

Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority  
Financial Policies

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Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority  
Financial Policies

**SUMMARY**

The Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority (Authority) Board of Directors recognizes their fiduciary responsibility by virtue of their appointment to the Board. In an effort to promote transparency in the fiscal affairs of the Authority and to promote fiscal accountability, it hereby adopts the following financial policies to guide the Authority's finances:

1. Revenues: The Authority will maintain a revenue system that will ensure a reliable, equitable, and predictable revenue stream to support Authority services.
2. Expenditures: The Authority shall assure fiscal stability and the effective and efficient delivery of services, through the identification of necessary services, establishment of appropriate service levels, and careful administration of the expenditure of available resources.
3. Fund Balance/Reserves: The Authority shall maintain a fund balance at a level sufficient to protect the Authority's creditworthiness as well as its financial position from unforeseeable occurrences or emergencies.
4. Capital Expenditures and Improvements: The Authority shall annually review the state of its capital assets, setting priorities for its replacement and renovation based on needs, funding, alternatives, and availability of resources.
5. Debt: The Authority shall utilize debt financing only to provide needed capital equipment and improvements while minimizing the impact of debt payments on current revenues.
6. Investments: The Authority's cash will be invested in such a manner that ensures the absolute safety of principal and interest, meet the liquidity needs of the Authority, and achieve the highest possible yield.
7. Grants: The Authority shall seek, apply for, and effectively administer federal, state, and foundation grants that address the Authority's current priorities and policy objectives.
8. Closure Funding: The Authority shall properly fund all closure and post-closure costs in accordance with California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) requirements.
9. Fiscal Monitoring: Authority staff shall prepare and present to the Board regular reports that analyze, evaluate, and forecast the Authority's financial performance and economic condition.

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10. Accounting, Auditing and Financial Reporting: The Authority's accounting, auditing, and financial reporting shall comply with prevailing local, state, and federal regulations, as well as current professional principles and practices as promulgated by authoritative bodies.
11. Internal Controls: The Authority shall establish and maintain an internal control structure designed to provide reasonable assurance that Authority assets are safeguarded and that the possibilities for material errors in the Authority's financial records are minimized.
12. Operating Budget: The Authority's operating budget will implement the policy decisions of the Board. It will provide a clear picture of the Authority's resources and their use.
13. Capital Assets: The Authority will capitalize all capital assets in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles to maintain proper control of all capital assets.

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**REVENUES**

The Authority will maintain a revenue system that will assure a reliable, equitable, predictable revenue stream to support Authority services.

A. User Fees

The Authority shall establish and collect fees to recover the cost of handling specific items that benefit only specific users. The Authority Board shall determine the appropriate cost recovery level and establish the fees. Where feasible and desirable, the Authority shall seek to recover full direct and indirect costs. User fees shall be reviewed on a regular basis to calculate their full cost recovery levels, compare them to the current fee structure, and to recommend adjustments where necessary.

B. Tipping Fees

Tipping fees shall be set at levels sufficient to cover operating expenditures, meet debt obligations, provide funding for ongoing capital improvements, and provide adequate levels of working capital. Tipping Fees are not expected to cover depreciation or depletion.

C. One Time Revenues

One-time revenues shall be used only for one-time expenditures.

D. Revenue Estimates

The Authority shall use a conservative, objective, and analytical approach when preparing revenue estimates. The process shall include analysis of probable economic changes and their impacts on revenues, historical collection rates, and trends in revenues. This approach should reduce the likelihood of actual revenues falling short of budget estimates during the year and thus avoid mid-year service reductions.

E. Revenue Collection and Administration

The Authority shall pursue to the full extent allowed by state law all delinquent ratepayers and overdue payments to the Authority. Since revenue should not exceed the cost of producing it, the Authority shall strive to control and reduce administrative collection costs.

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**EXPENDITURES**

The Authority shall assure fiscal stability and the effective and efficient delivery of services, through the identification of necessary services, establishment of appropriate service levels, and careful administration of the expenditure of available resources.

