

Goal/Mission: To provide management with appropriate guidelines and direction to assist in making sound decisions related to the procurement, construction, scheduling and managing of capital assets. To further demonstrate strong financial management practices for our county citizens, outside investors, and credit agencies.

The ultimate goal is to financially position Roane County to limit indebtedness for purchase/construction of capital assets and to insure proper accounting and management of capital projects.

This policy shall address all capital projects **dedicated to: General Government Operation Fund 101 and all Special Revenue Funds, accounted for in the General Capital Project fund 171 along with the General Highway fund 131 accounted for in the Highway Capital Project Fund 176.** However, certain exceptions shall be noted related to the Highway Fund 131, Highway Capital Projects Fund 176, the School Funds (141,142,143,144,146), Education Capital Projects Fund 177, and Wastewater Fund 204.

Objectives:

1. Provide an educational briefing of the categories of capital assets and their accounting in general operating funds and/or capital outlay funds.
2. Allow decisions to be transparent.
3. Provide long term planning for new and replacement assets can be studied.
4. Identify revenue streams that can support capital projects
5. Create an accounting plan which will help in establishing and maintaining creditability for capital management.

This Policy References:

- Resolution #10-99-05- Fixed Assets
- Various Resolutions noted in Section 4 and 5.
- Attachment A- Highway and Education Thresholds for Capital Planning
- Attachment B- Position Statement November 2010- Purchase of Replacement Schedule Assets
- Attachment C- Excerpts from Roane County Schools BEP formula

1. Categories of and Accounting for Capital Assets

Roane County shall classify capital assets for this policy into three (3) types of categories:

- **Minor capital asset** is considered an asset which is has a life expectancy from one (1) to five (5) years and a relatively small expenditure cost relative to the operating fund or department budget from which the asset is being purchased or constructed. Examples are: Computers, radios, furniture, certain tools and equipment. Estimated cost would be \$1,000 to \$20,000. Highway and Education thresholds are larger due to the size of the operating funds. (See Attachment A).

- Shall be purchased from their respective operating funds.
- **Medium capital asset** is considered an asset which has life expectancy from three (3) to 12 years, has a cost between \$20,000 and \$400,000. The asset cost could be a relatively small cost related to the operating fund or department budget from which the asset is being purchased or constructed. Examples are: Vehicles, roof replacement, certain heating and cooling replacement, walkways, roads improvement, and certain recreation improvements. Highway and Education thresholds are larger due to the size of the operating funds. (See Attachment A)
 - Shall generally be purchased out of a capital project fund but if the capital asset is classified as a replacement scheduled asset the asset could be purchased from operating fund (example would be vehicles).
- **Major capital asset** is considered an asset which has a life expectancy of 12 to 15 years or greater and has a large cost relative to the operating fund or department budget from which the asset is being purchased or constructed. Estimated cost would be between \$200,000 and up. Generally, the asset would require the issuance of debt. Examples are: New construction of buildings, major replacement of roofs, certain road improvements. Highway and Education thresholds are larger due to the size of the operating funds. (See Attachment A)
 - Shall generally be purchased out of a capital project fund but in very limited cases could be charged to an operating fund.

Roane County could pay for the purchase or construction of capital asset(s) either in an operating fund (101-149), a capital outlay fund (171-179), or an enterprise fund (201-209).

Scheduled Replacement Assets- Discussion of scheduled replacement assets can be found in the Attachment B –Replacement Asset Position Statement.

2. Transparency

Capital budgets shall be adopted by project(s) and if annual revenue supports the projects(s) then annual budget adoption is required.

Capital budgets remain authorized until the project(s) are completed or closed.

Capital Plan responsibilities (Excluding Highways and Education)

Responsibilities for capital plans and reporting shall be assigned as follows:

Director of Accounts and Budgets (DoAB) shall:

- Have an understanding of the accounting Fixed Asset Policy (Resolution #10-99-05)
- Develop a capital asset request form which shall capture data as follows:
 - Asset name and type
 - Department assets to be replaced
 - Estimated year needed- minor asset 1-3 years- medium asset 1-12 years- major asset 1-20 years
 - Anticipated cost
 - Any dedicated revenue source which may or could support the purchase of the asset
 - Whether the asset should be considered as a replacement scheduled asset
- Distributed by February 1 to Department Heads/Elected Officials the capital asset request form
- Complete the state Public Infrastructure Needs Survey and file a summary report with the county commission. This report shall include the Highway Department and the Board of Education needs.
- Review the county's Fixed Asset Report and be familiar with any replacement asset needs
- Consolidate Department Heads/Elected Officials capital asset request by category
- Annually and periodically report projects status to the county commission

