

Financial Policy #01: Financial Management

Effective Date: July 14, 2022 Resolution No. 614

Replaces and Cancels: Replaces Financial Policy #01: Financial Management; July 25, 2019
Resolution No. 561

References:

PURPOSE

To provide the necessary tools to ensure the City is capable of meeting its immediate and long-term financial and service level objectives. These policies serve as guidelines for both financial planning and internal financial management of the City.

The City of Ridgefield is accountable to its citizens for the use of public dollars. Resources must be used wisely to ensure adequate funding for the services, public facilities, and infrastructure necessary to meet the community's present and future needs.

OBJECTIVES

1. To guide City Council in management policy decisions that have significant fiscal impact.
2. To set forth operating principles that minimize the cost of government and financial risk.
3. To implement balanced and fair revenue policies that provide adequate funding for desired programs.
4. To maintain appropriate financial capacity for present and future needs.
5. To promote sound financial management by providing accurate and timely information on the City's financial condition.
6. To protect the City's credit rating and provide for adequate resources to meet the provisions of the City's obligations on all municipal debt.
7. To ensure the legal use of financial resources through an effective system of internal controls.

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I. GENERAL INFORMATION

The City of Ridgefield uses the Washington State Auditor's Office prescribed Budgetary, Accounting and Reporting System (BARS) for local governments.

Funds

Funds are used to account for and record designated information. A fund is a fiscal and accounting entity with a self-balancing set of accounts recording cash and other financial resources, together with all related liabilities and residual equities or balances, and changes therein, which are segregated for the purpose of carrying on specific activities or attaining certain objectives in accordance with special regulations, restrictions, or limitations.

Fund Types:

General Government Funds:

General Government funds are accounted for on a modified accrual basis of accounting. Following are the General Government funds used by the City.

General Fund: The General Fund is used to account for all of the financial resources of the government, except those required to be accounted for in another fund.

Special Revenue Funds: Special revenue funds are used to account for the proceeds of specific special revenue sources legally restricted or committed to expenditures for specific purposes.

Debt Service Funds: Debt Service funds are used to account for accumulation of resources for and payment of general government long-term debt principal and interest. It does not include the payment of principal and interest on debt associated with an enterprise fund.

Capital Projects Funds: Capital projects funds are used to account for financial resources used in the acquisition or construction of capital facilities or infrastructure not financed by proprietary or trust funds.

Proprietary (Business Type) Funds:

Proprietary funds are used to account for the proprietary or business-type activities for the City. Proprietary funds consist of enterprise funds and internal service funds. Enterprise funds are accounted for on a full accrual basis of accounting.

Enterprise Funds: Enterprise funds account for operations that are financed and operated in a manner similar to private business enterprises, where the intent of the governing body is that the costs of providing the goods or services to the general public on a continuing basis be financed or recovered primarily through user charges. Enterprise funds are maintained on a full accrual basis of accounting.

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Internal Service Funds: Internal service funds are used to account for the financing of goods or services provided by one department or agency to other departments or agencies of the governmental unit on a cost reimbursement basis. The City's Equipment Replacement Fund is established as an Internal Service Fund.

II. BUDGET MANAGEMENT

Budget Development

Refer to **Financial Policy #07: Budget** for more detailed information.

Department directors have primary responsibility for formulating budget proposals in accordance with City Council and City Manager priority direction, and for implementing the budget once they are adopted.

The Finance Department is responsible for conducting the overall preparation and administration of the City's budget. This includes providing information on revenues and expenditures, updating costs and revenues, organizing data in an understandable fashion, and creating and providing tools for budget development.

The Finance Department assists department management in developing their budget proposals including identifying and analyzing budget issues, formulating solutions and alternatives, and implementing any necessary changes.

The budget is prepared and implemented on an annual basis in accordance with RCW 35A.33. The budget includes revenue and expenditure categories that correspond to the State's Budgeting, Accounting and Reporting System (BARS) categories.

The City develops budgets for the General and Enterprise operating funds, Special Revenue, and Equipment Replacement funds of the City. Budgets are also developed in the Debt Service fund to account for principal and interest payments and in the Capital Project fund to account for capital expenditures and associated capital funding sources.

