

BUDGET GUIDE

A budget is a city's financial and operating plan for a period called a "Fiscal Year", and is mandated by Florida Statutes. The Town of Indian Shore's Fiscal Year begins October 1 and ends September 30. The Fiscal Year beginning October 1, 2008, is referred to as "Fiscal Year 2008-09". The Town Council is required to adopt the budget on or before September 30 each year for the coming Fiscal Year.

The Town cannot spend money unless appropriated within the budget. An appropriation is the legal approval given by the Town Council to the Town staff to spend money for a specific purpose. The budget also contains an estimate of revenues to be received by the Town during the same time period. The legal authorization to collect revenues, such as the property tax and user fees, is established by the Town Council by ordinance. Also included in the budget is the estimate of monies remaining from the prior fiscal year, called available or undesignated fund balance, which can be appropriated in the new year and spent. The Town Charter and State law require that expenditures not exceed the combination of available fund balance and revenues. The Town cannot borrow money to operate, as does the Federal government. The Town can only borrow money for major capital projects, such as the purchase of land, major equipment, or the construction of buildings and infrastructure.

The budget may be amended by a budget amendment which increases or decreases expenditures or the spending level of individual departments or a fund, as requested by the Town Administrator and approved by the Town Council.

The level of financial control within the organization currently rests at the department level. This means that the department can not exceed the approved budget without authorization, through a budget amendment, by the Town Council. This level of control is dictated by the legal advertising method that the Town currently practices of advertising the department budgets only in the local paper for the two public hearings for adoption of the new fiscal year budget.

THE BUDGET PROCESS HOW IS THE BUDGET PREPARED AND ADOPTED?

The budget process is a year-round activity. In the early part of the calendar year a comprehensive annual financial report is submitted to the Town Council by the Auditors and adopted which permits the Town Administrator and Finance Director, to begin developing the 5 Year Capital and Service Plan and framework for the proposed budget. Later in the spring, the department directors submit their departmental budgets. The Town Administrator and Finance Director then review these requests and meets individually with the department directors to finalize the Proposed Budget.

In July of each year the Town Administrator and Finance Director submit the proposed new fiscal year Budget to the Town Council. During July the Town Council establishes a maximum proposed property tax rate to be levied for the new fiscal year. This rate is included in the TRIM (Truth in Millage – Notice of Proposed Property Tax) notices mailed to all property owners in August by the Pinellas County Property Appraiser. During the month of July and August the Town Council reviews each department's budget during special work sessions.

In the month of September, two public hearings are held regarding the proposed property tax and budget for the new fiscal year with the Town council voting on the proposed budget at both public hearings. On September 30 each year, the existing fiscal year budget closes and the new fiscal year begins October 1st.

BUDGET BASIS

Annually appropriated budgets are legally adopted on a budgetary basis for the General, Special Revenue, and Enterprise Funds and are controlled on a fund and departmental level. Expenditures are recognized as encumbrances when a commitment is made (e.g., through a purchase order). Unencumbered appropriations lapse at year end.

The Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) shows the status of the town's finances on the basis of "generally accepted accounting principles" (GAAP). In most cases this conforms to the way the town prepares its budget. Exceptions are as follows:

- a. Compensated absences liabilities that are expected to be liquidated with expendable available financial resources are accrued as earned by employees (GAAP) as opposed to being expended when paid (Budget).
- b. Capital outlay items within the Enterprise Funds are recorded as assets on a GAAP basis and expended on a Budget basis.

WHAT IS A FUND?

The basic building block of governmental finance and budgeting is the "fund". Each fund is independent of all others, and is created to account for the receipt and use of specific revenues.

The General Fund is the Town's largest fund and includes governmental services such as legislative oversight, general and financial administration, law enforcement, public services, streets and roads maintenance, and library services. General Fund activities are primarily funded with property taxes, franchise fees, and certain State-shared revenues. General Fund activities typically comprise approximately 60% of the Town's annual budget.

A Special Revenue Fund is normally established to account for revenues that are restricted by statute or ordinance for a particular purpose, or where the Town wishes a separate accounting of the costs of a special project. The Town maintains two such funds: the Road and Bridge Fund to account for Local Option Gas Tax monies and a portion of the State Revenue Sharing funds designated from gas tax money to be used for street and road maintenance; The Capital Improvement Fund accounts for each separate capital project along with tracking debt payments.

