

**CITY OF LAGUNA WOODS  
ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY 2.9**

**BUDGETING, RESERVES, AND REPORTING**

**2.9.01. Statement of Purpose.**

This Administrative Policy is intended to provide a framework for the development of the City of Laguna Woods' budget, with an emphasis on balance, transparency, fiscal responsibility, and long-term planning, as well as related financial reporting.

**2.9.02. Budget Periods.**

The City operates on a fiscal year beginning on July 1 and ending on the following June 30. The City Manager shall present a proposed biennial fiscal years budget to the City Council no later than June 30 of each odd-numbered year.

**2.9.03. Budget Adoption.**

The City Council shall adopt a budget for the upcoming two fiscal years no later than June 30 of each odd-numbered year. Such adoption shall occur at a public meeting duly noticed pursuant to all applicable provisions of California Government Code (Ralph M. Brown Act). Members of the public shall have an opportunity to comment on the proposed budget prior to adoption.

**2.9.04. Budget Standards.**

1. The budget and the underlying accounting shall be prepared in accordance with applicable law and Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) for municipal governments on a modified accrual basis.
2. The budget shall be adopted at the fund level. Sufficient detail shall be provided in accompanying narrative to describe significant programs, projects, and services, as well as employee staffing levels.
3. The budget shall be developed using conservative projections of revenue and expenditure levels. Projections shall consider economic forecasts and data from multiple sources, including independent analysis of the two largest sources of ongoing General Fund revenue – property tax and sales tax.

4. The budget development process is intended to weigh competing requests for City resources within anticipated fiscal constraints. Notwithstanding emergency needs and circumstances that may dictate otherwise, requests for new, ongoing programs made outside of the budget development process are discouraged.
5. Current fiscal year revenues should fund current fiscal year expenditures. Use of the unassigned General Fund balance should be limited to one-time projects, capital improvement projects, the payment of long-term liabilities for periods beyond the current fiscal year, and emergency expenditures.
6. Unless specifically restricted by law, GAAP, a funding source, or an agreement, revenues shall be deposited in the General Fund and allocated in accordance with this Administrative Policy. Restricted revenues shall be deposited and allocated as required, including in a manner that ensures that revenues are spent and/or obligated for eligible purposes within required timeframes.
7. Grant funds are often distributed on a reimbursement basis, meaning that the City is required to make expenditures in advance of receiving the offsetting revenue. The unassigned General Fund balance may be used to make temporary “loans” to grant-funded programs, projects, and services until reimbursements are received. Such temporary “loans” are not reflected in the budget.
8. In order to assist with the long-term development of funding for major capital improvement projects on public property, an 11-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for “major capital improvements projects” shall be adopted as a part of each budget. To comply with Orange County Transportation Authority requirements for maintaining eligibility to receive Measure M2 (OC Go) funds, a CIP shall also be adopted at each fiscal year intervening biennial budget adoptions. The adoption of intervening CIPs may also necessitate amendment of adopted budgets. A “major capital improvement project” is any project that meets the definition of a “public project” in California Public Contracts Code Section 22002, including “construction, reconstruction, erection, alteration, renovation, improvement, demolition, and repair work” of facilities owned, leased, or operated by the City, as well as any non-minor “painting or repainting.” Maintenance is not considered a public project. A “major capital improvement project” also includes pavement management work included in the City’s 10-year Pavement Management Plan, work that is required to be included in the CIP for Measure M2 (OC Go) eligibility, and any other project so-designated by the City Council.

9. While the first two years of the 11-year CIP are included in the budget, the City Council shall retain the ability to modify the CIP at its discretion and no funding commitment is created by the inclusion of unfunded projects or projects phased for future fiscal years.
10. With the exception of CIP and non-operating project budgets, which shall be automatically carried over until the project is completed, carryovers of budget appropriations between fiscal years require approval of the City Council. All carryovers of budget appropriations between fiscal years shall be finalized and all necessary accounting entries made within 60 days of the submission of each Annual Comprehensive Financial Report to the City Council. Once a CIP or non-operating project is completed, the balance remaining within the budget shall be automatically returned to the fund from which it originated.