Budget Adjustments and Amendments

The City Council adopts the budget at the fund level. Budget amendments are needed when total expenditures in a fund are expected to exceed the adopted budget for that fund. This may occur due to policies or programs approved by the City Council after the budget was adopted or due to unanticipated expenses. In addition, the City Council may choose to amend the budget in the event of a material change in the City's revenue sources during the year. Minor changes to anticipated revenues or expenditures do not require City Council to adopt a budget amendment. Budget amendments are authorized by City Council through an ordinance.

Budget adjustments within the City Council adopted budget for a fund proceed as follows:

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- The Finance Department receives a request for a budget adjustment from a department. Budget changes can also occur based on new information or documentation that the Finance Department receives directly.
- The Finance Department reviews the request. Adjustments that simply move budget amounts within a department and that do not represent a change in a policy or program are processed by the Finance Department. Budget adjustments that increase the budgeted amount for one department that are offset by decreases in another department are reviewed by the City Manager or other designated person. If approved, the Finance Department makes the requested adjustment as long as it does not change the total budget appropriations at the fund level.
- Council approval is required if the requested adjustment changes the total budget appropriations at the fund level. The Finance Department will verify whether there are sufficient resources for the adjustment and prepare a budget amendment and ordinance for Council approval.

Budget Monitoring

Budgets are developed and monitored at the line-item level but are managed at the fund level. A department director can overspend on one line item within their department without the need for a budget adjustment as long as it is balanced out by an under expenditure on another line item. The total expenditures for a fund cannot exceed the total budget for the fund.

Department directors are responsible and accountable for their department budget.

Monthly reports that compare budget to actual will be created by the Finance Department and provided to the appropriate department director and supervisor for review and response if large discrepancies are identified.

City Positions and Staffing Levels

The budget approved by the City Council will fund a number of authorized full time equivalent City positions. The City's authorized positions will be included in the budget document and/or included in labor agreements approved by City Council. City Council will approve any new permanent City positions prior to the positions being filled. Temporary and seasonal positions do not require City Council approval as long as the funding to support the expenditure is provided for in the adopted budget.

III. REVENUES

The City will strive to maintain a diversified and stable revenue system to shield the City from short-term fluctuations from any one revenue source.

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The City will work to develop and maintain sustainable revenue sources to ensure its viability over the long term.

Revenue estimates adopted by City Council should be made with consideration to the sensitivity of both local and regional economic activities.

The City will establish all user charges at a level associated with the cost of providing the service.

The City will set fees and user charges for each enterprise fund, such as Water, and Storm Water Drainage, at a level that, along with other anticipated revenue, fully supports the total direct and indirect cost of the activity provided.

Grant revenue sources will be acquired and used whenever possible.

IV. EXPENDITURES

The City will only propose ongoing operating expenditures that can be supported by ongoing operating revenues.

The City will maintain a level of expenditures consistent with the level of services that will meet the goals and mission of the City as approved by the City Council.

Expenditures funded by one-time only sources, such as grants, must be identified and noted as such. Expenditures funded by these sources will not be included in subsequent budgets once the funding source no longer exists.

The City will maintain expenditure categories according to State statute and administrative regulation.

Expenditures associated with a grant revenue source will be identified and recorded against the corresponding grant.

V. CAPITAL ASSETS

Refer to ***Financial Policy #09: Capitalization of Assets*** for more detailed information.

The City of Ridgefield will maintain a capital asset system that meets Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) reporting requirements.

A capital asset system will be maintained to identify all City assets and their condition.

Capital assets are maintained for both the General Government and Enterprise funds.

Straight line depreciation will be calculated and charged appropriately against the asset.

VI. FUND BALANCE

Fund balances are created and maintained to provide capacity to:

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1. Offset significant downturns in the economy.
2. Provide sufficient cash flow to meet daily financial needs.
3. Meet all statutory and City Council approved loan covenant requirements for required debt reserves to pay debt service.
4. Maintain the ability to meet scheduled equipment repair and replacement needs that sustain city services at an acceptable level to prevent physical deterioration of city assets.
5. Provide the capacity to pay large unanticipated expenses, such as the payment of vacation and sick leave balances for employees that retire or leave employment with the City.

