

Town of Berlin Capital Policy

Introduction: The Town of Berlin capital policy was developed to help assure the sustainability of the Town's infrastructure by establishing a process for addressing maintenance, replacement and proper fixed asset accounting over the full life of capital assets. These policies are intended to serve as guidelines for coordinating capital projects and promoting sound, long-term operational and capital financing strategies for elected and appointed officials of the Town. These policies should be reviewed and adopted, at least annually, by the fiscal/budgetary and legislative bodies of the Town, respectively.

Capital Management Committee: A committee consisting of Town employees representing each of the key capital asset departments shall form the Capital Management Committee. This committee will include representatives from Public Works, Public Grounds, Public Buildings, Highway, Board of Education, Technology, Police Department, Fire Department, Town Garage, Purchasing and Accounting. The committee will meet at least monthly and will be chaired by the Town Manager or Finance Director (or the Finance Director's designee). The Committee is not a public agency of the Town and shall be an advisory committee.

The Committee will develop and update a 10-year capital plan for the Town, and the plan will include the intended funding source for each capital item. This plan will be reviewed with the fiscal/budgetary and legislative bodies as part of the annual budget process. The first year of the 10-year plan will be incorporated into the next succeeding year's General Fund budget and debt plan.

The Committee will seek to identify all capital needs of the Town and prioritize projects for each year of the plan. Prioritization will be based on:

1. **Safety:** priority will be given to public safety and risk mitigation projects;
2. **Community input:** wherever reasonably possible and financially feasible, priority will be given to capital projects with significant public support; this may not always be possible if safety projects consume a large percentage of resources;
3. **Cost:** projects will be evaluated against the scarce available resources;
4. **Alternative financing options:** consideration will be given to those proposed projects where non-Town funds (i.e., grants, donations, etc.) are available in lieu of or to supplement Town funds; and
5. **Legal or regulatory requirements:** priority will be given to capital projects mandated by legal or regulatory requirements.

Capital Reserve Fund: The Town shall endeavor to maintain a capital reserve fund of \$1,000,000. This fund is intended to support a stable tax structure for the Town. This

fund will supplement, not replace, the annual contingency line item/budget which is intended to deal with unexpected operating events during the fiscal year.

Definition of capital asset: An asset that meets the following criteria will be considered a capital asset. Anything not meeting the following criteria will be considered an operating asset.

1. An **initial, individual** cost of at least \$5,000, and
2. A useful life in excess of 2 years.

Capital assets are recorded at historical cost or estimated historical cost if purchased or constructed. Donated capital assets are recorded at estimated fair market value at the date of donation.

Financing capital assets: Different financing options will be considered based on the parameters listed below, and the Town's current debt level, current and projected interest rates, other uses of General Fund cash and mill rate target or mill rate growth target as established by the budget and legislative bodies.

Parameters	Funding Sources				
	Cash	Loans	Capital Leases	BANs (S-T)	Bonds (L-T)
Project/Asset total cost is less than \$100,000	✓		✓		
Project/Asset total cost is \$100,000-\$500,000	✓		✓	✓	
Project/Asset total cost in >\$500,000	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Asset useful life is less than 10 years	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Asset useful life is 10 years or greater	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

The Town is guided by four primary principles in selecting a funding source for capital improvements: equity, effectiveness, efficiency and timing.

1. **Equity:** Whenever appropriate, the beneficiaries of a project or service will pay for it. For example, if a project is a general function of government that benefits the entire community, such as a school, police station or library, the project will be paid for with general tax revenues or financed with general obligation bonds.

The Town will use its full faith and credit and issue general obligation bonds for projects benefiting specific users, such as water and sewer facilities, or the golf course. Revenues from the specific source, such as user fees or charges and targeted taxes and assessments, will be used to offset the general obligation debt service.

