

CITY OF FRANKLIN

T E N N E S S E E

Debt Management Policy

Prepared by
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Introduction

Debt management policies are written guidelines and restrictions that affect the amount and type of debt issued by a state or local government, the issuance process, and the management of a debt portfolio. A debt management policy improves the quality of decisions, provides justification for the structure of debt issuance, identifies policy goals, and demonstrates a commitment to long-term financial planning, including a multi-year capital plan. Adherence to a debt management policy signals to rating agencies and the capital markets that a government is well managed and should meet its obligations in a timely manner.

Debt levels and their related annual costs are important long-term obligations that must be managed within available resources. An effective debt management policy provides guidelines for a government to manage its debt program in line with those resources.

Since the guidelines contained in the Policy require regular updating in order to maintain relevance and to respond to the changes inherent in the capital markets, the City plans to revisit the Policy from time to time.

City of Franklin
Debt Management Policy

I. Policy Statement

In managing its debt, it is the City’s policy to:

- Achieve the lowest cost of capital
- Ensure high credit quality
- Assure access to the capital credit markets
- Preserve financial flexibility
- Manage interest rate risk exposure

II. Goals & Objectives

Debt policies and procedures are tools that ensure that financial resources are adequate to meet the City’s long-term planning objectives. In addition, the Debt Management Policy (“Policy”) helps to ensure that financings undertaken by the City satisfy certain clear objective standards which allow the City to protect its financial resources in order to meet its long-term capital needs. The adoption of clear and comprehensive financial policies enhances the internal financial management of the City.

The Policy formally establishes parameters for issuing debt and managing a debt portfolio which considers the City’s specific capital improvement needs; ability to repay financial obligations; the existing legal, economic, and financial and debt market conditions. Specifically, the policies outlined in this document are intended to assist in the following:

- To guide the City and its managers in policy and debt issuance decisions
- To maintain appropriate capital assets for present and future needs
- To promote sound financial management
- To protect the City’s credit rating
- To ensure the legal use of City’s debt issuance authority
- To promote cooperation and coordination with other stakeholders in the financing and delivery of services
- To evaluate debt issuance options

III. Issuance Process

The City charter, which was approved by private Act of the Tennessee Legislature as Chapter 126 in 1967, as amended, authorizes the City to issue general obligation bonds subject to the adoption of a bond resolution by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen. Other sections of the Tennessee Code Annotated and the Federal Tax Code may govern the issuance or structure of the City’s bonds.

These provisions serve as a basis for the City’s affordability guidelines described later in this policy.

IV. Credit Quality and Credit Enhancement

The City's debt management activities will be conducted to receive the highest credit ratings possible, consistent with the City's financing objectives. The Finance Director will be responsible for maintaining relationships and communicating with the rating agencies that assign ratings to the City's debt. The Finance Director will provide the rating agencies with periodic updates of the general financial condition of the City. Full disclosure of operations and open lines of communication shall be maintained with the rating agencies. The City, together with the Financial Advisor, shall prepare presentations to the rating agencies to assist credit analysts in making an informed decision. The Finance Director shall be responsible for determining whether or not a rating shall be requested on a particular financing, and which of the major rating agencies will be asked to provide such rating.

The City will make an annual credit presentation to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen, explaining the City's current rating, rating agency views on the City's performance and current items which may positively or adversely affect the City's General Obligation credit rating.

The City will consider the use of credit enhancements on a case-by-case basis, evaluating the economic benefit versus cost for each case. Only when clearly demonstrable savings can be shown shall an enhancement be considered. The City will consider each of the following enhancements as alternatives by evaluating the cost and benefit of such enhancements:

1. Bond Insurance

The City may purchase bond insurance when such purchase is deemed prudent and advantageous for negotiated sales. The predominant determination shall be based on such insurance being less costly than the present value of the difference in the interest on insured bonds versus uninsured bonds. For competitive sales, the purchaser of the bonds will determine whether bond insurance will be used.

The City will solicit quotes for bond insurance from interested providers, or in the case of a competitive sale, allow bidders to request bond insurance. In a negotiated sale, the City will select a provider whose bid is most cost effective and whose terms and conditions governing the guarantee are satisfactory to the City. The winning bidder in a competitive sale will determine the provider of bond insurance.