Fund Balance represents the difference between the fund's assets and the fund's liabilities. A positive fund balance should be maintained to properly manage a fund.

Reserves are a portion of the fund balance that is restricted or categorized to use for a designated purpose. The following definitions (though the City may not use all of these categories at any one time) are published by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board – Pronouncement No. 54:

- Non-spendable: Amounts that cannot be spent due to form; for example, inventories, prepaid amounts, long-term and notes receivables, and other restricted items. Also includes amounts that must be maintained intact legally or contractually.
- Restricted: Amounts constrained for a specific purpose by external parties, or constitutional provision, such as a requirement for revenue bonds to set aside funds in a debt service reserve account.
- Committed: Amounts constrained or restricted for a specific purpose by a government using its highest level of decision-making authority. Action by the legislative authority is required to remove or change this amount.
- Assigned: Used for funds to classify any remaining positive amounts not identified as non-spendable, restricted, or committed. These amounts should not result in a deficit in unassigned fund balance.
- Unassigned (remaining fund balance that is not reserved): This is the excess or residual amount of resources that exceed the amount expended, less amounts identified as non-spendable, restricted, committed, or assigned. If the residual amount is negative, the assigned amount should be reduced accordingly.

The City has determined the need to create the following reserves and fund balances with the priority identified:

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Priority #1- Debt Service Reserve:

Purpose: This reserve account will be established by any fund that budgets debt service, as an expense item in the fund. The purpose of this account is to create the financial ability to pay for principal and interest due on outstanding debt.

Amount: The amount allocated will be determined by bond issuance and/or loan covenant requirements and adjusted annually. The amount will come from a portion of the annual operating revenue generated in the fund that pays debt service.

Category: Identified as a “Committed” fund balance.

Priority #2 - Operations and Maintenance Reserve:

Purpose: This reserve account will be established by any fund that budgets ongoing operations and maintenance. The purpose of this account is to create the financial ability to pay operating expenses from month to month given the routine and seasonal fluctuations in the City’s revenue and expenses.

Amount: The General Fund and Street Fund operations and maintenance reserve will be set at 60 days of prior year actual operating expenses less any one time or capital outlay expenses. The operations and maintenance reserve for Enterprise Funds (water and stormwater) will be set at 90 days of prior year actual operating expenses less any one time or capital outlay expenses for water and 60 days of prior year actual operating expenses less any one time or capital outlay expenses for stormwater. Reserve amounts will be updated annually during the budget process. The source of the operations and maintenance reserve will come from the amount of annual operating revenue that exceeds the annual operating expenses for a fund.

Category: Identified as “Unassigned” fund balance.

Priority #3 - Revenue Stabilization Reserve:

Purpose: This reserve account will be established in the General Fund. The purpose of this reserve account is to provide the financial ability to cover operating expenses during a longer-term revenue shortfall due to reduced ongoing revenue receipts or a downturn in the economy. This reserve will allow the City to sustain service levels while the City Council implements policies that respond to and mitigate the revenue shortfall.

Amount: The amount will be calculated annually at 10% of the prior year actual revenues less any one-time revenues such as grant allocations and inter-fund transfers.

Category: Identified as “Unassigned” fund balance.

Priority #4 – Separation Reserve

Purpose: This reserve account will be established by any fund that budgets personnel expense. The purpose of this account is to provide the financial ability to cover retirement payout obligations

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for City staff. Accrued vacation hours are paid in full upon separation. Accrued sick leave is paid per union agreement or personnel policy upon separation. This reserve will allow the City to cover anticipated payouts without impacting ongoing operations and service levels.

Amount: The amount will be calculated at 30% of the anticipated payouts for the following ten years per financial model. The amount allocated to the reserves will be updated annually during the budget process.

Category: Identified as “Unassigned” fund balance.

Priority #5 - Capital Reserve:

Purpose: This reserve account will be used by any fund that budgets capital and/or large maintenance projects as an expense item in the fund or uses a capital projects fund to budget and pay for these expenses. The purpose of this account is to create the financial ability to pay for unanticipated capital needs typically resulting from a natural disaster or other unanticipated event that damages City infrastructure.

