

Financial Policies

City of Decatur

I. Purpose and Objective

The City of Decatur has a responsibility to carefully account for public funds, to manage municipal finances wisely, and to plan for the provision of public services. Sound financial policies are necessary to carry out these objectives responsibly and efficiently.

The City of Decatur's financial policies set forth below are the basic framework for its overall financial management. These policies incorporate long-standing principles and traditions that have served the City well in maintaining a sound and stable financial condition.

The broad purpose of the following financial policies is to enable the City of Decatur to achieve and maintain a long-term positive financial condition. The key values of the City's financial management include fiscal integrity, prudence, planning, accountability, honesty, and openness. Specifically, the purpose is to provide guidelines for planning, directing, and maintaining day-to-day financial affairs.

II. Operating Budget

A. Preparation

Budgeting is an essential element of the financial planning, control, and evaluation process of municipal government. The "operating budget" is the City's annual financial operating plan. The annual budget includes the operating departments of the general fund, special revenue fund, debt service fund, capital project fund, enterprise funds, and other approved funds that may be established as needed. The budget encompasses a fiscal year that begins on July 1 and ends on June 30. The budget is prepared by the City Manager with the cooperation of all City departments, on a basis that is consistent with generally accepted accounting principles.

1. Proposed Budget – A proposed budget shall be prepared annually by the City Manager with participation of all City Departments consistent with provisions of the City Charter and state budget laws.
 - a. The budget shall include (1) revenues, (2) personnel costs, (3) operating and maintenance supply costs, (4) general services costs, and (5) capital and other (non-capital) costs.

- b. The budget review process shall include public hearings. At the time the proposed budget is transmitted to members of the City Commission by the City Manager, a copy will be made available for public inspection at City Hall and advertised in a local newspaper of general circulation. No earlier than seven days after the proposed budget is transmitted to the City Commission and at least seven days in advance of budget adoption, a public hearing takes place to give the public an opportunity to comment on the proposed budget. Notice of public hearing must be advertised at least seven days in advance of the public hearing.
 - c. The City Commission, prior to the first day of the fiscal year, will adopt an annual budget at a public meeting. The annual budget shall be advertised at least one week prior to the meeting. The proposed budget is prepared by the City Manager and transmitted to members of the City Commission for its review with sufficient time given for the City Commission to address policy and fiscal issues.
2. Adoption – The budget shall be adopted by the approval of a budget resolution that specifies the anticipated revenues by appropriate categories, the proposed expenditure totals for each department, each non-departmental expense, and for each fund covered by the budget. Amendments to the budget must be approved by resolution. The budget shall be adopted at the fund/department level, which is the legal level of budgetary control. The current year’s budget may be adjusted to reflect changes in local economy, changes in priorities or services needs, receipt of unbudgeted revenues and for unanticipated expenditures.

B. Balanced Budget

The operating budget will be balanced with anticipated revenues, including appropriated unencumbered surplus, equal to proposed expenditures. All funds within the budget shall also be balanced.

C. Planning

The City will utilize a decentralized budget process. All departments will be given an opportunity to participate in the budget process and submit funding requests to the City Manager.

D. Reporting

Periodic financial reports will be prepared and distributed to the City Manager and Department Heads. These reports allow Department Heads to manage their budgets and enable the City Manager to monitor and control the budget. Summary financial and budgetary reports should be presented by the City Manager to the City Commission monthly.

E. Control and Accountability

Each Department Head is responsible for ensuring that his/her department expenditures do not exceed budgeted funds. Departments cannot exceed appropriations described in the budget. Failure to achieve budgetary control will be evaluated and investigated by the City Manager.

F. Performance Measures

The City integrates performance measures and objectives into the budget document. The City will also develop a system to monitor performance in meeting these objectives.

G. Budget Transfers

Contingent upon remaining within the confines of the total department budget, each Department Head has the authority to recommend budget transfers to the City Manager. Funds within departmental budget line items can be transferred upon the recommendation of the Department Head and with approval of the City Manager.

III. Capital Budget Policies and Capital Improvement Plan

A. Scope

A capital projects plan will be developed and updated annually. A five-year Capital Improvement Program will assist in the planning, acquisition, and financing of capital projects. A major capital project is generally defined as a non-recurring capital expenditure that has an expected useful life of more than 10 years and an estimated total cost of \$25,000 or more. Examples include parks improvements, streetscapes, computer systems, trucks, loaders, and expansion of facilities.

Major capital projects will be budgeted in the Capital Improvement Fund reflecting all available resources. With the involvement of responsible departments, the City Manager will prepare the capital budget annually. The City's capital budget will be adopted with the operating budget.

B. Control

All capital expenditures must be approved as part of each department budget or in the Capital Improvement Fund. Before committing to a capital improvement project, the City Manager or his/her designee must verify fund availability.

C. Program Planning

The capital budget provides annual funding for long-term capital projects identified in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). During the annual budget process, each department submits its budget request including operating and capital needs. Upon review of the requests, major capital

projects are placed in the capital improvements fund. Other capital outlay is placed in the department's operating budget. Capital outlay is generally defined as an individual item of excess of \$5,000 with a life expectancy of more than two years but less than 10 years.

Citywide capital improvements are assessed and prioritized based on the City's objectives and goals, the City's comprehensive work plan, and the City's strategic plan.

D. Timing

At the beginning of the fiscal year, the City Manager or his/her designee will work with Department Heads to schedule the appropriate timing of capital purchases to ensure the availability of funds.

E. Reporting

Periodic financial reports will be provided to enable the City Manager to monitor and control the capital budget and to enable the Department Heads to manage their capital budgets.

IV. Debt

A. Policy Statement

Debt results when one borrows from an individual or an institution. The borrower receives funds to acquire resources for current use with an obligation for repayment later. The debt from borrowing generally must be repaid with interest.

The City of Decatur recognizes that to maintain flexibility in responding to changing service priorities, revenue inflows, and cost structures, a debt management strategy is required. The City strives to balance service demands and the amount of debt incurred. The City realizes that failure to meet the demands of growth may inhibit its continued economic viability, but also realizes that too much debt may have detrimental effects as well.

