

**RESOLUTION NO. 04-19**  
**A RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING MASON COUNTY FINANCIAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**WHEREAS**, financial policies and procedures play an important role in a strategic, long-term approach to financial management.

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Mason County Commissioners recognize that it is in the best interest of Mason County to establish financial policies and procedures in order to promote sound financial management.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Mason County Commissioners does hereby adopt the Mason County Financial Policies and Procedures (Attachment A).

APPROVED this 22<sup>nd</sup> day of January, 2019.

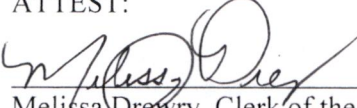
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

  
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Randy Neatherlin, Commissioner

  
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Sharon Trask, Commissioner

ATTEST:

  
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Melissa Drewry, Clerk of the Board

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

  
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Tim Whitehead, Chief DPA

C: Accounting, Treasurer, Public Works, Budget & Finance



# **Mason County Financial POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

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## I. OVERVIEW

This Financial Policies and Procedures handbook is intended to provide guidance to Mason County department heads and elected officials in properly discharging their financial responsibilities. The procedures, policies, and practices set forth below do not create an express or implied contract between Mason County and its employees, nor are they to be viewed as making any promises or creating contractual rights of any kind. The information contained in this notebook represents guidelines only, and Mason County reserves the right to limit, modify, or terminate any of these policies, procedures, or practices at any time, at its sole discretion.

## II. BUDGET

### 1) Purpose

The budget serves a number of functions. At the most basic level it is a legal document that gives County officials the authority to incur obligations and pay expenses. It is also a comprehensive business plan that should provide the following elements: public policies, a financial plan, an operations guide, and serve as a communications device. Mason County budgets on an annual calendar year basis.

### 2) Schedule

RCW 36.40 prescribes the major steps in budget preparation along with a suggested schedule for completion of each step. However, the Board of County Commissioners may also set other dates relating to the budget process, including but not limited to the dates set in RCW 36.40.010, 36.40.050, and 36.81.130 to conform to the alternate date for the budget hearing. Mason County typically adopts the alternate dates in July.

The major steps in budget preparation include:

- a) Call for Estimates. County Auditor notifies all officials to file budget requests and projected revenues for ensuing fiscal year. [RCW 36.40.010](#)
- b) Filing of estimates with Auditor or Chief Financial Officer by all officials in the format as requested by the Auditor. [RCW 36.40.010](#)
- c) Preliminary County budget prepared by Auditor or Chief Financial Officer submitted to Board of Commissioners. [RCW 36.40.050](#)
- d) Preliminary budget hearing presented to the Board of County Commissioners by the Auditor's Office. [RCW 36.40.070](#)
- e) Alternative preliminary budget hearing by the Board of County Commissioners, on the first Monday in December. [RCW 36.40.071](#)
- f) Final budget adoption by the Board of County Commissioners. [RCW 36.40.080](#)

### 3) Budget Adjustments

Budget Transfers are used when changes in spending during the year result in a deficit in

one expenditure line item and an excess in another line item, in accordance with Resolution 26-17.

- Transfers within Department's Budget

Budget transfers may be made from the excess line to the deficit line to keep their operating budget correct with the Budget Manager's approval

- Transfers Inter-Departments

All requests for budget inter-department transfers shall be submitted, with department head approval and justification, to the Board of County Commissioners for consideration and approval. The Board of County Commissioners' approval is required prior to budget expenditure.

Supplemental Appropriations are required when a department receives a new funding source that was not planned for during the budget process and will result in additional expenditures or when there are additional expenditures that weren't planned for during the budget process. Supplemental appropriations must be advertised for two weeks prior to Board approval.

Non-Debatable Emergency adjustments may be made due to an emergency caused by fire, flood, explosion, storm, earthquake, epidemic, riot, or insurrection, or for the immediate preservation of public health or any other emergency as defined by RCW 36.40.180.

