

# Village of Jackson

## Fund Balance and General Obligation Debt Limit Policies

### **PURPOSE:**

To seek to maintain a stable financial environment for the Village of Jackson's operations that allows the Village to provide quality services to residents in a fiscally responsible manner designed to keep services and taxes as consistent as possible over time. This fund balance policy is meant to serve as the framework upon which consistent operations may be built and sustained.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

The intent of this policy is to seek to avoid unanticipated, one-time expenditures, or revenue reductions resulting from external changes; to ensure funds are available as necessary to allow the Village to respond to unforeseen emergencies; to establish and maintain a pay as you go capital improvement fund attempting to minimize the need for long-term debt; to provide sufficient working capital to eliminate the need for short-term borrowing due to the timing of the receipt of short-term receivables and the remittance of short-term payables; to comply with GASB 54 while achieving the purpose as described above.

### **POLICIES:**

- *Non-spendable Fund Balance*  
At the end of each fiscal year, the Village will report the portion of the fund balances that is not in spendable form as Non-spendable Fund Balance on the financial statements
  
- *Spendable Fund Balance*  
Categories should be supported by actual plans approved by either the governing body, an appropriate officer, grant providers or enabling legislation.
  - *Restricted Fund Balance*  
At the end of each fiscal year, the Village will report "Restricted" fund balance for amounts that have applicable legal restrictions per GASB #54. In addition, encumbrances or funds restricted by enabling legislation will be reposted as "restricted".
  
  - *Committed Fund Balance*  
Prior to the end of each fiscal year, the Village will report "Committed" fund balance for long-term loan receivables such as advances to other funds and similar accounts.
  
  - *Assigned Fund Balance*  
At the end of each fiscal year, the Village will report "Assigned" fund balance for capital improvements according to the Village's Capital Improvement Plan.
  
  - *Unassigned Fund Balance*  
A minimum Unassigned Fund Balance equal to 35% and a maximum Unassigned Fund Balance equal to 75% should be maintained of total General Fund Expenditures. Should the actual amount designated for Unassigned Fund Balance fall below the desired minimum, the Village shall create a plan to restore the appropriate levels. Should the actual amount designated for Unassigned Fund Balance rise above the desired maximum, any excess funds will remain undesignated pending the Board's final decision concerning transfer to another fund. It is the policy of the Village that such excess funds will be, by Board action, reported in the spendable category of this policy. Any budget revision that will result in the Unassigned Fund Balance dropping below the minimum level will require the approval of 2/3 vote of the Village Board.

- General Obligation (G.O.) Debt Limit

The total principal amount outstanding of debt obligations carrying the G.O. pledge of the Village may not exceed an amount equal to five (5) percent of the Village's equalized value (including any tax increments) as determined by the Wisconsin Department of Revenue. As identified in the "Affordability Targets" section of this policy, the Village has imposed on itself a more restrictive direct debt burden limitation of sixty (60) percent, which is equivalent to utilization of no more than three (3) percent of its statutorily allowed debt capacity.

- Classifying Fund Balance Amounts

When both restricted and unrestricted funds are available for expenditure, restricted funds should be spent first unless legal requirements disallow it. When committed, assigned and unassigned funds are available for expenditure, committed funds should be spent first, assigned funds second, and unassigned funds last, unless the Village Board has provided otherwise in its commitment or assignment actions.

- Authority to Commit Funds

The Village Board has the authority to set aside funds for a specific purpose. Any funds set aside as Committed Fund Balance requires the passage of an ordinance by a simple majority of the Board. The passage of an ordinance must take place prior to December 31st of the applicable fiscal year. If the actual amount of the commitment is not available by December 31st, the ordinance must state the process or formula necessary to calculate the actual amount as soon as information is available.

- Authority to Assign Funds

Upon passage of the Fund Balance Policy, authority is given to the Village Administrator to assign funds for specific purposes. Any funds set aside as Assigned Fund Balance must be reported to the municipalities' governing board as soon as possible. The Village Board has the authority to remove or change the assignment of the funds with a simple majority vote. The Village Board has the authority to set aside funds with the intended use of a specific purpose. Any funds set aside as Assigned Fund Balance requires a simple majority vote and must be recorded in the minutes. The same action is required to change or remove the assignment.