2. **Effectiveness:** In selecting a source or sources for financing projects, the Town will select one or more that effectively funds the total cost of the project. For example, funding a capital project or the debt service on a project with a user fee

that does not provide sufficient funds to pay for the project is not an effective means of funding the project.

3. **Efficiency:** If grants or current revenues are not available to fund a project, the Town will select a financing technique that provides the lowest total cost consistent with acceptable risk factors and principles of equity and effectiveness. These methods currently consist of fixed-rate general obligation serial bonds or notes issues by the Town. Short-term notes will be used to finance less significant borrowing needs. These notes will be retired prior to permanent financing. Paydowns during this period will allow the Town to reduce the amount of long-term debt and the associated issuance costs.
4. **Timing:** The Town will consider annual cashflow requirements, interest earnings, the annual tax levy due date and periodic property revaluation schedules which shift the burden. The Town should schedule debt service payments to:
 - a. Maintain adequate tax reserves for the provision of daily government operations,
 - b. Earn interest from the beginning of the fiscal year until the last month of the fiscal year, and
 - c. Seek to align grant reimbursement requests from the State & Federal governments with the expenditures they reimburse.

The Town intends to set aside sufficient current revenues to finance ongoing maintenance needs and to provide periodic replacement and renewal consistent with its philosophy of maintaining its capital facilities and infrastructure systems in good repair, to maximize a capital asset's useful life and avoid unnecessary borrowing.

Requesting department responsibility: Any department making a capital request shall follow the steps below:

1. Comply with purchasing guidelines related to written/verbal and number of quotes or bids/proposals;
2. Determine if grant financing is available (for all or part of the project) **before** adding the capital project/asset to the CIP;
3. Include a contingency for unexpected costs. The contingency should be 5-20% of total project costs. The contingency amount **shall** be identified separately from the expected cost of capital projects when presenting to Council and communicating funding needs to Finance. The precise contingency amount shall be determined based on the nature of the project, the scope of the project, the duration of the project, the status of project design and other project-specific considerations;
4. Capital requests shall be added to the 10-year capital improvement plan (CIP). This plan will be managed by the Finance Director (or a designee) and the Town

Manager, and the plan will be approved by the CIP committee annually and presented to the fiscal/budgetary authority for the Town as part of the annual budget process.

5. The department head (or designee) requesting capital is responsible for securing budget and legislative approval for the project and funding. The Finance Director (or designee) will work with the department head to identify funding alternatives and, where appropriate, with bond counsel to include in a future bond offering.
6. The department head shall work with the Town Clerk to provide appropriate resolutions and secure time on the agendas of the budgetary and legislative body's agendas for presentation and approvals.

On-going management of capital projects/asset purchase: On-going management of the capital project/asset purchase is the responsibility of the **requesting department**. Management includes:

1. Ensuring that the project meets time and budget plans as approved by the Town Council/Board of Finance, and
2. If the project will exceed time or budget plans requesting department must notify the budgetary and legislative bodies of additional time sought or money required to complete the project or purchase the item.
3. Expending resources in a timely manner based on IRS arbitrage time requirements (generally within three years if funds are secured through debt financing).

The requesting department shall work with the Finance Department to obtain purchase orders (PO) for the project/item in advance of purchases, and to manage the PO throughout the life of the project/purchase. If additional funding is needed for the project, it is the **requesting department's** responsibility to identify the source of additional funds and, if needed, the requesting department is responsible to obtain approval for all fund transfers from the Town Manager or the Town Council/Board of Finance. No change orders or increases to the scope of a project that increase the cost of the project or increase the Town's financial obligation in connection with the Project shall be valid or agreed to unless and until the Finance Department issues a PO.

The requesting department shall notify Finance when the project is complete and open POs may be closed. At the end of each fiscal year, all open POs shall be closed. It is the requesting department's responsibility to notify Finance when an open PO should be rolled to the next fiscal year. The requesting department must review the new PO to validate the starting dollar amount and that the proper account(s) is being charged.