

Goal/Mission: To provide management with appropriate guidelines and direction to assist in making sound decisions related to managing the fund balance of the County General Fund, Highway Fund, General Purpose School Fund, General and Education Debt Service Funds, all Special Revenue Funds, Capital Outlay Funds, Enterprise Funds , and Agencies' Funds.

Objectives:

1. Provide an educational briefing: defining the fund balance, the purpose of the fund balance and recommended fund balances needed in various county operational, debt service, special revenue, capital outlay, enterprise, and agencies' funds.
2. Allow decisions to be transparent.
3. Provide a medium in which fund balance management decisions can be made.
4. Outline steps to be taken to reach an optimal fund balance, if an optimal fund balance does not exist.
5. Summarize the Fund Balance Policy.

1. Educational Briefing

a. Fund Balance Defined for this policy: Fund Balance shall be defined as all equity balances of restricted, committed, assigned, and unassigned within a fund.

b. Purpose of Fund Balance:

- To have sufficient funds to cash flow operations during the year.
- To have emergency funds available due to revenue short falls or unanticipated expenditures/expenses.
- To have investment funds available in order to provide operating interest earnings to support operations thus limiting the need for property tax revenue.
- To reflect financial stability and strength; thereby, portraying to the investment community the county's financial management strength and public investment security and low risk. Low financial risk and strong financial strength and stability should reflect a lower risk and thus lower interest rate for future debt issuance.

c. Fund balance needs for various funds shall be categorized as follows:

○ **101 - General Fund -**

The General Fund is heavily supported by property tax and, since property tax is not due until eight months into the fiscal year, must have a relatively high fund balance related to the appropriations in order to support cash flow needs. The fund balance should be sufficient to meet cash flow needs and available funds should also assist in investment planning, and is calculated at 35-45% of the current year appropriation.

○ **131 - Highway Fund -**

The Highway Fund is heavily supported by monthly revenue from the State of Tennessee gasoline and motor fuel tax and as such a low fund balance to annual appropriation is needed for cash flow purposes. The fund balance should be sufficient to meet cash flow needs and is calculated at 7-15% of the current year appropriation.

- **141 - General Purpose School Fund -**
The General Purpose School Fund is heavily supported by the State of Tennessee Basic Education Program (BEP) monthly revenue which is received beginning the first of September each year. The fund balance should be sufficient to meet the cash flow need, and should also assist in investment earnings. Cash flow needs should consist of one month normal operating costs. Normal operating costs are those costs for salaries and benefits when school is in session. The fund balance is calculated at 7-10% of the current year appropriation.

Debt Service Funds in General:

The County's number one priority is to insure that funds will be available for debt obligations. The county typically will have at least one year of future payments as fund balance, thereby maintaining 100% fund balance to appropriation. The county further recognizes that as the debt service obligations are paid off the fund balance would be scheduled to fall below 100% and conversely as additional debt is being anticipated the fund balance should grow above 100%. Further, a healthy fund balance reflects management's commitment to fiscal operation and should provide the investment community assurance to purchase the county's debt and thereby a low risk and low interest rate. Further, fund balances can be used as investments, thereby, providing operational revenue for the county.

- **151 - General Debt Service Fund –**
The General Debt Service Fund is the primary fund used for the depository of monies to pay for county debt. The fund can be used for Education Debt Service and does include certain education debt repayment. The General Debt Service Fund shall have an optimal fund balance between 50-150%, typically around 100%.
- **152 – Rural Debt Service Fund –**
The Rural Debt Service Fund is used to pay for educational indebtedness where the debt proceeds were used only for the Roane County Schools, excluding Harriman's and Oak Ridge's sharing of proceeds and repayment of debt. Taxpayers within the cities of Harriman and Oak Ridge do not pay for the debt retirement in the fund. Since the Harriman School System merged with the county system this fund will no longer be used for future debt. The expenditure for debt incurred prior to Harriman/Roane County Schools merger is the only debt within this fund. The fund balance in the 152 Rural Debt Service Fund should be sufficient to meet the cash flow needs of the fund and be structured to decline over the remaining years of indebtedness and approach zero by the end of the debt term.
- **156 – Education Debt Service Fund –**
The Education Debt Service Fund shall be used to pay future debt issued by Roane County where the proceeds of new debt are not shared with the City of Oak Ridge, nor are the Oak Ridge taxpayers paying for the repayment of the debt. This debt service fund should typically have 100% fund balance and could anticipate growing if new school capital projects are scheduled which would require debt funding. The fund balance shall be used for cash flow, investments, and portray to the investment community the county's financial management plans. The optimal fund balance is between 50-150%, typically around 100%.

