



## Appendix A Statement of Financial Policies

### Origin

Although a substantial portion of the policies and procedures of the County are defined by State law, others have been developed and revised by each succeeding administration. While subject to change, these non-statutorily defined policies and procedures, reflect a conservative financial philosophy and it would be unlikely that substantial modifications would be made in ensuing administrations.

### I. General

The County will operate on a fiscal year that begins on October 1st and ends on September 30th. The County will conduct its financial affairs in conformity with State and Federal laws and this Statement of Financial Policy, which shall be approved by Commissioners Court and reviewed on an annual basis as a part of the budget process.

### II. Accounting, Auditing and Financial Planning

The County Auditor's Office will continue to maintain records on a basis consistent with accepted principles and standards for local government accounting and in accordance with statements and pronouncements issued by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board, as applicable.

The County's accounts are maintained on the basis of (governmental) funds and account groups which segregate funds according to the intended purpose. **The County's budgeting and fund accounting is on a modified accrual basis**, under which most revenues (such as ad valorem and sales taxes) are recognized when they are susceptible to accrual, meaning the amount can be determined and is collectible. Charges for services, fines, licenses, permits and other miscellaneous revenues are recognized when cash is received and earnings on investments are recorded when earned. Fund expenditures are recognized when the liability is incurred by utilization of encumbrance accounting, under which the issuance of purchase orders and other expenditure commitments are recorded in order to reserve the required portion of the appropriation. Principal and interest on the County's general long-term debt is recorded when due.

Regular monthly and annual financial reports are issued summarizing financial activity by fund, and department, and comparing actual resources and expenditures with budgeted amounts, as required by Sections 114.025, 111.091, and 111.092 of the Revised Statutes of Texas, Local Government Code. The Auditor's Office provides monthly reports on the total cost of specific services by type of expenditure and by fund, in accordance with Sections 114.025, 111.091, and 111.092 of the Local Government Code. A financial audit will continue to be performed annually by an independent public accounting firm and an official opinion and annual financial report will continue to be published and issued, as authorized by Section 115.045 of the Local Government Code.

Polk County will continue to identify areas for evaluation efforts, by either staff, committees or consultants, in order to judge the effectiveness and efficiencies of County services. Cost/benefit studies will be conducted, where appropriate and applicable, on non-recurring expenditures and capital projects.



### III. Budgeting

Budgetary Basis – The County budget is adopted on a basis that is consistent with Generally Accepted Accounting Principals (GAAP), with the exception that only the annual costs of capital lease expenditures are recognized as budgetary expenditures. Annual appropriated budgets are adopted for the General, Special Revenue and Debt Service funds. All annual appropriations lapse at fiscal year-end. Project-length financial plans are adopted for all capital projects funds. Encumbrance accounting, under which funds are reserved for purchase orders, contracts, and other commitments, is employed in these same funds. As of September 30, encumbrances are subject to reappropriation in the budget of the subsequent year. The County budgets resources on a fiscal year that begins October 1st and ends on the following September 30th.

Budget packages for annual preparation that include forms and instructions shall be distributed to County departments on or about May 1 each year. Departments and Elected Officials must return their proposals no later than June 1 in that year.

The proposed budget estimate shall be prepared and distributed to all of the Commissioners Court members on or about July 15 of the preceding fiscal year. The proposed budget estimate shall be presented in the following format:

- Revenue estimates by major item.
- Operating and maintenance expenditures by object code, major expense categories, functionally related departments and program summaries.
- Debt Service summarized by issues detailing principal, interest and reserve amount by fund.

The proposed budget estimate shall also contain information regarding:

- Proposed personnel staffing levels including an index to job classifications and salary ranges.
- A detailed schedule of equipment to be purchased by department.
- A detailed schedule of capital projects.
- Any additional information, data, or analysis requested of management by the Commissioners Court.

The proposed budgeted revenues shall be provided by the Auditor's Office with the exception of ad valorem taxes for the current year, grant revenues, and interfund transfers.

Prior to October 1, the Commissioners Court shall adopt a [balanced budget](#), being one in which revenues are equal to or exceed expenditures.

The Polk County budgeting procedures attempt to identify distinct functions and activities performed by the County and to allocate budget resources adequate to perform these functions and activities at a specified level of service.

The County will continue to integrate performance measurements and productivity indicators with the budget process where appropriate.

The committed, but not yet received purchases as of September 30th will be reappropriated in the subsequent fiscal year per a list prepared by the County Auditor with appropriate Budget Amendment.