The goal of the City's debt policy is to maintain a sound fiscal position and to protect the credit rating of the City. When the City of Decatur utilizes debt financing, it will ensure the debt is financed soundly and conservatively.

B. Conditions for Using Debt

Debt financing of capital improvements and equipment will be done only when one or more of the following four conditions exist:

1. When non-continuous projects (those not requiring continuous annual appropriations) are desired;

2. When it can be determined that future users will receive a benefit from the improvement;
3. When it is necessary to provide basic services to residents and taxpayers;
4. When total debt, including that issued by overlapping government entities, does not constitute an unreasonable burden to residents and taxpayers.

C. Sound Financing of Debt

When the City utilizes debt financing, it will ensure that the debt is soundly financed by:

1. Taking a prudent and cautious stance toward debt, incurring debt only when necessary;
2. Conservatively projecting the revenue sources that will be used to pay the debt;
3. Insuring that the term of any long-term debt incurred by the City shall not exceed the expected useful life of the asset for which the debt is incurred and shall be limited to capital improvements only;
4. Determining that the benefits of the improvement exceed the costs, including interest costs;
5. Maintaining a debt service coverage ratio which ensures that combined debt service requirements will not exceed revenues pledged for the payment of debt;
6. Analyzing the impact of debt service on total annual fixed costs before bonded long-term debt is issued; and,
7. Maintaining total debt service for general obligation debt that does not exceed 10 percent of the net operating revenues. Net operating revenues are all general fund revenues available after accounting for transfers between other City funds.

D. Post-Issuance Tax Compliance for Tax-Exempt Debt

The City shall comply with all federal and state laws, rules and regulations related to the issuance of debt.

1. Responsibility- The City Manager shall be responsible for reviewing the requirements and responsibilities of the City under the Policy with bond counsel on or before the closing date of any Debt issued by the City to include preparation of disclosure documents such as the Preliminary Official Statement. Proper personnel shall have the opportunity to review the Preliminary Official Statement for completeness and accuracy. Continuing disclosure obligations shall also be met.
2. Dissemination and Training- The policy shall be disseminated to all relevant personnel in the City and to the auditor. Appropriate training will be provided to all personnel directly involved in the administration of tax-

exempt debt to ensure they comply with the provisions of the Policy. The City Manager shall consult as appropriate with qualified attorneys with respect to the content of such training.

3. Review- The policy shall be reviewed and revised annually by the City Manager and redistributed to all relevant personnel in the City and to the auditor as needed. The City Manager shall annually conduct a due diligence review of all Debt currently outstanding to ensure proper compliance with each of the provisions of the Policy. If the City Manager discovers non-compliance with any provisions of the Policy, steps necessary to correct the noncompliance will be taken within ten (10) business days of the conclusion of the annual due diligence review. Records of all corrective action taken shall be retained in accordance with the Policy.
4. Provisions
 - a. Record Keeping- All records relating to the Debt needed to comply with Section 6001 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the “Code”) shall be maintained. These records shall be kept in paper or electronic form and shall include, among other things, (i) basic records relating to the transaction (including the bond documents, the opinion of bond counsel, etc.), (ii) documents evidencing the expenditure of the proceeds of the Debt, (iii) documentation evidencing the use of Debt-financed property by public and private entities (e.g., copies of management contracts, leases and research agreements) and (iv) documentation pertaining to any investment of Debt proceeds (including the purchase and sale of securities, SLG subscriptions, yield calculations for each class of investments, actual investment income received from the investment of the proceeds of the Debt, guaranteed investment contracts and rebate calculations. Such records must be maintained as long as the Debt is outstanding, plus three years after the final payment or redemption date of the respective Debt.
 - b. Use of Proceeds- A list of all property financed with the proceeds of the Debt shall be created and maintained. The use of such property shall be monitored to ensure that such use does not constitute “private business use” within the meaning of the Code. Without limiting the foregoing, each contract, including but not limited to management contracts and leases, relating to such property shall be reviewed by legal counsel prior to the execution of such contract. The list of property shall be reviewed at least annually to ensure that none of the property has been sold.

- c. Remedial Action- In the event that property financed with the proceeds of the Debt is used in a manner that constitutes “private business use” or the property is sold, the remediation provisions of Treasury Regulation § 1.141-12 shall be carried out in consultation with bond counsel.
- d. Yield Restriction- If bond counsel advises that a fund or account needs to be yield restricted (i.e., not invested at a yield in excess of the Debt), the moneys on deposit in such fund or account shall be invested in United States Treasury Obligations – State and Local Government Series, appropriate “yield reduction payments” shall be made if permitted by the Code or the City Manager shall establish other procedures to ensure that such fund or account is yield restricted.
- e. Rebate- At the time the Debt is issued, the City Manager shall determine if he or she reasonably expects that one of the arbitrage rebate exceptions will be satisfied. If the arbitrage rebate exception relates to the time period over which the proceeds of the Debt are spent, the City Manager shall verify that the appropriate expenditures have been made at each milestone. If one of the milestones is not satisfied or the City Manager does not reasonably expect that one of the arbitrage rebate exceptions will be satisfied, an outside arbitrage rebate consultant shall be retained unless the City Manager has determined that positive arbitrage will not be earned.

V. Accounting, Audits, and Financial Reporting

The City shall maintain a system of financial monitoring, control, and reporting for all operations and funds in order to provide effective means of ensuring that overall City goals and objective are met.

A. Accounting Records and Reporting

The City will maintain its accounting records in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations and in a manner to facilitate an efficient audit process. The City will report its financial condition and results of operations in accordance with state regulations and Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) described in Governmental Accounting, Auditing, and Financial Reporting (GAAFR). The City’s accounts shall be kept in such a manner as to show fully the financial conditions of the City. In addition, the books shall be open to the public during business hours.

The City will maintain a Chart of Accounts that complies with requirements of the State of Georgia and is in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

B. Auditing

An independent auditor or auditing firm will annually perform the City's financial audit. The auditor must be a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) that can demonstrate that s/he has the capability to conduct the City's audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. The auditor's opinions will be supplemented in the City's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR). A copy of the audit will be sent to the State Auditor who will respond with comments regarding compliance. Results of the annual audit shall be provided to the City Commission in a timely manner.