2. Letters of Credit

The City may enter into a letter-of-credit (LOC) agreement when such an agreement is deemed prudent and advantageous. The City will prepare and distribute a request for qualifications to qualified banks or other qualified financial institutions which includes terms and conditions that are acceptable to the City.

V. Debt Affordability

The ratios and standards identified below are intended to provide guidelines which permit and facilitate long-term access to capital while ensuring that financial leveraging decisions do not negatively impact the City's annual operations. The City shall consider the ability to repay debt as it relates to the total budget resources and the property tax base:

Total Budget Resources

- Net Direct Debt divided by Operating Revenues $\leq 3.00X$

As defined by Moody's US Local Government General Obligation Debt report dated January 15, 2014.

- Total Governmental Funds Debt Service as a percent of Expenditures $\leq 25\%$

As defined by Standard & Poor's U.S. Local Governments General Obligation Ratings: Methodology and Assumptions dated September 12, 2013.

Property Tax Base

- Net Direct Debt as a percent of Full Value (Market or Taxable Value) $\leq 1.75\%$

As defined by Moody's US Local Government General Obligation Debt report dated January 15, 2014.

As part of the City's effort to manage these metrics and the impact such have on the City's credit rating, the City, along with its Financial Advisor, will calculate the indicative ratings per Moody's and S&P's applicable local government criteria.

VI. Bond Structure

The City shall establish all terms and conditions relating to the issuance of bonds and will invest all bond proceeds pursuant to the terms of the City's Investment Policy. Unless otherwise authorized by the City, the following shall serve as the Policy for determining structure:

1. Term

All capital improvements financed through the issuance of debt will be financed for a period not to exceed the useful life of the improvements, and in consideration of the ability of the City to absorb the additional debt service expense within the debt affordability guidelines, but in no event will the term exceed thirty (30) years.

2. Capitalized Interest

From time to time certain financings may require the use of capitalized interest from the issuance date until the City has beneficial use and/or occupancy of the financed project. Interest may be financial (capitalized) through a period permitted by federal law and State statute if it is determined that doing so is beneficial to the financing by the Finance Director.

3. Debt Service Structure

General Obligation debt issuance shall be planned to achieve relatively net level debt service or level principal amortization considering the City's outstanding debt obligations, while matching debt service to the useful life of facilities. The City shall avoid the use of bullet or balloon maturities, absent sinking fund requirements, except in those instances where these maturities serve to make existing overall debt service level or to match a specific income stream. Debt which is supported by project revenues and is intended to be self-supporting will be structured to achieve level proportional coverage to expected available revenues.

4. Call Provisions

In general, the City's securities will include a call feature no later than ten (10) years from the date of delivery of the bonds. The City will avoid the sale of long-term non-callable bonds absent careful evaluation by the City's Finance Director with respect to the value of the call option.

5. Original Issuance Discount/Premium

Bonds with original issuance discount/premium will be permitted.

6. Deep Discount Bonds

Deep discount bonds may provide a lower cost of borrowing in certain capital markets. The City's Finance Director will carefully consider their value and effect on any future refinancing as a result of the lower-than-market coupon.

7. Structured Products

The determination of the City to consider the use of structured products as a hedge against interest rate risk or a method to lower its cost of borrowing will be made by the Finance Director. The City will comply with state guidelines and will be able to quantify and understand the potential risks or to achieve fixed and/or variable rate exposure targets. The City will not use structured products for speculative purposes.

VII. Types of Debt

When the City determines that the use of debt is appropriate, the following criteria will be utilized to evaluate the type of debt to be issued.

Security Structure

1. General Obligation Indebtedness

The City may issue general obligation indebtedness supported by the full faith and credit of the City. General Obligation indebtedness shall be used to finance capital projects that do not have independent creditworthiness and significant ongoing revenue streams. The City may also use its General Obligation pledge or other tax-revenue pledge to support other revenue-supported debt, if such support improves the economics of the revenue-supported debt issue (including pledges required to participate in a debt program) and is used in accordance with these guidelines. (For example, the City may borrow from the State of Tennessee Revolving Loan Fund Program ("SRF Program") for funding of capital improvements for the Water & Wastewater Utility. The SRF Program often requires the City's full faith and credit pledge and a supporting pledge of the City's state shared revenues in addition to a revenue pledge.)

