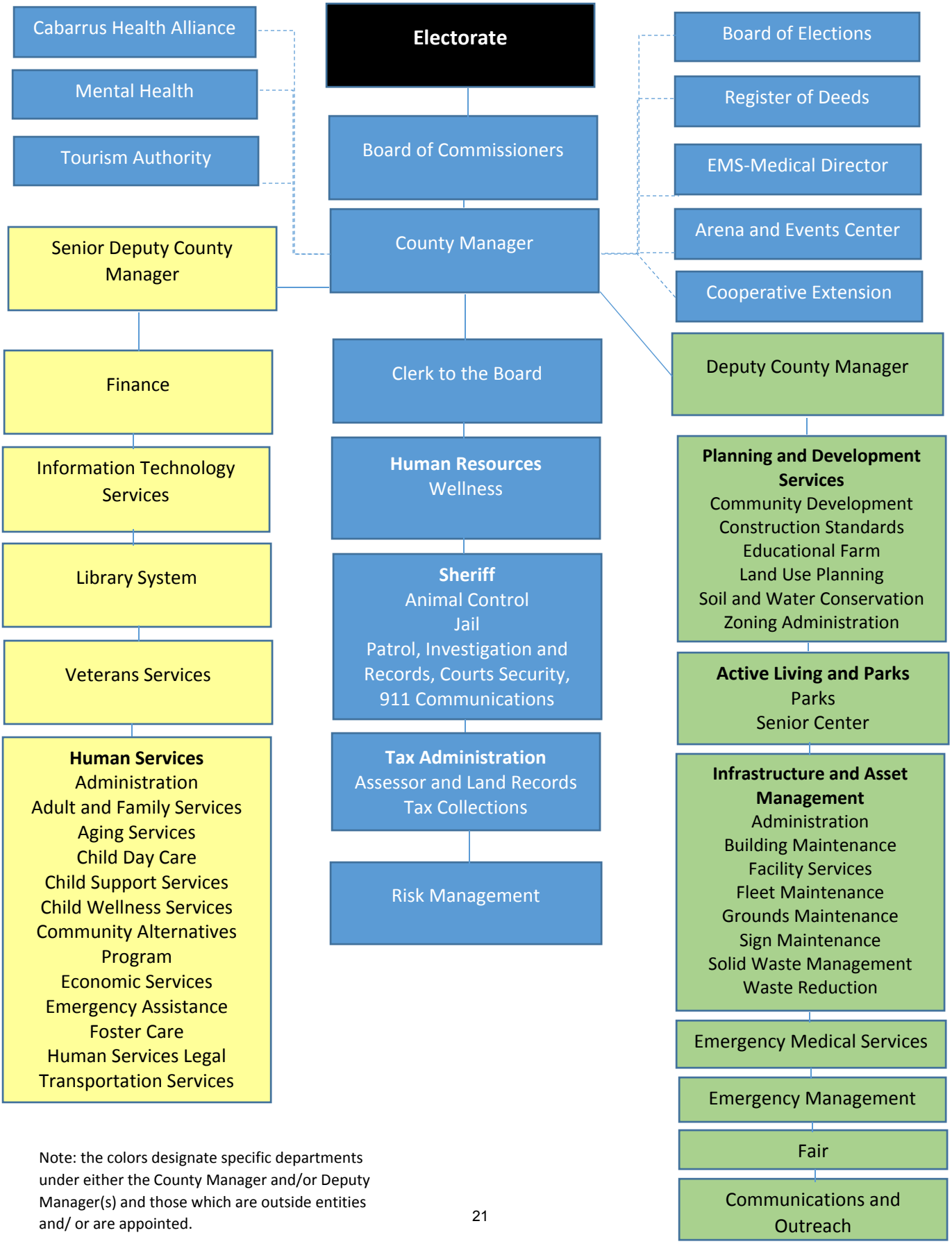
Financial Structure, Policy, and Process

