LEGISLATIVE REFERENCES

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Debt Related Financial Policies

City Council passed a set of debt-related financial policies on June 9, 1987. During FY 1998, the Budget and Fiscal Affairs Advisory Committee (BFAAC), a City Council appointed citizen committee, analyzed these debt-related financial policies, and examined the City's financial condition in comparison to other jurisdictions with superior credit ratings (other double-triple A rated jurisdictions). The BFAAC and the City Manager recommended that City Council reaffirm the updated debt-related financial policies, incorporating BFAAC's recommended updates to the policies to establish a consistent set of appropriate relationships between debt targets and limits. Because three of the six debt indicators measure the debt capacity of the City in relation to the size of the City and its economy, BFAAC recommended that these indicators should not produce debt capacity limits that vary greatly from each other. Note the terminology has been updated to reflect required changes to government accounting rules.

City Council reaffirmed its commitment to sound financial management and adopted the updated debt-related financial policies on December 9, 1997. City Council amended the policies on October 26, 1999, to allow priority consideration for an increase in the assignment of fund balance for capital project funding.

On June 24, 2008, City Council adopted the City Manager's recommendation, endorsed by BFAAC, to revise the target and limit upward reflecting the ratio of debt as a percentage of total personal income.

These updated polices are as follows:

Debt as a Percentage of Fair Market Real Property Value
Target = 1.1 percent; Limit = 1.6 percent

This ratio indicates the relationship between the City's debt and the full value of real property in the City as assessed annually at fair market value. It is an important indicator of the City's ability to repay debt because real property taxes are the primary source of the City's revenues used to repay debt. A small ratio is an indication that the City will be better able to withstand possible future economic downturns and continue to meet its debt obligations.

Debt as a Percentage of Total Personal Income
Target = 3.2 percent; Limit = 4.5 percent

This percentage is a measure of the capacity of citizens to finance tax-supported debt. A lower percentage means that taxes required to repay debt represent a smaller portion of the average citizen's income.

Debt Service as a Percentage of General Government Expenditures
Target = 8.0 percent; Limit = 10.0 percent

This ratio is a measure of the City's ability to repay debt without hampering other City services. A small ratio indicates a lesser burden on the City's operating budget.

Unassigned/Uncommitted General Fund Balance as a Percentage of General Fund Revenue
Target = Not applicable; Limit = 10 .0 percent

Unassigned General Fund Balance as a Percentage of General Fund Revenue
Target = 5.5 percent; Limit = 4.0 percent

Net Assets as a Percentage of General Revenues
Target = 5.5 percent; Limit = 4.0 percent

These ratios indicate the ability of the City to cope with unexpected financial problems or emergencies. The Unassigned/Uncommitted General Fund Balance represents the funds legally available to the City. It is desirable that the City maintain Unassigned/Uncommitted General Fund Balance that is comparable to the ratio maintained by other double-triple A rated

jurisdictions, but not to fall below the limit of 10 percent. The Unassigned General Fund Balance corresponds to the checkbook balance of the City. Both balances are important to consider. The unassigned/uncommitted balance includes commitments that the City Council has made and assignments City management has made but presumably could change. Net assets correspond to stockholders' equity for publicly traded companies. The larger the Unassigned General Fund Balance or spendable net assets, the greater the City's ability to cope with financial emergencies and fluctuations in revenue cycles.
The ratios for Unassigned General Fund Balance and spendable net assets are calculated after adjusting for the effect of subsequent year's expenditures, and funding for future equipment replacement and capital projects, grants and contributions restricted to specific programs, and extraordinary and special items.

The City will not issue tax or revenue anticipation notes to fund ongoing governmental operations. The City of Alexandria will manage its cash in a fashion that will prevent any borrowing to meet working capital needs.

The City will not issue bond anticipation notes (BAN's) for a period of longer than two years. If the City issues a BAN for a capital project, the BAN will be converted to a long-term bond or redeemed at its expiration, but will not be rolled over.

The City will continue to rely on current revenue, including its fund balance, to finance its short-lived and maintenance-oriented capital improvements. The City believes in funding a significant portion of capital improvements on a pay as you go basis; therefore, the City will continue to finance short-lived and maintenance-oriented capital improvements with current revenues, and its fund balance. The priority to consider when additional General Fund revenues become available at the end of the fiscal year would be an assignment within the General Fund fund balance for pay as you go capital.

The City will not establish a trend of using General Fund equity to finance current recurring operations. The City's General Fund equity has been built over the years to provide the City with sufficient working capital and to enable it to finance equipment replacement, capital projects, and unforeseen emergencies without borrowing. To conserve the General Fund equity balance and to avoid reliance on this balance, the City will not finance recurring operations from the General Fund equity balance for periods longer than two years as confirmed by the audited financial statements. If the audited financial statements confirm that recurring operations have been funded from the General Fund equity balance for a period longer than two consecutive fiscal years, then the City will adopt in its next ensuing budget a balanced budget in which the operating revenues meet the operating expenditures without any consideration of the General Fund equity balance.