C. Simplified Fund Structure

The City will attempt to minimize the number of funds. Funds will be categorized in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) for reporting purposes.

D. Financial Reporting

As a part of the audit, the auditor shall assist with the preparation of the required Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR). The CAFR shall be prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. The CAFR will be presented in a way to communicate effectively with citizens about the financial affairs of the City. The CAFR shall be made available to the elected officials, creditors, and citizens. In addition, two sets are maintained with the City's records.

Internal financial reports will be prepared that are sufficient to plan, monitor, and control the City's financial affairs. Monthly accounting reports are meant to transmit information regarding the financial situation of the City. These regular reports are made available to the City Commission, City Manager, Department Heads, and other staff as necessary.

VI. Revenues

A. Characteristics

The City shall strive for the following characteristics in its revenue structure:

1. Simplicity – The City shall strive to maintain a simple revenue structure in order to reduce compliance costs for the taxpayer and/or service recipient. A corresponding decrease in the City's cost of collection and a reduction in avoidance to pay should result.

2. Equity – The City shall make every effort to maintain equity in its revenue system. The City shall seek to minimize subsidization between entities, funds, service, customer classes, and utilities.
3. Adequacy – The City shall require that a balance in the revenue system be achieved. The revenue structure’s base shall have the characteristics of fairness and neutrality as it applies to cost of service, willingness to pay, and ability to pay.
4. Administration – The benefits of a revenue source shall exceed the cost of levying and collecting that revenue. The price of collection shall be reviewed periodically for effectiveness as a part of the indirect cost of service analysis.
5. Diversification and Stability – The City shall maintain a diversified and stable revenue structure to shelter it from short-term fluctuations in any single revenue source. The revenue mix shall combine elastic and inelastic revenue sources to minimize the effect of economic downturns.
6. Conservative Estimates –Revenues will be estimated realistically and prudently. Revenues of a volatile nature will be estimated conservatively. Conservative revenue estimates based on prior year collections may be used for revenue projections.
7. Rigorous Collection Policy – The City shall follow a rigorous and thorough policy of collecting revenues. As a last resort, real property will be sold to satisfy non-payment of property taxes.

a. **Pre-Collections.** Whenever possible, City staff shall record information from payers including name, mailing address, phone number, and email address in searchable databases for easier tracing of payers. Businesses shall provide all necessary contact information before receiving a business license, alcohol beverage license, or commercial sanitation service.

b. **Initial Notification.** Property tax payments are the responsibility of the property owner. Failure to receive a bill does not waive this responsibility. However, efforts shall be made by City staff to send tax bills to the most recent addresses available from County records to encourage timely remittances. Initial notices shall also be sent to payers for other taxes, fees, and fines before collection activities are escalated. Invoices, tickets, or enclosures may reference the consequences of nonpayment such as penalties and interest.

c. **Payment Arrangements.** Partial payment arrangements may be authorized by City staff. After the due date, waivers of penalties or interest may be authorized by management if the payer has provided required justification and meets eligibility criteria.

d. **Enforcement Techniques.** Collection techniques shall include but are not limited to second notices, emails, follow-up letters, certified mailings, and phone campaigns. City staff may use skip-tracing tools to find alternate contact information for delinquent payers. Such tools shall be used only to support compliance with tax, licensing, or other legal requirements. Site visits are also authorized for delinquent commercial accounts and, if necessary, chronically delinquent residential accounts. Amounts that remain past due are subject to liens, levies, or citations depending on the category of the debt. The City does not impose padlock levies against businesses for delinquent taxes.

Multiple notifications and legal advertisements are required before delinquent properties may be auctioned during a tax sale in accordance with the State Revenue Code. Private debt collections agencies or third-party collections agencies may be used to collect certain debts.

e. **Reporting.** Departments shall maintain printed or electronic reports of delinquent accounts including individual customer debts and a grand total. Such reports are periodically reviewed by management.

B. **Issues**

The following considerations and issues will guide the City in its revenue policies concerning specific sources of funds:

1. Non-Recurring Revenues – One-time or non-recurring revenues shall not be used to finance current ongoing operations. Non-recurring revenues should be used only for non-recurring expenditures and will not be used for budget balancing purposes.
2. Property Tax Revenues – All real and business personal property located within the City shall be valued at 50% of the fair market value for any given year based on the current appraisal supplied to the City by the DeKalb County Board of Tax Assessors.
3. User-Based Fees and Service Charges – For services associated with a user fee or charge, the direct and indirect costs of that service shall be

offset by a fee where possible. There will be an annual review of fees and charges to ensure that the fees provide adequate coverage of cost. The City Commission shall set schedules of fees and charges.

4. Intergovernmental Revenues (Federal/State/Local) – These revenue sources will be expended only for the intended purpose of grant aid. It must be clearly understood that operational requirements set up as a result of a grant or aid could be discontinued once the term and conditions of the project have terminated.
5. Revenue Monitoring – Revenues received shall be compared to budgeted revenues. Significant variances will be investigated by the City Manager or designee.

VII. Purchasing

A. **Intent**

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for the procurement of goods and services in compliance with procurement provisions of the City and the State of Georgia. The goal of this policy is to establish, foster, and maintain the following principles:

1. To consider the best interests of the City in all transactions;
2. To purchase without prejudice, seeking to obtain the maximum value for each dollar expenditure with maximum quality standards;
3. To subscribe to and work for honesty and truth in buying.

B. **Vendors**

The City will make every effort to obtain high quality goods and services at the best possible price. All procurement procedures will be conducted in a fair and impartial manner with avoidance of any impropriety. All qualified vendors have access to City business. No bidder will be arbitrarily or capriciously excluded. It is the intent of the City that competition be sought to the greatest practical degree. The conditions of the contract shall be made clear in advance of the competition. Specifications shall reflect the needs of the City.

1. Solicitation of Vendors and Submission of Bids

When a purchase for a single good is expected to exceed \$25,000, competition is required to the extent that it exists. Each department must attempt to obtain a minimum of three bids from different sources. If three sources are not possible, the seeker of the bid must attempt to obtain as many vendors as possible. Each department head shall document the competitive bidding process with records of the vendor and bids received.