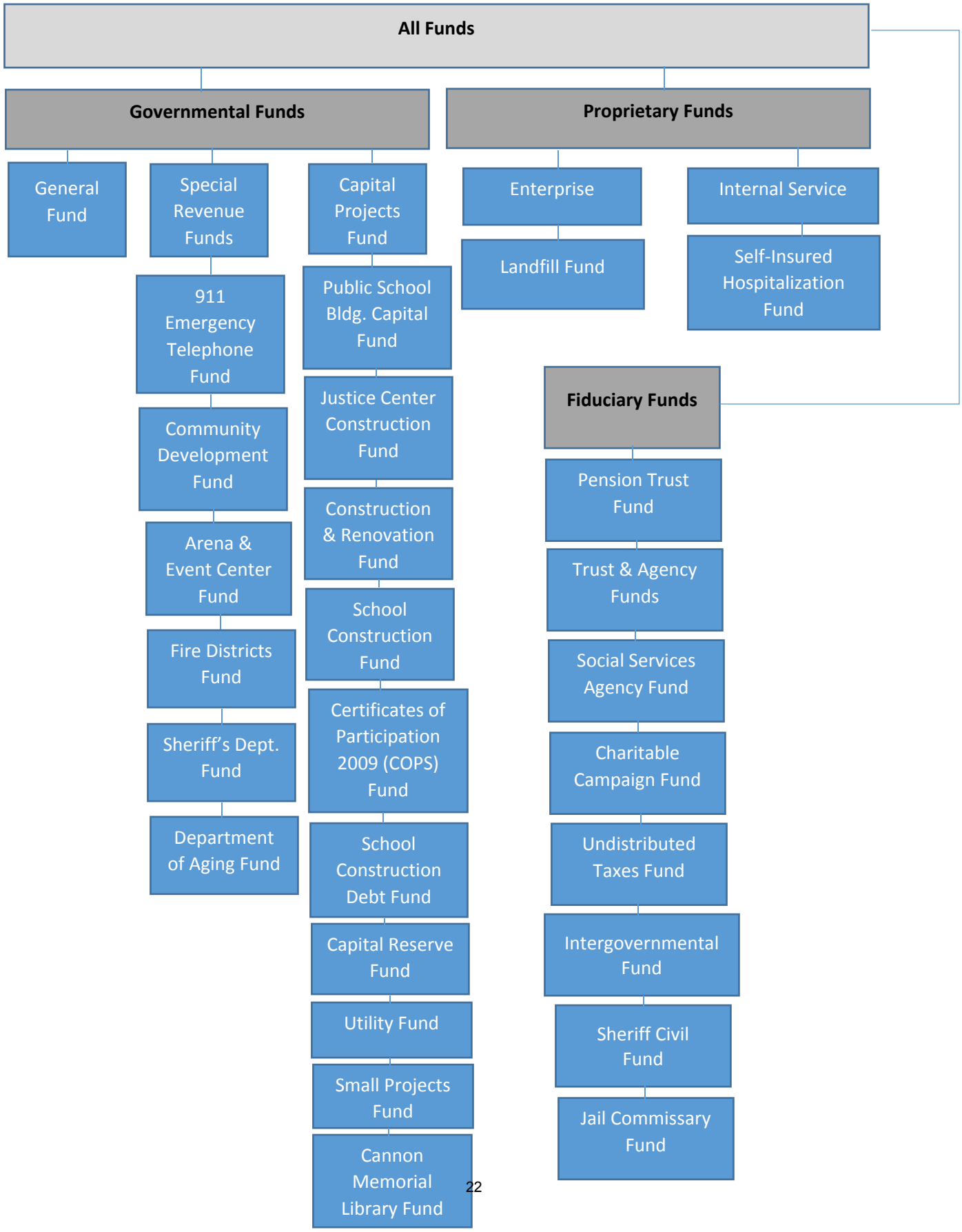
ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



Note: the colors designate specific departments under either the County Manager and/or Deputy Manager(s) and those which are outside entities and/ or are appointed.

Financial Structure, Policy, and Process

FUND STRUCTURE



Financial Structure, Policy, and Process

FUND RELATIONSHIPS

Cabarrus County's accounts are organized and operated on a fund basis. A fund is an independent fiscal and accounting entity with a self-balancing set of accounts recording its assets and deferred outflows of resources, liabilities and deferred inflows of resources, fund balances, revenues, and expenditures. The minimum number of funds is maintained consistent with the requirements of the law. In addition, the County maintains certain additional sub-funds for its own specific management needs. These sub-funds are consolidated into the appropriate fund for financial statement purposes as is required by generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP).

The County has the following governmental fund types and sub-funds:

Fund Type and Assignment Numbers

GENERAL OPERATING FUND

001 General Fund

SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS

401 911 Emergency Telephone Fund

410 Community Development Block Grant Fund

420 Cabarrus Arena & Events Center Fund
430 Fire Districts & Municipalities Fund
461 Sheriff's Department Fund

532 Dept. of Aging Fund

CAPITAL PROJECTS FUNDS

320 Public School Capital Fund
342 Justice Center Construction Fund
343 Construction & Renovation Fund
364 School Construction Fund
365 Certificates of Participation 2009

450 Capital Reserve Fund

451 Utility Fund

460 Small Projects Fund

534 Cannon Memorial Library Trust Fund

ENTERPRISE FUND

270 Landfill Fund

INTERNAL SERVICE FUNDS

610 Self-Insured Hospitalization

TRUST AND AGENCY FUNDS

515 Sheriff Civil Fund

520 Charitable Campaign Fund

540 Jail Commissary Agency Fund

550 Pension Trust Fund

560 Social Services Agency Fund

570 Undistributed Taxes

571 Intergovernmental Fund

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FUND DESCRIPTIONS

GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS

General Fund – The general fund is the principal operating fund of the County and is used to account for all resources and activities of the County which are not required to be accounted for in another fund.