A. Current Funding Basis

The Authority shall operate on a current funding basis. Expenditures shall be budgeted and controlled to not exceed current revenues.

B. Avoidance of Operating Deficits

The Authority shall take immediate corrective actions if at any time during the fiscal year expenditure and revenue estimates are such that an operating deficit (i.e., projected expenditures in excess of projected revenues) is projected at year-end. Corrective actions can include a hiring freeze, expenditure reductions, fee increases, or use of fund balance within the Fund Balance/Reserves Policy. Expenditure deferrals into the following fiscal year, short-term loans, or use of one-time revenue sources shall be avoided to balance the budget.

C. Maintenance of Capital Assets

Within the resources available each fiscal year, the Authority shall maintain capital assets and infrastructure at a sufficient level to protect the Authority's investment, to minimize future replacement and maintenance costs, and to continue current service levels.

D. Periodic Program Reviews

The General Manager shall undertake periodic staff and third-party reviews of Authority programs for both efficiency and effectiveness. Privatization and contracting with other governmental agencies will be evaluated as alternative approaches for service delivery. Programs which are determined to be inefficient and/or ineffective shall be reduced in scope or eliminated.

E. Purchasing

The Authority shall make every effort to maximize any discounts offered by creditors/vendors. Staff shall use competitive bidding whenever possible to attain the best possible price on goods and services.

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**FUND BALANCE/RESERVES**

The Authority shall maintain a fund balance at a level sufficient to protect the Authority's creditworthiness as well as its financial position from unforeseeable emergencies.

A. Funding the Reserves

After completion of the annual audit, any undesignated cash balance will be first used to pay down any Unfunded Actuarial Liability to the CalPERS retirement accounts. Remaining funds shall be allocated to reserves using the following methodology:

1. Operating Reserve (20%)
2. Capital Projects Reserve (60%)
3. Environmental Impairment Reserve (20%)

Any allocation outside of the prescribed methodology or transfers between reserves must be approved by the Board.

B. Operating Reserve

The Authority shall strive to maintain an Operating Reserve equal to twenty percent (25%) of the current year's operating expenditure budget in order to provide sufficient reserves for unforeseen occurrences and revenue shortfalls. Operating expenditures, for reserve purposes, is defined as the total budget less capital project expenditures.

❖ Use of Operating Reserve

The Operating Reserve shall be used only for its designated purpose: Emergencies, non-recurring expenditures, or major capital purchases that cannot be accommodated through current year revenues. Should such use reduce the balance below the appropriate level set as the objective, restoration recommendations will accompany the decision to utilize said reserve.

C. Capital Projects Reserve

Due to the capital-intensive nature of the Authority's landfill operations the Authority will develop a Capital Projects Reserve for the purpose of funding future capital projects and replacement of existing capital infrastructure in accordance with the Capital Improvements Financial Policies. The target amount of the reserve will be based on the average annual capital needs of the Authority.

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D. Environmental Impairment Reserve

Due to the potential release of contaminants that exists with all Municipal Solid Waste landfills, the Authority will fund an Environmental Impairment Reserve for the purpose of responding to a release in a timely manner. The funds can also be used for mitigation or corrective action measures required by CalRecycle. It is highly unlikely that all sites would need corrective action at the same time. Therefore, the funding goal is the Capital Improvement costs at the highest of the sites.

E. Annual Review of Reserves

As part of the annual budget process, the Authority will review the target amount and the status of each of the reserves. This will be considered as part of the budget development. The goal is to reach the Operating and Environmental Impairment Reserve amounts within a five-year period but in no case later than 10 years.

### **CAPITAL EXPENDITURES AND IMPROVEMENTS**

The Authority shall annually review the state of its capital assets, setting priorities for their replacement and renovation based on needs, funding, alternatives, and availability of resources.

A. Capital Improvement Plan

The Authority shall prepare a 10-Year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) which will detail the Authority's capital needs. The CIP plan will be reviewed every year while discussions of the operating budget take place. The CAO will develop guidelines for what projects to include in the CIP budget. All projects, ongoing and proposed, shall be prioritized based on an analysis of current needs and resource availability. For every capital project, all operation, maintenance, and replacement costs shall be fully disclosed. The CIP budget will be in conformance with and support the Authority's major planning documents and 3-year Strategic Plans.