Each department has full authority to determine and obtain professional and contractual services as provided for in the budget. When possible and practical, competitive quotes for professional and contractual services should be obtained. If competitive quotes are not possible, the City Manager must be notified in writing. Each department head shall document the process.

2. Interest of City Officials in Expenditure of Public Funds

No official of the City of Decatur will be interested directly or indirectly in any transaction with, sale to, work for, or contract of the City or any department of government or service involving the expenditure of public funds in violation of the City's "Ethics Ordinance." The City shall not use a vendor who is a member of the immediate family of a City Commissioner, City Attorney, City Manager, Assistant City Manager, a Department Head, Personnel Officer, or Payroll Clerk. The City shall not use a vendor for services in an operating department who is a member of the immediate family of an employee of that operating department.

3. Request for Proposal

It is suggested that, whenever appropriate, a Request For Proposal (RFP) process be used for procuring products and services. The RFP should specify the service, evaluation criteria, and terms and conditions required by the City. Large purchases should be advertised in the legal organ and other venues as time and advertising funds allow.

4. Award of Bids

Bids are awarded to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder. A responsive bid is one that conforms in all material respects to the need of the City. Responsible means a bidder who has the capability to perform the requirements.

5. Local Bidder Preference

If all other relevant factors are met, each department is authorized to negotiate with and select a local vendor if the local vendor's bid is within 10% of the lowest offer. A current City of Decatur business license is required to be considered as a local vendor.

6. Equal Opportunity

The City of Decatur will provide an equal opportunity for all businesses to participate in City contracts regardless of actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, marital status, familial status, or veteran/military status. The City will actively seek to ensure that minority-owned and operated firms have the opportunity to participate in the purchasing process, including bidding, negotiations and contract awards. The City will not knowingly conduct business with contractors who do not have a non-

discrimination policy in place that prohibits discrimination based on actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, marital status, familial status, or veteran/military status.

8. Contractors to provide drug-free workplace

Successful bidders must certify that they and their subcontractors provide a drug-free workplace for their employees.

8. Ineligible Vendors

Any person, firm, or corporation who is in arrears to the City for taxes, or otherwise, will not be qualified to bid on any purchase until their lien to the City has been cleared. No requisition will be approved for such vendors.

9.. State Contracts

The City is authorized to use state contracts in lieu of issuing bids to vendors or buying locally when it is to the economic advantage of the City or deemed appropriate by the City Manager. The state contract price may be used to establish the maximum price for a good or service.

10. Back-up Policy and Emergency Purchases

The City should strive to decrease dependency on single-source vendors in order to achieve maximum efficiency in its purchases. In order to achieve the City's fiscal independence, it is strongly suggested that each department have back-up vendors for each recurring and/or large purchase.

In cases of emergency, a contract may be awarded without competitive bidding, but the procurement shall be made with as much competition as the circumstances allow (i.e., informal quotes). An emergency is defined as a threat to life or property, or an unforeseen situation that curtails or greatly diminishes an essential service as determined by the City Manager. In the event of an emergency, the City Manager shall be contacted.

C. Decentralization of Purchasing Authority

1. Purchasing of Goods

Each department head shall have the authority to purchase individual goods costing less than \$1,000 each as long as costs remain within the approved budget. Each department head is responsible to ensure that internal control procedures, including those issued by the City Manager, are followed.

For individual goods costing over \$1,000, the department shall make every effort to solicit a minimum of three competitive prices. To the extent that an emergency condition exists or an item is supplied by only

one source, the Department Head shall inform the City Manager and make an appropriate notation.

2. Monitoring of Purchases

Although authority may be delegated, the ultimate responsibility rests with the City Manager. Purchases must be monitored to assure compliance with City policy.

D. Purchase Order (PO)

Purchase orders are not required by the City. If a vendor requires a purchase order, a PO cannot be issued unless sufficient funds are available in the budget.

The following is the established City procedure if a purchase order is required:

1. An item or service is required and sufficient funds exist in the approved budget to cover the cost of the item or service.
2. The item or service is ordered by a department.
3. The item or service is received and verified by the department.
4. The department is invoiced by a vendor for the required item or service.
5. A PO is prepared and the invoice is attached. The departmental purchasing authority must certify that funds are available to cover the cost of the purchase.
6. The PO is approved by the departmental purchasing authority.
7. The invoice and PO are reviewed by the bookkeeper or designee.
8. The invoice and PO are reviewed and authorized by the City Manager and/or the City Manager's designee.
9. Payment to the vendor is generated.

E. Petty Cash

Petty cash is used to make small cash disbursements for those purchases that must be made quickly and without prior notice on a contingency basis.

Each department has a petty cash expense account. Petty Cash is incurred as an expense for each department. Departments are monitored at least twice a year to verify account balances.

The following is the City's policy on petty cash distributions:

1. Under \$50 – cash is distributed at the department level with department head approval.
2. Over \$50 – cash distribution must be approved by the City Manager.

The following is the City’s procedure for petty cash:

1. Petty cash request form is completed. The Petty Cash request form contains details of the request and documented account numbers.
2. The petty cash request is approved by the department head.
3. Petty cash is then received by the requesting party.
4. Once the purchase is made, a receipt must be obtained.
5. The receipt is then attached to the request form and returned to the petty cash box.
6. On a regular basis, a check request must be submitted for the department’s purchases and cash box replenished and balanced.

F. City Credit Cards

1. General

For the purpose of this policy, the term ‘credit card’ equates to ‘financial transaction card’ as defined by O.C.G.A. § 16-9-30.

Each City Commissioner and the City Manager will be issued a city credit card. Per City Manager approval, management level employees will be issued a city credit card. The credit card is to be used for **City business only** to purchase goods, services, or for specific expenditures incurred under approved conditions. All purchases utilizing a city credit card must be in accordance with city policy and state law. The cardholder is the only person authorized use the credit card.

Before being issued a city credit card under this policy and state law, all authorized cardholders shall sign and accept an agreement with the city that the cardholder will use the city credit card only in accordance with the policies of the city.

2. Regulations of Use

The established monthly credit card limit per card for City Commissioners is \$3,000. The City Manager is authorized to approve credit limits for city employees.

City credit cards may not be used for the following:

- a. Any purchases for personal use.
- b. Cash refunds or advances.
- c. Items specifically restricted by this policy, unless a special exemption is granted by the City Manager.
- d. Purchases or transactions in violation of purchasing policy, transactional limits or state law.

