

Glossary & Abbreviations

GLOSSARY

A

ACCRUAL BASIS: Both governmental and business-type activities are presented using the accrual basis of accounting in the government-wide financial statements and the proprietary and fiduciary fund financial statements. Under the accrual basis of accounting, revenues are recognized when earned and expenses are recognized when incurred, regardless of the timing related cash flows. Property taxes are recognized as revenues in the year for which they are levied. Grants and similar items are recognized as revenues as soon as all eligibility requirements imposed by the provider have been met.

AGENCY FUNDING: County assistance provided to semi-autonomous agencies. These are agencies not directly under the control of the County Commissioners. Examples of these include: the Health Department and Board of Education.

AGRICULTURE TRANSFER TAX: Tax on the sale of property located within an area zoned agriculture; proceeds are currently used to help fund the Agricultural Land Preservation Program.

ALLOCATE: To set apart portions of budgeted expenditures which are specifically designated to organizations for special activities or purposes (i.e., various rescue squads).

AMENDED BUDGET: The budget as adopted by the County Commissioners and adjusted to show any increases or decreases.

ANNUAL BUDGET: A budget covering a single fiscal year.

APPROPRIATIONS: A legal authorization granted by a legislative body to make expenditures and to incur obligations for specific purposes. Typically, an appropriation is limited in amount and time it may be expended.

APPROVED BUDGET: The budget as formally adopted by the Board of Commissioners for the upcoming fiscal year.

ASSESSABLE BASE: The value of taxable real and personal property within the County, as determined by the State Department of Assessments and Taxation (SDAT).

ASSESSMENT: The process of determining values of real and personal property for taxation purposes.

ASSETS: The resources owned by an entity. All assets have the capacity to provide future services or benefits to the entities that use them.

B

BALANCED BUDGET: A budget in which all expenditures are equaled by the total revenues and other financing sources. The County's General Fund budget must be balanced by State Law.

BASIS OF ACCOUNTING: Revenues and expenditures/expenses are recognized in the accounts and reported in the financial statements. It relates to the timing of the measurements made regardless of the measurement focus applied. The measurement focus identifies which transactions should be recorded. Accrual Basis and Modified Accrual Basis are two different types of accounting methods.

BASIS OF BUDGETING: The basis that was used in preparing the budget which may differ from the basis of accounting.

BOND: An investment bearing certificate of indebtedness sold by a governmental agency to generate funds. The bond guarantees payment of the original investment plus interest by a specified date or dates in the future. Bonds typically involve long-term indebtedness to pay for infrastructure.

BOND RATING: A grade indicating a governmental unit's investment qualities. Generally speaking, the higher the bond rating, the lower the interest rate and the cost of financing capital projects funded by bonds. A high rating is indicative of the Government's strong financial position. Ratings range from AAA (highest) to D (lowest).

BOND SALE: The process of raising cash to fund capital projects by selling certificates of debt guaranteed by the County Government.

BONDED DEBT: The total amount owed by the County as a result of the sale of general obligation or other bonds guaranteed by the County Government.

BUDGET: A plan of financial operations for a given period of time providing estimates of proposed expenditures and the proposed means of financing them. A means of allocating resources.

GLOSSARY

C

CAPITAL ASSETS: Property, plant, equipment, and infrastructure assets (e.g. roads, bridges, and similar items.)

CAPITAL BUDGET: The budget which funds major infrastructure projects such as parks, schools, bridges, roads, water & sewer facilities, and landfills.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CIP): A multi-year plan showing anticipated capital projects and required funding.

CAPITAL OUTLAY: An expenditure classification for items that are expected to have a useful life greater than five years or an estimated total cost of \$5,000 or more. Capital outlay expenditures include such purchases as a vehicle, machinery, and equipment.

CAPITAL PROJECTS FUND: Account for financial resources to be used for the acquisition or construction of major capital facilities (other than those financed by business-type/proprietary funds). The Capital Project Fund is a major fund.

CASH AND CASH EQUIVELENTS: Cash on hand, petty cash, demand deposits, and short term securities and certificates of deposit with an original maturity of three months or less at time of purchase.

CHART OF ACCOUNTS: The County's Chart of Accounts includes expenditure line items grouped in like categories. The following is a list of each category: *Agency Funding* *Capital Outlay* *Debt Service* *Depreciation* *Fringe Benefits* *Operating Contingency* *Operating Costs* *Personal Services* *Transfers Out*

CHARTER HOME RULE: Specified in Charter. Must provide for an elected Council. Offers broader powers than the traditional Commissioner form and Code Home Rule form.

CODE HOME RULE: Charles County's form of government. Commissioners determine structure through local enactments. County Commissioner title is retained. Offers broader powers than the traditional Commissioner form.

CONNECTION FEE: Fee charged for access to a central water or sewer system to pay for the infrastructure cost that provided the capacity.

CONTINGENCY: Budget account in which funds are set aside for unforeseen expenditures which may become necessary during the year and which have not been provided for in the context of the budget.

CONTINGENCY- INFLATION: Account set up in the CIP budget that will be used as a reserve when needed to add to a project if/when inflation occurs. This method provides for proper financial planning for cost inflation while at the same time presenting projects that are in today's dollars.

CONSTRUCTION IN PROGRESS: Significant outlays for capital assets and improvements are capitalized as Construction in Progress while projects are being constructed. Projects are not depreciated until completed or substantially completed and available for use.

D

DEBT: Duty or obligation to pay money, deliver goods, or render services under an express or implied agreement.

DEBT SERVICE FUND: Accounts for the accumulation of designated revenues for the periodic payment of principal and interest on long-term debt. The Debt Service Fund is a major fund.

DEPARTMENT: A County agency or office consisting of one or more divisions. Examples are the Department of Public Works and Department of Community Services.

DEPRECIATION EXPENSE: Annual loss of value for equipment or other asset.

E

ENCUMBRANCE: A financial commitment for services, contracts, or goods which have not as yet been delivered or performed.

ENTERPRISE FUND: Funds established for operations that have a defined customer base and are primarily funded by a service fee associated directly with the operation. These operations are accounted for in a manner similar to the private sector, where budgets are used as a management tool and are subject to the amount of activity.

EXPENSE LINE: A breakdown of operating costs into a specific area of cost. Examples are Full Time Salaries and Supplies.