B. Capital Improvement Budget

The CIP plan will be the basis for which projects will be included in the following year's budget. Appropriations will be approved annually using the following criteria:

1. The needs identified in the Authority's planning documents.
2. Cost/benefit analysis identifying all economic or financial impacts of the project.
3. Identification of available funding resources.

CIP funding will be based on the following priorities:

1. Projects that comply with regulatory requirements.
2. Projects that maintain health and safety standards.
3. Projects that maintain and preserve existing facilities.
4. Projects that replace existing facilities which can no longer be maintained.
5. Projects that improve operations.

C. Capital Expenditure Financing

Projects will be financed using the following preferred order:

1. Use of current revenues.
2. Use of the Capital Projects Reserve.
3. Borrow money through debt issuance.

Debt financing includes revenue bonds, certificates of obligation, lease/purchase agreements, and other obligations permitted to be issued or incurred under California law. Guidelines for assuming debt are set forth in the Debt Policy Statements.



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D. Capital Projects Reserve Fund

A Capital Projects Reserve Fund shall be established and maintained to accumulate funds transferred from the undesignated fund balance. This fund shall only be used to pay for non-routine and one-time capital expenditures such as land and building purchases or construction and maintenance projects with a 10-year life. Expenditures from this Fund shall be aimed at protecting the health and safety of residents, employees, and the environment, and protecting the existing assets of the Authority.

E. Capital Projects Management

The Authority will fund and manage its capital projects in a phased approach. The project phases will become a framework for appropriate decision points and reporting. The phasing will consist of:

1. Conceptual/Schematic Proposal
2. Preliminary Design and Cost Estimate
3. Engineering and Final Design
4. Bid Administration
5. Acquisition and Construction
6. Project Closeout

Each project will have a project manager who will prepare the project proposal, ensure that required phases are completed on schedule, authorize all project expenditures, ensure that all regulations and laws are observed, periodically report project status and track project expenditures.

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**DEBT**

The Authority shall utilize debt financing only to provide needed capital equipment and improvements while minimizing the impact of debt payments on current revenues.

A. Use of Debt Financing

The issuance of long-term debt will be only for the acquisition of land, capital improvements, or equipment.

Debt financing is not considered appropriate for current operations, maintenance expenses, or for any recurring purposes.

B. Conditions for Debt Issuance

The Authority may use long-term debt to finance major equipment acquisition or capital projects only if it is established through a cost/benefit analysis that the financial and community benefits of the financing exceed the financing costs. Benefits would include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Present value benefit: The current cost plus the financing cost is less than the future cost of the project.
2. Maintenance value benefit: The financing cost is less than the maintenance cost of deferring the project.
3. Equity benefit: Financing provides a method of spreading the cost of a facility back to the users of the facility over time.
4. Community benefit: Debt financing of the project enables the Authority to meet an immediate community need.

Debt financing will be used only when project revenues or other identified revenue sources are sufficient to service the debt.

C. Debt Structure

The Authority's preference is to issue fixed-rate, long-term debt with level debt service, but variable rate debt or other debt service structure may be considered if an economic advantage is identified for a particular project.

Bond proceeds, for debt service, will be held by an independent bank acting as trustee or paying agent.

The Authority's minimum bond rating objective for all debt issues is a Moody's and Standard & Poor's rating of A (upper medium grade). Credit enhancements will be used to achieve higher ratings when there is an economic benefit.

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The Authority may retain the following contract advisors for the issuance of debt:

1. Financial Advisor - To be selected, when appropriate, by negotiation to provide financial analysis and advice related to the feasibility and structure of the proposed debt.
2. Bond Counsel - To be selected by negotiation for each debt issue.
3. Underwriters - To be selected by negotiation or competitive bid for each bond issue based upon the proposed structure for each issue.

D. Call Provisions

Call provisions for bond issues shall be made as short as possible consistent with the lowest interest cost to the Authority. When possible, all bonds shall be callable only at par.