Only the Commissioners Court shall have authority to transfer expenditure appropriations from any department category of object codes to any other department or non-departmental major object code category. Transfers of such funds amount to a new appropriation and therefore must be adjusted prior to expenditure of such amounts. Any transfer shall ONLY be made when it is submitted on a Request for a Budget Amendment Form initiated and signed by the department head. Those transfer requests are then submitted to the Commissioners Court for final approval.

The department head or elected official may request a transfer under \$1,000 (one thousand dollars) cumulative total from any major category of expenditure to any other major category of expenditure within operating funds. This type of request must be submitted on an Intra-Departmental Operating Transfer Form to the Budget Office and must receive approval from the County Judge, and County Auditor. Such adjustments will be reported quarterly to the Commissioners Court. At no time, however, will funds be transferred into or from the Personnel, Fringe Benefit, or Capital categories without court approval.

## **IV. Revenues and Transfers**

Polk County will maintain a diversified and stable revenue system to shelter it from short term fluctuations in any one revenue source by doing the following:

- Establishing user charges and fees as permitted by law at a level related to the cost of providing that service including indirect costs.
- Pursuing legislative change, where necessary, to permit increases in user charges and fee.
- Aggressively collecting property tax revenues, including the filing of suit where appropriate and necessary, as authorized by the Texas Property Tax Code.

Polk County will pay for all current expenditures with current resources as required by Article XI, Section 7 of the Constitution, and by Section 111.091 – 111.093 of the Local Government Code, Revised Statutes of Texas.

Transfers between funds will only be accomplished after approval by the Commissioner Court.

The County will support a portion of the operations of the Road and Bridge precincts from vehicle registration fees authorized by the State and will credit fines and forfeitures from Court operations to the General fund.

## **V. Reserves / Fund Balance**

The County will maintain an unappropriated contingency line item account to provide for small increases in service delivery costs as well as unanticipated needs that may arise throughout the year.

THEREFORE, IT WILL BE NECESSARY FOR OFFICIALS AND DEPARTMENT HEADS TO REVIEW AND CONTROL EXPENDITURES SUCH THAT THE RATE OF EXPENDITURE DOES NOT EXCEED THE APPROVED BUDGET.

Cases of anticipated material deviation should be covered by a request for a budget amendment. This request shall be from the Department Head in writing and include



justification for such action. Such requests should be submitted to the Budget Office for initial review and then forwarded to Commissioners Court for consideration and approval.

The County shall strive to maintain a fund balance in the general and road and bridge (operating funds of not less than three months operating expenditures).

The County shall strive to maintain a balance in the Debt Service Fund equal to not less than one half of the principal and interest payments on outstanding debt for each fiscal year.

To comply with the Government Accounting Standards Board Statement 54 and to provide a clearer understanding of the County's fund balances, the County has adopted a Fund Balance Policy developed by the County Auditor. The purpose of this policy is to establish a key element of the financial stability of the County by setting guidelines for fund balance. Unassigned fund balance is an important measure of economic stability. It is essential that the County maintain adequate levels of unassigned fund balance to mitigate financial risk that can occur from unforeseen revenue fluctuations, unanticipated expenditures, and similar circumstances. The fund balance also provides cash flow liquidity for the County's general operations. The County's Fund Balance Policy states;

#### Definitions

Fund Equity – A fund's equity is generally the difference between its assets and its liabilities.

Fund Balance – An accounting distinction is made between the portions of fund equity that are spendable and nonspendable. These are broken up into five categories:

- 1) Nonspendable fund balance includes amounts that are not in a spendable form or are required to be maintained intact. Examples are inventory or permanent funds.
- 2) Restricted fund balance includes amounts that can be spent only for the specific purposes stipulated by external resource providers either constitutionally or through enabling legislation. Examples include grants and child safety fees.
- 3) Committed fund balance includes amounts that can be used only for the specific purposes determined by a formal action of the Commissioners Court. Commitments may be changed or lifted only by the Commissioners Court taking the same formal action that imposed the constraint originally.
- 4) Assigned fund balance comprises amounts intended to be used by the government for specific purposes. Intent can be expressed by the Commissioners Court or by an official or body to which the Commissioners Court delegates the authority. In governmental funds other than the general fund, assigned fund balance represents the amount that is not restricted or committed. This indicates that resources in other governmental funds are, at a minimum, intended to be used for the purpose of that fund.
- 5) Unassigned fund balance is the residual classification of the general fund and includes all amounts not contained in other classifications. Unassigned amounts are technically available for any purpose.

Commissioners' Court is the County's highest level of decision-making authority and the formal action that is required to be taken to establish, modify, or rescind a fund balance commitment is a resolution approved by the court at the County's Commissioners Court meeting. The resolution must either be approved or rescinded, as applicable, prior to the



last day of the fiscal year for which the commitment is made. The amount subject to the constraint may be determined in the subsequent period.