Emergencies Other than Non-Debatable may be made when there is a public emergency that does not fall under the qualifications of RCW 36.40.180. Emergencies other than non- debatable must be advertised for one week prior to Board approval.

All requests for supplemental or emergency appropriations will be submitted by the department head to the Board of County Commissioners for consideration and approval. The request shall be in writing, containing the facts constituting the supplemental or emergency appropriations and the estimated amount of additional budget required. Supplemental appropriations are done as needed.

#### **4) Operating Budget**

The operating budget is the central financial planning document that encompasses all operating revenue and expenditure decisions. It establishes the level of services to be provided by each department within the restrictions of anticipated County revenues.

Current expenditures will be paid for with current revenues. One-time expenditures, or revenues of a limited or indefinite term, should be used for capital projects or one time operating expenditures to ensure that no core services are lost when such revenues are reduced or discontinued. No operating deficits in any fund balance shall be incurred at year end.

High priority will be given to expenditures that will reduce future operating costs, such as increased utilization of technology and equipment and prudent business methods.

If expenditure reductions are necessary, complete elimination of a specific, non-mandatory service is preferable to lowering the quality of existing programs.

## **5) Capital Budget**

A comprehensive six year plan for capital improvements will be prepared per RCW 82.46, updated, and included in the yearly budget. Capital project proposals should include cost estimates that are complete, reliable, and attainable. Cost estimates should be based on a thorough analysis of the project and are expected to be reliable and complete. Funding sources should also be reliable and complete and the capital project will not be budgeted unless there are reasonable expectations that revenues will be available to pay for them.

Changes to the comprehensive six year plan may be made annually during the budget process or concurrently with an amendment of the County budget, per RCW 36.70A.130 (2)(a)(iii). Any revision to the comprehensive plan would have to go to the state for review sixty days prior to adoption.

The County will provide for adequate maintenance and appropriate replacement of capital facilities and equipment. The County will also provide for maintenance schedules to ensure that facilities and equipment are maintained so as to maximize its useful lifespan. These amounts will be reflected in the capital budget plan. The intent of the Capital Budget Plan is to maintain all assets at an adequate level in order to protect the County's capital investment and to minimize unexpected future maintenance and replacement costs. Funding of repair and replacement schedule projects will be the funding priority before discretionary capital projects.

Decision making for capital improvements will be coordinated with the operating budget to make effective use of the County's limited resources for operating and maintaining facilities and capital projects.

## **6) Internal Allocation Costs**

This is the annual charge to non-General funds for the services provided by the General fund. Internal allocation costs shall be prepared with a detailed indirect cost allocation plan. The internal indirect cost allocation plan shall be developed each year with audited expenditures to identify and distribute costs of services provided by internal service departments to funds outside of the General Fund. The Auditor's Office and the Budget Office will prepare this after the yearly audit by the State Auditor's Office and incorporate the charges into the following year's budget, which is adopted by the Board of County Commissioners. These will be the actual costs charged to funds outside of the General Fund.

# **III. BASIS OF ACCOUNTING**

The basis of accounting used determines when revenues and expenditures/expenses are recognized in the accounts and reported in the financial statements.

All funds are accounted for using the cash basis of accounting, in accordance with Resolution 67-17.

Only the minimum number of funds consistent with legal and operating requirements should

be established, because unnecessary funds result in inflexibility, undue complexity, and inefficient financial administration.

In order for a special revenue fund to be created, the following two criteria must be met:

- 1) Expenditure for specified purposes – Such a limitation on spending may be imposed by external parties, constitutional provisions, enabling legislation, or board action, and
- 2) Proceeds of specific revenue sources – A substantial portion of resources must be derived from one or more specific revenue sources. A surplus in the General fund does not constitute a revenue source

The Board of County Commissioners has the authority to create or delete funds by resolution.

