

**OFFICIAL OPERATING BUDGET  
FISCAL YEAR 2009**

**APPENDIX E  
GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS**

# OFFICIAL OPERATING BUDGET FISCAL YEAR 2009

## GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

**Accrual**: The recognition of revenue when earned or expenses when incurred regardless of when cash is received or disbursed

**Accrual Accounting**: A basis of accounting in which revenues are recorded when they are earned and expenditures (or expenses) are recorded when they are incurred, regardless of when cash is actually received or spent.

**Ad Valorem Taxes**: Taxes which are levied according to the value of the property.

**Allotment**: The part of an appropriation that can be encumbered or expended during an allotment period. An allotment period is generally less than one fiscal year in length.

**Appropriation**: A specific amount of money authorized by the city council to be spent for a particular purpose. In the General Fund an appropriation is only valid for one fiscal year.

**Assessed Value**: The value set for property that serves as the basis for levying taxes.

**Balance Sheet**: An itemized statement that lists the total assets and the total liabilities of a given business to portray its net worth at a given moment of time. The amounts shown on a balance sheet are generally the historic cost of items and not their current values.

**Balanced Budget**: Represents the fiscal plan of operation of the City. To be balanced, the fiscal plan consists of an equal amount of proposed revenues and expenditures.

**Boards and Agencies**: The various not for profit organizations that receive appropriations from the City of Birmingham for providing services to area citizens. Most of these boards and agencies are not under the administrative control of the City.

**Bond**: A written promise to pay a specified sum of money at a stated date or dates along with any interest due. The most common types of bonds are general obligation and revenue bonds. Bonds are generally used to finance capital projects and require prior approval by the voters before they can be issued.

**Bond Anticipation Notes**: A short-term debt instrument issued by a state or municipality to borrow against the proceeds of an upcoming bond issue.

**Budget**: A fiscal plan of operation. The budget consists of proposed expenditures and proposed revenues together with specific authorizations and restrictions as appropriate. It also includes not only the proposed fiscal plan but the current and prior fiscal period history. The budget quantifies executive and legislative objectives and provides a quantitative means of measurement of performance. As a guideline for operations, the budget changes over time

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in response to changes in conditions. Finally, the budget embodies public policy and provides insights into how that policy will be implemented.

**Budget Calendar**: The schedule of dates followed in planning, preparing, and adopting the budget.

**Budget Transfer**: The procedure used to modify an appropriation. The mayor can authorize transfers between categories of appropriations in the same fund within a department. A transfer between funds or between departments requires authorization from the city council.

**Capital Budget**: The plan of proposed capital outlays and the means of financing them for the current accounting period.

**Capital Improvement Program**: The plan for capital improvement projects to be undertaken, continued or completed over a fixed number of fiscal years, along with the resources for financing those projects. Each year's Capital Budget will be made up from the annual projects listed in the City's Five Year Capital Improvement Program.

**Capital Outlay**: Expenditures for acquiring or adding to fixed assets. Examples of capital outlays include equipment, tools, vehicles, furniture, and building improvements.

**Capitalized Lease Obligations**: A lease obligation that has to be capitalized on the balance sheet. It is characterized by: it is non-cancelable; the life of lease is less than the life of the asset(s) being leased; and, the lessor does not pay for the upkeep, maintenance, or servicing costs of the asset(s) during the lease period.

**Cash Management**: The process of determining how much cash will be needed to pay the expenditures of a given period and investing any temporary cash balances in order to obtain the highest return possible.

**Citizen's Advisory Board**: A city-wide representation of the Citizen Participation Program. The Citizen's Advisory Board is made up of the presidents of the twenty two Community Advisory Committees.

**Citizen Participation Program**: The system of neighborhoods and communities designed to improve communication, understanding and cooperation between Birmingham citizen's and city officials.

**Classified Status**: A civil service position that is subject to rules set forth by the Jefferson County Personnel Board.

**Community**: A geographic area made up of two or more adjoining neighborhoods. There are twenty two officially designated communities in the City of Birmingham. The presidents,

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vice presidents and secretaries of the Neighborhood Associations within a community form groups referred to as Community Advisory Committees.

**Community Development Block Grant (CDBG):** A primary source of federal funds. CDBG funds are used for neighborhood revitalization, economic development and public services.