Commissioners' Court is authorized to assign fund balance to a specific purpose as approved by this fund balance policy.

It is the goal of the County to achieve and maintain an unassigned fund balance in the general fund equal to 25% of expenditures.

When multiple categories of fund balance are available for expenditure (for example, a construction project is being funded partly by a grant, funds set aside by Commissioners' Court, and unassigned fund balance), the County will start with the least restricted category and spend those funds first before moving up to the next category with available funds.

## **VI. Personnel**

The number of regular full time employees on the payroll shall not exceed the total number of positions approved unless authorized by Commissioners Court. All personnel actions shall at all times be in strict conformance with applicable federal, state, and county policies.

Deletion and downgrades of positions may occur at any time during the fiscal year at the department head or elected officials request or if a review of workload statistics indicates that a reduction in force is practical in a department. Reductions in elected official's budgeted positions will only be accomplished with their approval.

Additions, position reclassifications, reorganizations, etc., must be presented with the initial budget request. Exceptions to this policy will only be allowed with Court approval.

The Court may institute a freeze during the fiscal year on hiring, promotions, transfers and capital equipment purchases. Such action will not be used arbitrarily and will allow for exceptions in appropriate areas to comply with emergency needs such as natural disasters and/or loss of major revenue source.

## **VII. Fixed Assets**

All purchases of physical assets with a value of \$5,000 (five thousand dollars) shall be placed on the County inventory maintained by the County Auditor. Assets of lesser value shall be logged on an inventory maintained by each individual department.

The County will maintain these assets at a level adequate to protect Polk County's capital investment and to minimize future maintenance and replacement costs by:

- Providing for adequate maintenance of capital equipment and equipment replacement under the above stated amount in the annual operating budget.

Capital expenditures for projects and equipment are budgeted by item or project and must be spent accordingly. Any request for unbudgeted capital equipment or projects throughout the fiscal year must be submitted to the Budget Office and approved by the Commissioners Court as a budget amendment prior to a requisition being issued to Purchasing.



Where possible, items in good useable condition placed in surplus will be used:

- To supplement expenditure for new budgeted capital purchases.
- To supplement expenditure for replacement/budgeted capital purchases.
- To supply needed unbudgeted new and replacement equipment.

## **VIII. Debt Management**

The County will not use long-term debt for current operations in accordance with Article XI, Section 7 and Article VIII, Section 9, of the Constitution and by the Local Government Code of the Revised Statutes of Texas.

When Polk County finds it necessary to issue bonds, the following policy will be adhered to:

- Reserve funds will be provided to adequately meet debt service requirements in the subsequent year.
- Interest earning on these reserve fund balances will be used for debt service purposes.
- Bond finance will be confined to capital improvement projects, which could not feasibly be financed from current revenues.
- The term of any bond issue will not exceed the useful life of the capital project/facility or equipment for which the borrowing is intended.

## **IX. Investment and Cash Management**

The Treasurer's Office will continue to collect, disburse and deposit all funds on a schedule which ensures optimum cash availability, in accordance with the Revised Statutes of Texas; Sections 113.043, 113.065, 113.901, 113.001-005, 113.021-024, 113.041-047 and 116.112, Local Government Code.

The County Treasurer shall handle all original reconciliation of Polk County bank accounts with the Depository Bank and shall resolve any financial difference between Polk County and the Depository Bank.

The County Treasurer is the Chief Investment Officer of Polk County as authorized by State law and shall invest the funds of Polk County in accordance with the Public Funds Investment Act (Govt' Code, Section 2256.005) using the following priorities in order of importance; (1) suitability of the investment to the financial requirements of the County; (2) preservation and safety of principal; (3) liquidity; (4) marketability of the investment should the need arise to liquidate prior to maturity; (5) diversification of the investment portfolio; and (6) yield.

Polk County shall maintain a written Investments Policy, approved and annually reviewed by the Commissioners Court, as required by State law. The County Treasurer will maintain an original copy of all security and/or surety pledges made by the Depository Bank in behalf of Polk County funds and shall monitor the adequacy of pledged funds to deposits.

The County Treasurer will maintain an original copy of all security advice for all Polk County investment transactions.

There shall be an Investment Committee, consisting of the County Treasurer, County Auditor, County Judge, and one Member of Commissioners Court.



Appendix B  
**General  
Financial  
and Other  
Information**

The Treasurer's Office will provide regular information concerning the cash position and investment performance, as required by Sections 114.025, 111.091, and 111.092 of the Revised Statutes of Texas, Local Government Code.