In accordance with the City Charter and in order to meet the debt ratio targets, to schedule debt issuance, and to systematically improve the capital structure, each year the City will prepare and adopt a six-year capital improvement program. [1] This capital improvement program will identify the source of funding for all capital projects. The debt issuances that are a part of the capital improvement program will be structured to meet the City's debt policies and debt ratio targets.

The City Manager will prepare each year and submit a set of ten-year scenarios of possible future revenues and expenditures that match the ten-year Capital Improvement Program time horizon with the Approved budget to be considered by the City Council. Those scenarios will be updated to reflect the decisions of the City Council and issued with the approved budget. In order to improve financial planning and decisions, the City Manager also will annually prepare with the approved budget a set of ten-year scenarios of possible future General Fund revenues and expenditures and their effects on the debt-related financial policy ratios outlined above, including the effect of planned borrowing under the approved CIP.

General Fund Cash Capital Related Policies

On January 13, 2015 through Resolution #2660, City Council provided specific guidance regarding the amount of recurring General Fund Cash Capital applied to the CIP. City Council set minimum and target amounts for the annual General Fund Cash Capital Transfer. Providing a minimum and a target ensures that cash capital will be maintained at an acceptable level, but at

[1] While the City Charter indicates the City will prepare and adopt a six-year capital improvement program, City Council has directed staff to prepare a ten-year capital improvement program for its approval. Subsequent language in this section will reflect a ten-year plan.

same the time flexibility in setting budget priorities between the annual General Fund Operating Budget and annual cash capital transfer from the General Fund to the CIP will remain.

Recurring General Fund Cash Capital Transfer as a Percentage of General Fund Expenditures
Minimum = 2.0 percent; Target = 2.5 percent

This cash capital policy will provide City staff the flexibility to develop sustainable and affordable General Fund support to the CIP through debt service paid on General Obligation Bonds and a recurring cash capital transfer supporting City Council capital infrastructure priorities in the ten-year CIP. Furthermore, this policy will tie the cash capital closely to the General Fund, and allow cash capital to grow or decrease proportionally with the General Fund, while still providing the necessary resources to maintain the City's capital infrastructure.

In accordance with the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) budget review requirements, this table, taken from the City's FY 2014 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report is repeated here:

City of Alexandria, Virginia
Computation of Legal Debt Margin
As of June 30, 2014

Assessed Value of Real property, January 1, 2014……		$35,335,182,000
Debt Limit: 10 Percent of Assessed Value…….……		$3,533,518,200
Amount of Debt Applicable to Debt Limit:		
General Obligation Bonds	$539,780,000	
Total General Obligation Debt……		($539,780,000)
LEGAL DEBT MARGIN……		$2,993,738,200

Source: City of Alexandria Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2014, pg. 86.

Limitations on the Incurrence of General Obligation Debt:

There is no requirement in the Virginia Constitution, the Virginia Statutes or in the Charter of the City of Alexandria that the issuance of general obligation bonds of the City be subject to approval of the electors of the City at referendum.

Under the City Charter, the City Council has full authority to authorize and issue general obligation bonds. The authorizing procedure consists of the passage on first reading of an ordinance authorizing the issuance of the bonds followed by a notice of public hearing at a subsequent meeting and the final passage on second reading following the public hearing.

The only constitutional limitation on the issuance of general obligation bonds is contained in Article VII, Section 10 of the Virginia Constitution, which states that: No city or town shall issue any bonds or other interest-bearing obligations which, including existing indebtedness, shall at any time exceed ten percent of the assessed valuation of real estate in the city or town subject to taxation, as shown by the last preceding assessment for taxes.

LEGAL BASIS

The FY 2016 - FY 2025 Capital Improvement Program has been prepared pursuant to Section 6.14 of the Alexandria City Code, as amended, which states the City Manager:

"...shall submit to the Council a budget of the approved capital improvement projects for the ensuing fiscal year and for the five fiscal years thereafter, with his recommendations as to the means of financing the improvements approved for the ensuing fiscal year. The Council shall have power to accept with or without amendments or reject the approved program and approved means of financing

the ensuing fiscal year but, except in the case of emergency as provided in subsection (d) of Section 2.02 of this Charter, the Council shall not authorize any capital improvement project or make any appropriation therefore unless such project is included in the capital budget as adopted by it." [2]

[2] While the Alexandria City Code indicates the preparation of a six-year capital improvement program, at the direction of City Council, a ten-year capital improvement program is prepared for City Council approval.