#### **2.9.05. Budget Adjustments.**

During fiscal years, circumstances may require adjustment of the appropriations established in the adopted budget. The City Manager is authorized to make budget adjustments within adopted fund-level appropriations, and may also reduce adopted fund-level appropriations, based on economic conditions or the needs of the City. Increases in adopted-fund level appropriations require City Council approval.

#### **2.9.06. Reserves and Fund Balance.**

Reserves are a key component of fiscal responsibility and financial resilience. They provide the City with options for responding to unanticipated events and risk.

Reserves are set aside as a part of fund balance. The term “fund balance” is used to describe the net position of the General Fund and other governmental funds. There are five categories of fund balance recognized by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board: *nonspendable*, *restricted*, *committed*, *assigned*, and *unassigned*. The committed, assigned, and unassigned categories are collectively known as “unrestricted fund balance.” Unrestricted fund balance may be considered the financial resources that are available, or are capable of being made available, for periodic, unanticipated, and emergency needs, without limitation.

The City shall evaluate the adequacy of the overall target for committed and assigned reserves and individual targets by reserve category contained in this Administrative Policy at least as frequently as each biennial budget development process. In doing so, the City shall consider current and future risk and funding obligations that may

impact reserve levels, as well as best practices established by the Government Finance Officers Association and other authoritative entities.

The time and method for replenishment of reserves shall be defined following use thereof, based on the category of reserve, reason required, amount used, and other relevant factors. The City shall strive to replenish reserve balances within three years of use. Funds for replenishment may be drawn from one-time revenues, excess revenues, year-end surpluses, reductions in appropriations, or other means deemed appropriate at the time reserve funds are used. A long-term perspective shall be considered when evaluating methods for replenishment.

### Overall Target for Committed and Assigned Reserves

Based on risk assessment and long-term projection of potential reserve needs, the overall target for committed and assigned reserves shall be established in an amount equal to at least 50% of the adopted General Fund revenue budget at the beginning of each fiscal year (July 1), less any one-time revenues and non-operating revenues. Although annual revenues may fluctuate, they have historically been more stable than annual appropriations, allowing for greater consistency in committed and assigned reserve calculations year-over-year. The fund balance equal to the overall target for committed and assigned reserves shall be allocated first to other committed and assigned reserves and then to the General Fund Contingency Fund.

### Committed and Assigned Reserves

#### *Paid Leave Contingency Reserve*

The City shall maintain a Paid Leave Contingency Reserve with an annual target equal to projected accrued paid leave balances at the end of each fiscal year (June 30), in accordance with the City's paid leave policies and obligations. An estimate of the annual target shall be adopted as a part of the City's budget and finalized by City Council action after fiscal-year-end calculations are available.

The City Manager is authorized to make expenditures from the Paid Leave Contingency Reserve in amounts necessary to comply with the City's paid leave policies and obligations (e.g., the payment of accrued paid leave upon an employee's separation from the City). The Administrative Services Director/City Treasurer shall notify the City Council of all expenditures made from the Paid Leave Contingency Reserve as a part of the quarterly budget reporting described in Section 2.9.09.

### *Self-Insurance Contingency Reserve*

The City shall maintain a Self-Insurance Contingency Reserve for legal judgements liability and workers' compensation claim settlements not covered by insurance policies. In developing the annual target for this reserve, the City shall consider its five-year claims settlement history, the status of any pending claims and litigation, and any reasonably anticipated future claims activity and litigation.

The City Manager is authorized to make expenditures from the Self-Insurance Contingency Reserve in the amount of any claim settlements approved by the City Council. Payments for legal judgements and all other expenditures from the Self-Insurance Contingency Reserve require approval of the City Council.

### *General Contingency Reserve*

The City shall maintain a General Contingency Reserve for economic uncertainty, operating contingencies, and emergencies caused by calamitous events. This reserve shall be established, annually, in an amount not less than the current overall target for total reserves less the amounts set aside for other reserves. Expenditures from the General Contingency Reserve require City Council approval.