E. Debt Refunding

Authority staff and the financial advisor shall monitor the municipal bond market for opportunities to obtain interest savings by refunding outstanding debt. As a general rule, the present value savings of a particular refunding should exceed 3.5% of the refunded maturities.

F. Interest Earnings

Interest earnings received on the investment of bond proceeds shall be used to assist in paying the interest due on bond issues, to the extent permitted by law.

G. Lease/Purchase Agreements

Over the lifetime of a lease, the total cost to the Authority will generally be higher than purchasing the asset outright. As a result, the use of lease/purchase agreements and certificates of participation in the acquisition of vehicles, equipment and other capital assets shall generally be avoided, particularly if smaller quantities of the capital asset(s) can be purchased on a "pay-as-you-go" basis.

H. Post Issuance Administration / Internal Control

❖ Investment of Proceeds

The proceeds of bond sales will be invested until used for the intended project(s) to maximize utilization of the public funds. The investments will be made to obtain the highest level of 1) safety, 2) liquidity, and 3) yield, and may be held as cash. The Authority's investment guidelines and bond indentures will govern objectives and criteria for investment of bond proceeds. The Finance and Administration Manager will oversee the investment of bond proceeds in a manner to avoid, if possible, and minimize any potential negative arbitrage over the life of the bond issuance, while complying with arbitrage and tax provisions.

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❖ Use of Proceeds

Bond proceeds will be deposited and recorded in separate accounts to ensure that funds are not comingled with other Authority funds. To ensure proceeds from bond sales are used in accordance with legal requirements, all invoices will be submitted to the Finance and Administration Manager for approval prior to payment. The Finance and Administration Manager will be tasked with monitoring the expenditure of bond proceeds to ensure that they are used only for the purpose and authority for which the bonds were issued and exercising best efforts to spend bond proceeds in such a manner that the Authority will meet one of the spend-down exemptions from arbitrage rebate. Tax-exempt bonds will not be issued unless it can be demonstrated that 85% of the proceeds can reasonably be expected to be expended within the three-year temporary period.

❖ Arbitrage Compliance

The use of bond proceeds and their investments must be monitored to ensure compliance with all Internal Revenue Code Arbitrage Rebate Requirements. The Finance and Administration Manager shall ensure that all bond proceeds and investments are tracked in a manner which facilitates accurate calculation; and, if a rebate payment is due, such payment is made in a timely manner.

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**INVESTMENTS**

The Authority's cash will be invested in such a manner to ensure the absolute safety of principal and interest, meet the liquidity needs of the Authority, and achieve the highest possible yield after meeting the first two requirements.

A. Investment Policy

The Authority Treasurer is both authorized and required to promulgate a written Statement of Investment Policy which shall be presented to the Board annually.

B. Interest Earnings

Interest earned from investments shall be distributed to the operating funds from which the money was provided, with the exception that interest earnings received on the investment of bond proceeds shall be attributed and allocated to those debt service funds responsible for paying the principal and interest due on the bond issue.

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**GRANTS**

The Authority shall seek, apply for, and effectively administer federal, state and foundation grants-in-aid that address the Authority's current priorities and policy objectives.

A. Grant Guidelines

The Authority shall apply, and facilitate the application for others, only for grants that are consistent with the objectives and high priority needs previously identified by the Board. The potential for incurring ongoing costs, to include the assumption of support for grant-funded positions from local revenues, will be considered prior to applying for a grant.

B. Indirect Costs

The Authority shall recover full indirect costs unless the funding agency does not permit it. The Authority may waive or reduce indirect costs if doing so will significantly increase the effectiveness of the grant.

C. Grant Review

All grant submittals shall be reviewed for their cash match requirements, their potential impact on the operating budget, and the extent to which they meet the Authority's policy objectives. Departments shall seek Board approval prior to submission of a grant application. Should time constraints under the grant program make this impossible, the department shall obtain approval to submit an application from the CAO and then, at the earliest feasible time, seek formal Board approval. If there are cash match requirements, the source of funding shall be identified prior to application. An annual report on the status of grant programs and their effectiveness shall also be prepared.