**Condense Code:** A three character code used by the City to identify the fund and responsibility center to which expenditures should be charged.

**Contractual Services:** Services rendered to the City by private firms, individuals or other government agencies.

**Contributed Capital:** Capital received from investors for stock, equal to capital stock plus paid-in capital, NOT that capital received from earnings or donations. Also called contributed capital.

**Current Assets:** Those assets of a company that are reasonably expected to be realized in cash, or sold, or consumed during the normal operating cycle of the business (usually one year). Such assets include cash, accounts receivable and money due usually within one year, short-term investments, US government bonds, inventories, and prepaid expenses.

**Current Liabilities:** Liabilities to be paid within one year of the balance sheet date.

**Debt Service:** The cost of paying principal and interest on borrowed funds.

**Defeasing:** The setting aside by a borrower of cash or bonds sufficient to service the borrower's debt. Both the borrower's debt and the offsetting cash or bonds are removed from the balance sheet.

**Department:** The basic administrative unit of city government. Departments are organized according to the service they provide.

**Encumbrance:** The legal commitment of appropriated funds to purchase an item or service.

**Enterprise Fund:** A type of fund used to account for operations that are financed and operated in a manner similar to private business enterprises, where charges for services cover the cost of providing the service.

**Estimated Revenue:** The amount of revenue budgeted to be collected or accrued during the fiscal year.

**Expenditure:** A decrease in net financial resources for the purpose of obtaining goods or services, retiring debt or settling losses. Under the modified accrual basis of accounting used

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by the City of Birmingham, expenditures are recorded at the time the goods are delivered or the services are rendered even though the actual cash payment may not have been made.

**Fiduciary Fund**: A type of fund in which the government acts as a trustee or agent on behalf of another party. An example is pension funds.

**Fiscal Year**: The twelve month period to which the budgets apply. July 1 through June 30 is designated as the fiscal year for the City of Birmingham.

**Fringe Benefits**: Employee compensation that is in addition to wages or salaries. Fringe benefits provided by the City include life insurance, retirement pension, medical insurance and longevity payments.

**Full Faith and Credit**: Security for indebtedness based upon the taxing authority of a government.

**Function**: A group of related programs or activities. The four functional areas of city government are: General Government, Public Safety, Public Service and Culture and Recreation.

**Fund**: A financial entity with a self-balancing set of accounts, created for the purpose of carrying out specific activities. For example, the General Fund records all the revenue and expenditures related to the ordinary operations of city government.

**Fund Balance**: The difference between fund assets and fund liabilities and reserves.

**Fund Equity**: Net total assets of each City fund.

**Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP)**: The rules and practices which define the standards for recording financial transactions. In accounting for government, generally accepted accounting principles are set out in pronouncements by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB).

**General Fund**: The fund used to account for both general government activities and those activities not required to be accounted for in another fund.

**General Obligation Bonds**: Bonds issued to finance public projects such as street improvements and facilities construction. This type of bond is backed by the full faith and credit of the issuing government.

**Goals**: General aims of the organization, departments, and divisions (based on vision).

**Grants**: Contributions by other governments or organizations to be used for specific programs.

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**Hope IV:** This program was developed as a national action plan to eradicate severely distressed public housing. The program targets revitalization in the areas of physical and management improvements and social and community services.

**Indenture:** Agreement between lender and borrower that details specific terms of the bond issuance. Specifies legal obligations of bond issuer and rights of bondholders. An indenture spells out the specific terms of a bond, as well as the rights and responsibilities of both the issuer of the security and the holder.

**Independent Boards, Commissions and Associations:** Organizational units that receive budgetary and administrative support from the City. They differ from departments in that they are overseen by a board of directors.

**Infrastructure:** Public domain fixed assets such as roads, bridges, curbs and gutters, streets and sidewalks, drainage systems, lighting systems and similar assets that are immovable and the responsibility of the governmental unit.

**Interfund Transfers:** Amounts transferred from one fund to another within the same governmental unit.

**Intergovernmental Revenue:** Revenue received from another governmental unit. Intergovernmental revenues include grants, cost reimbursements and payments in lieu of tax.