- **Other Special Revenue Funds –**
Other Special Revenue Funds should have sufficient fund balance to support cash flow needs. These funds' fund balances could be as low as 10% and exceed 100% due to the nature, use, and total appropriation of the fund. These fund balances shall be monitored and discussed annually with the Budget Committee as the respective funds are recommended to the County Commission.

- **Capital Outlay Funds –**
There are basically three capital outlay funds used by Roane County:
 - The 171 General Capital Outlay Fund for various capital improvements of the General Fund and certain special revenue funds. (The 171 General Capital Project Fund further will have restrictions established by state law which can only be used as specified in state law.)
 - The 176 Highway Capital Project Fund for highway projects.
 - 177 Education Capital Fund for education projects.

The fund balance in each of the funds shall be sufficient for cash flow purposes. Further the funds shall be allowed to accumulate fund balances for planned and anticipated future capital investments.

- **Enterprise Fund –**
As of 2011 Roane County only operates the 204 Wastewater Treatment Enterprise Fund. The fund balance shall be sufficient for cash flow purposes and shall set aside funds for future capital replacement or expansion needs. This fund is managed by the Roane County Board of Public Utilities.
- **Agencies' Funds –**
Agencies' Funds are funds in which the county performs accounting services but the decision of use of the money falls outside county appropriations control. Fund balances in these funds are only for cash flow needs and expenditures/expenses are prohibited if the cash is not available. Certain funds may have additional control of operation which regulate their respective balances.

2. Decisions shall be transparent

The County Budget Committee shall recommend an annual budget to the County Commission. The annual budget shall reflect the operational activity of the county and have an Operational Statement filed with the annual budget. The County Commission's deliberation on the annual budget shall consider the Operational Statement in the adoption of the annual budget. The Operational Statement shall become a part of the annual budget. The process for adoption of the annual budget shall be a public record and all meetings shall be public meetings.

3. Medium in which the Fund Balance Decisions shall be made

The management of the fund balances shall be transparent to the Commission and the public by the annual publication of an Operational Statement for each of the county funds. The

Operational Statement shall reflect: **Estimated Beginning Fund Balance plus Estimated Revenue less Appropriation equals Estimated Ending Fund Balance.**

The estimated beginning fund balance shall be estimated during the annual budget process and shall be continuously reviewed for each fund until the budget is adopted and/or the fiscal year end is closed. After the fiscal year end is closed, the operational statement shall be recalculated reflecting the ending fund balance closing (prior year), which is the beginning fund balance for the new budget. After the annual audit is complete, the operational statement is again updated with the audited fund balance (prior year).

During the adoption of the annual budget, calculation shall be made comparing the percentage of Estimated Ending Fund Balance (for the proposed new year) with the proposed appropriation. This calculation shall be compared to the policy for compliance. Any variance outside of this policy shall be noted and explained and outline the reasoning for the variance and any proposal to comply with the policy.

Attachment A notes an example of an Operational Statement and Fund Balance percentage.

4. **Steps To Be Taken If Fund Balance is Not Optimal**

The Budget Committee and County Commission's action on the fund balance, which may be higher or lower than the policy, shall be set out as follows:

- If the fund balance is lower than the stated policy the budget should consider increasing revenue or reducing appropriations to adjust the fund balance into an acceptable range. In the event the fund balance is in the Debt Service Fund, the policy should consider whether the Debt Service Fund anticipates future increases or decreases in annual appropriations before adjustments to revenues are made. Explanations should state why the fund balance should be increased or decreased.
- If the fund balance in the General Fund, Highway Fund, or General Purpose School Fund is greater than the stated optimal fund balance policy then the monies greater than the optimal fund balance should be used for capital expenses and possibly transferred to the respective capital project fund for capital improvements.

5. **Summary of Fund Balance**

- 101 General Fund between 35 – 45% of proposed appropriation
- 131 Highway Fund between 7 – 15% of proposed appropriation
- 141 School Fund between 7 – 10% of proposed appropriation
- 151 General Debt Service Fund between 50 – 150% of proposed appropriation
- 152 Rural Debt Service Fund is declining to zero at the year of last payment because debt will no longer be issued and paid out of this fund
- 156 Education Debt Fund Balance between 50 – 150% of proposed appropriation
- All Other Special Revenue Funds – specifically noted during budget deliberation
- Capital Outlay Funds – cash flow and proposed future scheduled projects – reviewed and discussed annually
- Enterprise Fund – cash flow and capital projects – reviewed and discussed annually
- Agencies' Funds – cash flow, and at request of agency