2. Revenue Indebtedness

The City may issue revenue indebtedness, where repayment of the debt service obligations of said indebtedness will be made through revenues generated from specifically designated sources. Revenue indebtedness will typically be issued for capital projects which can be supported from project or enterprise-related revenues.

3. Capital Leases

The City may use capital leases to finance short-term projects.

Duration

1. Long-Term Debt (maturing after 3 years)

The City may issue long-term debt where it is deemed that capital improvements should not be financed from current revenues or short-term borrowings. Long-term borrowing will not be used to finance current operations or normal maintenance. Long-term debt will be self-supporting and structured such that financial obligations do not exceed the expected useful life of the project(s).

- a) *Serial and Term Bonds* may be issued in either fixed or variable rate modes to finance capital infrastructure projects with an expected life of three years or greater.
- b) *Capital Outlay Notes* may be issued to finance capital infrastructure projects with an expected life of three to seven years.

2. Short-Term Debt (maturing within three years)

Short-term borrowing may be utilized for the construction period of a long-term project or for the temporary funding of operational cash flow deficits or anticipated revenues (defined as an assured source with the anticipated amount based on conservative estimates) subject to the following policies:

- a) *Bond Anticipation Notes (BANs)*, including commercial paper notes issued as BANs, may be issued instead of capitalizing interest to reduce the debt service during the construction period of a project or facility. The BANs shall not mature more than 2 years from the date of issuance. BANs can be rolled in accordance with federal law and State statute. BANs shall mature within 6 months after substantial completion of the financed facility.
- b) *Revenue Anticipation Notes (RANs) and Tax Anticipation Notes (TANs)* shall be issued only to meet cash flow needs consistent with a finding by bond counsel that the sizing of the issue fully conforms to Federal IRS and state requirements and limitations.
- c) *Lines of Credit* shall be considered as an alternative to other short-term borrowing options. A *line* of credit shall be structured to limit concerns as to the Internal Revenue Code.
- d) *Intrafund Loans* shall only be used to fund operational deficiencies among accounts or for capital projects to be paid from current fiscal year revenues. Such intrafund loans shall in no event extend beyond twelve (12) months and shall only be issued in compliance with state regulations and limitations.
- e) *Other Short-Term Debt*, including commercial paper notes, may be used when it provides an interest rate advantage or as interim financing until market conditions are more favorable to issue debt in a fixed rate mode. The City will determine and utilize the least costly method for short-term borrowing. The City may issue short-term debt when there is a defined repayment source or amortization of principal.

Interest Rate Modes

Fixed Rate Debt

To maintain a predictable debt service burden, the City may give preference to debt that carries a fixed interest rate.

Variable Rate Debt

The percentage of net variable rate debt outstanding (excluding (1) debt which has been converted to synthetic fixed rate debt and (2) an amount of debt considered to be naturally hedged to short-term assets in the Unreserved Fund Balance) shall not exceed 20% of the City's total outstanding debt and will take into consideration the amount and investment strategy of the City's operating cash.

1. The following circumstances may result in the consideration of issuing variable rate debt:
 - a) *Asset-Liability Matching*
 - b) *Construction Period Funding*
 - c) *High Interest Rates.* Interest rates are above historic averages.
 - d) *Variable Revenue Stream.* The revenue stream for repayment is variable, and is anticipated to move in the same direction as market-generated variable interest rates, or the dedication of revenues allows capacity for variability.
 - e) *Adequate Safeguards Against Risk.* Financing structure and budgetary safeguards are in place to prevent adverse impacts from interest rate shifts; such structures could include, but are not limited to, interest rate caps and short-term cash investments in the City's General Fund.
 - f) *Financial Advisor Analysis.* An analysis from the City's Financial Advisor evaluating and quantifying the risks and returns involved in the variable rate financing and recommending variable rate as the lowest cost option.
 - g) *As a Component to Synthetic Fixed Rate Debt.* Variable rate bonds may be used in conjunction with a financial strategy, which results in synthetic fixed rate debt. Prior to using synthetic fixed rate debt, the City shall certify that present value savings of at least 3% results from issuing synthetic fixed rate debt relative to traditional fixed rate debt.

VIII. Use of Synthetic Debt

The Finance Director will determine whether the use of synthetic debt is appropriate and will comply with the state statutes regulating the use of synthetic debt.