Special Revenue Funds – These funds are used to account for specific revenues that are legally restricted to expenditures for particular purposes.

Individual Fund Descriptions:

911 Emergency Telephone System Fund – This fund accounts for revenues received from subscriber fees that are specifically restricted for the operation and maintenance of a countywide Emergency 911 network.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Fund– This fund accounts for revenues received under the Community Development Block Grant Program that are specifically restricted to the revitalization of selected areas of the County.

Cabarrus Arena and Events Center Fund – This fund accounts for revenues received from rental, user fees and general fund support that are specifically restricted to the operation of the facility.

Fire Districts & Municipalities Fund – This fund accounts for property taxes collected and disbursed on behalf of the Fire Departments that protect the unincorporated areas of the County.

Sheriff's Department Fund – This fund accounts for the collection and appropriation of federal and state funds received specifically for the Cabarrus County Sheriff's Department.

Department of Aging Fund – This fund accounts for the activities associated with contributions for senior citizen activities and projects.

CAPITAL PROJECT FUNDS

These funds are used to account for the financial resources to be used for the acquisition or construction of major capital facilities other than those financed by proprietary and trust funds.

Individual Fund Descriptions:

Public School Building Capital Fund – This fund accounts for the acquisition, construction, renovation, and repair of various school facilities financed with revenue from the State of North Carolina under the School Facilities Finance Act of 1987 and revenue from the North Carolina Lottery proceeds.

Justice Center Construction Fund – This fund accounts for the planning, design, and construction of the Justice Center facility with County funds, installment financing and certificates of participation.

Construction and Renovation – This fund accounts for the planning, design, construction, and/or renovation of public facilities.

School Construction Fund – This fund accounts for the planning, design, construction, and/or renovation of schools funded through cash (non-debt).

Certificate of Participation 2009 (COPS) Fund – This fund accounts for the planning, design, construction, and/or renovation of schools financed through the issuance of COPS.

Capital Reserve Fund – This fund accounts for the accumulation of resources to be used specifically for capital projects designated by the Board of Commissioners.

Utility Fund – This fund accounts for the collection of utility assessment fees and the payment of water line improvement projects.

Small Projects Fund – This fund accounts for the collection and appropriation of general fund revenues and federal and state grant funds received specifically for use by the appropriate County departments who have received the funds.

Cannon Memorial Library Fund – This fund accounts for the activities associated with Concord Library activities.

PROPRIETARY FUNDS

Enterprise Funds – These funds are used to account for operations that are financed and operated in a manner similar to private business enterprises, where the intent of the governing body is to finance or recover primarily through user charges the costs of providing goods or services to the general public on a continuing basis; or where the governing body has decided that periodic determination of revenues earned, expenses incurred, and/or net income is appropriate for capital maintenance, public policy, management control, accountability, or other purposes.

Individual Fund Descriptions:

Landfill Fund – This fund is used to account for the operations of the solid waste landfill. Cabarrus County accepts only demolition and recycled materials at the landfill. Most of the funds reserved in this fund are for post-closure expenses related to future closure of the landfill.

Internal Service Funds – These funds are used to account for the financing of goods or services provided by one department or agency to other departments or agencies of the government and to other government units on a cost reimbursement basis.

Individual Fund Description:

Self-Insured Hospitalization – This fund accounts for the administration and operation of the County's employee hospitalization and life insurance.

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FIDUCIARY FUNDS

Trust and Agency Funds – These funds are used to report assets held in a trustee or agency capacity for others and, therefore, cannot be used to support the government's own programs. The fiduciary fund category includes pension (and other employee benefit) trust funds, private-purpose trust funds, and agency funds.

Individual Fund Descriptions:

Sheriff Civil Fund- This fund accounts for collections of civil writs from citizens prior to distribution to plaintiffs.

Charitable Campaign Fund – This fund accounts for the collection of employee charitable giving and the disbursement to various agencies selected annually.

Jail Commissary Fund – This fund accounts for the collection and disbursement of jail inmate's personal money.

Pension Trust Fund – This fund accounts for the accumulation of contributions to and payments for retirees for the special allowance benefits.