## **IV. ACCOUNTING POLICY, FINANCIAL SYSTEMS & REPORTING**

### **1) Accounting Policy**

Mason County will establish and maintain the highest standard of accounting practices. Accounting and budgetary systems will conform to the State of Washington Budgeting Accounting Reporting System (BARS) and local regulations.

### **2) Financial Systems**

Mason County will strive to provide the technological tools, information systems support and uninterrupted level of information systems service to sustain the successful implementation and maintenance of a sound, reliable and efficient financial management system.

The financial system shall also protect County departments against unauthorized access through information systems security and controls while allowing staff the ability to access information directly from the system.

Munis is currently the County's primary financial system. The primary financial system serves as the County's principal journal of record.

### **3) Financial Reporting**

Full disclosure will be provided in all County financial reports and bond representations.

Reports outlining the status of revenues and expenditures shall be prepared monthly on cash basis by the Budget Office. It will be distributed to the Board, elected officials, department heads, and any other interested party.

An annual financial report will be prepared by the Auditor's Office in a timely basis to meet or exceed the State Auditor's Office standards.

#### **4) State Audits**

An annual audit will be performed by the State Auditor's office and include the issuance of a financial opinion.

## **V. CASH**

Cash deposits from the various operations are remitted to the Treasurer's Office and RCW 36.29.010 stipulates the Treasurer's responsibilities over cash. All County employees or new hires who handle cash are required to review, sign, and follow the department's procedures for cash handling. For additional information and detail see Mason County Revenue (Cash) Handling Policies and Procedures.

#### **1) Receipting**

Departments that receive cash for services or fees are required to evidence receipt by pre-numbered cash receipts. Cash shall be deemed to include cash, checks, or other financial instruments that can be converted to cash. Checks should be endorsed immediately and must be maintained with other cash items in a locked and secure location. Cash receipts must be balanced and deposited with the Treasurer's Office on a daily basis, unless exemption is approved, pursuant to RCW 43.09.240. The size and amount of deposits vary by location and department. Alternative receipt practices may be adopted only by approval of the County Treasurer. Where ever possible, the functions of receipting, balancing and depositing should be performed by different personnel to ensure adequate safeguards.

#### **2) Petty Cash/Revolving Funds**

Departments may maintain petty cash or revolving funds for the payment of incidental expenses only with the Treasurer's prior approval and evidence of accounting ability to maintain the fund to the County standard. These funds are not intended for repository of cash receipts in the normal course of business and must not be commingled.

#### **3) Bank Accounts**

The use of bank or other financial institution accounts for the purpose of depositing or maintaining public funds is forbidden without the prior consent and knowledge of the Mason County Treasurer, his/her office and staff.

## **VI. INVESTMENTS**

The County Treasurer has responsibility for the investment of public funds under RCW 36.29.020. Investments are carried at book value and investments are made by fund. Investments are held by a third party trust agreement on a delivery versus payment basis and are booked electronically. Authorization to invest funds of a district or related entity is required in writing by an appointed investment officer for the district. The County Treasurer invests the County's short term cash and reserves for maximum return according to the investment policy established by the Mason County Treasurer and the

## **VII. GRANTS & FEDERAL OR STATE FUNDING**

Grant applications will be reviewed by the Board of County Commissioners with due consideration being given to whether locally generated revenues will be required to support these programs when outside funding is no longer available. Grants may be accepted if the County can be assured that the total costs and requirements of accepting funds are known and judged not to adversely impact the County's funds. Future impacts on the budget will be identified and analyzed prior to approval of grant contracts.

Grant related revenue and expenditures (including matching funds provided by the County) shall be authorized, within policy, and properly accounted for in the project accounting module of the financial management system according to Federal, State and local regulations and the terms and conditions of the grant award.

The responsibility for understanding and adhering to County, State and Federal regulations, policies or procedures belongs to the managing department of that particular grant.

