

The annual budget is built upon a series of basic financial policies and guiding principles as established by the Village Board and Management. Although these policies are fundamental in nature, they have contributed significantly to the historical financial strength of the Village and demonstrate the Village's ongoing commitment to being a responsible steward of the public's finances.

These policies have served the Village well, not just in good economic times, but particularly in periods of sustained economic downturn and uncertainty. Adherence to these principles help to maintain a position that ensures the Village is able to deliver uninterrupted basic government services on both a near-term and long-term basis. Further, well established and thoughtful policy development contribute toward ensuring services are delivered in a cost-effective manner, maintaining a well-diversified community and economic base, and distributing the cost of government fairly across those it serves.

A. General

The Village of Carol Stream has a tradition of sound municipal financial management. The multi-year Financial Plan and the Annual Budget include a set of policies to be followed in managing the financial and budgetary affairs of the Village. These policies will allow the Village to maintain its strong financial condition, as well as quality services now and in the future.

B. Revenue

1. The Village endeavors to maintain a diversified and stable revenue base to shelter it from short-term fluctuations in any one-revenue source. The revenue mix combines elastic and inelastic revenue sources to minimize the effect of an economic downturn.

Surpluses identified but not included in the annual base-operating budget are dedicated to capital, plant and equipment.

2. Through the Village's economic development program, the Village will strive to strengthen and further diversify its revenue base.
3. The Village will project revenues for the next three years and will update this projection annually. Each existing and potential revenue source will be reexamined annually or more often if needed.
4. The Village will maintain a revenue monitoring system to assist in trend analysis and revenue forecasting.

5. The Village will oppose State and/or Federal legislation that will mandate costs to units of local government without providing a new or increasing an existing revenue source to pay those costs.
6. The Village follows a “cost of service” approach which results in user fees, rates and customer charges being sufficient to cover the cost of providing the service. Each year the Village will establish user fees, rates and charges at a level related to the cost of providing the service and to adjust for the effects of inflation.
7. The Village will set fees and user charges for each enterprise fund, such as Water and Sewer, at a level that fully supports the total direct and indirect cost of the activity. Indirect costs include the cost of annual depreciation of capital assets.
8. The Village will not use one-time revenue for continuing expenses. All new and continuing expenses will be based on known and conservatively projected revenue sources. The identification of new, but one-time revenue opportunities (i.e. state and federal grants) will be used to fund one-time expenses such as capital equipment purchases and small capital projects not involving on-going operating expenses.
9. The operating reserve may be used to supplement the budget during a financial downturn. The use of the reserves must be authorized by the Village Board and a plan to replenish the reserves to the required level should accompany the request to use the funds.

C. Expenditure

1. The Village will maintain a level of expenditures which will provide for the public well being and safety of the residents of the community.
2. Expenditures will be within the confines of generated revenue. The operating reserve may be used to supplement the budget during a financial downturn.
3. The Village will maintain expenditure categories according to state statute and administrative regulation.
4. Services will parallel and adjust to the Village’s inelastic revenue sources in order to maintain the highest level of service. During periods of economic upturn, long-term expansion of core services will be limited to the anticipated increase of those sources.
5. The Village will forecast its expenditures for each of the next three years and will update this forecast annually. Expenditure forecasts will be cognizant of the elastic and inelastic structure of revenues.

6. The Annual Operating Budget and Financial Plan and Capital Improvement Program should provide for adequate design, construction, maintenance, and replacement of the Village's capital plant and equipment.
7. A performance based employee compensation package consistent with sound economic policies of the Village of Carol Stream is maintained to recruit and to retain qualified employees.

D. Debt Management

Although the Village has infrequently utilized indebtedness as a means of financing capital improvements or major purchases, the Village has adopted a Debt Management Policy which has the following purpose:

The Debt Management Policy sets forth comprehensive guidelines for the financing of capital projects and infrastructure. It is the objective of the policy that (1) the Village obtain financing only when necessary, (2) the process for identifying the timing and amount of debt or other financing be as efficient as possible and (3) the most favorable interest and other costs be obtained.

The Debt Management policy can be found in its entirety on the Village web site at carolstream.org.

E. Cash Reserve Policy

The Village will maintain operating cash reserve balances for its operating funds (General Corporate Fund and Water and Sewer Fund) as a means of meeting the Village's cash flow requirements and to provide a liquidity buffer to protect against short-term revenue losses, delays in State funding, or other unplanned significant expenditures. Reserve balances will be established in accordance with parameters set forth in this policy.