Department Heads/Elected Officials shall:

- Submit to the DoAB by March 1 their respective capital asset request

County Executive shall:

- Work with the DoAB to compile capital project needs
- Development a capital project funding plans
- Submit consolidated capital project plan/budgets to the respective committees or county commission with recommendation

County Budget Committee/respective committee(s) or ad hoc Capital Committee shall:

- Review consolidated capital project plan/budgets for consideration and recommendation to the county commission

County Commission shall:

- Consider any request for projects for approval and/or funding

Capital Plan responsibilities for Highways

The Highway Department shall follow the same policy practices and procedures as the General Government.

Capital Plan responsibilities for Education

Responsibilities of education capital improvement planning shall be at the discretion of the Director of Schools and Board of Education.

The County Executive, Budget Committee and County Commission shall recommend and/or approve any funding which requires debt issuance.

The county encourages the Director of Schools and Board of Education to follow a similar capital plan as developed herein and to submit to the DoAB and County Executive annual and multi-year plans to be consolidated with the county's plan.

3. Medium for long term planning for new and replacement assets

During January and February of each year the Director of Accounts and Budgets (DoAB) shall request from each elected/appointed official and department head a listing of future capital projects. The DoAB shall compile a list of all projects and consolidate the new request with existing projects and establish additional listing within established sub funds or recommend the creation of new sub funds.

A consolidated budget shall be submitted to the county executive for recommendation to the budget committee. The budget committee shall submit a recommendation to the county legislative body at any time or during the annual adoption of the county budget.

Periodic reports shall be filed with the county commission for public records reflecting:

- Project name
- Accounting entity sub fund or project fund reflecting
 - Balance Sheet
 - Project Budget Remaining
 - Statement of Revenues and Expenditure against remaining project budget
 - Statement of Revenue and Expenditures for the entire project

- Time calendar or Gantt chart for project scheduling

Projects shall be placed in an established sub fund or a new sub fund shall be established to account for the projects.

4. Revenue Streams to support capital projects

Various revenues can be used or assigned to help support capital projects. The following revenues have been identified and shall be considered for capital projects, further certain revenues shall be noted in the annual appropriation resolution:

- Recreation Fee from the Caney Creek Marina and Riley Creek Campground to be used for recreation related capital asset activities and matching capital assets grants.
- Certain capital assets will have respective grant revenues
- Proceeds from debt issued
- Excess fund balance of other funds which may accumulated over time
- Any other revenue which may be identified at any point in time

5. Accounting plan establishing and maintaining creditability for capital management

Roane County shall establish a permanent General Capital Project Fund 171 in order to account and plan for the procurement and/or construction of medium and large Capital assets. General Capital Project Fund 171 shall be divided into sub funds in order to maintain accounting integrity and assist in scheduling and planning capital projects.

- Establishment of a BAL account to receive annual property tax for funding new projects (assets) and replacement schedule assets (i.e. vehicles) with the annual revenue being distributed to various sub fund annually as recommended by the Budget Committee.
- Shifting of Debt Service Revenues (Property Tax) to Capital Projects Funds. Debt Service Funds are adequately funded and annual Debt Fund payment are declining as debt is being paid off. This practice allowing a more level tax rate when adoption of Debt and Capital Tax Rates. Example would be General Debt Tax of \$0.14 and Capital Tax of \$0.05 equaling a total of \$0.19. The debt could be reduced \$0.05 increasing the Capital fund by \$0.05. Total taxes for Debt and Capital would remain the same of \$0.19. (must still comply with debt policy).
- Projects established as of the 2018 Budget subject to change annually as follows:
 - AMB – Specifically for the purchases of Ambulances and for facility improvements

- BAL – Receive property tax revenue to be distributed to other sub funds and to account for data processing investment in Financial Management Software
- CCC – Specifically for purchases or projects related to the convenience centers, (i.e. compactors, concrete pads, sheds covering compactors)
- CHJ – Specifically for major projects at the courthouse or jail

For General Capital Project Fund 171 (cont.)

