



We Are Columbia

Office of Budget & Program Management
1136 Washington Street, Ste. 504, Columbia, SC 29201 • Phone: 803-545-3146 • Fax: 803-545-3147

TO: Honorable Stephen K. Benjamin, Mayor & Columbia City Council
CC: Teresa Wilson, City Manager

FROM: Missy Caughman, Budget & Program Management Director 

DATE: April 17, 2014

RE: Finance, Audit & Budget Committee FY 14/15 Budget Directives

At the start of the FY 14/15 budget process with the Finance, Audit and Budget Committee, we were given several directives in the preparation of the budget. As we begin budget deliberations with City Council, we will provide updates regarding these directives:

- **Flat/No increase budget.** The City has undergone significant changes and growth over the past several years. Maintaining a flat budget is a challenge that staff seeks to meet through realigning of resources where possible and keeping costs to a bare minimum while maintaining the City's current levels of services. We will discuss this directive more specifically as we bring forward the budget in more detail.
- **Fund balance policy.** The purpose of the Fund Balance Policy is to establish clear direction for the minimum levels of the fund balance to be maintained by the General Fund. The Fund Balance Policy is set at a minimum unassigned fund balance of 15%. After several revisions, this policy will be on the April 22nd or April 29th City Council agenda for approval.
- **Compensation & Classification Study.** The staff was asked to review ways to compensate employees fairly and equitably; develop a system that would incorporate recognition of high performance, advanced training, certifications, degrees, and licensing; identify strategies for retaining employees and create performance evaluation tools. A contract for a compensation and classification study is on City Council's April 22nd agenda for approval.
- **Health Care, Wellness Initiatives & Retiree Plans.** Recommendations for updates to the Employee & Retiree Health plans to include wellness initiatives will be discussed during the April 22nd Budget Workshop.
- **IT Assessment.** City staff was asked to evaluate options for outsourcing portions of IT. Advanced Automation Consultants (AAC)'s assessment of IT will be presented during the April 29th Budget Workshop.
- **Public Safety Initiatives.** Staff will be discussing the marketing, recruitment and retention efforts needed to operate the Columbia Police Department at full capacity and efficiency, to include development of law enforcement based Hospitality Unit and other public safety



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initiatives. These initiatives will be discussed during the April 22nd Budget Workshop.

- **Animal Services No Kill Shelter Initiative & Public/Private Partnerships.** During the April 8th City Council meeting, City Council deferred this item to the Economic and Community Development Committee to discuss the ordinance changes regarding increasing the number of licensed pets allowed within City limits.

We look forward to discussing these matters and the FY 14/15 Proposed Budget with you.

FY 14/15 Revised Budget Review Calendar

April 29	Last Regular City Council meeting prior to advertising Public Hearing
May 5	Date Public Hearing is advertised in newspaper
May 6	City Council Budget Workshop
May 20	Public Hearing
June 3	First Reading
June 17	Second Reading/Final Adoption