D. Grant Program Termination

The Authority shall terminate grant-funded programs and associated positions when grant funds are no longer available unless alternate funding is identified.

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**CLOSURE AND POST-CLOSURE FUNDING**

The Authority shall properly fund all closure and post closure costs in accordance with CalRecycle requirements.

A. Closure Funding

In accordance with CalRecycle requirements, the Authority shall annually set aside sufficient funds to fully fund all accrued closure costs liability. These funds will be held in a separate Closure Fund restricted specifically for this purpose.

B. Post-Closure Funding

Johnson Canyon Landfill is the Authority's last regional landfill. To ensure that there is adequate funding for post-closure maintenance of the landfill for the minimum required 30 years, the Authority shall ensure that the post-closure liability is fully funded annually. The required funding shall be the currently filled capacity percentage times the CalRecycle approved post-closure estimate. These funds will be held in a separate Post-Closure Fund restricted specifically for this purpose.

In accordance with Financial Assurances, the Authority shall fund post closure costs for the three currently closed sites from future revenues when those costs are incurred. The Authority has entered into a Pledge of Revenue agreement with CalRecycle for this purpose.

C. Closure and Post-Closure Funding Calculations

The Authority shall, as part of the budget process, annually recalculate the closure and post-closure costs on a per ton basis. Funds will be transferred monthly to the appropriate fund based on tonnage landfilled. Post-closure expense incurred due to the current fiscal year solid waste disposal will be recorded as an expense on the Authority's financial statements with a corresponding liability.

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**FISCAL MONITORING**

Authority staff shall prepare and present to the Board regular reports that analyze, evaluate, and forecast the Authority's financial performance and economic condition.

A. Financial Status and Performance Reports

Monthly reports comparing expenditures and revenues to current budget, noting the status of fund balances, and outlining any remedial actions necessary to maintain the Authority's financial position shall be prepared for review by the Board.

B. Five-year Forecast of Revenues and Expenditures

A five-year forecast of revenues and expenditures, to include a discussion of major trends affecting the Authority's financial position, shall be included during the budget process. The forecast shall also examine critical issues facing the Authority, economic conditions, and the outlook for the upcoming budget year. The document shall provide insight into the Authority's financial position and alert the Board to potential problem areas requiring attention.

C. Status Report on Capital Projects

A summary report on capital projects completed and the status of the Authority's various capital projects will be prepared as part of the monthly financial report and presented to the Board.

D. Compliance with Board Policy Statements

The Financial Policies will be reviewed annually and updated, revised, or refined as deemed necessary. Policy statements adopted by the Board are guidelines, and occasionally, exceptions may be appropriate and required. However, exceptions to stated policies will be specifically identified, and the need for the exception will be documented and fully explained.



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**ACCOUNTING, AUDITING, AND FINANCIAL REPORTING**

The Authority's accounting, auditing and financial reporting shall comply with prevailing local, state, and federal regulations, as well as current professional principles and practices as promulgated by authoritative bodies.

A. Conformance to Accounting Principles

The Authority's accounting practices, and financial reporting shall conform to generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) as promulgated by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB), the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA), and the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA).

B. Popular Reporting

In addition to issuing an annual comprehensive financial report (ACFR) in conformity with GAAP, the Authority shall supplement its ACFR with a simpler, "popular" report designed to assist those residents who need or desire a less detailed overview of the Authority's financial activities. This report should be issued no later than six months after the close of the fiscal year.

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**INTERNAL CONTROLS**

The Authority shall establish and maintain an internal control structure designed to provide reasonable assurance that Authority assets are safeguarded and that the possibilities for material errors in the Authority's financial records are minimized.

A. Proper Authorizations

Procedures shall be designed, implemented, and maintained to ensure that financial transactions and activities are properly reviewed and authorized.

B. Separation of Duties

Job duties will be adequately separated to reduce, to an acceptable level, the opportunities for any person to be in a position to both perpetrate and conceal errors or irregularities in the normal course of assigned duties.