An Enterprise Fund is a self supporting entity deriving its revenue from charges placed on the users of its services, much like a private business. The Town operates one enterprise fund: the Parking Fee Fund.

The Town also operates two other kinds of funds which are not included in this budget - Agency and Trust Funds.

TRUTH IN MILLAGE (TRIM)

The budget and property tax rate adoption process is governed by the State Statute known as TRIM (Truth in Millage). In Florida, properties are assessed by the county Property Appraiser and property taxes are collected by the county Tax Collector. With the approval of Amendment One by voters on January 29, 2008 property owners are eligible to receive a homestead exemption of \$25,000 plus an additional \$25,000 homestead exemption above just value of \$50,000 on their principal place of residence. All property is assessed at 100% of real value, which is approximately 85% of market value.

The Town is required to hold two public hearings for adoption of a property tax rate and budget. The first public hearing is advertised by the Property Appraiser mailing a TRIM notice to each property owner. In addition to notification of this first public hearing, the TRIM notice contains the following information:

1. The new assessed value and the assessed value for the prior year;
2. The tax bill if the current property tax rate is charged for the new year;
3. The tax bill if the rolled-back rate is levied for the new year (the rolled-back rate is that property tax rate which would derive the same amount of revenue based on the new assessed values as was raised in the prior year at the old assessed values for the Town; it discounts for inflation); and
4. The property tax bill if the advertised tax rate is adopted.

The second public hearing is advertised using a ¼ page newspaper advertisement. Accompanying this advertisement is a summary of the revenues and expenditures contained within the budget tentatively approved at the first public hearing.

GLOSSARY

The following definitions of terms are provided to aid in understanding the terminology employed in the text of the budget and other financial documents.

Account Number:

A system of numbering used to categorize or “group” accounting transactions into common areas, such as salaries, rent, and utilities expense. Account numbers are the numerical equivalent of descriptive terms, e.g., the number .12 represents the account number for regular salaries.

Accounting Period:

A period at the end of which, and for which, financial statements, budgets, or other reports are prepared, typically an annual period. The Town’s annual accounting period begins October 1 and ends September 30.

Accounting Procedures:

All processes which identify, record, classify and summarize financial information to produce financial records.

Accounting System:

The total structure of records and procedures which identify, record, classify, summarize and report information on the financial position and results of operations of a government.

Accrual Basis:

The basis of accounting under which transactions are recognized when they occur, regardless of the timing of related cash flows.

Ad Valorem Tax:

A tax levied on the assessed value of real property. This tax is also known as property tax.

Appraise:

To make an estimate of value, particularly of the value of property. If the property is valued for purposes of taxation, the less-inclusive term “assess” is substituted for this term.

Appropriation:

An authorization granted by a legislative body to incur obligations and to expend public funds for a stated purpose. An appropriation is usually limited in amount and as to the time when it may be expended.

Assessed Valuation:

A valuation set upon real estate or other property by a government as a basis for levying taxes.

Assessment:

- (1) The process of making the official valuation of property for purposes of taxation.
- (2) The valuation placed upon property as a result of this process.

Available (Undesignated) Fund Balance:

This refers to the funds remaining from the prior year which are available for appropriation and expenditure in the current year.

Balanced Budget:

A budget in which planned funds available equal planned expenditures.

Bond:

A written promise to repay a specified sum of borrowed money, called the face value or principal amount, at a specified date or dates in the future, called the maturity date(s), together with periodic interest at a specified rate. The difference between a note and a bond is that the latter typically runs for a longer period of time.

Budget:

A plan of financial operation embodying an estimate of proposed expenditures for a given period and the proposed means of financing them. Used without any modifier, the term usually indicates a financial plan for a single fiscal year.

Budgetary Basis:

Actual expenditures adjusted by the change in the end reserve for encumbrances.

Budgetary Control:

The control or management of a government or enterprise in accordance with an approved budget for the purpose of keeping expenditures within the limitations of available appropriations and available revenues.

Capital:

Any item with an expected life of more than one year and a value of more than \$750, such as automobiles, trucks, furniture, buildings, land, etc.