**Mayor-Council Act:** The amendment to the State of Alabama code that is the basis of Birmingham city government. This act, approved on September 9, 1955, specified that the City would be governed by a mayor who would be elected at large and nine council members elected by districts.

**Mill:** A tenth of a penny. This term is usually used in property tax assessment.

**Modified Accrual Basis:** A system of accounting recommended for use in governmental funds wherein fund revenues are recorded when they are both measurable and available; and expenditures (with a few exceptions) are recorded when the liability is incurred.

**Neighborhood:** The City of Birmingham has ninety-nine officially designated neighborhoods which are the basic building blocks of the City's Citizen Participation Program. Neighborhood associations can apply for assistance from the Community Development Block Grant and Revenue Sharing funds to pay for approved projects to benefit their neighborhood.

**Non-departmental Expenses:** Those expenditures incurred by the City which can not be allocated to a particular responsibility center. An example of a non-departmental expense is debt service payments.

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**Notes:** A negotiable instrument wherein the maker agrees to pay a specific sum at a definite time.

**Object Code:** A four character code used by the City to identify the type of expenditure.

**Objective:** Something that will be accomplished within a designated time frame. Objectives differ from performance goals in that they are time bound and measurable.

**Operating Budget:** The legally adopted spending and financing plan for normal government operations within a single fiscal year.

**Ordinance:** A legislative act of the city council to adopt laws, statutes and regulations for the city.

**Paratransit:** Public or group transportation, as by automobile, van, or minibus, organized to offer services to individuals who, because of a disability (physical, cognitive or visual) cannot access an accessible fixed route bus.

**Performance Goal:** A broad statement of the intended accomplishments of a governmental entity or department. Goals are long range plans.

**Permanent Standing:** A position which is required for a period of more than six months during a given year is generally classified as permanent.

**Personnel Services:** The total expenditures and appropriations related to the cost of employee services. Personnel Services include salaries and wages, overtime and fringe benefit costs.

**Property Tax:** A tax levied on the assessed value of real property, i.e., ad valorem tax.

**Proprietary Fund:** A type of fund which emulates the private sector and focuses on the measurement of net income. This fund type presents actual financial position and results of operations, such as actual assets, liabilities, fund equity balances, revenues and expenses.

**Requisition:** A written request from a department to the Purchasing Office for specific goods or services. A requisition precedes the authorization of a purchase order.

**Responsibility Center:** The smallest unit to which departmental costs can be allocated. An example of a responsibility center would be the Mounted Patrol unit of the Tactical Division of the Police Department.

**Retained Earnings:** The balance, either debit or credit, of appropriated or unappropriated earnings of an entity that are retained in the business.

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**Revenue**: Additions to the financial resources of a governmental fund. Examples of revenue are taxes, fees from services, fines and interest income.

**Revenue Anticipation Notes**: Security issued in anticipation of future revenue which will be used for repayment.

**Revenue Bonds**: A type of municipal bond where principal and interest are secured by revenues such as charges or rents paid by users of the facility built with the proceeds of the bond issue. Projects financed by revenue bonds include highways, airports, and not-for-profit health care and other facilities.

**Revenue Warrants**: Tax increment financing district warrants in which ad valorem taxes are collected to fund the debt service.

**Special Revenue Fund**: A type of fund used to account for the proceeds of a specific revenue source (other than special assessments or major capital projects) that are legally restricted to expenditures for specified purposes. An example is revenue from the Community Development Block Grant.

**Tax Increment Financing**: A method of providing money to pay for infrastructure related to development in a designated district. The money comes from the increase in property tax above the redevelopment level and can be used for a predetermined time period or pledged to repay a bond issue.

**Surplus**: Any excess amount, but in finance it is the remainder of a fund appropriated for a particular purpose.

**Tax Anticipation Notes**: Securities issued in anticipation of future tax collections.

**Temporary Standing**: Any position which is not permanent and is likely to be required for less than six months during a given year.

**Unclassified Status**: A position that is not subject to rules set forth by the Jefferson County Personnel Board.

**Unencumbered Balance**: The amount of an appropriation that is neither expended nor encumbered.

**Voucher**: A document indicating that a transaction has occurred. It usually contains the accounts related to the transaction.

**Warrant**: A type of debt issue authorized by vote of the city council. Warrants differ from bonds in that the issuance of warrants does not require prior approval by voters.