C. Proper Recording

Procedures shall be developed and maintained that will ensure financial transactions and events are properly recorded and that all financial reports may be relied upon as accurate, complete, and up to date.

D. Access to Assets and Records

Procedures shall be designed and maintained to ensure that adequate safeguards exist with the access to and use of financial assets and records.

E. Independent Checks

Independent checks and audits will be made on staff performance to ensure compliance with established procedures and proper valuation of recorded amounts.

F. Costs and Benefits

Internal control systems and procedures must have an apparent benefit in terms of reducing and/or preventing losses. The cost of implementing and maintaining any control system should be evaluated against the expected benefits to be derived from that system.

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**OPERATING BUDGET**

The Authority's operating budget will implement the policy decisions of the Board. It will provide a clear picture of the Authority's resources and their use.

A. Budget Format

The budget shall provide a complete financial plan of all Authority funds and activities for the ensuing fiscal year and shall be in such form as the Chief Administrative Officer deems desirable or that the Board may require.

The budget shall begin with a clear general summary of its contents. It shall show in detail all estimated revenues, all carryover fund balances and reserves, and all proposed expenditures, including debt service, for the ensuing fiscal year.

The total of proposed expenditures shall not exceed the total of estimated revenues plus the unappropriated fund balance, exclusive of reserves, for any fund.

The budget will be organized on a program/service level format.

The budget development process will include the identification and evaluation of policy options for increasing and decreasing service levels.

B. Estimated Revenues

The Authority will annually update its revenue forecast to enhance the budgetary decision-making process.

In its budget projections, the Authority will attempt to match current expenses to current revenues. If it becomes apparent that revenue shortfalls will create a deficit, efforts will be made first to reduce the deficiency through budgetary reductions.

If appropriate reductions are insufficient, the Board may decide, on an exception basis, to use an appropriate existing reserve.

C. Appropriations

In evaluating the level of appropriations for program enhancements, or reductions, the Authority will apply the following principles in the priority order given:

1. Essential services, which provide for the health and safety of residents, will be funded to maintain current dollar levels.
2. The budget will provide for adequate ongoing maintenance of facilities and equipment.

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3. Appropriations for program enhancements or reductions will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis rather than across the board.
4. When reductions in personnel are necessary to reduce expenditures, they shall be consistent with the Authority Board's established service level priorities and, when possible, shall be accomplished through normal attrition.
5. Programs, which are self-supported by special revenues or fees, shall be separately evaluated.

Prior to the Authority Board making any supplemental appropriation, the CAO or Finance and Administration Manager shall certify that funds in excess of those estimated in the budget are available for appropriation. Any such supplemental appropriations shall be made for the fiscal year by Board action up to the amount of any excess.

Appropriations may be reduced at any time during the fiscal year by the Authority Board upon recommendation of the CAO. When appropriation reductions are recommended, the CAO shall provide specific recommendations to the Board, indicating the estimated amount of the reduction, any remedial actions taken, and recommendations as to any other steps to be taken.

The CAO may transfer appropriations between divisions, and division managers may transfer appropriations between programs and accounts within their individual divisions, but only the Board by resolution may appropriate funds from reserves or fund balances.

Appropriations for capital improvement programs, post-closure, and grants shall continue in force until expended, revised, or cancelled. All other appropriations shall lapse at the end of the fiscal year to the extent that they have not been expended.

The Authority will endeavor to budget a contingency account in the operating budgets equal to one percent of the total Operating Budget to meet changing operational requirements during the fiscal year.

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**CAPITAL ASSETS**

The Authority will capitalize all assets in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles to maintain proper control of all assets.

