

Financial Goals

The City of St Helen's financial goals seek to:

- Ensure the financial integrity of the City
- Maintain accountability into the financial operation of the City
- Improve financial information for decision makers at all levels:
 - Policy makers as they contemplate long-term City decisions
 - Managers as they implement policy on a day-to-day basis

Financial Objectives

St. Helen's fiscal policies address the following major areas:

Revenue policy

Addresses property taxes, user charges and other sources to adequately fund desired services

Operating budget policy

Relating to budgeting guidelines.

Capital improvement policy

Relating to capital improvement planning and implementation.

Accounting policy

Relating to reporting financial transactions and preparing financial reports.

Debt policy

Dealing with long-term financing of the city's capital needs and its bond rating.

Reserve policy

For establishing reserves and contingency funding as needed for the various activities of the City.

Management of finance policy

Dealing with approval, recommendation, review and implementation of policies – including monitoring compliance.

Financial Policies

St. Helen's long-term financial policies are as follows:

1. Revenue Policy

- 1.1. System development charges shall be established to fund the costs of improvements to service additional increments to growth, such as street, storm, water, sewer, and parks and recreation facilities.
- 1.2. The City will maximize the use of service users' charges in lieu of ad valorem taxes and subsidies from other City funds, for services that can be identified and where costs are directly related to the level of service provided.
 - 1.2.1 Charges for providing utility services shall be sufficient to finance all operating, capital outlay and debt service expenses of the City's enterprise funds, including operating contingency and reserve requirements.
 - 1.2.2 User charges shall fund 100% of the direct cost of development review and building activities. User charges include land use, engineering inspection, building permit and building inspection fees.
 - 1.2.3 Other reimbursable work performed by the City (labor, meals, contracted services, equipment and other indirect expenses) shall be billed at actual or estimated actual cost.
 - 1.2.4 Charges for services shall accurately reflect the actual or estimated cost of providing a specific service. The cost of providing specific services shall be recalculated periodically, and the fee adjusted accordingly. The City shall maintain a current schedule of fees, showing when the fees were last reviewed and/or recalculated.
- 1.3 The City shall pursue collecting delinquent accounts. When necessary, discontinuing service, small claims court, collection agencies, foreclosure, liens and other methods of collection, such as imposing penalties, collection and late charges, may be used.

2. Operating Budget Policy

- 2.1 The City shall prepare, present, adopt and amend its annual operating budget(s) in accordance with Oregon Budget Law.
 - 2.1.1 The City shall maintain a budget system to monitor expenditures and revenues on a monthly basis, with a thorough analysis and adjustment (if required) at least at mid-year and/or year-end.

- 2.2 The City shall not adopt an operating budget that is greater than the amount of resources available to fund it. Current operating resources will be sufficient to support current operating expenditures, reimbursement transfers, reserves, unappropriated balances and contingencies.
- 2.3 Annual recurring revenues of the General and Enterprise Funds' shall not be less than annual recurring operating expenditures (total annual budget, minus capital outlay, equity transfers, reserves, appropriated balances and contingencies).
- 2.4 Unless otherwise authorized by City Council, General Fund and other unrestricted revenues shall not be earmarked for specific programs, activities or services.
- 2.5 Long-term debt or bond financing shall only be used for the acquisition of capital facilities or specialized equipment. Long-term debt or bond financing shall not be used to finance current operating expenditures.

3. Capital Improvement Policy

- 3.1. Annually, the City shall adopt a 5-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Prior to adopting a Capital Improvement Plan, the City shall hold public meetings and a public hearing on the contents of the CIP document. The document shall provide details on each capital project plan: its estimated costs, sources of financing and a description.

4. Accounting Policy

- 4.1. The City shall establish and maintain its accounting systems according to generally accepted accounting practices and shall adhere to generally accepted accounting principles and standards promulgated by the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) and Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB).
- 4.2. An annual audit shall be performed by an independent public accounting firm, which will issue an official opinion on the annual financial statements, along with a management letter identifying areas needing improvement, if necessary.
- 4.3. Full disclosure shall be provided in the financial statements and bond representations.
- 4.4. Quarterly budget reports showing the current status of revenues and expenditures shall be prepared and distributed to appropriate legislative, staff and management personnel in a timely manner and made available for public inspection.

5. Debt Policy

- 5.1. Capital projects financed through the issuance of bonds shall not be financed for a period which exceeds the expected useful life of the project.
- 5.2. The City shall use the most prudent methods of acquiring capital outlay items, including the use of lease purchase agreements.
- 5.3. The City shall maintain its bond rating at the highest level fiscally prudent, so that future borrowing costs are minimized and access to the credit market is preserved.

6. Reserve Policy

- 6.1. Within the General Fund, the City's goal is to keep a minimum of 20% of recurring revenue in reserve between Contingency and Unappropriated accounts.
- 6.2. Within Enterprise Funds, the City's goal is to keep a minimum of 90 days operating reserve as contingency while maintaining at least 5% of their operating budget (excluding debt service, capital outlay, equity transfers, reserves and interfund transfers and reimbursement revenues)
- 6.3. The City shall adhere to GASB Statement #54, in which the objective is to enhance the usefulness of fund balance information by providing clear fund balance classifications including but not limited to: non-spendable, which is fund balance associated with inventories. Restricted, which includes amounts that can be spent only for specific purposes stipulated by legislation, Committed, which includes amounts that can be used only for specific purposes determined by a formal action of the decision-making authority. Assigned, which are intended to be used for specific purposes but do not meet the criteria to be restricted or committed. Unassigned, which include all spendable amounts not contained in other classifications.

7. Management of Fiscal Policy

- 7.1. The Government Body will review and accept the audit report and review a report from management about the disposition of any findings. The Governing Body will ensure that management has been proactive in implementing the internal control and financial recommendations of the independent auditor.
- 7.2. The Governing Body will receive and review a formal risk assessment document from management that includes all identifiable financial risk areas, along with reasons for those risks (lack of funding, size of staff, etc.). The Governing Body will inquire of management about what is being done to mitigate the identified risks.
- 7.3. The Governing Body will review the organization's fidelity insurance coverage to determine if it adequately protects the organization against losses as a result of fraudulent activity by management or other employees.

- 7.4 Throughout the year, the Governing Body will review the following reports:
1. Budget to Actual performance data. Management should provide explanations for any major variations against the budget
 2. Investment reports which show where the organization's monies are located/invested, along with current rates of return and a list of alternatives for where the organization can invest their monies.

8. Management of Fiscal Policy

- 8.1 Fiscal policies and changes in policies shall be approved by the City Council and adopted by resolution at a public hearing.
- 8.1.1 The City Administrator and Finance Director shall recommend fiscal policy and changes in policy to the City Council. The City Administrator and Finance Director shall prepare a report explaining the substantive impact of all recommendations and their impact on the City's operations, service levels and/or finances.
- 8.2.2 The Finance Director shall implement fiscal policies and monitor compliance.
- 8.2.2.1 If the Finance Director discovers a deviation from policy, he/she shall report it in writing to the City Council within thirty days.
- 8.2.2.2 As a part of the City's annual budget document, the City's budget message shall identify: (a) all major changes in policy since the previous budget year and (b) any material variations from policy in the ensuing year's budget.