### **1) Grant Project Form**

When an application for grants is approved, or when a new federal or state funding source is secured, the department must complete and provide to the County Auditor the grant project form as prescribed by the County Auditor. A signed copy of the grant must be submitted with the grant code request form to the Auditor's Office. This helps ensure the required funding source information has been gathered so the Auditor can assign the proper revenue number in accordance with the State Auditor's BARS manual.

### **2) Year End Program Contract Worksheet**

At the end of each fiscal year, the County Auditor will provide a listing of all federal and state funding sources that were reported to the State Auditor's Office on Schedule 15 and Schedule 16. Each department must complete and provide to the County Auditor the program contract worksheet as prescribed by the County Auditor. These worksheets are considered the final Schedule 15 and Schedule 16 data, which is compiled by the County Auditor into a single document.

### **3) Federal Policy**

The departments shall also use applicable cost principles from the US Code of Federal Regulations Title 2, part 200 (2 CFR 200) to determine the reasonableness, allow ability and allocation of costs applicable to federal grants and contracts.

The County shall recover the full cost of providing internal services to funds with grant revenue as permitted under the grant agreement and 2 CFR 200.

Any instance where a potential conflict of interest may arise must be disclosed in writing by the responsible department to the federal awarding agency or pass-through entity in

accordance with applicable Federal awarding agency policy. The definition of a conflict of interest is described in 2 CFR 200.318(c) Reference Mason County Conflict of Interest Policy. Any instances of violations of federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting federal awards must be disclosed in writing to the federal awarding agency or pass-through entity by the responsible department.

Elected Officials, Department Heads, and grant managers within each department are authorized to sign the required certification as stated in 2 CFR 200.415.

For billing indirect costs to grants, use the rate determined by the simplified external indirect cost allocation plan, which is calculated by the Auditor's Office.

## **VIII. DEBT**

Deficit financing and borrowing will not be used to support ongoing County services and operations. Expenses will be reduced to conform to the long term revenue forecast.

Interfund loans are permissible to cover temporary gaps in cash flow, but only by resolution that states a short term repayment schedule and at an interest rate based on the Washington State Local Government Investment Pool. The lending fund must have excess funds available and the use of those funds won't have an impact on the fund's current operations. For additional information and detail see Mason County Interfund Loan Policy.

If the Board of County Commissioners approves lease purchasing, the useful life of the item must be equal or greater than the length of the lease. The fixed asset information form must be provided by the department concurrent with the submission of the lease documents.

Debt payments shall not extend beyond the estimated useful life of the project being funded.

The Mason County will maintain good communications with bond rating agencies concerning its financial condition, and will take all appropriate and responsible measures to sustain quality bond ratings with continuous financial management efforts to enhance the County's bond ratings. Mason County follows the Mason County Debt Policy which is maintained by the County Treasurer.

### **1) Authority for County Indebtedness**

Department heads do not have the authority to commit Mason County to any indebtedness beyond current budget authority. For additional information and detail see Mason County Purchasing Policy.

Indebtedness includes, but is not limited to leases, lease-purchases, rental agreements, contracts, grants, and other obligations of short and long term debt.

The Mason County Commissioners shall be signatory to any obligations requiring short or long term indebtedness beyond current budget authority, unless the Commission has given written authority to exempt certain contracts.

## IX. REVENUE

The County will follow a vigorous policy of collecting all County revenues.

Revenue will be coded to the correct account per the Washington State BARS (Budgeting, Accounting, and Reporting System).

Grant revenue must be deposited with the Mason County grant project code as assigned by the Auditor's Office.

### **1) Accounts Receivable**

Currently, billings for services, goods, and reimbursements for funds are done through a de-centralized financial accounting system.

If revenue is anticipated, the department anticipating the revenue shall notify the Treasurer's office by Treasurer's ACH form or deposit form prior to receipt to ensure proper recording.

There will be adequate segregation of duties relating to accounts receivable. To accomplish this, the billing, cash collection, recording, and reconciliation functions should be separated. If this level of segregation of duties is not possible, compensating controls should be implemented to ensure a proper division of functional responsibility.