Swaps are appropriate to use when they achieve a specific objective consistent with overall financial policy. Swaps may be used, for example, to lock-in a current market fixed rate or create additional variable rate exposure. Swaps may be used to produce interest rate savings, alter the pattern of debt service payments, or for asset/liability matching purposes. Swaps may be used to cap, limit or hedge variable rate payments.

Options granting the right to commence or cancel an underlying swap may be used to the extent the swap itself is otherwise consistent with these guidelines; however, the Finance Director must determine if the use of any such option is appropriate and warranted given the potential benefit, risks, and objectives of the City.

IX. Refinancing Outstanding Debt

The Finance Director with assistance from the City's Financial Advisor shall have the responsibility to analyze outstanding bond issues for refunding opportunities. The Finance Director will consider the following issues when analyzing possible refunding opportunities:

1. Debt Service Savings

Absent other compelling considerations such as the opportunity to eliminate onerous or restrictive covenants contained in existing debt documents, the Finance Director establishes a minimum present value savings threshold of 3.0% of the advanced refunded bond principal amount. The present value savings will be net of all costs related to the refinancing. If present value savings is less than 3.0%, the Finance Director may consider the option value captured as a percent of total savings. If the option value exceeds 70% and present value savings is less than 3.0%, the Finance Director may opt to complete a refunding. If the present value savings per maturity is at least 3.0% but less than 70% of the option value, the Finance Director may opt to complete a refunding. The decision to take savings on an upfront or deferred basis must be explicitly approved by the Board of Mayor and Alderman. Current refunding opportunities will be considered by the Finance Director if the refunding generates positive present value savings.

2. Restructuring for economic purposes

The City will refund debt when it is in the best financial interest of the City to do so. Such refunding will be limited to restructuring to meet unanticipated revenue expectations, achieve cost savings, mitigate irregular debt service payments, release reserve funds or remove unduly restrictive bond covenants.

3. Term of Refunding Issues

The City will refund bonds within the term of the originally issued debt. However, the Finance Director may consider maturity extension, when necessary to achieve a desired outcome, provided that such extension is legally permissible. The Finance Director may also consider shortening the term of the originally issued debt to realize greater savings. The remaining useful life of the financed facility and the concept of inter-generational equity should guide this decision.

4. Escrow Structuring

The City shall utilize the least costly securities available in structuring refunding escrows. In the case of open market securities, a certificate will be provided by a third party agent, who is not a broker-dealer stating that the securities were procured through an arms-length, competitive bid process, that such securities were more cost effective than State and Local Government Obligations (SLGS), and that the price paid for the securities was reasonable within Federal guidelines. Under no circumstances shall an underwriter, agent or financial advisor sell escrow securities to the City from its own account.

5. Arbitrage

The City shall take all necessary steps to optimize escrows and to avoid negative arbitrage in its refunding subject to the City's investment policies. Any positive arbitrage will be rebated as necessary according to Federal guidelines.

X. Methods of Issuance

The City or its designee will determine the method of issuance on a case-by-case basis.

1. Competitive Sale

In a competitive sale, the City's bonds shall be awarded to the bidder providing the lowest true interest cost as long as the bid adheres to the requirements set forth in the official notice of sale.

The City's Financial Advisor shall not be permitted to bid on the City's competitive bond sale.

2. Negotiated Sale

While the City prefers the use of a competitive process, the City recognizes that some securities are best sold through negotiation. In its consideration of a negotiated sale, the City shall assess the following circumstances:

- a. State prohibitions against negotiated sales,
- b. A structure which may require a strong pre-marketing effort such as a complex transaction or a "story" bond,
- c. Size of the issue which may limit the number of potential bidders,
- d. Market volatility is such that the City would be better served by flexibility in timing a sale,
- e. Whether the Bonds are issued as variable rate demand obligations,
- f. Whether an idea or financing structure is a proprietary product of a single firm.

The City's Financial Advisor shall not be permitted to serve as the underwriter on the City's negotiated bond sale.

3. Private Placement

From time to time the City may elect to privately place its debt. Such placement shall only be considered if this method is demonstrated to result in a cost savings to the City relative to other methods of debt issuance.

The City's Financial Advisor shall not be permitted to purchase the City's debt through a private placement.

