

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ACCOUNTING SYSTEM: The total set of records and procedures which are used to record, classify, and report information on the financial status and operations of an entity.

ACCRUAL BASIS OF ACCOUNTING: The method of accounting under which revenues are recorded when they are earned (whether or not cash is received at that time) and expenditures are recorded when goods and services are received (whether cash disbursements are made at that time or not).

APPROPRIATION: An authorization made by the legislative body of a government which permits officials to incur obligations against and to make expenditures of governmental resources. Appropriations are usually made for fixed amounts and are typically granted for a one-year period.

ASSESSED VALUATION: A valuation set upon real estate and certain personal property by the County Assessor as a basis for levying property taxes.

ASSETS: Property owned by a government which has a monetary value.

BOND: A written promise to pay (debt) a specified sum of money (called principal or face value) at a specified future date (called the maturity date(s)) along with periodic interest paid at a specified percentage of the principal (interest rate). Bonds are typically used for long-term debt.

BUDGET DOCUMENT: The official written statement prepared by the budget office and supporting staff which presents the proposed budget to the legislative body.

BUDGET MESSAGE: A general discussion of the proposed budget presented in writing as a part of the budget document. The budget message explains principal budget issues against the background of financial experience in recent years and presents recommendations made by the County Administrator and budget officer.

CAPITAL ASSETS: Assets of significant value and having a useful life of several years. Capital assets are also called fixed assets.

CAPITAL PROJECTS BUDGET: A plan of proposed capital expenditures and the means of financing them. The capital budget is enacted as part of the complete annual budget which includes both operating and capital outlays. The capital budget normally is based on a capital improvements program (CIP).

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM: A plan for capital expenditures to be incurred each year over a fixed period of several future years setting forth each capital project, identifying the expected beginning and ending date for each project, the amount to be expended in each year, and the method of financing those expenditures.

CAPITAL OUTLAYS: Expenditures for the acquisition of capital assets.

CAPITAL PROJECTS: Projects which purchase or construct capital assets. Typically a capital project encompasses a purchase of land and/or the construction of a building or facility.

CASH BASIS: The method of accounting under which revenues are recorded when received in cash and expenditures are recorded when paid.

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CONTINGENCY ACCOUNT: A budgetary reserve set aside for emergencies or unforeseen expenditures not otherwise budgeted for.

DEBT SERVICE: Payment of interest and repayment of principal to holders of a government's debt instruments.

DEPRECIATION: (1) Expiration in the service life of capital assets attributable to wear and tear, deterioration, action of the physical elements, inadequacy or obsolescence; (2) that portion of the cost of a capital asset which is charged as an expense during a particular period.

EXPENDITURES: Where accounts are kept on the accrual or modified accrual basis of accounting, the cost of goods received or services rendered whether cash payments have been made or not. Where accounts are kept on a cash basis, expenditures are recognized only when the cash payments for the above purposes are made.

FULL FAITH AND CREDIT: A pledge of the general taxing power of a government to repay debt obligations (typically used in reference to bonds).

FUND: An independent fiscal and accounting entity with a self-balancing set of accounts recording cash and/or other resources together with all related liabilities, obligations, reserves, and equities which are segregated for the purpose of carrying on specific activities or attaining certain objectives.

FUND BALANCE: The excess of funds assets over its liabilities. A negative fund balance is sometimes called a deficit.

GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS: When a government pledges its full faith and credit to the repayment of the bonds it issues, then those bonds are general obligation (GO) bonds. Sometimes the term is also used to refer to bonds which are to be repaid from taxes and other general revenues.

GRANT: A contribution of assets (usually cash) by one governmental unit or other organization to another. Typically, these contributions are made to local governments from the state and federal governments. Grants are usually made for specified purposes.

MODIFIED ACCRUAL BASIS: The basis of accounting under which expenditures other than accrued interest on general long-term debt are recorded at the time liabilities are incurred and revenues are recorded when received in cash except for material and/or available revenues, which should be accrued to reflect properly the taxes levied and revenue earned.

MATURITIES: The dates on which the principal or stated values of investments or debt obligations mature and may be reclaimed.

OBJECT OF EXPENDITURE: Expenditure classifications based upon the types of categories of goods and services purchased. Typical objects of expenditure include:

- personal services (salaries and wages);
- operating expenses (utilities, maintenance contracts, travel, supplies and materials);
- capital outlays.

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OPERATING BUDGET: A plan of financial operation embodying an estimate of proposed expenditures for the calendar year and the proposed means of financing them (revenue estimates).

OPERATING TRANSFER: Routine and/or recurring transfers of assets between funds.

RESIDUAL EQUITY TRANSFER: Nonrecurring or nonroutine transfers of assets between funds.

RETAINED EARNINGS: An equity account reflecting the accumulated earnings of the James City Service Authority.

REVENUE: The term designates an increase to a fund's assets which:

- does not increase a liability (e.g., proceeds from a loan);
- does not represent a repayment of an expenditure already made;
- does not represent a cancellation of certain liabilities; and
- does not represent an increase in contributed capital.

REVENUE ESTIMATE: A formal estimate of how much revenue will be earned from a specific revenue source for some future period; typically, a future fiscal year.

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.

TAX LEVY: The total amount to be raised by general property taxes for the purposes stated in the resolution.

TAX RATE: The amount of taxes levied for each \$100 of assessed valuation.