

Readers' Guide

BASIS OF ACCOUNTING/BUDGETING

FUND ACCOUNTING

The accounts of the Borough are organized on the basis of funds and account groups; each is considered a separate accounting entity. Fund accounting is designed to demonstrate legal compliance and to aid in financial management by segregating transactions of various Borough functions and activities. The operations of each fund are accounted for with a separate set of self-balancing accounts that comprise its assets, liabilities, fund equity, revenues, and expenditures or expenses, as appropriate. Government resources are allocated to, and accounted for, in individual funds based upon the purposes for which they are to be spent and the means by which spending activities are controlled. The various funds are grouped into three generic fund types: governmental, proprietary, and fiduciary. In addition, the School District is classified as a component unit of the Borough. More detailed information about the funds of the Borough can be found at the beginning of the Budget By Funds section of this budget.

BASIS OF ACCOUNTING

Basis of accounting refers to the method by which revenues and expenditures are recognized in the accounts and reported in the financial records of the Borough.

Modified Accrual

For financial reporting at the fund level, in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP), all governmental funds of the Borough use the modified accrual basis of accounting. Revenues are recognized when they become both measurable and available. A revenue is "measurable" when the amount of the transaction can be reasonably determined. "Available" means the revenues are collectible within the current period or soon enough thereafter to pay liabilities of the current period. For the Borough, revenues collected within 45 days of the end of the fiscal year are available for that fiscal year. Property tax revenues are accounted for (accrued) when they are levied and available to finance expenditures of the current period. Hotel-motel room taxes are accounted for (accrued) in the period they are both due and collected. Delinquent sales tax revenues are accrued when collected. Certain grant revenues are dependent upon expenditures, and revenues from these grants are recognized when the expenditures are made; revenues from other grants are recognized on the cash basis. Charges for services and miscellaneous revenues are recognized on the cash basis. Interest income is accrued when earned. For investments with maturities greater than one year, unrealized gains and losses are recorded at the end of the reporting period. Expenditures are generally recognized under the modified accrual basis of accounting when the related fund liability is incurred. However, principal and interest on general long-term debt and employee annual leave are recognized when due.

Accrual

The proprietary funds are accounted for using the accrual basis of accounting for financial reporting in accordance with GAAP. Revenues are recognized when earned, except for revenues from land disposals, which are recognized on the installment method. Expenses are recognized when they are incurred, except for estimated landfill closure and postclosure care costs which are recognized based on landfill usage.

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Operating Transfers

Transactions between funds are reflected as operating transfers in this budget document. Transfers from the General Fund exceed transfers in from other funds because taxes and state revenues are collected in the general fund and transferred to other funds to cover expenditures/expenses. Education, debt service, capital projects, transit, and Carlson Activity Center are the usual funds that receive operating transfers from revenues collected in the general fund. The expenditures/expenses for these services are accounted for in their own funds, rather than in the general fund, in order to demonstrate legal compliance and to aid in financial management by segregating transactions of these Borough functions and activities.

BASIS OF BUDGETING

For the governmental funds, the Borough recognizes revenues and expenditures for budgetary purposes on a basis most similar to the modified accrual basis of accounting described above. The proprietary funds (enterprise and internal service), however, use a budgetary basis very different from their accounting basis. Only one budgetary basis is used for the entire Borough. Therefore, the budgetary basis of the proprietary funds is the same as for the governmental funds.

Although proprietary funds use the accrual basis of accounting, their budgets more closely follow the modified accrual method used for other funds. For example, the proprietary fund budgets include capital outlay amounts for the initial purchase of fixed assets, but do not include budget amounts for depreciation of those fixed assets. Conversely, the proprietary fund statements in the Borough's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report do not reflect capital outlay expenditures but do include depreciation expense. In addition, the Solid Waste Disposal Enterprise Fund budget does not include an amount for recognition of increases and decreases in the landfill closure and postclosure care cost liability; when landfill closure and postclosure care activity is ready to begin, those amounts will be budgeted.

There are three primary differences between the modified accrual basis of accounting and the budgetary basis used by the Borough: encumbrances, intragovernmental cost allocations (IGCP), and employee annual leave.

Encumbrances. Encumbrances represent commitments related to unperformed contracts for goods or services and are recognized as expenditures under the Borough's budgetary basis. Encumbrance accounting, under which purchase orders, contracts, and other commitments for the expenditure of monies are recorded in order to reserve that portion of the applicable appropriation, is utilized as an extension of formal budgetary control. Encumbrances outstanding at year-end and related budgets are carried forward to the new fiscal year for budgetary purposes in the Borough's financial records. The budgets presented in this document, however, do not include budget increases related to carried-forward encumbrances. For GAAP financial reporting purposes, outstanding encumbrances at year-end are reported as reservations of fund balances and do not constitute expenditures or liabilities because the commitments will be honored during the subsequent fiscal year.

Intragovernmental Cost Allocations (IGCP). For budgetary purposes, the intragovernmental allocations of overhead costs among funds are treated as revenues and expenditures/expenses. However, for GAAP financial reporting, intragovernmental allocations are considered reimbursements and are treated as an adjustment to expenditures/expenses; that is, an increase in expenditures/expenses in the reimbursing fund and a corresponding decrease in expenditures/expenses in the reimbursed fund.

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The Borough's budgetary basis allows for the appropriation of the full cost of providing support functions, rather than the net cost after the other funds reimburse the support functions.

Employee Annual Leave. Annual leave (paid time off) is earned by employees as they work. Any unused leave must be paid to terminating employees. Under the modified accrual basis of accounting, the Borough's liability for annual leave is only recorded when it becomes due and payable to an employee. However, the Borough budgets for annual leave as it is earned by employees. This ensures that the Borough has the resources to pay its obligations to employees when they come due.

Lapsing of Appropriations. Annual operating appropriations lapse at year-end, except for that portion related to encumbered amounts. Encumbrances and encumbrance accounting are described above. Appropriations for those special revenue, capital projects, and enterprise projects funds with multi-year budgets do not lapse until the purpose of the appropriation has been accomplished.