- GWT – In God We Trust contributions
- HOME – Grant funding for low income housing projects are received in this fund. Work performed might be replacing windows or doors for those who would qualify for grant assistance
- IND – Specifically for capital projects performed within the three Industrial Parks. Grant funding from the State or Federal Government, property tax and Contributions from the Industrial Development help fund these projects
- NRT – State or Federal Grants provide the funding for ramps along the rivers of Roane County
- OES – Specifically for assets and capital projects for the Office of Emergency Services
- OFI – Specifically for other facility infrastructures. This would include the Animal Shelter, Juvenile Office, and UT Ag Building
- RCY – Specifically for projects relating to the Recycling Center located in Midtown
- REC – Specifically for projects needed at Roane County Parks
- SPC – Specifically for projects near the Swan Pond Sports Complex
- VEH – Specifically for vehicles for the Sheriff’s department as well as other offices in need of vehicles
- VOT – accounts for the funding of new voting machines. The State may fund a portion of the purchase and if true then what funds are not needed will be returned to the BAL sub fund to be appropriated for other projects

For Highway Capital Project Fund 176

- BAL – Receive property tax revenue to be distributed to other sub funds and to account for Highway facility improvements
- BRG – Support for the County’s 93 Bridges
- EQT – Equipment replacement
- CCB – Specifically for the Caney Creek Bridge
- PCR – Specifically for the Popular Creek Road

Sub funds are used to account for either reoccurring or specific one time projects and can be opened and closed with approval of the County Legislative Body.

Attachment A

Highway and Education Thresholds for Capital Planning

Highway Capital Threshold and Discussion

Capital items in the Highway Fund consist mainly of vehicles, equipment, and road improvements (hot mix asphalt and bridges). Even though Road improvement are considered major capital assets, Roane County has over 99.6% of all roads paved which would mean that most road improvements would fall under maintenance or scheduled replacement assets (Attachment B) in the operating fund.

It would be anticipated that any future local revenue contribution for highways should be allocated to the Highway Capital Project Fund 176; thereby, prohibiting future required maintenance of effort (TCA 67-3-901).

Education Capital Threshold and Discussion

Many capital items in the education department are considered replacement scheduled assets (Attachment B) such as (vehicles, computer, furniture and equipment); further, the Basic Education Program (BEP) funding formula earns capital outlay funding. The earnings by the formula come from both state and local revenue. These earnings are generated for the estimated construction cost of new facilities and a related estimated debt repayment schedule associated with the new facilities. Roane County has not requested the schools to pay for their own debt thereby freeing these funds up for other use.

The county would anticipate the Board of Education would have a capital program which would fund all capital needs outside of new school construction. The Board of Education should set aside a percentage of their BEP capital earnings for replacement of HVAC, roofs and similar type of large ticket expenditures; thereby, not requesting the county to fund these expenditures with debt.

Attachment B

Date: November 2010

Position Statement: Purchase of Replacement Scheduled Capital Assets:

Goal: To continue the process of migrating into a Capital Projects and Debt Management Plan/Policy by beginning to purchase certain replacement scheduled capital assets without borrowing.

Objective: To purchase replacement scheduled assets such as computers, vehicles and certain capital assets that are not large ticket items without borrowing

Our office is in the process of developing a Capital Projects Plan/Policy and Debt Management Plan/Policy, but in the interim we must start the process by focusing on immediate issues that eventually will be encompassed in the overall program under development. As we formulate our Capital Projects and Debt Management Plans/Policies, we are taking a position on the county purchase of scheduled and replacement assets.

Items that would be considered scheduled replacement assets:

1. Computers
2. Radios
3. Sheriff's Patrol Cars
4. Ambulances
5. School Buses

Background:

- **Computers/Radios:** Roane County had historically purchased computers/radios from operations but within the last number of years began the program of issuing capital outlay notes for these assets. Some of these notes appear to be re-funded with longer term notes and as such, it is speculated that some debt could now exceed the asset's useful life. Our position is to no longer issue debt on computer and radio replacements and never issue debt for longer than an asset's useful life.
- **Sheriff's patrol cars:** The Sheriff's patrol cars have been purchased from operations, capital outlay notes, and in more recent years, on lease agreements. Our position is that lease agreements to purchase scheduled replacement assets should never be used and in reviewing the Roane County audit over a number of years, the imputed interest rates on leases have always exceeded the going interest rates on traditional loans available to county governments. Further, since a set number of Sheriff's patrol cars are replaced each year, the county should develop a financial position and policy that these assets are purchased either from operations or a capital fund and no debt be issued to purchase these assets.
- **Ambulances:** Ambulances have been purchased from both operations and capital outlay notes in the past. Since ambulances costs and service rates are set as a part of the Ambulance Operations Budget, sufficient funds should be available to purchase ambulances from operations or capital sub fund.