Department of Social Services Agency Fund – This fund accounts for moneys held by the Department of Social Services as agent for various individuals who are incapable of managing their own financial affairs.

Undistributed Taxes Fund – This fund accounts for the collection of property taxes and the disbursement of the taxes to the county and to the municipalities located in the county.

Intergovernmental Fund- This fund accounts for the accumulation of fines and forfeitures before they are distributed to the local School Boards; and accounts for the accumulation of Register of Deeds fees that the County is required to remit to the State of North Carolina.

BASIS OF BUDGETING AND ACCOUNTING

All funds are budgeted and accounted for on a modified accrual basis. Under this basis, revenues are recognized when measurable and available to be used to pay liabilities. Expenditures are recognized in the period in which they are incurred. One exception to this applies to principal and interest due on long-term debt, which are considered to be expenditures in the year payments are due.

Formal budgetary accounting is employed as a management control for all County funds. Each fiscal year, an annual budget ordinance is adopted and amended as required. Project budgets spanning more than one fiscal year are adopted or amended as required for specific revenue and capital project funds such as Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and school construction.

Budgetary control is exercised at the departmental level with the adoption of the budget by the Board of Commissioners and at the line item level through account controls. The newly adopted budget is implemented on July 1. Throughout the year, the Finance Department and the County Manager's office monitor expenditures and revenues. The budget may be amended at any time after adoption during the fiscal year by the Board of Commissioners, and with limitations, by the County Manager.

Financial Structure, Policy, and Process

The Finance Department ensures that all purchasing and payment procedures are performed correctly. This office also reviews all contracts and capital outlay requests to determine that sufficient funds are available.

The following sections include information regarding the FY2016 Annual Budget. After summaries in total and for each fund, the remaining sections of the document are grouped by service area, and are presented by program.

FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY POLICIES

Objectives

1. To link long-term financial planning with short-term daily operations;
2. To maintain the County's stable financial position;
3. To ensure that Commissioner's adopted policies are implemented in an efficient and effective manner;
4. To secure the highest possible credit and bond ratings by meeting or exceeding the requirements of bond rating agencies through sound, conservative financial decision making; and
5. To comply with North Carolina Budget and Fiscal Control Policies.

Operating Budget

The County's Annual Budget Ordinance will be balanced in accordance with the Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act (N.C.G.S. 159-8 (a)). A budget is balanced when the sum of estimated net revenues and appropriated fund balances is equal to appropriations. The County's Annual Budget Ordinance will be adopted by July 1 (N.C.G.S. 159-13 (a)).

Revenue Policy

The County seeks to implement a diversified taxing policy that will ensure reasonable stability for operation at continuous service levels, but that will provide elasticity necessary for responding quickly to increased service demands due to new development. Revenue management includes within its focus an ongoing process for reviewing and analyzing each revenue source to ensure that proceeds from each source are at an optimum level. Projected revenues will be estimated conservatively and will be based on historical trends, growth patterns, and the economy. To meet these objectives the County observes the following guidelines:

Ad Valorem Tax

As provided by the North Carolina Local Budget and Fiscal Control Act, estimated revenue from the Ad Valorem Tax levy will be budgeted as follows:

a. Assessed valuation will be estimated based on historical trends and growth patterns in a conservative manner.

b. The estimated percentage of collection will not exceed the percentage of the levy actually realized in cash as of June 30 during the preceding fiscal year, in accordance with state law.

Financial Structure, Policy, and Process

The tax rate will be set each year based on the cost of providing general governmental services and paying debt service.

User Fees

The County sets fees that will maximize user charges in lieu of ad valorem taxes for services that can be individually identified, and where the costs are directly related to the level of service. This objective is in keeping with the Commissioners' goal that growth should pay for itself, and not place a burden on current residents who do not use the service. Emphasis on user charges over ad valorem taxes results in the following benefits:

User charges are paid by all users, including those exempt from property taxes.

User charges avoid subsidization in instances where the service is not being provided to the general public.

User charges are a means of rationing the provision of certain services. User charges for certain services can be justified on the basis of equity and efficiency, by producing information on the demand level for services and by helping to make the connection between the amount paid and the service received.

Grant Funding

Staff will pursue opportunities for grant funding. Application will be made after a grant is evaluated for consistency with Commissioners' goals and objectives.

Other Revenue

All other revenue will be programmed through the annual budget process to meet County Commissioners' goals and objectives.

Expenditure Policy

Expenditure budgets are reviewed by staff, the Finance Director, Deputy Manager's, the County Manager and County Commissioners prior to adoption and are continually monitored throughout the budget year by individual departments and Finance staff.