### **2) Collection policy**

The collection policy and any action plan shall be established by the elected official or department head, recognizing State requirements and the unique characteristics of the clients served by that department. It is the responsibility of each department to collect their accounts receivable.

Departments will review their outstanding receivables on a timely basis for past due accounts. Accounts Receivable aging reports should be run in the de-centralized accounting system in order to determine which accounts are past due. The oldest outstanding accounts receivables will be reviewed on a regular basis.

Departments have the ability to handle past due accounts along reasonable business practice guidelines.

An example of reasonable business practice could be as follows:

*A past due notice is issued for all accounts that are 30 days past due. Notices are issued by the responsible department every 30 days over a 90 day period. Notices are distinguished as "first notice" "second notice" and "final notice", with the final notice indicating that the account could go to a collection agency if not paid. At the discretion of the department or elected official, the initial notice period can be extended in limited circumstances. No receivables should be due for longer than 90 days without past due notices being issued.*

**As soon as accounts receivable are identified as uncollectible, the department should request a write-off approval from the Board of County Commissioners.**

### **3) Refunds vs. Reimbursements**

Cash refunds from vendors are payments received for returned goods; for services paid for, but not used; or for overpayments. These are the only items that may reduce expenditures. Payments received by any outside agency as reimbursements for goods or services are not refunds and should be recorded as revenue, not as a reduction of expenditures.

If the refund is received after the end of the accounting period in which the original expenditure was made, and the dollar amount of the refund is not material, a BARS revenue account established by the Auditor's office will be credited for the amount of the refund.

### **4) Public Fees & Charges**

The full cost of services shall be evaluated by each department regularly to provide a basis for setting the charge or fee. Full cost incorporates direct and indirect costs.

## ***X.EXPENDITURES***

Expenditures will be coded to the correct account per the Washington State BARS (Budgeting, Accounting, and Recording System).

The Elected Official, Department Head, or approved designee will be verifying with their signature on the voucher that the payment of the indebtedness is authorized by the Commissioners through the budget process.

### **1) Budget Appropriation and Monitoring**

The Board of County Commissioners adopts the General fund budget at the department level and the special funds at the fund level. The County will not process expenditures in excess of the total appropriation for that fund. Departments are responsible for monitoring their budget expenditures. This is especially important during the last quarter of the budget year. Invoices in excess of budget will not be paid until the budget allows. Expenditures will be approved by the Board of County Commissioners at their next regular business meeting.

Departments within the General Fund may exceed the approved budget within individual line items, but shall not exceed total departmental budgets without Board approval of a budget adjustment, per Resolution 58-17.

No fund shall exceed total fund budget without Board approval of a budget adjustment.

### **2) Travel/Business Expenditures**

For additional information and detail see Mason County Personnel Policy, Travel Expense Reimbursement.

### **3) Non-Travel Food Purchases**

Food may not be purchased for employees with County funds unless the County is hosting an official meeting at which non-County employees are in attendance or, in accordance with RCW 43.03.049, each of the following criteria is met:

- 1) The purpose of the meeting is to conduct official County business or to provide training to County employees or officials: and
- 2) The meals are an integral part of the business meeting or training session, and
- 3) The meeting or training session takes place away from the employee's or official's regular workplace, and
- 4) The County obtains a receipt for the actual costs of the meals with meetings

### **4) Purchasing**

For all new individual vendors, a completed Vendor Info Form or W9 must be submitted to the Auditor's Financial Services Department before payment to that vendor can be made. For additional information and detail see Mason County Purchasing Policy.

### **5) Lost warrants**

The County will not reissue a warrant, due to the loss of the original warrant, until a lost warrant affidavit is turned into the Auditor's Financial Services Office. A lost warrant affidavit may be turned in three weeks after the issue date of the original warrant, except in the case of a payroll warrant.