- A. Overview – The Finance Division will maintain an asset management system that will meet external financial reporting requirements and the needs of the Authority in line with these policies.
1. Capital assets are recorded as expenditures in governmental funds at the time the assets are received, and the liability is incurred. These assets will be capitalized at cost on the government wide financial statements. Enterprise fixed assets are recorded as assets within the fund when purchased and a liability is incurred.
    - I. GASB 34 defines Capital Assets as land, improvements to land, easements, buildings, building improvements, vehicles, machinery, equipment, works of art and historical treasures, infrastructure, and all other tangible or intangible assets that are used in operations and have initial useful lives extending beyond a single reporting period.
    - II. GASB 34 defines Infrastructure Assets as long-lived capital assets that normally are stationary in nature and normally can be preserved for a significantly greater number of years than most capital assets. Examples include roads, bridges, tunnels, drainage systems, water and sewer systems, dams, and lighting systems. Buildings that are an ancillary part of a network of infrastructure assets are included.

The Authority uses the most current edition of GOVERNMENTAL ACCOUNTING, AUDITING, AND FINANCIAL REPORTING (GAAFR) published by the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) as its authoritative guide in setting policy and establishing accounting procedures regarding capital assets.

- B. Capitalization  
Generally, all capital assets with an original cost of \$15,000 or more will be capitalized (recorded as an asset on the balance sheet versus expensing the item). This capitalization policy addresses financial reporting, not control. The Authority follows the GFOA recommended practices for establishing capitalization thresholds. Specific capitalization requirements are described as follows:

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1. The asset must cost \$15,000 or more.
2. The asset must have a useful life of more than one year.
3. The capitalization threshold is applied to individual units of capital assets rather than groups. For example, ten items purchased for \$10,000 each will not be capitalized even though the total (\$100,000) exceeds the threshold of \$15,000.
4. For purposes of capitalization, the threshold will generally not be applied to components of capital assets. For example, a keyboard, monitor and central processing unit purchased as components of a computer system will not be evaluated individually against the capitalization threshold. The entire computer system will be treated as a single asset. The capitalization threshold will be applied to a network if all component parts are required to make the asset functional.
5. Repairs to existing capital assets will generally not be subject to capitalization unless the repair extends the useful life of the asset. In this case the repair represents an improvement and is subject to the requirements described in number six below.
6. Improvements to existing capital assets that extend the useful life of the related capital asset will be subject to capitalization if the cost exceeds \$15,000.
7. Capital projects will be capitalized as "construction in progress" until completed. Personal computers will not be capitalized:

C. Leased Assets

GASB 87 requires that all leases are reported as a capital or financing lease unless the lease is a short-term lease, characterized as 12 months or less. A lease is defined as a contract that conveys control of the right to use another entity's nonfinancial asset as specified in a contract for a period of time in an exchange or exchange-like transaction. Examples of nonfinancial assets include buildings, land, vehicles, and equipment.

Leases will be capitalized if both of the following criteria are met:

1. The non-cancellable portion of the lease is more than 12 months
2. The total amount of the lease meets the capitalization threshold of \$15,000

At the commencement of the lease term, a lease will be recorded as both a lease liability at the present value of payments expected to be made during the lease term, and a lease asset measured at the amount of the initial measurement of the lease liability, plus any payments made to the lessor at or before the commencement of the lease term and certain direct costs.

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D. Capital Asset Recording

It is the responsibility of the Finance Division to record, monitor and inventory all fixed assets. Each division will assign appropriate staff members to respond to verification, inventories, and filling out the necessary forms for recording transfers, dispositions, or retired fixed assets.

E. Acquisition of Capital Asset

Fixed assets may be acquired through direct purchase, lease-purchase or capital lease, construction, eminent domain, donations, and gifts. When a capital asset is acquired, the funding source will be identified. If funds are provided by a specific funding source, a record will be made of that specific source such as:

- ❖ Bond Proceeds
- ❖ State Grants

F. Measuring the Cost and/or Value

Capital assets are recorded at their "historical cost," which is the original cost of the assets. Donations accepted by the Authority will be valued at the fair market value at the time of donation. Costs include purchase price (less discounts) and any other reasonable and necessary costs incurred to place the asset in its intended location and prepare it for service. Costs could include the following:

- ❖ Sales Tax
- ❖ Freight charges
- ❖ Legal and title fees
- ❖ Closing costs
- ❖ Appraisal and negotiation fees
- ❖ Surveying fees
- ❖ Land-preparation costs
- ❖ Demolition costs
- ❖ Relocation costs
- ❖ Architect and accounting fees
- ❖ Insurance premiums and interest costs during construction