Current operating expenditures will not exceed current operating revenues. Budgeted funds will only be spent for categorical purposes for which they were intended. The annual operating budget ordinance defines staff authorization for operating budget adjustments. No appropriations of the proceeds of a debt instrument will be made except for the purpose for which such debt instrument was issued or payment of debt principal and interest. Donations will be spent only toward the intent for which they were given.

For continuing contracts, funds will be appropriated in the annual budget ordinance to meet current year obligations arising under the contract, in accordance with G.S. 160A-17.

Payroll will be in accordance with the requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act. Overtime and benefit payments will be made in accordance with the County's Personnel Ordinance.

Reserve Policy

In accordance with state statute, appropriated fund balance in any fund will not exceed the sum of cash and investments minus the sum of liabilities, encumbrances, and deferred revenues arising from cash receipts.

The County will maintain an unrestricted, unassigned fund balance that exceeds eight percent (8%) of annual general fund expenditures in accordance with the North Carolina Local Government Commission's (LGC) recommendation. For a County our size, a recommended target goal of fifteen percent (15%) should be maintained. These funds will be used to avoid cash-flow interruptions, generate interest income, eliminate the need for short-term borrowing, assist in maintaining an investment-grade bond rating, and sustain operations during unanticipated emergencies and disasters.

On June 14, 2005 (revised March 15, 2010), the Board of Commissioners adopted a resolution formalizing the following fiscal management policies to be incorporated into the County's budget document beginning with the 2006 fiscal year:

1. Recurring, operational expenses of the County government will only be funded through recurring revenue sources;

2. The County will maintain an unrestricted, unassigned fund balance equal to 15% of general fund expenditures; and

3. Upon the completion of the annual audit of the County finances, any unrestricted, unassigned fund balance above 15% will be transferred to the Capital Reserve Fund, to reduce reliance on debt financing; or to the Self-Funded Hospitalization Fund as required to maintain the integrity of those funds.

4. Notwithstanding the requirements of items 1, 2, and 3 above, fund balance may be committed or assigned for any use in the general fund to overcome revenue shortfalls related to significant downturns in the economy.

Capital Improvement Policy

Capital Improvement Plan

The County will update and readopt annually a five-year capital improvement plan (CIP) which projects capital needs and expenditures and details the estimated cost, description and anticipated funding sources for capital projects.

The first year of the five-year CIP will be the basis of formal fiscal year appropriations during the annual budget process. If new project needs arise during the year, a budget amendment identifying both the

funding sources and project appropriations will be utilized to provide formal budgetary authority for the subject projects. The CIP will generally address those capital assets with a value of more than $100,000 and a useful life of over five (5) years.

The County will emphasize preventive maintenance as a cost-effective approach to infrastructure maintenance. Exhausted capital goods will be replaced as necessary.

The County will acknowledge pay-as-you-go financing as a significant capital financing source, but will ultimately determine the most appropriate financing structure for each capital project on an individual basis after examining all relevant factors of the project.

Debt Management

Capital projects financed through the issuance of bonds or lease financing agreements will be financed for a period not to exceed the expected useful life of the project.

The County will strive to maintain a high reliance on pay-as-you-go financing for its capital improvements. The general obligation debt of the County will not exceed the legal limit of 8% of the assessed valuation of the taxable property of the County. Total general fund debt service will not exceed the limits imposed and recommended by the Local Government Commission (LGC). As a guide, formulas established by the LGC and rating agencies will be closely monitored and appropriately applied.

The County will seek the best financing type for each financing need based on the following considerations: flexibility to meet the project needs, timing, tax or rate payer equity, and lowest interest cost.

The County will continue to strive for the highest possible bond rating to minimize the County's interest expenses.

The County's debt policy will be comprehensive and the County will not knowingly enter into any contracts creating significant unfunded liabilities.

Accounting/Financial Reporting Policy

The County will establish and maintain its accounting systems according to the North Carolina Local Budget and Fiscal Control Act. Financial systems will be maintained to monitor expenditures and revenues.

All records and reporting will be in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. The basis of accounting within governmental funds types is modified accrual. Under this method of accounting, revenue is recorded when measurable and available. All Enterprise Funds follow the accrual basis of accounting. Under this method of accounting, revenues are recognized when earned and expenditures are recorded when incurred.

The County will place emphasis on maintenance of an accounting system which provides strong internal budgetary and accounting controls designed to provide reasonable, but not absolute, assurance regarding

the safeguarding of assets against loss and the reliability of financial records for preparing financial statements and reports. These reports will be the basis for the budget and the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR).