### **6) Registered Warrants**

Restricted cash flow and decreasing cash reserves require that Mason County enlist the aid of other financial institutions to hold registered warrants. The Mason County Treasurer reserve the statutory authority to issue registered warrants but has available several other alternative arrangements to cover short term financing.

### **7) Credit Cards**

Personal charges may not be made with a County credit card. Any charges which cannot be properly identified or which are not properly allowed shall be paid promptly by the card user. This includes finance charges, late fees, etc.

Retain credit card receipts with detail of purchases throughout the month. Once the credit card statement is received, reconcile receipts to the statement, attach to an invoice edit and send the edit, statement and receipts to the Auditor's Financial Services Office for payment. For additional information and detail see Mason County Credit Card Policy.

### **8) Outside Vendor Credit Accounts**

When the County has a credit balance on an outside vendor account, the balance must either be used within 90 days, or a reimbursement must be made to the County from the

vendor.

## **9) Miscellaneous**

### **Volunteer Recognition**

Mason County frequently receives assistance from volunteers in the community. County departments may provide non-monetary recognition for volunteers not to exceed the limitation on gifts, per RCW 42.52.150.

### **Other Recognition**

Celebrations/Memorials/Flowers -

No County funds shall be used to purchase gifts or flowers for County employees or relatives, except for retiring employees. For retiring employees, a gift with a value not to exceed the limitation on gifts, per RCW 42.52.150, may be given by the County.

## ***XI. ADJUSTING JOURNAL ENTRIES***

All adjusting journal entries will be accounted for by maintaining a file including the date, posting number, description, preparer's and approver's initials.

There will be adequate documentation attached to the adjusting journal entry that will explain the reasoning for the entry.

Departments may request an adjusting journal entry, but only Financial Services or Treasurer's Office may post. The approver may not be the same person as the preparer.

## ***XII. PAYROLL***

Please see the Mason County Employee Handbook and/or the Payroll/Human Resources policy for detailed payroll and benefit policies.

## ***XIII. CAPITAL ASSETS***

Capital Assets owned by the County that are required to be registered will be recorded in the name of "Mason County" and not of an individual Department or Fund. For additional information and detail see Mason County Capital Asset Policy.

### **1) Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) Funds**

The State of Washington is authorized to levy a real estate excise tax on all sales of real estate. A locally-imposed tax is also authorized. REET I and II taxes are collected by Mason County. RCW 82.46 governs the REET funds.

REET I funds can be imposed by all cities and counties. In order to impose REET II, the County must be planning under the Growth Management Act.

REET I dollars must be spent solely on capital projects that are listed in the capital facilities plan element of their comprehensive plan. Those include public works projects of a local government for planning, acquisition, construction, reconstruction, repair, replacement, rehabilitation, or improvement of streets; roads; highways; sidewalks; street and road lighting systems; parks; recreational facilities; law enforcement facilities; fire protection facilities; trails; libraries; and administrative and judicial facilities.

REET II dollars must be spent on public works projects in the capital facilities plan element of their comprehensive plan such as planning, acquisition, construction, reconstruction, repair, replacement, rehabilitation, or improvement of streets, roads, highways, sidewalks, street and road lighting systems, traffic signals, bridges, domestic water systems, storm and sanitary sewer systems, and planning, construction, reconstruction, repair, rehabilitation, or improvement of parks.

## ***XIV. FUND BALANCE***

### **1) Classification**

Mason County fund balances are classified by reserved or unreserved.

The Department of Community Development's permit fee revenues and expenditures will be analyzed by the Financial Services Department at least annually to ensure resources are properly used.

### **2) Minimum Level**

Maintenance of an adequate fund balance for the General fund to ensure sufficient resources for cash flow and to mitigate revenue shortages or emergencies shall be a priority.

The General fund's long-term fund balance target is a year-end unassigned fund balance of 15% of annual expenditures, in accordance with Resolution 58-17.