City credit cards may be used for official city business to purchase goods and/or services that are not prohibited by this policy or state law.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The City Clerk is designated as the administrator of the city's credit cards. The administrator's responsibilities are determined by the City Manager and shall include, but not be limited to:

- a. Serve as liaison between the city's cardholders and the issuer(s) of such cards.
- b. Maintain the cardholder agreement for all cardholders.
- c. Provide instruction, training, and assistance to cardholders.
- d. Upon receipt of information indicating fraudulent use or lost/stolen cards, report such incident to the appropriate parties, including the issuer, in a timely manner.
- e. Conduct monthly review and audit of credit card transactions.
- f. Recommend the credit card issuer and system for documenting credit card transactions by cardholders.
- g. Make available for public inspection those documents related to purchases using city credit cards in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 36-80-24(b).

Employees designated as credit card approvers are responsible for reviewing the monthly credit card statement of each employee for whom they have been assigned as an approver. Responsibilities include reviewing all transactions for compliance with the city policy and state law, ensuring each transaction is coded correctly and that receipts have been produced for each transaction.

The credit card holder is responsible for documentation and safekeeping of the credit card during the employee's issuance. A receipt for each transaction must be obtained by the employee when a purchase is made using the City credit card.

This receipt shall be dated and a description of the service or item purchased and account codes shall be written on the back of every receipt or otherwise documented during the monthly statement reconciliation process. Each month, the credit card holder must submit on a timely basis documentation of credit card purchases with the credit card statement. Late submittal of credit card documentation may result in credit card privileges being cancelled.

The same standards for credit cards of receipts, documentation, reconciliation, and cancellation shall apply to membership/store cards offered by merchants such as warehouse clubs and hardware stores when an organizational account is maintained by the City.

4. Violations

Violation of the city's credit card policy or state law regarding the use of government-issued credit cards may result in suspension or revocation of city credit card privileges. Violation of the city's credit card policy may constitute a violation of the city's Personnel Rules and Regulations and cardholder may be subject to disciplinary action including, but not limited to, reprimand, suspension, demotion, or termination.

Nothing in this ordinance shall preclude the City Manager from referring misuse of a credit card for criminal prosecution.

In the event that a cardholder inadvertently makes a transaction in violation of city policy, the cardholder must report the transaction to the card administrator within 10 business days of receipt of the card transaction statement. The cardholder will be responsible for reimbursing the City the full amount of the unacceptable transaction.

G. Expense Reimbursements

Receipts for City business related expenses requiring reimbursement from the City of Decatur must be submitted to the accounting office with an expense reimbursement within 30 days of the date the expense was incurred. Each receipt shall be dated and contain a description of the service or item purchased and account codes shall be written on the back of every receipt. Each expense reimbursement form must be approved by the appropriate departmental supervisor. Failure to submit the required documentation will result in forfeiture of the reimbursement.

H. Travel Expenses

When City business travel requires advance payment to the employee for estimated travel expenses, a travel expense/reimbursement form shall be

submitted to the accounting office no less than two weeks before the travel date. Within 30 days of the final day of travel, all receipts with dates and a description of the service or item purchased will be submitted to accounting for verification purposes. If documented expenses exceed the travel advance, a reimbursement will be provided to the employee. If documented expenses are less than the travel advance, the employee will provide the City with the difference between the advance and actual expenses. Failure to provide the appropriate documentation will result in the advance being reported as income on the employee's W-2 and may result in disciplinary action. Fines such as parking violations or similar citations are not reimbursable.

VIII. Investments

A. Scope

This investment policy applies to all funds under the City of Decatur's control; excluding the City's pension funds which are invested at the direction of the City of Decatur Employees' Retirement System Board of Trustees.

B. Objectives

The following investment objectives shall be met with this policy:

1. Safety – Preservation of principal shall always be the foremost objective in any investment transaction involving City funds. Those investing funds on the City's behalf must first ensure that capital losses are avoided by limiting credit and interest risk. Credit risk is the risk of loss due to the failure of the security issuer or backer. Interest risk is the risk that market value portfolios will fall due to an increase in general interest rates.
2. Liquidity – The second objective shall be the maintenance of sufficient liquidity within the investment portfolio. The City's investment portfolio shall be structured such that securities mature at the time when cash is needed to meet anticipated demands (static liquidity). Additionally, since all possible cash demands cannot be anticipated, the portfolio should maintain some securities with active secondary or resale markets (dynamic liquidity).
3. Return on Investment – The third objective shall be the realization of competitive investment rates, relative to the risk being assumed. However, yield on the City's investment portfolio is of secondary importance compared to the safety and liquidity objectives described above.

C. Delegation of Authority

The overall management of the investment program is the responsibility of the City Manager. Responsibility for the daily investment activities will be assigned by the City Manager. The City Manager may designate an employee or employees to assist with the management and implementation of the City's investment program.

Responsibilities to fulfill this authority include: opening accounts with banks, brokers, and dealers; arranging for the safekeeping of securities; and executing necessary documents.

A system of internal controls over investments is established and approved by the City's independent auditors. The controls are designed to prevent losses of public funds arising from fraud, error, misrepresentation by third parties, unanticipated changes in financial markets, and/or imprudent action by staff and City officials. No person may engage in an investment transaction except as provided for under the terms of the policy.

D. Authorized Investments

All investment activity is required to be in compliance with Chapter 83 of Title 36 of the *Official Code of Georgia*, which establishes guidelines for local government investment procedures.