An annual audit will be performed by an independent public accounting firm which will issue an opinion on the annual financial statements, with a management letter detailing areas that need improvement, if required. Full disclosure will be provided in all regulatory reports, financial statements, and bond representations.

The County will establish and maintain an inventory of capital assets to account for the County's property. Reports of these inventories and depreciation of all capital assets will be made in accordance with current governmental accounting standards.

The County's annual financial report will be prepared according to the standards necessary to obtain the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from GFOA, and will be submitted each year for recognition.

Cash Management Policy

The purpose of the County's Cash Management Policy is to provide guidelines to maximize the use of public moneys in the best interest of the public.

Receipts

Cash receipts will be collected as expediently as reasonably possible to provide secure handling of incoming cash and to move these moneys into interest earning accounts and investments.

All incoming funds will be deposited daily as required by law. Deposits will be made in such a manner as to receive credit for that day's interest.

The County will develop and maintain cash flow projections that allow the County to invest moneys for longer periods of time at higher rates of interest since yields usually increase for longer maturities.

Cash Disbursements

The County's objective is to retain moneys for investment for the longest appropriate period of time.

Disbursements will be made in advance of or on the agreed-upon contractual date of payment unless earlier payment provides a greater economic benefit to the County.

Inventories and supplies will be maintained at minimally appropriate levels for operations to increase cash availability for investment purposes.

For County checks, dual signatures will be required. Facsimile signatures will be safely stored and used when appropriate.

Financial Structure, Policy, and Process

Investment Policy

It is the policy of the County to preserve capital and invest public funds in a manner which provides the highest investment return with the maximum security, while meeting the daily cash flow demands of the County and conforming to all state and local statutes governing the investment of public funds.

This investment policy applies to all financial assets in the County's investment portfolio except debt proceeds, which are accounted for and invested separately from other funds. These funds are accounted for in the County's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.

The standard of prudence to be used by staff will be the "prudent person" rule. The "prudent person" concept discourages speculative transactions. It attaches primary significance to the preservation of capital and secondary importance to the generation of income and capital gains. Authorized staff, if acting in accordance with written procedures and state statutes and exercising due diligence, shall be relieved of personal responsibility for an individual security's credit risk or market price changes, provided that these deviations are reported immediately and action is taken to control adverse developments.

The primary objectives, in priority order, of the County's investment activities will be: safety, liquidity, and yield.

Safety of principal is the foremost objective of the investment program. Investments of the County will be undertaken in a manner that seeks to ensure the preservation of capital in the overall portfolio. To attain this objective, diversification is required in order that potential losses on individual securities do not exceed the income generated from the remainder of the portfolio.

The County's investment portfolio will remain sufficiently liquid to enable the County to meet all operating requirements which might be reasonably anticipated, through the use of structured maturities and marketable securities.

The County's investment portfolio will be designed with the objective of attaining a market rate of return while minimizing risk and retaining liquidity. North Carolina General Statute 159-25(a) 6 delegates management responsibility for the investment program to the Finance Director. The Finance Director will establish and maintain written procedures for the operation of the investment program consistent with this investment policy. Such procedures will include explicit delegation of authority to persons responsible for investment transactions. No person may engage in an investment transaction except as provided under the terms of this policy and the procedures established by the Finance Director. The Finance Director will be responsible for all transactions undertaken and will establish a system of controls to regulate the activities of subordinates.

Officers and employees involved in the investment process will refrain from personal business activity that could conflict with proper execution of the investment program, or which could impair their ability to make impartial investment decisions. Employees and investment officials will disclose to the County Manager any material financial interests in financial institutions that conduct business within this jurisdiction, and they will further disclose any large personal financial/investment positions that could be related to the performance of the County's portfolio. Employees and officers will subordinate their personal investment transactions to those of the County, particularly with regard to the time of purchase and sales.

Financial Structure, Policy, and Process

The Finance Director will maintain a list of financial institutions authorized to provide investment services. Authorized financial institutions will be selected by credit worthiness and must maintain an office in the State of North Carolina. These may include "primary" dealers or regional dealers that qualify under Securities & Exchange Commission Rule 15C3-1 (uniform net capital rule). No public deposit will be made except in a qualified public depository as established by state laws.

All financial institutions and broker/dealers who desire to become qualified bidders for investment transactions must supply the Finance Director with the following: audited financial statements, proof of National Associations of Security Dealers Certifications, proof of state registrations, and certification of having read the County's investment policy.

A review of the financial condition and registrations of qualified bidders will be conducted by staff. Any financial institution and/or broker/dealer not supplying requested information may be removed from the list by the Finance Director.

The County is empowered by North Carolina G.S. 159-30(c) to invest in the following types of securities:

- Obligations of the United States or obligations fully guaranteed both as to principal and interest by the United States.