G. Establishing Cost in the Absence of Historical Records

According to GASB 34, an estimate of the original cost is allowable. Standard costing is one method of estimating historical cost using a known average installed cost for a like unit at the estimated date of acquisition. Another recognized method is normal costing wherein an estimate of historical cost is based on current cost of reproduction new indexed by a reciprocal factor of the price increase of a specific item or classification from the appraisal date to the estimated date acquired. When necessary, the Authority will use whichever method gives the most reasonable amount based on available information.

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H. Recording Costs Incurred After Acquisition

Expenditures/expenses for replacing a component part of an asset are not capitalized. However, expenditures/expenses that either enhance a capital asset's functionality (effectiveness or efficiency), or that extend a capital asset's expected useful life are capitalized. For example, periodically slurry sealing a street would be treated as a repair (the cost would not be capitalized), while an overlay or reconstruction would be capitalized. Adding a new lane constitutes an addition and would therefore also be capitalized.

I. Disposition or Retirement of Fixed Assets

Assets with an estimated remaining value of \$15,000 or more will be scheduled for Board approval prior to disposal. The asset will be disposed of in a way to achieve the highest recovery possible while ensuring that the cost of disposal is minimized. The recovered funds will be allocated to the Capital Improvement Project used to replace the asset. Once disposed, the original cost less depreciation will then be removed from the Authority's capital asset management system.

J. Transfer of Assets

The transfer of fixed assets between divisions requires notification to the Finance Department.

K. Depreciation

In accordance with GASB Statement No. 34 the Authority will record depreciation expense on all capital assets, except for inexhaustible assets.

The Authority will use straight-line depreciation using the half-year convention or mid-month as appropriate. Depreciation will be calculated over the estimated useful life of the asset.

L. Recommended Lives

The Authority follows GFOA Recommended Practices when establishing recommended lives for capitalized assets. In accordance with GASB 34 the Authority will rely on "general guidelines obtained from professional or industry organizations." The Authority will rely on estimated useful lives published by GFOA. If the life of a particular asset is estimated to be different than these guidelines, it may be changed. The following is a summary for the estimated useful lives:

| <u>Asset Class</u>      | <u>Useful Life</u> |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Buildings               | 20 to 50 years     |
| Improvements            | 15 to 45 years     |
| Infrastructure          | 20 to 50 years     |
| Equipment and Machinery | 5 to 20 years      |



Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority  
Financial Policies

M. Control of Assets

In accordance with GFOA Recommended Practice the Authority will exercise control over the non-capitalized tangible capital-type items by establishing and maintaining adequate control procedures at the division level. The Authority's capitalization threshold of \$15,000 meets financial reporting needs and is not designed for nor particularly suited to maintain control over lower cost capital assets. It is the responsibility of each division to maintain inventories of lower-cost capital assets to ensure adequate control and safekeeping of these assets.

N. Maintenance Schedules

The Authority shall develop and implement maintenance and replacement schedules with a goal of maximizing the useful life of all assets. The schedules shall include estimates of annual maintenance and/or replacement funding required for each asset.

O. Maintenance Funding

The Authority shall identify specific sources of funds for the annual maintenance or replacement of each asset. Whenever possible, the maintenance or replacement funding shall be identified from a source other than the Authority General Fund. The Authority shall endeavor to set aside, on an annual basis, one and one-half percent (1½%) of its Operating Budget to provide for on-going maintenance and required replacement of assets that cannot be reasonably funded from other sources.

P. Inventorying

The Authority will follow the GFOA recommended practice of performing a physical inventory of its capitalized capital assets, either simultaneously or on a rotating basis, so that all capital assets are physically accounted for at least once every five years.

Q. Tagging

The Authority will tag only moveable equipment with a value of \$15,000 or higher. Rolling stock items will not be tagged. They will be identified by the VIN number. The Finance department will be responsible for tagging equipment.