### Unassigned General Fund Balance

In addition to committed and assigned reserves, unassigned General Fund balance is available for any governmental purpose and can be appropriated upon direction from the City Council. Use of the unassigned General Fund balance should be limited to one-time projects, capital improvement projects, the payment of long-term liabilities for periods beyond the current fiscal year, and emergency expenditures.

### **2.9.07. Unfunded Accrued Liability for Pension Plans.**

The City shall maintain an irrevocable Internal Revenue Code Section 115 trust fund to prefund employer contributions to California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS) pension plans.

The City shall consider making lump sum payments to reduce unfunded accrued liability (UAL) for CalPERS pension plans at least as frequently as each biennial budget development process. The City shall strive to maintain an at least 80% funded level for all CalPERS pension plans.

## **2.9.08. Trust Funds.**

### **Other Post-Employment Benefits Prefunding Trust Fund**

The City shall maintain an irrevocable Internal Revenue Code Section 115 trust fund to prefund other post-employment benefit (OPEB) liability incurred as a result of state-mandated retiree medical obligations. The City shall strive to maintain an at least 80% prefunding level calculated at least as frequently as CalPERS requires employers to prepare actuarial valuations of OPEB liability for participation in the California Employers' Retiree Benefit Trust Fund.

Contributions to the trust fund require approval of the City Council. Expenditures from the trust fund shall be made in a manner approved by the City Council.

### **Pension Prefunding Trust Fund**

The City shall maintain an irrevocable Internal Revenue Code Section 115 trust fund to prefund pension liability incurred as a result of participation in CalPERS. The City shall strive to maintain a minimum balance of \$670,000 in the trust fund (the sum of the five most recent lump sum payments made by the City to pay off the entirety of its then-current UAL, as of January 1, 2025, rounded to the nearest ten thousand). After reaching a minimum balance of \$670,000, the City Council shall consider establishing new goals for the trust fund.

To reach a minimum balance of \$670,000, the City shall consider making at least annual contributions to the trust fund equal to 50% of the audited increase in the General Fund fund balance at the end of each fiscal year, beginning with Fiscal Year 2024-25. For fiscal years when there is no increase in the audited General Fund fund balance, the City shall consider contributing an alternative amount.

Contributions to the trust fund require approval of the City Council. Expenditures from the trust fund shall be made in a manner approved by the City Council.

## **2.9.09. Reporting.**

1. The Administrative Services Director/City Treasurer shall prepare and submit an Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) with each of the sections prescribed by GASB, including an independent audit performed by a qualified firm, to the City Council within eight months of the end of each fiscal year. The City shall strive for submission of the ACFR to the City Council within six

months of the end of each fiscal year and an unqualified audit opinion.

2. The Administrative Services Director/City Treasurer shall prepare and submit a quarterly budget report to the City Council within 60 days of the end of each quarter. The report shall include actual year-to-date revenues and expenditures by fund; information regarding any change in revenue projections or anticipated expenditures that is likely to impact the ability to carry out budgeted activities; and, notification of all expenditures made from the Paid Leave Contingency Fund and Self-Insurance Contingency Fund during the subject quarter.
3. The Administrative Services Director/City Treasurer shall prepare and submit a monthly investment report to the City Council within 30 days of the end of each month. The report shall include the information specified in Section 2.2.17 of Administrative Policy 2.2.
4. The City Council may request additional or supplemental budget, investment, or financial reports at any time by providing direction to the City Manager.

#### **2.9.10. Relationship to Federal and State Laws.**

Where federal or state laws are more restrictive than or contradict this Administrative Policy, such laws shall take precedence. Where this Administrative Policy is more restrictive than federal or state laws, this Administrative Policy shall take precedence. The Administrative Services Director/City Treasurer shall advise the City Council of any contradictions of federal or state law for consideration during each biennial budget development process.

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City Council Adoption: January 15, 2025