XI. Underwriter Selection (Negotiated Transaction)

Senior Manager Selection

The Board of Mayor and Alderman or its designee shall select the senior manager for a proposed negotiated sale. The selection criteria shall include but not be limited to the following:

- The firm's ability and experience in managing complex transactions
- Prior knowledge and experience with the City
- The firm's willingness to risk capital and demonstration of such risk
- Quality and experience of personnel assigned to the City's engagement
- Financing ideas presented
- Underwriting fees

Co-Manager Selection

Co-managers will be selected on the same basis as the senior manager. In addition to their qualifications, co-managers appointed to specific transactions will be a function of transaction size and the necessity to ensure maximum distribution of the City's bonds.

Selling Groups

The City may use selling groups in certain transactions. To the extent that selling groups are used, the Finance Director at his or her discretion may make appointments to selling groups as the transaction dictates.

Underwriter's Counsel

In any negotiated sale of City debt in which legal counsel is required to represent the underwriter, the appointment will be made by the Senior Manager with input from the City.

Underwriter's Discount

The Finance Director will evaluate the proposed underwriter's discount against comparable issues in the market. If there are multiple underwriters in the transaction, the Finance Director will determine the allocation of fees with respect to the management fee, if any. The determination will be based upon participation in the structuring phase of the transaction.

All fees and allocation of the management fee will be determined prior to the sale date; a cap on management fee, expenses and underwriter's counsel will be established and communicated to all parties by the Finance Director. The senior manager shall submit an itemized list of expenses charged to members of the underwriting group. Any additional expenses must be substantiated.

Evaluation of Underwriter Performance

The Finance Director with assistance of an independent Financial Advisor will evaluate each bond sale after completion to assess the following: costs of issuance including underwriters' compensation, pricing of the bonds in terms of the overall interest cost and on a maturity-by-maturity basis, and the distribution of bonds and sales credits.

Following each sale, the Finance Director shall provide a report to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen on the results of the sale.

Syndicate Policies

For each negotiated transaction, the Finance Director will prepare syndicate policies that will describe the designation policies governing the upcoming sale. The Finance Director shall ensure receipt of each member's acknowledgement of the syndicate policies for the upcoming sale prior to the sale date.

Designation Policies

To encourage the pre-marketing efforts of each member of the underwriting team, orders for the City's bonds will be net designated, unless otherwise expressly stated. The City shall require the senior manager to:

- Equitably allocate bonds to other managers and the selling group
- Comply with Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board (MSRB) regulations governing the priority of orders and allocations
- Within 10 working days after the sale date, submit to the Finance Director a detail of orders, allocations and other relevant information pertaining to the City's sale

XII. Consultants

Financial Advisor

The City shall select a financial advisor (or advisors) to assist in its debt issuance and debt administration processes. Selection of the City's financial advisor(s) shall be based on, but not limited to, the following criteria:

- Overall quality of the firm's proposal as an indicator of its probability for success.
- Relevant Financial Advisor experience with municipal government issuers and the public sector.
- Indication that the firm has a broadly based background and is therefore capable of balancing the City's overall needs for continuity and innovation in capital planning and debt financing.
- Experience and demonstrated success as indicated by its listing of current major clients.
- The firm's professional reputation for integrity and compliance with state and federal law.
- Independence from municipal bond underwriting, trading, or other clients, activities, or events which could result in a conflict of interest.
- Professional qualifications and experience of principal employees who will work for the City.
- Commitment to fair and equitable employment practices.
- Consideration will be given to the proposed fee structure and estimated costs, but price will not be the sole determining factor.

Financial Advisory Services

Financial advisory services provided to the City shall include, but shall not be limited to the following:

- Advise the City on financial matters relating to proposed capital financing projects.
- Analyze the current debt profile and recommend appropriate changes to ensure correct mix of fixed rate debt, variable rate debt and structured products to accomplish the City's immediate and long-term fiscal objectives.
- Working with the City staff and their legal advisors, prepare Preliminary Official Statement, Official Statement, Notice of Bond Sale and other related documents.
- Advise and assist in presentations to rating agencies.
- Assist the City in obtaining competitive bids from bond underwriters, trustees, paying agents/registrars, printers and escrow verification agents, as necessary.
- In the event the City undertakes negotiated underwritings, the Financial Advisor shall represent the City's interests in all aspects of the negotiated transaction, including underwriter selection, revenue and transaction structuring, credit enhancement and pricing scales.
- Arrange for electronic disclosure and bidding services.
- Develop five and ten year debt strategies that incorporate the City's capital financing plans and revenue constraints. Discuss funding alternatives and cost benefits of proposed

strategies. Determine the City's debt or bonding capacity and the revenue impact of capital projects.