The City of Decatur may invest funds subject to its control and jurisdiction in the following:

1. Certificates of Deposit (CD's) issued by banks insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC). Deposits in excess of FDIC coverage must be collateralized by securities with a market value equal to at least 110% of the deposit. Only those securities described in Georgia Code 50-17-59 can be pledged as collateral;
2. Certificates of Deposit (CD's) issued by savings and loans associations insured by the Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corporation (FSLIC). Deposits in excess of the FSLIC coverage must be collateralized by securities equal to at least 110% of the deposit. Only those securities described in Georgia Code 50-17-59 can be pledged as collateral;
3. Obligations issued by the United States government;
4. Obligations fully insured or guaranteed by the United States government or a United States government agency;
5. Obligation of any corporation of the United States government;

6. Obligation of the state of Georgia or of other states;
7. Obligation of other political subdivision of the state of Georgia;
8. The Local Government Investment Pool of the state of Georgia managed by the State Department of Administrative Services, Fiscal Division;
9. Repurchase agreements (REPO's) issued by commercial banks insured by the FDIC and collateralized by securities described in Georgia Code 50-17-59 with a market value equal to at least 103% of the Repurchase Agreements' maturity value;
10. Repurchase agreements (REPO's) issued by primary dealers supervised by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York and collateralized by securities described in Georgia Code 50-17-59 with a market value of at least 103% of the Repurchase Agreements' maturity value; and
11. Prime Banker's Acceptances.

E. Prudence

The standard of prudence to be used by investment officials shall be the "prudent person" standard and shall be applied in the context of managing an overall portfolio. Under the "prudent person" standard, investments shall be made with judgment and care, under circumstances then prevailing, which

persons of prudence, discretion, and intelligence exercise in the management of their own affairs, not for speculation but for investment, considering the probable safety of their capital as well as the probable revenue to be gained.

The City Manager and all designees acting in accordance with 1) written procedures, 2) this investment policy, and 3) exercising due diligence shall be relieved of personal responsibility for an individual security's credit risk or market price changes, provided deviations from expectations are reported in a timely fashion and appropriate action is taken to control adverse development.

F. Diversification

The City of Decatur agrees with the premise that diversification is an important component of portfolio security. Therefore, the City shall endeavor to maintain an adequate level of diversification among its

investments. The City shall not be over invested in any one type of instrument or financial institution. No more than 25% of the total investment portfolio shall be placed with a single issuer. This limitation shall not apply to the Local Government Investment Pool or direct obligations of the United States government.

G. Maturities

To achieve the aforementioned objective of adequate liquidity within City's portfolio, the City shall attempt to match investment maturities with anticipated cash flow requirements. Unless matched to a specific cash flow, the maximum maturity of any instrument in the City's portfolio may not exceed two years from the date of acquisition by the City. In order to preserve liquidity and to lessen market risk, not more than 25% of the total portfolio may mature more than one year beyond the date of calculation. The maturity of non-negotiable time deposits may not exceed one year.

H. Safekeeping and Custody

All investment securities purchased by the City of Decatur shall be delivered against payment and shall be held in a third-party safekeeping account by the trust department of a bank insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. The City Manager, or his/her designee, shall be responsible for the selection of a financial institution for this purpose, as well as the execution of a written safekeeping agreement with the trustee.

I. Ethics and Conflicts of Interest

Officers and employees involved in the investment process will refrain from personal business activity that would conflict with proper execution of the investment program, or which would impair their ability to make impartial investment decisions. Employees and investment officials will disclose to the City Manager any material financial interests in financial institutions that conduct business with the City, and they will further disclose any large personal financial/investment positions that would be related to the performance of the City's portfolio. Employees and investment officials will subordinate their personal investment transactions to those of the City – particularly with regard to the time of purchases and sales.

J. Relationships with Banks and Brokers

The City of Decatur will select depositories through the City's banking services procurement process – including formal requests for proposals issued as needed. In selecting depositories, objective business criteria will be used. To the extent possible, preference will be given to depositories located within the City of Decatur. The creditworthiness of the institutions will be a fundamental consideration.

K. Report on Deposits and Investments

Periodic investment reports will be submitted to the City Manager. Reports should include the following: an average daily balance of investment in each investment category; a current portfolio yield for each investment type and for the portfolio as a whole; an average daily balance of uninvested collected funds; an average daily balance of uncollected funds; and a percent of available funds invested. The report shall also provide a list of investments and accrued interest as of the last day of the quarter.

L. Performance Evaluation

The City Manager, or his/her designees, will seek to achieve a market average rate of return on the City's portfolio. Given the special safety and liquidity needs of the City, the basis used to determine whether market yields are being achieved shall be the six-month Treasury Bill.

IX. Grants

A. Scope

The purpose of this policy is to provide direction in the application, acceptance and administration of funds awarded through grants to the City from other local governments, the state or federal government, non-profit agencies, philanthropic organizations and the private sector.

B. Application and Acceptance of Grants.

1. The City Manager is given authority to make application for and accept grants that:
 - (a) are expected to be \$200,000 or less on an annual basis with no required City match; or,
 - (b) are expected to be \$100,000 or less on an annual basis with a required match of 20% or less; or,
 - (c) are expected to be \$50,000 or less on an annual basis with a required match of over 40%.
2. The City Commission must approve the application of and acceptance of any grants in excess of the limits established in Section 1 of this policy.
3. The City will assess the merits of a particular program as if it were funded with local tax dollars. Local tax dollars will not be used to make up for losses of intergovernmental aid without first reviewing the program and its merits as a budgetary increment. Therefore, no grant will be accepted that will incur management and reporting costs greater than the grant amount.

C. Grant Administration.

1. Each department must notify the City Clerk upon acceptance of any grant. Prior to the receipt or expenditure of grant revenues, the City Clerk must be provided with the following information prior to receiving grant revenues or making purchases against the grant:
 - a. Copy of grant application
 - b. Notification of grant award

 - c. Financial reporting and accounting requirements including separate account codes and/or bank accounts.
 - d. Schedule of grant payments

2. Each department is responsible for the management of its grant funds and periodic reporting.

X. Fixed Assets

A. Fixed Asset Criteria

A fixed asset is defined as a financial resource meeting all of the following criteria:

1. It is tangible in nature.
2. It has a useful life of greater than one year.
3. It is not a repair part or supply item.

4. It has a value equal to, or greater than, the capitalization threshold of \$5,000.

Keeping an accurate record of the City's fixed assets is important for a myriad of reasons. Some of the most important reasons that the City needs to keep a good record of fixed assets are: for financial statement information, for insurable values, for control and accountability, for maintenance scheduling and cost analysis, for estimating and accounting for depreciation, for preparation of capital and operating budgets, and for debt management.

