to keep property values current. The City will annually review the various levels of property tax exemptions and abatements which may be optionally granted by the City.

8.4 The City may impose impact fees upon new development. The purposes of these fees are to pay a portion of the cost of constructing capital improvements or facility expansions necessary to serve new development.

8.5 Expenditures of impact fees are limited to paying for construction-related costs or capital improvements or facility expansions and to payment of principal and interest on bonds, notes, or other obligations issued to finance eligible capital improvements.

8.6 Plans and costs of enforcement related to the passage of ordinances and/or other legislation (if any) should be disclosed to the City Council by the City Manager, prior to the passage of ordinances and/or other legislation.

8.7 Consistent efforts shall be made to reconcile the total water volume sold to the total water volume purchased or pumped. Acceptable water losses for fire-fighting, fire hydrant testing and broken lines should not exceed seven percent (7%). To achieve this goal, it is the policy of the City that all water service, including City-owned facilities, be metered appropriately.

8.8 Efforts shall be made to reconcile wastewater contributed from customers to those volumes flowing through treatment facilities. Acceptable amounts of inflow and infiltration should not exceed ten percent (10%).

8.9 Utility billing collection cycles should be as short as practical and utility security deposits should reflect those cycles in order to minimize losses to the City. Meter readings should occur in relatively uniform monthly time frames, and utility bills should be generated in a timely manner thereafter. Utility bills should be due no more than fifteen (15) days after the customer receives the bill. Delinquent notices should be mailed one day after the due date. Termination of utility service should occur no more than sixty (60) days after the meter reading date.

8.10 The City will evaluate privatization or regionalization of services which will either maintain or improve the existing quality of services, while at the same time minimizing the cost of the service to the public. Examples of services to be evaluated for privatization are solid waste collection, engineering, and data processing services.

8.11 The City will provide adequate staffing and training to our fiscal functions in order to maintain effective internal controls, timely financial transactions and meaningful financial management information.

8.12 Utility cost subsidies should be minimized. Cost subsidies can occur between funds, i.e., General Fund and Water and Wastewater Enterprise Fund; between utilities, water utility and sewer utility; between customers, residential customers and commercial customers; and between generations, current and future generations.

8.13 The City will cautiously evaluate the granting of tax exemptions and/or abatements, which shift tax burdens, and may also eventually raise the overall tax rate.

8.14 The City will thoroughly review state and federal legislation that will impact City services, and the potential or resulting costs to citizens.
