

## **GLOSSARY OF BUDGET-RELATED TERMS**

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**ABC Tax** - A tax on the net profits of county and city alcoholic beverage control (ABC) stores. The law provides that the net profits from the tax to a county's general fund.

**Accrual Basis of Accounting** - Method of accounting in which transactions are recognized at the time they are incurred, as opposed to when cash is received or spent.

**Ad Valorem Tax (also known as "Property Tax")** - A tax on property itself, levied on the assessed value of the property.

**Adopted Budget** - The original budget approved by the Board of County Commissioners for a given fiscal year.

**Amended Budget** - The original budget plus or minus any adjustments approved during the fiscal year by the Board of County Commissioners, i.e. 6/30 or year end.

**Appropriation** - An authorization from a governing body to make expenditures for a specific purpose.

**Assessed Valuation** - The total value of real estate and personal property as determined by tax assessors which is used as a basis for levying taxes.

**Average Daily Membership (ADM)** - The average number of students attending the public schools (grades K-12) on any given day based on enrollment figures through the first 10 days of the school year. This number is used by the State Department of Public Instruction for the allotment of "per pupil" funds to a school system. It is also used by county government as the basis for the allotment of operating (non-capital) funds from county sources to the public schools.

**Balance Budget** – A budget (including project ordinances and financial plans for Internal Service Funds) where the sum of estimated net revenues and appropriated fund balances is equal to appropriations. G.S. 159-8(a) requires an exact balance – neither a deficit nor a surplus. G.S. 159-13(b) (16) states that each of the accounting funds, the sum of which make up the annual budget, must also be balanced.

**Beer & Wine Tax** - A tax levied by the state on alcoholic beverages. A county is eligible to share in beer and wine excise tax revenues if these beverages may be legally sold at the retail level in any part of a county outside of the municipalities. Distribution of the revenue from this tax is made to county governments based on the non-municipal population.

**Benchmarking** - A practical process for measuring an organization's performance and processes, and using that analysis to improve services, operations and associated expenses.

**Best in Class** - Organizations that perform each function at the lowest cost, or with the highest degree of quality or efficiency.

**Best Practice** - The method used by an entity that excels at doing a particular activity. These are the measures against which the county benchmarks its current processes for performing the activity.

**Block Grant** - The consolidation by a funding agency (Federal or State government, for example) of two or more program-specific grants into one grant. This, in theory, provides the recipient of the grant with the maximum flexibility in the expenditure of the grant funds, while adhering to program requirements. In practice, it is sometimes used by funding agencies as a method of reducing the amount of grant awards.

**Bond** - A written promise to pay a specific sum of money plus interest within a specific period of time. Bonds are a major source of revenue for construction or major renovations.

**Brownfields** - Abandoned industrial sites that are, many times, contaminated, and in need of redevelopment before new businesses can utilize them. With potential positive changes to federal EPA regulations looming on the horizon, involvement in the area of brownfields redevelopment could yield public benefits in the areas of downtown and community redevelopment, as well as within the small business community.

**Budget** - A proposed plan for raising and spending money for specified programs, functions, activities, or objectives during a fiscal year.

**Budget Calendar** - The schedule around which the budget is developed. This schedule must include certain statutory dates, ultimately ending with the adoption of a budget ordinance by the Board of County Commissioners prior to July 1 (the date that the fiscal year begins).

**Budget Message** - The introduction of the budget that provides the Board of County Commissioners and the public with a general summary of the most important aspects of the budget, changes from the current and previous fiscal years, and the views and recommendations of the County Manager.

**Budget Ordinance** - The official enactment by the Board of Commissioners making appropriations and establishing a tax rate for the budget year. Appropriations shall be made by department, function, or project and will include the presentation of revenue estimates by major source. The ordinance must be adopted prior to July 1, with appropriate notification made to the Finance Officer and Clerk to the Board within five (5) days of approval by the Board of Commissioners.

**Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)** - A five-year plan of major construction or renovation projects. This plan includes the projected annual expenses and available revenues for each project. The plan is adjusted annually and approved by the Board of County Commissioners.

**Capital Improvement Program** - A long range plan which outlines proposed capital improvement projects and estimates the costs and funding sources associated with those projects.