- Obligations of the Federal Financing Bank, the Federal Farm Credit Bank, the Bank for Cooperatives, the Federal Intermediate Credit Bank, the Federal Land Banks, the Federal Home Loan Banks, the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation, the Federal National Mortgage Association, the Government National Mortgage Association, the Federal Housing Administration, the Farmers Home Administration, the United States Postal Service.

- Obligations of the State of North Carolina

- Bonds and notes of any North Carolina local government or public authority.

- Fully collateralized certificates of deposit issued by any bank or savings and loan organized under the laws of the State of North Carolina.

- Prime quality commercial paper bearing the highest rating of at least one nationally recognized rating service and not bearing a rating below the highest by any nationally recognized rating service which rates the particular obligation.

Bankers acceptances of a commercial bank or its holding company provided that the bank or its holding company is either (i) incorporated in the State of North Carolina or (ii) has outstanding publicly held obligations bearing the highest rating of at least one nationally recognized rating service and not bearing a rating below the highest by any nationally recognized rating service which rates the particular obligations.

Participating shares in a mutual fund for local government investment, provided that the investments of the fund are limited to those qualifying for investment under this subsection and that said fund is certified by the Local Government Commission.

Financial Structure, Policy, and Process

Evidences of ownership of, or fractional undivided interest in, future interest and principal payments on either direct obligations of the United States government or obligations the principal of and the interest on which are guaranteed by the United States, which obligations are held by a bank or trust company organized and existing under the laws of the United States or any state in the capacity of custodian.

Repurchase agreements with respect to either obligations of the United States or obligations the principle of and the interest on which are guaranteed by the United States if entered into with a broker or dealer, as defined by the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, which is a dealer recognized as a primary dealer by a Federal Reserve Bank, or any commercial bank, trust company or national banking association, the deposits of which are insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation or any successor thereof.

All transactions, including collateral for repurchase agreements, entered into by the County will be conducted on a delivery-versus-payment basis. Securities will be held by a contracted third party custodian designated by the Finance Director and evidenced by safekeeping receipts.

The County will diversify its investments by institution. With the exception of U.S. Treasury securities and agencies and authorized pools, no more than 35% of the County's total investment portfolio will be invested with a single security type or with a single financial institution.

It is desirable to diversify by security type; however, if the yield is higher, more than 35% of the County's total investment portfolio may be invested in the same security type.

To the extent possible, the County will attempt to match its investments with anticipated cash flow requirements. Beyond identified cash flow needs, investments will be purchased so that maturities are staggered to avoid undue concentration of assets in a single maturity range, however, the County will not directly invest in securities maturing more than five (5) years from the date of purchase. The County may collateralize its repurchase agreements using longer-dated investments not to exceed ten (10) years to maturity.

It is the County's full intent, at the time of purchase, to hold all investments until maturity to ensure the return of all invested principal dollars. However, economic or market conditions may change, making it in the County's best interest to sell or trade a security prior to maturity.

All moneys earned and collected from investments other than bond proceed earnings will be allocated quarterly to various fund amounts based on the quarter's average cash balance in each fund as a percentage of the entire pooled portfolio. Earnings on bond proceeds will be directly allocated to the same proceeds.

The Finance Director is charged with the responsibility of preparing a monthly investment inventory report, which includes investment types, cost, market value, maturity date and yield.

Financial Structure, Policy, and Process

Contract Administration Policy

It is the purpose of this Policy to create and maintain an efficient and uniform process in the administration of contracts that is consistent with the stewardship and objectives of Cabarrus County pursuant to the current Purchasing Policy; and, that provides the County with the most proficient product and/or service provider. It will also be the intent of the County to consolidate contracts when appropriate in order to reduce paper flow and administrative costs.

The County enters into many various contracts. Developing a system to organize all contracts is a difficult task; however, there are several general rules that should be followed:

The Department Head, County Manager or Chairman of the Board of Commissioners should sign contracts according to levels defined. If a contract is in writing, an original should be kept in the contract file (in the Purchasing Agent's Office). If the contract causes the County to spend money, it should be pre-audited and encumbered.

G.S. 159-28 (a) states that if an obligation is evidenced by a contract or agreement requiring payment of money, the contract or agreement shall include on its face a certificate stating that the instrument has been pre-audited. The certificate, which shall be signed by the finance officer or any deputy finance officer approved for this purpose by the governing board, shall take substantially the following form:

"This instrument has been pre-audited in the manner required by the Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act."

G.S. 159-28 (a) also states that an obligation incurred in violation of this subsection is invalid and may not be enforced and the finance officer shall establish procedures to assure compliance with this subsection.