B. General Policy

1. Each Department Head is ultimately responsible for the proper recording, acquisition, transfer, and disposal of all assets within their Department. *City property may not be acquired, transferred, or disposed of without first providing proper documentation.* A fixed asset information form must accompany each step.

2. Recording of Fixed Assets

Unless otherwise approved by the City Clerk, all recordable fixed assets must be recorded within 30 calendar days after receipt and acceptance of the asset.

A fixed asset form must be attached to the purchase order before submitting request for payment.

Assets will be capitalized at acquisition cost, including expenses incurred in preparing the asset for use.

Donated assets shall be recorded at fair market value as determined by the Department Head. Fair market value may be defined as, but is not limited to, an average of documented prices for equivalent items from three separate vendors.

The City will recognize acquisition costs based on extended pricing. For example, in acquiring equipment, if three personal computers (PC) were acquired simultaneously at \$2,000 each, this would be an asset of \$6,000 consisting of 3 PCs. It would not be 3 separate acquisitions of \$2,000.

For equipment purchases, title is considered to pass at the date the equipment is received. Similarly, for donated assets, title is considered to pass when the asset is available for the agency's use and when the agency assumes responsibility for maintaining the asset.

Constructed assets are transferred from the construction in progress account to the related building, improvements other than buildings, or equipment accounts when they become operational. Constructed buildings, for example, are assumed to be operational when an authorization to occupy the building is issued, regardless of whether or not final payments have been made on all the construction contracts.

3. Acquisition of Fixed Assets

There are various methods by which assets can be acquired. The asset acquisition method determines the basis for valuing the asset. Fixed assets may be acquired in the following ways:

- New purchases
- Donations
- Transfers from other City departments
- City surplus
- Internal/external construction
- Lease purchases
- Trade-in
- Forfeiture or condemnation

4. Lease Purchases

Assets may be lease-purchased through installment purchases (an agreement in which title passes to the Department) or through lease financing arrangements (an agreement in which title may or may not pass).

Departments considering a lease purchase for greater than \$10,000 and other than from an established, City approved contract, must consult with the City Manager.

5. Transfer of Fixed Assets

An asset transfer between departments usually represents the sale of an item by one department to another and may be treated as a new purchase. A transfer between related departments under the same control (Police and Fire, for example) may, if desired, be treated as a transfer rather than sale. That is, the asset is recorded under the new Department with original acquired date and funding amount.

A fixed asset form must be sent to the finance office for all transfers.

6. Sale of Fixed Assets, Non-Fixed Assets, and Confiscated Goods

The City is interested in full realization of the value of goods it purchases.

The City policy is aimed at making sure all surplus is disposed to the economic advantage of the City.

Sale of fixed assets and other surplus goods by a department must be to the highest, responsible bidder and must be conducted by sealed bid or by auction, including online auctions .

Central Supply is responsible for receiving, storing, and safeguarding all auction materials before, during, and after the auction. Public Safety will be responsible for the storage and safeguarding of all small, high value items, such as jewelry.

Central Supply will also administer the sale of all surplus property including Fixed Assets, Non-Fixed Assets, and Confiscated Goods under the supervision of the Public Works Director.

Reporting

Central Supply will issue a request for surplus goods available for auction on a quarterly basis to each department.

The department head will submit a description form for each auction item. This form will include at minimum a description of the item, serial number, fixed assets number, estimate of value, date of sale, and amount of sale. Large quantities of similar items may be reported on one form, unless it is a Fixed Asset.

Accounting will keep the original fixed asset form and the description form in the same file after a fixed asset has been declared surplus.

Advertising

After each quarterly reporting period Central Supply will publish a list online of surplus items that are available for use by city departments. Departments will have ten (10) working days from the publication of the list online to request a transfer of the item to their department. Items will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis. If the item is not claimed for departmental transfer within ten working days it will be auctioned to the highest, responsible bidder.

The auction must be publicized in accordance with GA Code 36-37-6 and other applicable state laws.

At the conclusion of an auction a list of unsold items will be published on the city's web site for donation to non-profit organizations on a first-come, first-served basis.

Sale of the Item

Eligibility. Members of the general public may participate as buyers at public sales, in sealed bids, and auctions. No employee whether full-time, part-time or temporary, of the City of Decatur, member of the employee's household and/or the employee's immediate family, or any person acting on the employee's behalf may participate in public sales if the employee has had any role in declaring the item surplus, processing the item or related paperwork, or offering it for sale. City Commissioners are also excluded from participating in city auctions.

The Central Supply manager will be responsible for managing the seller account with Ebay and posting items for bid. He will determine the most efficient communication and listing procedures in conjunction with the Director of Public Works. The costs associated with the auction will be paid from the advertising account in Division 4910.

Department heads or their designees are responsible for providing an estimate of the value of fixed assets and confiscated goods designated for

auction. Pricing of an item will be determined by reviewing the same or similar items for sale on electric auction service. Vehicle estimates will be determined by using Kelly's Blue Book or a similar source. A reserve amount is required for all vehicle sales and estimates over \$500 dollars. Before listing an item for auction the estimated value or reserve amount must be approved by Central Supply and Accounting. The City is interested in realizing the highest possible value for its surplus items.

The buyer is responsible for pick-up and all shipping costs incurred. Vehicles will not be shipped, but require pick-up at Central Supply or Public Safety.

The City will accept cash, money orders, and cashier checks.

The sale of certain Public Safety items requires a release form for public and/or non-emergency use. The Central Supply officer is responsible for ensuring the proper disposal according to state and federal laws regarding these items. A signed release form from the buyer acknowledging proper use is required at the time of pick-up. The release form will be kept with the description form.

The city may re-list an auction item up to two (2) times if it does not meet the reserve price in a particular auction.

Recording of the sale

The date of sale, amount of sale, and signature of the buyer will be recorded on the item description form.

The Accounting Department will have access to the seller account on Ebay. The City Clerk or his designee will compare the submitted description forms to the record of sale provided by electronic auction service. A quarterly report will be prepared by the accounting office including at minimum the list of items sold, the sale price, the buyer contact information, and listing fees paid.

Revenues from the sale of confiscated goods will be issued to the police department. Revenues from the sale of all other goods will be issued to the appropriate fund.

Central Supply will coordinate with the Finance Department to properly record the sale of surplus items.

