

**TOWN OF BROOKLYN**  
**FUND BALANCE POLICY**  
**PROPOSED**  
**8/18/2021**

**Overview**

The Brooklyn Board of Finance is responsible for appropriate accounting of public funds, sound management of municipal finances, and adequate funding of services desired by the public.

It is essential for the town to maintain reasonable levels of unexpended surplus funds in the General Fund to mitigate unanticipated expenditures and/or revenue shortfalls, without withholding funds that could otherwise be put to productive use. To ensure economic viability, the Board of Finance has established a fund balance policy to help the town maintain a prudent level of financial resources to provide essential services, maintain sufficient cash flow, and manage unanticipated expenditures.

**Background**

The Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) issued Statement No. 54, *Fund Balance Reporting and Governmental Fund Type Definitions* which provides clearer fund balance classifications that can be more consistently applied. This policy is written in accordance with Statement No. 54.

**Definitions**

Fund balance is a measurement of available financial resources and is the difference between total assets and total liabilities in each fund.

GASB Statement 54 distinguishes fund balance classified based on the relative strength of the constraints that control the purposes for which specified amounts can be spent. Beginning with the most restrictive constraints, fund balance amounts will be reported in the following categories:

1. **Nonspendable fund balance** - amounts that cannot be spent because they are (a) not in spendable form (such as inventory, prepaid items, long term portions of notes receivables) or (b) legally or contractually required to be maintained intact (such as permanent fund principal).
2. **Restricted fund balance** - amounts that can only be used for the specific purposes stipulated by external parties either constitutionally or through enabling legislation (e.g.,

- grants or donations).
3. **Committed fund balance** - amounts that can only be used for the specific purposes determined by a formal action of the Board of Finance. Commitments may be changed or lifted only by referring to the formal action that imposed the constraint originally (e.g., the board's commitment in connection with future construction projects).
  4. **Assigned fund balance** - amounts intended to be used by the government for specific purposes. Intent can be expressed by the Board of Finance or by a designee to whom the governing body delegates the authority. In governmental funds other than the general fund, assigned fund balance represents the amount that is not **restricted** (#2 above) or **committed** (#3 above). This indicates that resources in other governmental funds are, at a minimum, intended to be used for the purpose of that fund.
  5. **Unassigned fund balance** - includes all amounts not contained in other classifications and is the residual classification of the general fund only. Unassigned amounts are available for any legal purpose.

### **Order of Expenditure of Funds**

When multiple categories of fund balance are available for expenditure, the town will spend funds in the following order: restricted, committed, assigned, unassigned.

### **Goals**

- Preserve the Town of Brooklyn's financial stability and maintain the town's credit worthiness while ensuring a positive cash flow in the event of temporary revenue shortfalls and/or unanticipated major expenditures.
- Avoid using the unassigned fund balance for operating expenses, as this practice has an inherently destabilizing impact on current and future operating budgets.
- Maintain a year-to-year carryover fund balance in an amount necessary for adequate cash flow and to prevent the demand for short-term borrowing. The unassigned fund balance should be approximately ten (10) percent of the general fund operating budget.
- Maintain a reserve fund for capital and non-recurring expenditures and transfer fund balance in excess of the goal to this fund or another designated fund.
- Use Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) fund classifications and hierarchies for fund balance reporting.

### **Policy**

The Town will strive to maintain an unassigned fund balance of ten (10) percent of budgeted expenditures in the General Fund.

If the unassigned fund balance exceeds the ten (10) percent target, excess funds will be transferred to a Reserve Fund for Capital and Non-recurring Expenditures or other fund and may be used for capital projects and other one-time expenses.

If the unassigned fund balance goes below the 10% minimum, the Board of Finance will take action necessary to restore the unassigned fund balance to acceptable levels within 3 years.

The Board of Finance shall review and/or update the fund balance requirements annually as part of the budget process.

### **Using Unassigned Fund Balance**

Use of the unassigned fund balance will be limited to unanticipated expenditures, emergencies, unexpected liabilities, and one-time capital expenditures that align with essential services. The unassigned fund balance should not be used on a routine or one-time basis to lower taxes or offset normal operating expenditures, unless done as part of a planned drawdown.

### **Replenishing Unassigned Fund Balance**

If the unassigned fund balance is depleted below the level established by this policy, the Board of Finance will develop a plan to replenish it within 3 years. The plan should be reviewed and modified on an annual basis until the Fund Balance Policy level is achieved. Any increase in discretionary expenditures should be limited until the unassigned fund balance is restored to the policy level.