- Surplus Use

At the end of each fiscal year, it is the intent of the Village to use all surpluses generated to meet the objectives of this policy. To this end, any surpluses realized in the general fund at year end shall be used first to meet fund balance policies as set forth above. If such fund balances are healthy, as determined by the Village Administrator, excess surplus will then be used for the following purposes, listed in priority order:

- Capital Improvement

After the Cash Flow and Contingency fund balance have been satisfactorily met, up to 60 percent of excess surplus may be set aside to provide the cash necessary to administer the Capital Improvement Fund. Prior to any funds being transferred, a simple majority of the Board must approve the allocation by resolution. (Additional surplus, above the aforementioned 60 percent, may be allocated to Capital Improvement, however consideration for Retirement or Refinancing of Existing Debt should be made prior to exceeding that amount).

- Retirement or Refinancing of Existing Debt

Any excess surplus remaining after Capital Improvement has been met may be used to pay principal on existing debt obligations as approved by a simple majority of the Board via resolution.

- Variation from Surplus Use Policy  
If this policy does not properly address the current needs of the Village at the time of implementation, the Board may consider alternative uses of surplus funds by modifying this document via resolution, approved by a simple majority of the Board.
- Periodic Review  
This policy will be reviewed annually by staff following each fiscal year audit or sooner at the direction of the Village Board.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **DEFINITIONS:**

Fund Balance – The difference between assets and liabilities in governmental funds. The Fund Balance consists of five categories: 1- ‘Non-spendable’ and 4 - Spendable: ‘Restricted’, ‘Committed’, ‘Assigned’ and ‘Unassigned’.

- Non-spendable Fund Balance – Describes the amount of a fund balance that cannot be spent because it is either not in spendable form or there is a legal or contractual requirement for the funds to remain intact. Examples include inventory, prepaid amounts, and land.
- Spendable Fund Balance – Describes the amount of fund balance that is available for appropriation based on the constraints that control how specific amounts can be spent. Typically, a significant portion of a government’s spendable resources can be spent only for specified purposes. The following categories define the revenue source and the level of force of the constraint on spending.
  - Restricted Fund Balance – The restricted fund balance category includes the portion of the spendable fund balance that reflects constraints on spending because of legal restrictions stipulated by outside parties (e.g., encumbrances for goods or services with outside parties-creditors, grantors outstanding at the end of the year). Also, any legal restrictions based on state statutes or grant requirements placed on the use for specific purposes. Examples include debt service funds, grant funds and impact fees.
  - Committed Fund Balance – The committed fund balance classification includes the portion of the spendable fund balance that reflects constraints that the Village has imposed upon itself by a formal action of the Village Board (for example, an ordinance passed by a Village Board). This constraint must be imposed prior to year-end but the amount can be determined later. Examples include capital expenditures, construction, and improvements under contract.
  - Assigned Fund Balance – The assigned fund balance is the portion of the spendable fund balance that reflects funds intended to be used by the Village for specific purposes assigned by more informal operational plans (e.g., capital goods replacement - the constraint on use is not imposed by external parties or by formal Board action). In Village funds other than the general fund (capital improvement funds and debt service funds), assigned fund balance represents the amount that is not restricted or limited. Examples are capital projects or equipment purchases.
  - Unassigned Fund Balance – This is the residual classification for the Villages’ General Fund and includes all spendable amounts not contained in the other classifications and, therefore, not subject to any constraints. Unassigned amounts are available for any purpose. These are the current resources available for which there are no Village self-imposed limitations or set spending plan. Although there is generally no set spending

plan for the unassigned portion, there is a need to maintain a certain funding level. Unassigned fund balance is commonly used for emergency expenditures not previously considered. In addition, the resources classified as unassigned can be used to cover expenditures for revenues not yet received. Examples are funds held as working capital and for emergencies.