Procedures for the recording of the sale will be in accordance with GAAP.

7. Disposal of Fixed Assets, Non-Fixed Assets, and Confiscated Goods

When an asset is disposed of, its value is removed from the financial balances reported and from inventory reports; however, the asset record, including disposal information, remains on file in hardcopy form for three years, in the City Clerk's Office, after which time it is purged from the system according to general accepted accounting principles. This preserves an audit trail for disposed items, and facilitates departmental comparisons between actual or historical useful life information with useful life guidelines. Such comparisons permit a more precise definition of an asset's useful life than those provided by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) or other guidelines initially used.

A disposal action is appropriate only when certain conditions occur resulting in an asset no longer being in the possession of the agency. Assets no longer in use, which remain in the possession of the department, are considered surplus property and not a disposal.

Fixed assets may be disposed of in any one of seven ways:

- a. Sale or trade-in
- b. Abandonment/Retirement
- c. Lost or stolen
- d. Transfer
- e. Cannibalization (taking parts and employing them for like uses within the department, such as is often the practice in computer or vehicle maintenance).
- f. Casualty loss
- g. Donation to a 501 (c3) non-profit organization

The city should try to obtain the highest value out of the disposed item. If another city department does not need the item then it should be put up for auction or sealed bid. If the item is not suitable for sale or does not meet reserve requirements then it can be donated to a non-profit organization. Only when the asset is no longer in possession of the department, due to one of the seven reasons listed above, is disposal action appropriate.

Assets are "abandoned" or "retired" when there is no longer any use for them in the Department, they are of no use to any other City department, they cannot be repaired, transferred, cannibalized, sold, or traded-in. Thus meaning that, there is no safe and appropriate use for the abandoned goods to the City or for others.

Stolen items must be reported to Decatur Police and a police report filed. A copy of this report must accompany the disposal record.

Casualty losses must be documented within 24 hours of loss and reported to the City's Administrative Services Director immediately for follow-up with the City's insurance carrier.

Cannibalized items are considered surplus and are disposed of by noting cannibalization on the disposal record. Ideally, this method will allow departments to look at cannibalized items on the disposal report and assess what surplus parts may be available. Departments will send documentation of items cannibalized to the City Clerk's Office, and all remaining costs and accumulated depreciation will be removed from appropriate asset accounts in the general fixed asset fund.

All assets no longer in the possession of the department, due to one of these six qualifying conditions and after submission of all appropriate documentation to the City Clerk's Office, will be removed from the master departmental asset file and considered disposed.

Department management is responsible for reviewing disposal reports, evaluating causes and trends leading to disposals, and implementing procedures to more effectively manage and control disposals when the dispositions represent problems, inefficiencies, and/or the incurrence of unnecessary cost.

The Sanitation and Facilities Maintenance Department will not take City property for disposal without the accompaniment of proper documentation.

Disposal of Items of De Minimus Value

In accordance with O.G.G.A. 36-37-6(b), the City may dispose of property with an estimated value of \$500 or less without advertisement or the acceptance of bids. The City Manager or his/her designee is authorized to approve the disposal of property with an individual value not exceeding \$500 in such manner as he/she judges appropriate. Such disposal may include recycling or transfer to a waste collection site in addition to any of the options described in section B (7) of this policy. In such cases, the department will document the property to be disposed of through a physical log and photographs; and, when practical, provide an estimated value of the property, either individually or as a lot.

8. Physical Inventory

An annual physical inventory of all fixed assets will be performed by the City Clerk's Office. The inventory will be conducted with the least amount of interruption possible to the department's daily operation. A full report of the results of the inventory will be sent, within 30 days of completion, to all departments for verification and acceptance.

XI. Fund Balance Policy

- A. Fund balance is the cumulative difference between revenues and expenditures at the end of the City's fiscal year. It is also understood to be the difference between assets and liabilities on the balance sheet. The practice of conservative revenue estimates and carefully monitored expenditures may result in a fund balance. The City intends to maintain an unreserved unassigned fund balance in the general fund between twenty and thirty percent of the operating budget or an amount equal to 3-4 months' operating expenses. The City does not budget for contingencies and therefore, must rely on the fund balance for emergency expenditures. In some years, the City may budget to use fund balance for one-time expenditures while remaining within the acceptable level for fund balance. Fund balance may not be used to support long-term, recurring operating expenditures.

If fund balance is used to support one-time capital and one-time non-operating expenditures, the City Commission must appropriate the funds.

If, at the end of the fiscal year, the fund balance falls below the targeted range, City staff will present a plan to the City Commission for aligning the fund balance with the policy.

- B. Fund Balance Classifications. In accordance with the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Statement 54, the City recognizes the following five classifications of fund balance for financial reporting purposes:
- a. Nonspendable – non-cash assets such as inventories or prepaid items.
 - b. Restricted – funds legally restricted for specific purposes, such as grant funds.
 - c. Committed – amounts that can only be used for specific purposes pursuant to a formal vote of the City Commission.
 - d. Assigned – amounts intended to be used for specific purposes. The City Commission can choose to delegate this authority.
 - e. Unassigned – residual spendable fund balance after subtracting all above amounts and are available for any legal purpose.
- C. Spending Prioritizations.
- a) When an expenditure is incurred that would qualify for payment with either restricted or unrestricted funds, it will be paid from restricted funds.
 - b) When an expenditure is incurred that qualifies for payment from either of the three unrestricted fund balance categories, it will be applied in the following order:
 - 1) Committed, 2) Assigned, and 3) Unassigned.
- D. Committed Fund Balance. The City Commission may commit fund balance by a formal vote prior to the government's fiscal year-end for that fiscal year. Future modification or rescission of committed funds must likewise be accomplished by a formal vote of the City Commission prior to fiscal year-end.

- E. Pursuant to the requirements of Accounting Statement 54 of the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB), the City Commission hereby commits all of the revenue received by the following Special Revenue funds to be used exclusively for each respective program's operating expenditures:

Special Revenue Fund

Children & Youth Services

Economic Development

Committed Revenue Source

Attendance and registration fees

Tree bank account fees

- F. Assigned Fund Balance. The City Commission expressly delegates to the City Manager the authority under this policy to assign funds for particular purposes.