This fund may with specific appropriation by City Council be used for investment in revenue producing capital projects or repair and replacement of existing infrastructure at the end of the asset’s useful life, or in the event of a failure of the asset.

Amount: The amount allocated will be calculated at 1% of prior year net capital assets. The amount will come from a portion of the annual operating revenue generated in the fund that pays for these types of projects.

Replenishment of Reserves – The following criteria will be used to restore the Capital Reserve Fund based upon the minimum reserve guideline:

1. If the reserves are drawn down by 25-50% of reserve fund balance, then a budgetary plan shall be implemented to return the reserve level to between 75-100% of the minimum reserve balance over a 5-7 year period.
2. If the reserves are drawn down by 10-25% of reserve fund balance, then the budgetary plan to restore the minimum reserve balance shall be structured over a 3-5 year period.
3. If the reserves are drawn down by 0-10% of reserve fund balance, then the budgetary plan to restore the minimum reserve balance shall be structured over a 1-3 year period.

Category: Identified as “Assigned” fund balance unless a resolution or budget amendment is processed that identifies a specific amount to be used for a specific item or purpose, then this amount would be classified as “Committed” fund balance.

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Priority #6 - Capital Repair and Replacement Reserve (Enterprise Funds)

Purpose: This reserve account will be used to set aside funds for future repair and replacement of utility infrastructure. The purpose of this account is to create the financial ability to pay for repair or replacement of existing utility infrastructure at the end of the asset's useful life, or in the event of a failure of the asset. Use of these funds for specific repair and replacement projects must be appropriated by City Council through the budget process or by emergency declaration in the event of a significant failure of the asset.

Amount: The amount will be allocated on an annual basis as 5% of the previous year utility receipts from rates and will be deposited into a separate fund balance. The minimum target fund balance for this account is 2% of the historical cost for infrastructure, not to include machinery and equipment which is included in the Equipment Replacement Fund Reserve in the accompanying enterprise fund.

Replenishment of Reserves – The following criteria will be used to restore the Capital Repair and Replacement Reserve Fund based upon the minimum reserve guideline:

1. If the reserves are drawn down by 25-50% of reserve fund balance, then a budgetary plan shall be implemented to return the reserve level to between 75-100% of the minimum reserve balance over a 5-7 year period.
2. If the reserves are drawn down by 10-25% of reserve fund balance, then the budgetary plan to restore the minimum reserve balance shall be structured over a 3-5 year period.
3. If the reserves are drawn down by 0-10% of reserve fund balance, then the budgetary plan to restore the minimum reserve balance shall be structured over a 1-3 year period.

Category: Identified as “Assigned” fund balance unless a resolution or budget amendment is processed that identifies a specific amount to be used for a specific item or purpose, then this amount would be classified as “Committed” fund balance.

Priority #7 - Equipment Repair and Replacement Reserve:

Purpose: This reserve account will be set-up as a separate fund to account for equipment replacement for existing City equipment and vehicles. The purpose of this fund is to create the financial flexibility to plan for replacement of these types of expenses, maintaining the City assets at an acceptable level to prevent physical deterioration.

Amount: The amount allocated will be determined by a financial model used to track the funds needed to replace existing vehicles and equipment at the end of their useful life. The amount allocated to the reserves will be updated annually during the budget process.

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Category: Identified as “Assigned” fund balance unless a resolution or budget amendment is processed that identifies a specific amount to be used for a specific item or purpose, then this amount would be classified as “Committed” fund balance.

The City will make every effort to create and maintain the fund balances and reserves identified above and based on the priorities established. The City is aware that needs may change over time and fund balance reserve amounts may be redistributed within a fund to meet the needs that occur at a given time. If it is determined that funds need to be redistributed within a fund, the fund balance with the lowest priority will be redistributed first to allow the ability to meet the need of a higher priority fund balance. In all cases, council approval or budget enactment is required before changing or redistributing the amounts allocated to a reserve account.

VII. PURCHASING

Refer to ***Financial Policy #04: Procurement of Goods and Services*** for more detailed information.