**Capital Outlay** - Expenses associated with the acquisition, construction, improvement, replacement, or renovation of land, structures and improvements thereon. This includes equipment and physical property, other than land and buildings, having a useful life of more than three years and a cost in excess of \$5,000. (Expenditures to replace parts or otherwise to restore assets to their previously efficient operating condition, are treated as repairs.)

**Capital Projects** - A renovation and/or new construction project where costs are \$100,000 or more; the finished project has a life expectancy of five (5) or more years; and, the

project takes a year or more to complete.

**Capital Project Fund** - Transactions relating to the construction of any major capital improvements, including those financed by bond proceeds.

**Capitation** - The practice by a funding agency (Federal or State government, for example) of establishing maximum amounts which may be allocated to recipients of revenue.

**Cash Basis of Accounting** - Method of accounting in which transactions are recognized at the time cash is received or spent.

**Community Based Alternatives (CBA's)** - State-funded alternatives to training school for juveniles, ages 7-17, who have been adjudicated delinquent, or are at risk of being involved in the juvenile justice system. Because Guilford County sends a higher than average number of children to training school, all local programs funded with DBA funding must serve at least 50% of children adjudicated delinquent. The Youth Advisory Council, mandated in every county, and appointed by the Board of Commissioners, makes recommendations on funding each year to the Board of Commissioners. There is a required local match of 30%. The local funding can come from local government (city & county), the United Way, or any local foundation.

**Community Development Fund** - This fund accounts for projects financed primarily with Community Development Block Grant Funds for rehabilitation and new construction of housing for individuals with low-to-moderate income levels. Guilford County is a member of a housing consortium with four (4) other local governments under the Home Investment Affordable Housing Program created through the Title II Home Investment Partnership Act of the Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act of 1990.

**County Building Construction Fund** - Transactions associated with the financing and construction of various capital assets and improvements for county projects as opposed to schools, water/sewer, parks and watershed.

**Countywide Budget** - The combination of the General Fund Budget (less any transfers to other funds) and the School Capital Outlay Fund Budget. This budget serves as the basis for the countywide tax rate.

**Debt Service** - Payments of interest and principal on an obligation resulting from the issuance of bonds.

**Emergency Telephone System Fund** - Transactions associated with the operation and debt retirement of the "911" Emergency Communications System. These transactions include those associated with both the "hardwire" (landlines) and "wireless" (cellular) communications components.

**Fire Protection District Funds** - Transactions relating to the operation of the Fire Protection Districts in the county. There are 21 individual Fire Protection Districts in the county. Each is funded, in large part, from a special district tax levied on the property value for the individual district. The tax rate for each district is established annually by the Board of County Commissioners with the adoption of the Budget Ordinance.

**Fiscal Year (FY)** - The twelve-month period designated as the operating year for county

government. For Guilford County, the fiscal year begins on July 1, and ends on the following June 30.

**Fund** - A separate fiscal and accounting entity, with its own set of accounts and having its own cash and other resources, liabilities, equities or fund balance, revenues and expenditures.

**Fund Balance - Appropriated** - Unrestricted money (cash & investments) left over at the end of a given fiscal year that is budgeted to help finance the subsequent year's expenditures.

**Fund Balance - Undesignated** - Unrestricted money (cash & investments) left over at the end of a given fiscal year that is not budgeted to help finance the subsequent year's expenditures. Any or all of this amount may be appropriated by action of the Board of County Commissioners at any time during the year, or may be left undesignated until the end of the fiscal year. The Local Government Commission recommends that the undesignated fund balance be at least 8% of the countywide budget.

**GAAP** - An acronym meaning "Generally Accepted Accounting Principals", which refer to a set of standard accounting rules and procedures used by governmental agencies to account for the receipt and expenditure of funds.

**General Fund** - Transactions very general in nature and not required to be accounted for in another fund. This is the primary operating fund for the county.

**General Obligation Bonds** - Bonds issued by the government, usually requiring voter approval, that are backed by the government's full faith and credit.

**Hold-Harmless Revenue** – Revenue remitted by the State to county governments in an effort to partially offset the loss of revenue resulting from the elimination of Inventory Tax and Intangibles Tax reimbursements

**Internal Services Fund** - Transactions of departments that serve other departments in the same government rather than the public. Operations in Guilford County government that are included in the Internal Services Fund are Risk Management, Telecommunications and the Employee Health Care Plan.

