OPERATING BUDGET POLICY

I. POLICY

The Ottawa County Board of Commissioners supports principles of budgeting, management, and accounting which promote the fiscal integrity of the County. The goal of the budget is to provide financial plan for County operations that align to the Board of Commissioner Strategic Plan/ Business Plan and communicate the same to Ottawa County residents.

II. STATUTORY REFERENCES

The Board of Commissioners may establish such rules and regulations regarding the business concerns of the County as the Board considers necessary and proper. See: MCL 46.11(m); 46.71, Act 156 of 1851, as amended. See also the specific statutory requirements of the Uniform Budgeting and Accounting Act, MCL 141.421a et seq.

III. COUNTY LEGISLATIVE OR HISTORICAL REFERENCES

Board of Commissioners Policy Adoption Date and Resolution Number: June 13, 2017; B/C 17-118

Board of Commissioners Review Date and Resolution Number: May 23, 2017; B/C 17-101

Name and Date of Last Committee Review: Planning and Policy Committee, May 11, 2017

Last Review by Internal Policy Review Team: May 1, 2017
IV. PROCEDURE

A. County Budget Philosophy

1. Alignment with Strategic Plan: The Board of Commissioners reviews and updates the County’s strategic plan annually which serves as a guide for County operations. Since the budget is the main tool for implementation of the Strategic Plan/Business Plan, the budget, to the extent possible, will be consistent with the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan/Business Plan.

2. Prudence: As stewards of taxpayer dollars and to promote stability, the budget will be prepared using conservative, but realistic estimates. The County will also avoid budgetary procedures such as accruing future years’ revenues or rolling over short-term debt to balance the current budget at the expense of future budgets. The County will include a contingency amount in the budget for unforeseen and emergency type expenditures. The amount of contingency will not exceed 3% of the General Fund’s actual expenditures for the most recently completed audit.

3. Balancing the Budget: In accordance with Public Act 621, no fund will be budgeted with a deficit (expenditures exceeding revenues and fund balance). Prudence requires that the ongoing operating budget be matched with ongoing, stable revenue sources to maintain consistent service levels.

B. Budget Formulation

1. Responsibility: The County Administrator is responsible for the preparation, presentation and control of the budget, and shall prepare an annual budget calendar and budget resolution packet for each fiscal year.

2. State law requires the County to adopt a budget for the General Fund and all Special Revenue Funds. In addition to what is required by law, the County will adopt a budget for all Debt Service Funds and Capital Projects Funds.

3. With the exception of the Capital Improvement Fund, the legal level of control, at a minimum, is the department in each fund for which a budget is adopted. The Capital Improvement Fund is appropriated by project and unexpended resources will carry over until complete. Fiscal Services may implement safeguards or guidelines for processing budget reallocations within a department to ensure sufficient resources are available.

4. Budget Basis: Except capital assets, the budget will be prepared on the same basis as the County’s financial statements. Capital assets are budgeted on cash basis of accounting.
5. Required Budget Data: As part of the budget preparation process, Department Heads and Elected Officials will provide information and justification to the County Administrator as it pertains to any of their budget requests, including new/replacement equipment and positions.

6. Departments and Elected Officials are responsible for administering their respective programs within the budget, as adopted or amended.


V. REVIEW PERIOD

The Internal Policy Review Team will review this Policy at least once every two years, and will make recommendations for changes to the Planning & Policy Committee.