The City shall commit to the following guidelines:

- Comply with all federal, state, and local laws, adopted codes, ordinances, and stated policies in its procurement process.
- Buy competitively and wisely to obtain maximum value for the public resource dollars spent.
- Afford all bidders an equal opportunity to quote and compete on equal terms.
- Initiate and promote good, continuous vendor relations, as well as reliable alternate sources of supply.
- Buy from suppliers who maintain adequate financial strength, high ethical standards, a record of adhering to specifications and who will maintain integrity in payment terms, delivery, and service.

VIII. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

The City will make capital improvements in accordance with an adopted capital improvement plan.

The capital improvement program and the base operating budget will be reviewed at the same time. This will ensure that the City’s capital and operating needs are balanced with each other.

The City will develop a multi-year plan for capital improvements including operations and maintenance costs and update it every two years or sooner if needed. Future capital expenditures necessitated by changes in population, changes in real estate development, or changes in the economic base will be calculated and included in the capital budget projections.

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The City will identify the estimated costs and potential funding sources for each capital project proposal before it is submitted to Council for approval. The City will use intergovernmental grants, loans, and other outside resources whenever possible.

IX. LOCAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS (LID):

LID's are formed to provide an alternative means of financing for property owners, within a defined geographical area, to make improvements benefiting their property.

Improvements financed by the Local Improvement District (LID) may include street and sidewalk construction, construction of water distribution and storm water collection facilities. Assessments are determined by the size and location of each property in relation to the improvement and the benefit to the property.

An LID may be initiated by City Council resolution or by petition of the majority of property owners along the frontage of the improvement, within the boundaries of the district. Refer to RCW 35.43 for authority.

The formation of a Local Improvement District is limited to specific instances and can apply as follows:

- When a group of property owners wish to accelerate development of a certain improvement; or
- When a group of property owners desire a higher standard of improvement than the City's project contemplates; or
- When a group of property owners request City assistance in LID formation to fund internal neighborhood transportation facilities improvements.

LID projects may or may not have City funding involved. If City funding is proposed by the project sponsors (property owners), they shall request it from the City Council (through the City Clerk) in writing before the LID promotion activity begins.

X. LATECOMER AGREEMENTS

Refer to Ridgefield Municipal Code chapter 3.90 for more detailed information.

As a source of financing capital improvements, the City may work with private developers to construct projects identified in the capital facilities plan.

The City shall collect a connection or impact fee from future developers that utilize the capital improvement and reimburse the developer that built the initial capital improvement.

Construction projects considered under this agreement:

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- The project must be a project identified in the adopted capital facilities plan
- The project extension must serve anticipated future development.
- The project requires prior approval by the Community Development Director or Public Works Director.
- The latecomer agreement must be approved by City Council prior to construction.

Payment of any latecomer fee shall occur within 15 years of final acceptance of construction.

Documentation of the actual project costs and the agreement with current participants must be made prior to any reimbursements.

The reimbursements shall not exceed that amount which brings participant costs equal to zero.

XI. DEBT MANAGEMENT

Refer to ***Financial Policy #10: Debt Management*** for more detailed information.

The Debt Policy for the City of Ridgefield sets forth guidelines for the issuance and management of all financings of the City. Adherence to the policy is essential to ensure that the City maintains a sound debt position and protects the credit quality of its obligations while providing flexibility and preserving financial stability.

XII. INVESTMENTS

Refer to ***Financial Policy #08: Investments*** for more detailed information.

The policy on investment applies to the investment of all City funds excluding pension funds or trust accounts. The primary objective of investment activities shall be: 1) Safety of principal that seeks to minimize potential losses; 2) Liquidity of cash to sufficiently meet all operating requirements; and 3) Return on investment that allows for the highest market rate of return throughout budgetary and economic cycles.

The City of Ridgefield authorized investment officers will perform their duties in a manner consistent with the standard of a “prudent person,” as defined in RCW 43.250.040. A prudent person is defined as “exercising the judgment and care under the circumstances then prevailing which persons of prudence, discretion, and intelligence exercise in the management of their own affairs, not in regard to speculation but in regard to the permanent disposition of the funds considering the probable income as well as the probable safety of the capital.” The investment officer is the Finance Director.