Capital Improvement Program:

A plan for purchasing capital expenditures over a period of years to meet capital needs arising from the long-term work program or otherwise. It sets forth each project or other contemplated expenditure in which the government is to have part and specifies the full resources estimated to be available to finance the projected expenditures.

Consumer Price Index (CPI):

A statistical description of price levels provided by the U.S. Department of Labor. The index is used as a measure of the increase in the cost of living, i.e., economic inflation.

Cost Allocation:

A method used to charge Internal Service Funds and Enterprise Funds for their share of central administration costs.

Debt Service:

The payment of principal and interest on borrowed funds, such as bonds.

Deficit:

An excess of liabilities and reserves of a fund over its assets.

Depreciation:

The decrease in value of physical assets due to use and the passage of time.

Encumbrance:

An amount of money committed for the payment of goods and services not yet received or paid for.

Enterprise Fund:

A self-supporting fund designed to account for activities supported by user charges; examples are Parking, Water, Solid Waste and Sewer Funds.

Entitlement:

The amount of payment to which a state or local government is entitled as determined by the Federal government pursuant to an allocation formula contained in applicable statutes.

Fiscal Year:

A 12-month period to which the annual operating budget applies, and at the end of which, a government determines its financial position and the results of its operations. For the Town, the fiscal year begins October 1 and ends September 30.

Fixed Assets:

Assets of a long-term character which are not intended to be sold for profit, but which are to be used in an organization's normal course of business, such as land, buildings, improvements other than buildings, machinery and equipment.

Franchise:

A special privilege granted by a government permitting the continuing use of public property, such as town streets, and usually involving the elements of monopoly and regulation.

Full-Time Equivalent (FTE):

Equates part-time and temporary positions to full-time positions based on a 2,080-hour work year. A position which works 20 hours per week (1,040 per year) equals .5 FTE.

Full-Time Position:

A position which qualifies for full Town benefits, usually required to work 35 hours per week.

Fund:

A set of interrelated accounts to record assets, liabilities, equity, revenues, and expenditures associated with a specific purpose.

Fund Balance:

The fund equity (excess of assets over liabilities) of governmental funds and trust funds.

Fund Type:

In governmental accounting, all funds are classified into eight generic fund types; General, Special Revenue, Debt Service, Capital Projects, Special Assessment, Enterprise, Internal Service, and Trust and Agency.

GAAP:

Generally accepted accounting principles as determined through common practice or as promulgated by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board, Financial Accounting Standards Board, or various other accounting standard setting bodies.

General Fund:

A fund containing revenues such as property taxes not designated by law for a special purpose. Some of the departments that are part of the General Fund include Town Administration, Finance, Building, Police, and Public Services.

General Obligation Bonds:

Bonds for the payment of which the full faith and credit of the issuing government are pledged.

Grants:

Contributions or gifts of cash or other assets from another government to be used or expended for a specific purpose, activity or facility.

Homestead Exemption:

Pursuant to the Florida State Constitution, the first \$25,000 of assessed value of a home which the owner occupies as principal residence and up to an additional \$25,000 of assessed value as approved by voters in January 2008 is exempt from the property tax.

Intergovernmental Revenues:

Revenues from other governments in the form of grants, entitlements, shared revenues or payments in lieu of taxes.

Lease-Purchase Agreements:

Contractual agreements which are termed "leases", but which, in substance, amount to installment purchase contracts.

Levy:

(Verb) To impose taxes, special assessments or service charges for the support of governmental activities.

(Noun) The total amount of taxes, special assessments or service charges imposed by a government.

Liabilities:

Debts or other legal obligations arising out of transactions in the past which must be liquidated renewed or refunded at some future date. This term does not include encumbrances.

Millage:

The tax rate on real property based on \$1 per \$1,000 of assessed property value.

Modified Accrual Basis:

The accrual basis of accounting adapted to the governmental fund type. It is a modified version of the full accrual basis of accounting that, in general, measures financial flow (tax and spend) of an organization, rather than capital accumulation (profit or loss).

Operating Budget:

Plans of current expenditures and the proposed means of financing them. The annual operating budget is the primary means by which most of the financing acquisition, spending and service delivery activities of a government are controlled. The use of an annual operating budget is usually required by law.