**Investment Earnings** - The interest realized as a result of the investment of idle cash (includes fund balance, capital and operating proceeds, and bond proceeds. These earnings must be credited proportionately among the funds from which the invested money came.

**Joint Water/Sewer Trust Fund** - Transactions associated with the financing and construction of various water and sewer construction projects through joint agreements with various municipalities, including the cities of Greensboro and High Point and the Towns of Gibsonville and Jamestown.

**Law Enforcement Separation Fund** - Transactions associated with the amounts paid by the county to the State of North Carolina to supplement the standard retirement benefits for law enforcement personnel at any level of government. The retirement plan allows law enforcement personnel to retire with 30 years of service or at age 55. The supplement adds to the standard retirement benefits and amount the retiree would receive from Social Security

until the time that the retiree is eligible for Social Security.

**Modified Accrual Basis of Accounting** - A method for recording the receipt and expenditure of funds in which revenues are recorded when the amount becomes measurable and available to pay current liabilities and expenditures are recorded when the liability is actually incurred.

**Modified Accrual Basis of Budgeting** – The assignment of most revenues, including the property tax, to the year when they are received in cash, or if they are received shortly after the start of one fiscal year but are measurable and available at the end of the prior fiscal year, to the prior year's budget; and the assignment of expenditures to the year in which the liabilities arising from those expenditures are expected to occur.

**Motor Vehicles** - For the purpose of establishing property values, motor vehicles are defined as any vehicle that is self-propelled and every vehicle designed to run upon the highways that is pulled by a self-propelled vehicle. Motor vehicles are designed for public roads and include trailers.

**Outcome** - Measures providing information on program results or effectiveness.

**Output** - Indicators that define the amount of service units provided by a department or program (workload indicators).

**Pay As You Go Funding (PAYG)** - A funding mechanism for capital projects that relies on annual appropriations as opposed to long-term debt created through the issue of voter-approved bonds. This form of funding usually requires an appropriation from the General Fund (primarily property tax revenues or fund balance appropriations).

**Performance Measures** - Quantitative measures that assist in analyzing the effectiveness and efficiency of a program or department.

**Personal Property** - Property that is movable as distinguished from fixed property. Property in the category is divided into two groups: "Tangible" and "Intangible".

**Property Tax (also known as "Ad Valorem Tax")** - A tax on property itself, levied on the assessed value of the property.

**Real Property** - Land, buildings, and items permanently affixed to land or buildings.

**Revenue** - Receipts that increase the County's net worth or net financial resources.

**Room Occupancy & Tourism Development Fund** - Transactions relating to the collection of a tax on certain accommodations, with the proceeds allocated to the Guilford County Tourism Development Authority and to the City of High Point.

**School Capital Outlay Fund** - Transactions associated with the financing of school capital assets for the Guilford County Public Schools and Guilford Technical Community College.

**Sewer Bond Fund** - Transactions associated with the financing and construction of various sewer construction projects.

**State Certified Property** - For the purpose of establishing property values, the N.C. Department of Revenue appraises some real and personal property in each county and certifies the values of such property to the assessor. Examples of the types of property included in this category are airline companies, bus line companies, electric membership corporations and power companies, gas companies, pipeline companies, and motor freight carrier companies.

**State Shared Revenue** - The proceeds from State taxes that are shared with counties, with the distribution being determined by some formula, depending on the type of tax. Revenue in this category includes intangibles tax, beer & wine taxes, and real estate transfer fees.

**Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)** - This State block grant replaces the former entitlement program (AFDC).

**Tangible Personal Property** - Items of visible and movable property not permanently affixed to real property.

**Tax Levy** - The total amount to be raised by general property taxes for operating and debt service purposes specified in the annual budget ordinance.

**Tax Rate** - The factor that determines the amount of tax due on taxable property. Tax rates are customarily expressed in dollars per \$100 appraised valuation.

**Water Bond Fund** - Transactions associated with the financing and construction of various water construction projects.

**Water/Sewer Construction Fund** - Transactions associated with the financing and construction of various water and sewer construction projects.