Operating reserves will be established based on annual "net budgeted expenditures" of the fund, which shall be defined as total budgeted expenditures minus capital expenditures.

Cash balances subject to the reserve policy shall exclude cash deposits, escrows, or other amounts held by the Village on behalf of third parties.

The Village Board may, from time to time, establish "special operating reserves", which may be maintained in addition to standard operating reserve balances. Generally, these may be established to support special programs or projects as approved by the Village Board (e.g. Emerald Ash Borer Reserve). These special operating reserves may be established as a percentage of net budgeted expenditures or as a fixed dollar amount which is reduced as qualified expenditures are incurred.

General Corporate Fund

The General Corporate Fund shall maintain an operating cash reserve balance at a minimum of 25% of annual net budgeted expenditures, but shall be no more than 50% of net budgeted expenditures.

In the event cash reserve balances exceed 50% of net operating expenditures, the excess amount over the 50% maximum may be:

1. Retained in the General Fund upon direction of the Village Board.
2. Transferred to the Capital Projects Fund as the primary funding support for ongoing Village infrastructure improvements.
3. Used for any other purpose as the Village Board may direct and approve.

Transfers or other disposition of balances in excess of the policy maximum need not take place more frequently than once annually and should generally be directed on or near the time of the adoption of the annual budget, or as soon as is practicable thereafter.

Water and Sewer Fund

The Water and Sewer Fund shall maintain an operating cash reserve balance at a minimum of 25% of annual net budgeted expenditures. All other fund reserve balances shall be designated as “capital reserve” balances and will be used to support the construction, repair, rehabilitation or replacement of capital assets serving the combined water and sewer utilities.

If fund balances are used to support one-time capital, one-time non-operating expenditures, and operating expenditure the funds must be specifically appropriated by the Village Board and a plan to replenish the reserves to the required level should accompany the request to use the funds.

F. Cash Management

1. An investment policy has been adopted by the Village Board. The investment policy provides guidelines for the prudent investment of the temporary idle cash and outlines the policies for maximizing the efficiency of the cash management system. The ultimate goal is to enhance the economic status of the Village while protecting its pooled cash.
2. The cash management system is designed to accurately monitor and forecast expenditures and revenues, thus enabling the Village to invest funds to the fullest extent possible. The Village attempts to match funds to projected disbursements.

3. In order to maximize interest earnings, the Village commingles the cash of all funds excluding the Police Pension Fund. Interest revenue derived from commingled cash is allocated to the participating funds monthly based on the relative cash balance of each fund.
4. Criteria for selecting investments and the order of priority are:
 - a. Legal. The investment program must be in conformance with federal laws, state statutes, local ordinances, and internal policies and procedures. State statutes govern the investment of public funds and provide the general framework for investment activity and fiduciary responsibilities.
 - b. Safety. The safety and risk associated with an investment refers to the potential loss of principal, interest or a combination of these amounts. The Village only invests in those investments that are considered safe.
 - c. Liquidity. This refers to the ability to “cash in” at any moment in time with a minimal chance of losing some portion of principal and interest. Liquidity is an important investment quality especially when the need for unexpected funds occur occasionally.
 - d. Yield. Yield is the potential dollar earnings an investment can provide, and sometimes is described as the rate of return.

G. Accounting, Auditing and Financial Reporting Policies

1. The Village will establish and maintain a high standard of accounting practices in conformance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principals (GAAP) for governmental entities as promulgated by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB).
2. The accounting system will maintain records on a basis consistent with accepted standards for local government accounting (according to GASB).
3. Where possible, the reporting system will also provide monthly information on the total cost of specific services by type of expenditure and, if necessary, by Fund.
4. An independent firm of certified public accountants will perform an annual financial and compliance audit according to Generally Accepted Auditing Standards (GAAS) and will publicly issue an opinion which will be incorporated in the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.
5. Annually seek the GFOA Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting Program.
6. The Village will use the modified accrual basis of accounting for its governmental funds (general, special revenue, capital projects and debt service funds). Revenues are

recognized in the accounting period which they become available and measurable. Expenditures are recognized in the accounting period in which the liability is incurred.

7. The Village will use accrual basis accounting for its proprietary funds (enterprise and internal service funds). Revenues are recognized in the accounting period they are earned and become measurable. Expenses are recognized in the accounting period in which the liability is incurred.
8. The Village will promote full disclosures in its annual financial statements and its bond presentations.