Operating Costs:

Outlays for such current period items as expendable supplies, contractual services, and utilities.

Ordinance:

A formal legislative enactment by the governing board of a municipality. If it is not in conflict with any higher form of law, such as a state statute or constitutional provision, it has the full force and effect of law within the boundaries of the municipality to which it applies. The difference between an ordinance and a resolution is that the latter requires less legal formality and has a lower legal status. Ordinarily, the statutes or charter will specify or imply those legislative actions which must be by ordinance and those which may be by resolution.

Other Costs:

Refers to costs which are not personnel, operating or capital in nature, such as debt service and transfers between funds.

Pay-As-You-Go Basis:

A term used to describe the financial policy of a government which finances all of its capital outlays from current revenues rather than by borrowing. A government which pays for some improvements from current revenues and others by borrowing is said to be on a partial or modified pay-as-you-go basis.

Part-Time Position:

Part-time employees work less than 35 hours per week and are not entitled to full-time employee benefits.

Personnel Costs:

Refers to all costs directly associated with employees, including salaries and fringe benefits.

Program:

A program is a distinct, clearly identifiable activity, function, cost center, or organizational unit which is budgeted as a sub-unit of a department. A program budget utilizes the separate program budgets as its basic component.

Property Tax:

A tax levied on the assessed value of real property. This tax is also known as ad valorem tax.

Purchase Order:

A document which authorizes the delivery of specified merchandise or the rendering of certain services, establishes their cost, and creates a commitment on both the provider and receiver of the product or service.

Reclassification:

The moving of an existing position from one personnel classification (title) to another based on a study by the Personnel Department or a consultant that the person is performing the duties of a classification other than that in which the employee is currently placed.

Reserve:

- (1) An account used to earmark a portion of fund balance for a particular purpose and,
- (2) An account used to earmark a portion of fund equity as legally segregated for a specific future use.

Resolution:

A special or temporary order of a legislative body; an order of a legislative body requiring less legal formality than an ordinance or statute.

Retained Earnings:

An equity account reflecting the accumulated earnings of an Enterprise or Internal Service Fund.

Revenue Bonds:

Bonds whose principal and interest are payable exclusively from earnings of an Enterprise Fund. In addition to a pledge of revenues, such bonds sometimes contain a mortgage on the Enterprise Fund's property.

Revenues:

An increase in the assets of a fund which does not increase a liability, does not represent the recovery of an expenditure, does not represent the cancellation of a liability or a decrease in assets, and does not represent a contribution of fund capital to enterprise or in internal service funds.

Rolled-Back Millage Rate:

Under Florida law, as property values are increased each year by the property appraiser due to inflation, the Town property tax rate is automatically reduced proportionately so that the Town does not automatically derive additional revenue. All property tax rate changes are calculated using the rolled-back rate as the base.

Special Assessment:

A compulsory levy made against certain properties to defray part or all of the cost of a specific improvement or service deemed to primarily benefit those properties.

Surplus:

An excess of the assets of a fund over its liabilities and reserved equity.

Tax Rate:

The amount of tax stated in terms of a unit of the tax base; for example, 25 mills per dollar of assessed valuation of taxable property.

Tax Rate Limit:

The maximum rate at which a government may levy a tax. The limit may apply to taxes raised for a particular purpose, or to taxes imposed for all purposes, and may apply to a single government, to a class of governments or to all governments operating in a particular area. Overall tax rate limits usually restrict levies for all purposes and of all governments, state and local, having jurisdiction in a given area.

Tax Roll:

The official list showing the amount of taxes levied against each taxpayer or property. Frequently, the tax roll and the assessment roll are combined, but even in these cases, the two can be distinguished.

Taxable Value:

The assessed value of property minus the homestead exemption and any other exemptions which may be applicable.

Temporary Position:

A temporary position is filled for a specified period of time, is not permanent in nature, and does not qualify for regular Town benefits.

Trust Funds:

Funds used to account for assets held by a government in a trustee capacity for individuals, private organizations, other government and/or other funds.

User Charges:

The payment of a fee for direct receipt of a public service by the party benefiting from the service.