Polk County conducts its treasury activities with financial institution(s) based upon written contracts, which specify compensating balances, service charges, term, and other conditions as authorized by the Local Government Code inclusive of the Revised Statutes of Texas.

## **General Government Functions**

The Commissioners Court is the governing body of the County. The Texas Constitution specifies that the Court consists of a County Judge, who is elected at large and serves as presiding officer, and four County Commissioners elected by the voters of their individual precinct. The Local Government Code prescribes the duties and grants authorities of the Commissioners Court and other County officers, relating to financial management.

In compliance with State statutes, the Commissioners Court maintains budgetary controls to ensure that provisions embodied within the annually appropriated budget are met for most County functions. According to the budget laws of the State of Texas, expenditures may not exceed the amount appropriated for each fund.

## **Internal Control Structure**

The financial operating controls are shared by the Commissioners' Court, which is the governing body, and the County Auditor, who is appointed by the District Judges. The County Auditor has the basic responsibilities for maintaining the records of all financial transactions of the County and "examining, auditing, and approving" all disbursements from County funds prior to their submission to the Commissioners Court for payment.

The Commissioners Court sets the tax rate, establishes policies for County operations, approves contracts for the County, and develops and adopts the County budget within the resources estimated by the County Auditor.

In developing the County's accounting systems, consideration was given to the adequacy of internal accounting controls. Internal accounting controls are designed to provide reasonable, but not absolute, assurance regarding the safeguarding of assets against loss from unauthorized use or disposition and the reliability of financial records for preparing financial statements and maintaining accountability for assets. The concept of reasonable assurance recognizes the cost of a control should not exceed the benefits likely to be derived there from and the evaluation of costs and benefits requires estimates and judgments by management. All internal control evaluations occur within the above framework. The county's internal accounting controls adequately safeguard assets and provide reasonable assurance of proper recording of financial transactions.



## Cash Management

The County Treasurer, by statute, serves as the custodian of county funds and is responsible for the receipt and disbursement of all monies owed to or by the County. The County Treasurer is required to maintain accurate records of all transactions of his/her office and to regularly report to the Commissioners Court.

The Commissioners Court selects qualified banks to serve as County depositories, in which the County Treasurer deposits all monies received. Monies that are temporarily idle during the year are deposited in TEXPOOL. The County's Investment Policy was revised to meet the changes in the Public Funds Investment Act and investment strategies were identified for each group of funds.

## Debt Administration

The presently outstanding tax supported debt of the county is rated "A3" by Moody's Investors Service, Inc. and "A+" by Standard and Poor's Corporation. The County will continue to manage and administer debt in such a manner as to maintain or improve this rating.

## Risk Management

The County participates in the Texas Association of Counties Workers' Compensation Pool to cover job related risk. Development of a limited risk management program (the Health and Safety Program) has resulted in substantial savings in Workers' Compensation Insurance premiums. Additionally the County annually reviews with its carrier all liability coverage, making necessary amendments and/or adjustments to policy deductibles and limits.

## Independent Audit

The County engages a firm of certified public accountants annually to perform an audit of the general purpose financial statements which are presented under the same [modified accrual basis of accounting](#) as utilized for the County's budget. Certain funds not budgeted by the County and for which the County has no regulatory authority are reported within the annual audit, such as the County Clerk's and District Clerk's Expendable Trust Funds.

## Awards

GFOA has presented a *Distinguished Budget Presentation Award* to Polk County each year since our first submittal to the award program of our annual budget for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 1999. In order to receive this award, a governmental unit must publish a document that meets program criteria as a policy document, as an operations guide, as a financial plan and as a communications device. This award is valid for one year only and the most recent award certificate is displayed on page 1 of this document. We believe our current budget continues to conform to program requirements and we are submitting it to GFOA to determine its eligibility for another award.





Polk County has also achieved the Gold Circle Level of the Texas Comptroller Leadership Circle program, which recognizes local governments across Texas that are striving to meet a high standard for financial transparency online. The program rewards those local governments that go beyond the basics of posting three recommended documents — the Budget, the Annual Financial Report (or Comprehensive Annual Financial Report) and the Check Register and spotlights local governments that are opening their books to the public, providing clear, consistent pictures of spending and sharing information in a user-friendly format that lets taxpayers easily drill down for more information. Leadership Circle designees receive a certificate reflecting a Circle Award level: Gold, Silver or Bronze. The Gold Level is awarded to entities that are setting the bar with their transparency efforts and Polk County ranked in the top five counties in the state for our achievements in this area. We applaud the efforts of the Polk County Auditor and staff in achieving this recognition for the County.

The County's website - [www.co.polk.tx.us](http://www.co.polk.tx.us) - includes a menu tab for "Financial Transparency", where the County's financial information may be viewed.

