

**CITY OF CEDAR SPRINGS
STANDARD OPERATING POLICY**

SUBJECT: Fund Balance Policy
Effective Date: August 11, 2011

Policy Number: 6
Amended Date: November 13, 2013
March 13, 2014

Purpose

To establish a policy for managing fund balance in the City's governmental funds in a manner consistent with GASB Statement No. 54.

Policy

Fund balance is created from excess revenues over expenditures. It is a fund's net assets, mostly made up of cash and investments and, unless otherwise restricted, available for spending. There are five components of fund balance, namely:

1. **Nonspendable Fund Balance.** This portion of fund balance is *nonspendable* because of its form, for example inventory and non-financial assets, or because of legal or contractual requirements.
2. **Restricted Fund Balance.** This portion of fund balance is *restricted* due to external limitations placed on the use of the funds. The restriction typically comes from outside the local government as a condition of the revenue source.
3. **Committed Fund Balance.** Fund balance is *committed* if a limitation is set in place by formal action of the City Council prior to the end of the fiscal year. The limitation remains binding until the City Council takes formal action to remove it.
4. **Assigned Fund Balance.** Fund balance may be *assigned* to reflect the intended use of the resource. The assignment of funds may come from the City Council or from the City Manager or Finance Director. Less formality is needed to impose, remove, or modify a constraint reflected in *Assigned Fund Balance*. No funds other than the General Fund may have Unassigned Fund Balance, therefore any amounts remaining in excess of Nonspendable, Restricted, or Committed funds in funds other than the General Fund will automatically be reported as *Assigned Fund Balance*. If any portion of existing fund balance will be used to eliminate a projected deficit in the subsequent year's budget, this amount will also be categorized as *Assigned Fund Balance*.
5. **Unassigned Fund Balance.** The General Fund, and no other governmental fund, may have resources that cannot be classified in one of the four categories described above. Only the General Fund can report a surplus, an *Unassigned Fund Balance*.

Because Nonspendable and Restricted fund balances are not available for spending due to external enforceable conditions, this fund balance policy is focused on the appropriate level of General Fund Unrestricted fund balances, those classified as Committed, Assigned and Unassigned.

Utilization of Fund Balance

The policy regarding fund balance shall be that when multiple classifications are available and appropriate for particular expenditures, fund balance will be utilized first from the most restrictive category working toward unassigned fund balance. Relative “restrictiveness” of fund balance shall proceed from the most to least in order of the five classifications listed in this policy, from one to five above.

Minimum Fund Balance

Financial flexibility, provided by adequate fund balance, is needed to cushion the impact of unanticipated emergencies and revenue shortfalls. These include loss of major taxpayers, loss of state revenue sharing, infrastructure emergencies and other economic distresses that serve to impair the City’s ability to deliver essential community services. Without this cushion taxpayers would be subject to millage increases, cuts in services and/or deferred investment in and maintenance of infrastructure.

For the General Fund, the budget shall be prepared and activities managed to result in an ending unassigned fund balance of at least 20% of general fund expenses except in the case of emergency or financial distress. Circumstances of emergency or financial distress shall be reported to the City Council at the earliest practical time.

When fund balance approaches its minimum threshold the following measures, in priority order, shall be used to build up fund balance:

1. Cut or delay pay-as-you-go capital improvements.
2. Cut general operating expenses.
3. Increase rates and charges funding specific services to make them self-sufficient where possible.
4. Increase millage.