- **School Buses:** School Buses have been purchased using three-year capital outlay notes since at least in the early 80's. This practice was due to: (1) the county operated a transportation system for both the Roane County Schools and the Harriman City Schools, and (2) the county could issue capital outlay notes and have a county-wide property tax to repay this indebtedness, but proceeds of the original debt issuance did not have to be shared with the Oak Ridge City School System.

Changes to this practice of operating and financing school buses changed the reasoning, logic, and the need to purchase school buses by capital outlay notes. What changed was: (1) Harriman City School System became a part of the Roane County School System, and (2) a local Chancellor ruled that future issues of capital outlay note proceeds would have to be shared with a city school system. The financial and operational reasoning for capital outlay notes issued now does not exist.

Positions:

First: The least expensive of the above listed assets are computers and radios. Our position is that these replacement assets should be purchased from general operations without debt obligation.

Second: Scheduled vehicles that are purchased infrequently should have money set aside allowing the vehicles to be purchased without debt obligation either in the normal operating budget or in a capital budget.

Third: Large dollar amount purchased assets such as any group of Sheriff's patrol cars, ambulances, and school buses should have a replacement schedule and either be purchased from operating budgets or capital budgets. The revenue and expenses should be scheduled, thus no debt is issued for these assets.

Fourth: Our position is that any debt should not exceed an asset's useful life.

Fifth: Our position is that lease agreements for the purchase of assets should not be used.

Sixth: Our position is that we should work to stop the practice of "rolling debt".

The Problem – "Rolling Debt":

Roane County has been in the practice for a number of years of issuing debt for replacement scheduled assets. The County has been able to continue this practice by the informal practice of what I would refer to as "**rolling debt**". As debt is paid off more debt is issued for the same type or similar assets. Our position is that Roane County should take needed steps to stop the practice of "rolling debt".

The Solution:

The issue is how and when do we solve the "rolling debt" problem?

First, Sheriff's patrol cars will not be leased. Our office will propose the establishment of a capital projects sub-fund in December of 2010 or January of 2011 on vehicles. The county should use the property tax assigned to the General Capital Fund 171 (original tax in Fund 101) to purchase these vehicles. Our position is that no debt will be used to purchase/lease the Sheriff's patrol cars.

Second, we will ask the school administration and board to begin the process of purchasing school buses from operations or from school capital projects funds. Since the school system has a sufficient fund balance and has a low capital request need for the 2010-11 budget, we are asking the schools to assist in our long term debt management/capital plan by purchasing school buses in 2010-11 similar to the county which will be purchased out of our current operations or our fund balances. The schools have a fund balance that not only exceeds a much talked about 3% balance but exceeds 10% of operations. The school fund balance generally, as the county develops a fund balance policy, would run about one month of salaries which is between 7 % and 10% of the school general purpose budget. Since the school fund balance exceeds a typical fund balance requirement and since school buses were originally projected at \$305,000, of which it has been determined that approximately half is for a special education bus which historically has not been on the debt schedule but purchased with special education funds, thus the need for the 2010-2011 year is approximately \$150,000. \$150,000 is only a very small percentage of the school budget and of their respective fund balance. Further, the county would have to borrow more than just the county's portion since the proceeds would have to be shared with the Oak Ridge City School System. The schools are in a substantially better financial position than the County General Fund which continues to struggle for operations money but have and will take a financial position in managing proactively our capital debt operations. Further the administration of borrowing only \$150,000 is cost prohibitive. We are looking at the potential adoption of a 20-page resolution, receiving approval from the Comptroller's Office setting up a note and amortization schedules for the future payments.

With approval of the Budget Committee, we respectively request the Roane County Board of Education and administration to consider amending the transportation and/or general purpose school budget or capital budget to pay for the school buses for the 2010-11 year out of the current operations and/or fund balance. **Budget Committee did not approve asking the Roane County School Board for any assistance (see Budget Committee Minutes of 11-4-10).**

Summary of Positions:

1. Replacement of computers and radios should be out of general operations and no debt issued.
2. Vehicles that are purchased infrequently should have money set aside for those purchases and no debt issued.
3. Sheriff's patrol cars, ambulances, and school buses should have replacement schedules and planned purchases out of operating or capital fund without debt issued.
4. Any debt should not exceed an asset's useful life.
5. Lease agreements for the purchase of assets should not be used.
6. The practice of "rolling debt" should be stopped.