Officers and employees involved in the investment process shall refrain from personal business activity that could conflict with the proper execution of the investment program, or which could impair their ability to make impartial investment decisions.

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The City may invest in any of the securities identified as eligible investments as defined by RCW's: 35A.40.050, 39.59, 43.250, and 43.84.080. These include Certificates of Deposit, United States Securities, Bankers' Acceptances, Repurchase Agreements and Certificates, and Notes and Bonds of the State of Washington. The City may also create investment accounts with the Clark County Treasurer's Office per RCW 36.29.020, and the Local Government Investment Pool per RCW 43.250.040. Speculative investments are not allowed.

Investment transactions shall be conducted with approved broker/dealers selected by credit worthiness and other selection criteria. Broker/dealers must be registered to provide investment services in the State of Washington.

The policy shall be to assure no single institution or security is invested into, to such an extent that a delay of liquidation at maturity is likely to cause a current cash flow emergency.

XIII. ACCOUNTING, AUDITING AND FINANCIAL REPORTING

The City will establish and maintain a high standard of accounting practices.

The accounting system will maintain records on a basis consistent with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles and the State of Washington Budgeting, Accounting, and Reporting Systems.

Regular monthly, quarterly and annual financial reports will present a summary of financial activity by major types of funds. Monthly reports will also include a summary of the investment activities by type of investment.

Where feasible, the reporting system will also provide monthly information on the total cost of specific services by type of expenditure and, if necessary, by fund.

The State Auditor's Office will audit City records annually or biannually, depending upon audit requirements, and will issue a financial opinion.

XIV. MEASUREMENT FOCUS, BASIS OF ACCOUNTING AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT PRESENTATION

Basis of accounting refers to the point at which revenues and expenditures/expenses are recognized in the accounts and reported in the financial statements. Basis relates to the timing of the measurements made, regardless of the measurement focus applied.

The government-wide financial statements are reported using the economic resources measurement focus and the accrual basis of accounting, as are the proprietary fund financial statements. Revenues are recorded when earned and expenses are recorded when a liability is incurred, regardless of the timing of related cash flows. Property taxes are recognized as

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revenues in the year for which they are levied. Grants and similar items are recognized as revenue as soon as all eligibility requirements imposed by the provider have been met.

Governmental fund financial statements report the current financial resources measurement focus and the modified accrual basis of accounting. Revenues are recognized as soon as they are both measurable and available. Revenues are considered to be available when they are collectible within the current period or soon enough thereafter to pay liabilities of the current period. For this purpose, the government considers revenues to be available if they are collected within 60 days of the end of the current fiscal period. The City considers taxes as available if they are collected within 60 days after year end. Expenditures are accrued to the period the liability is incurred if the invoice is received within 60 days of the end of the current fiscal period for all amounts, when received between day 61 and day 75 invoices exceeding \$25,000 will be accrued, and no accrual will occur after day 75 in order to facilitate preparation of financial statements and the year-end close. Debt service expenditures, as well as expenditures related to compensated absences and claims and judgments, are recorded only when payment is due.

Property taxes, sales tax, franchise fees, licenses and interest associated with the current fiscal period are all considered to be susceptible to accrual and will be recognized as revenues of the current fiscal period. Only the portion of special assessments receivable due within the current fiscal period is considered to be susceptible to accrual as revenue of the current period. All other revenue items are considered to be measurable and available only when cash is received by the City.

As a general rule the effect of interfund activity is eliminated from the government-wide financial statements. Exceptions to this general rule are payments-in-lieu of taxes and other charges between the government's water, and storm water function and various other functions of the government. Elimination of these charges would distort the direct costs and program revenues reported for the various functions concerned.

Proprietary funds distinguish operating revenues and expenses from non-operating items. Operating revenues and expenses generally result from providing services and producing and delivering goods in connection with a proprietary fund's principal ongoing operations. The principal operating revenues of the Water and Storm Water Funds are charges to customers for sales and services. Operating expenses for these funds include the cost of sales and services, administrative expenses, and depreciation on capital assets. All revenues and expenses not meeting these definitions are reported as non-operating revenues and expenses.