- Assist the City in identifying and obtaining new sources of funding for capital needs such as new revenues, asset sales, state and/or federal grants or incentive programs.
- Assess use of swaps and other structured products, and propose strategies, to meet the City's financing objectives.
- Develop a formal written debt policy, which incorporates the City's financial and operational objectives.
- Perform annual credit/scorecard calculations using the applicable local government criteria as provided by Moody's and Standard & Poor's.
- Perform bi-annual review of the City's credit/scorecard calculations in comparison to peer cities.
- Conduct necessary analysis and feasibility studies relating to financing of City projects, including cash flows, sources and uses, and sensitivity analysis of variables in a financing, such as interest rate, maturities, and rate of principal redemption.
- Propose innovative financing techniques, which may assist the City in minimizing costs, simplifying debt financing or achieving the City's objectives.
- Provide consultation and research on tax issues faced by the City relative to the financing of public infrastructure.
- Advise the City in complying with and preparing continuing disclosure information pursuant to Security and Exchange Commission rules.
- Cooperate and confer with the City's Bond Counsel and other advisors retained by the City.
- Review all financing documents and advise the City's Finance Director accordingly.
- Undertake such additional actions as will lead to the prompt and successful delivery of the proceeds and the production and availability of bonds.
- Make recommendations on legislation, as requested, which may significantly affect the bond's cost of financing.

Conflict of Interest

The City requires that its consultants and advisors provide objective advice and analysis, maintain the confidentiality of City financial plans, and be free from any conflicts of interest. Specifically, underwriters shall clearly identify itself in writing as an underwriter and not a financial advisor from the earliest stages of its relationship with the City. The underwriter must clarify its primary role as a purchaser of securities in an arms-length commercial transaction and that it has financial and other interests that differ from those of the City.

Bond Counsel

The City shall enter into an engagement letter agreement with the legal counsel representing the City in a debt transaction. City debt will include a written opinion by legal counsel affirming that the City is authorized to issue the proposed debt, that the City has met all legal requirements necessary for issuance, and a determination of the proposed debt's federal income tax status.

The approving opinion and other documents relating to the issuance of debt will be prepared by counsel with extensive experience in public finance and tax issues.

Disclosure by Financing Team Members

All financing team members, and their associated costs to perform such services, either on an on-time or continued basis, will be required to provide full and complete disclosure to the City and its governing body. Any and all Financing Team Members shall also disclose agreements with other financing team members and outside parties. The extent of disclosure may vary depending on the nature of the transaction. However, in general terms, no agreements shall be permitted which could compromise the firm's ability to provide independent advice which is solely in the City's best interests or which could reasonably be perceived as a conflict of interest.

XIII. Disclosure

The City will provide annual financial and economic information to the Electronic Municipal Market Access facility of the Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board. The City will also notify the MSRB of any of the following material events:

- Principal and interest payment delinquencies
- Nonpayment-related defaults
- Unscheduled draws on bond-related reserves
- Unscheduled draws on credit enhancements
- Substitution of credit or liquidity providers or the failure of performance on the part of a liquidity provider
- Adverse tax opinions or events affecting the tax-exempt status of any bonds
- Modifications to rights of bond holders
- Bond calls
- Defeasances
- Matters affecting collateral
- Rating changes

The City will also maintain a system of record keeping and reporting which complies with the arbitrage rebate compliance requirements of the federal tax code.

XIV. Debt Policy Review

The debt policy guidelines outlined herein are only intended to provide general direction regarding the future use and execution of debt, interest rate swaps and options. The City maintains the right to modify these guidelines and may make exceptions to any of them at any time to the extent that the execution of such debt, swap or option achieves City goals.

This policy will be reviewed no less frequently than annually. At that time the Finance Director will consider any recommendations for any amendments, deletions, additions, improvements or clarification.