Although not all contracts obligate the County to make a payment of money, it is nevertheless important to have a system that organizes and catalogs all contracts involving the County. The administrative procedures and guidelines of this policy are not herein included, due to space limitations. They are distributed to department heads and staff.

Personnel Management Policy

In 1994, the County Commissioners adopted Personnel Management programs to stabilize the compensation package for employees and to provide a more consistent process for budgeting. These programs included:

Cost of Living Allowance: Effective at the first full pay period of each fiscal year, a cost of living allowance will be applied to salaries based upon the Consumer Price Index increase for the past calendar year, with the adjustment rounded down to the nearest ½ percent.

Market Comparison of Salaries: Salary studies will be conducted every two years during the first half of the fiscal year by outside consultant(s) in order to maintain a pay scale that is consistent with like jobs in the surrounding area and in similar governmental entities, with the recommended and approved changes being effective in the first full pay period in the following January.

401K Plan: A five percent 401K contribution for non-law enforcement employees will be granted, thus providing them the same benefit as mandated by the State for law enforcement employees.

Longevity: The County grandfathered existing dollar amounts for employees who were receiving longevity to keep the County's commitment to what was earned under the system the employee was hired under. Longevity programs were eliminated from March 21, 1994 forward.

Merit Pay: The County funds merit pay for employees based on performance (per merit pay scale and performance scores).

Employee Development Plan: Individualized plans of career development are prepared jointly by the supervisor and employee in conjunction with the employee's performance evaluation each year.

BUDGET PROCESS

The County's annual budget process is a method of planning and communicating operational and capital objectives and allocating financial resources to achieve them. The process is usually performed during the seven-month period running from December through June. The North Carolina Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act (G.S. 159, Article 3) requires local governments to adopt an annual budget by June 30 of each year, based on the state mandated fiscal year which runs from July 1 to June 30.

The N.C. Local Government and Fiscal Control Act mandates the following deadlines for legal requirements:

April 30	Department Requests Due
May 15	Community College and School System Requests Due
June 1	Balanced Budget and Budget Message Submitted to Board of Commissioners
July 1	Board of Commissioners Must Have Adopted Annual Budget

A public hearing must be advertised and held before adoption of the annual budget by the Board of Commissioners.

FY 2016 Budget Process Calendar:

December – Budget and Capital Improvement Program (CIP) materials are distributed to all departments

January – Department staffs formulate service level and performance objectives and determine financial resources required to achieve them.

Capital Improvement requests are submitted to the Finance Director for review.

February – Board of Commissioners are briefed at a Retreat on expected revenues and expenditures for the upcoming fiscal year.

March – Department directors present their budget and CIP requests to the budget staff and County Manager. Revenue and expenditure projections are made.

Budget staff reviews departmental budget requests and prepares recommended budget based on available financial resources.

April – County Manager and Finance Director finalize preparation of preliminary budget.

May – Budget is presented to the Board of Commissioners at a scheduled meeting in May.

Copies of the budget are available at the Finance Department and at the County libraries in Concord, Kannapolis, Harrisburg, and Mt. Pleasant.

Budget work sessions are held in late May to review the preliminary budget.

June – Board of Commissioners hold a public hearing at a date to be determined in June and adopt the annual budget at their June meeting, or no later than June 30.

BUDGET ADOPTION

The annual budget serves as the foundation for the County's financial planning and control. Chapter 159 of the North Carolina General Statutes prescribes a uniform system of budget adoption, administration and fiscal control. All agencies of the County are required to submit requests for appropriation to the County Manager by the end of February each year. The County Manager uses these requests as the starting point for developing an adopted budget. The budget is prepared by fund, function (e.g., public safety), and department (e.g., Sheriff). Not later than July 1, the Board of Commissioners is required to adopt a budget ordinance making appropriations and levying taxes for the budget year in such sums as the Board may consider sufficient and proper, whether greater or less than the sums recommended in the adopted budget. The budget ordinance authorizes all financial transactions of the County except:

1) Those authorized by a project ordinance;
2) Those accounted for in an intra-governmental service fund for which a financial plan is prepared and approved; and
3) Those accounted for in a trust or agency fund established to account for moneys held by the local government or public authority as an agent or common-law trustee or to account for a retirement, pension, or similar employee benefit system. Therefore, budgets are adopted for the General Fund, Landfill Fund, Arena and Events Center Fund, 911 Emergency Telephone Fund, and Health Insurance Fund. Those funds listed above that are not budgeted annually are included in the audited financial statements of the County.

AMENDMENTS TO THE BUDGET ORDINANCE

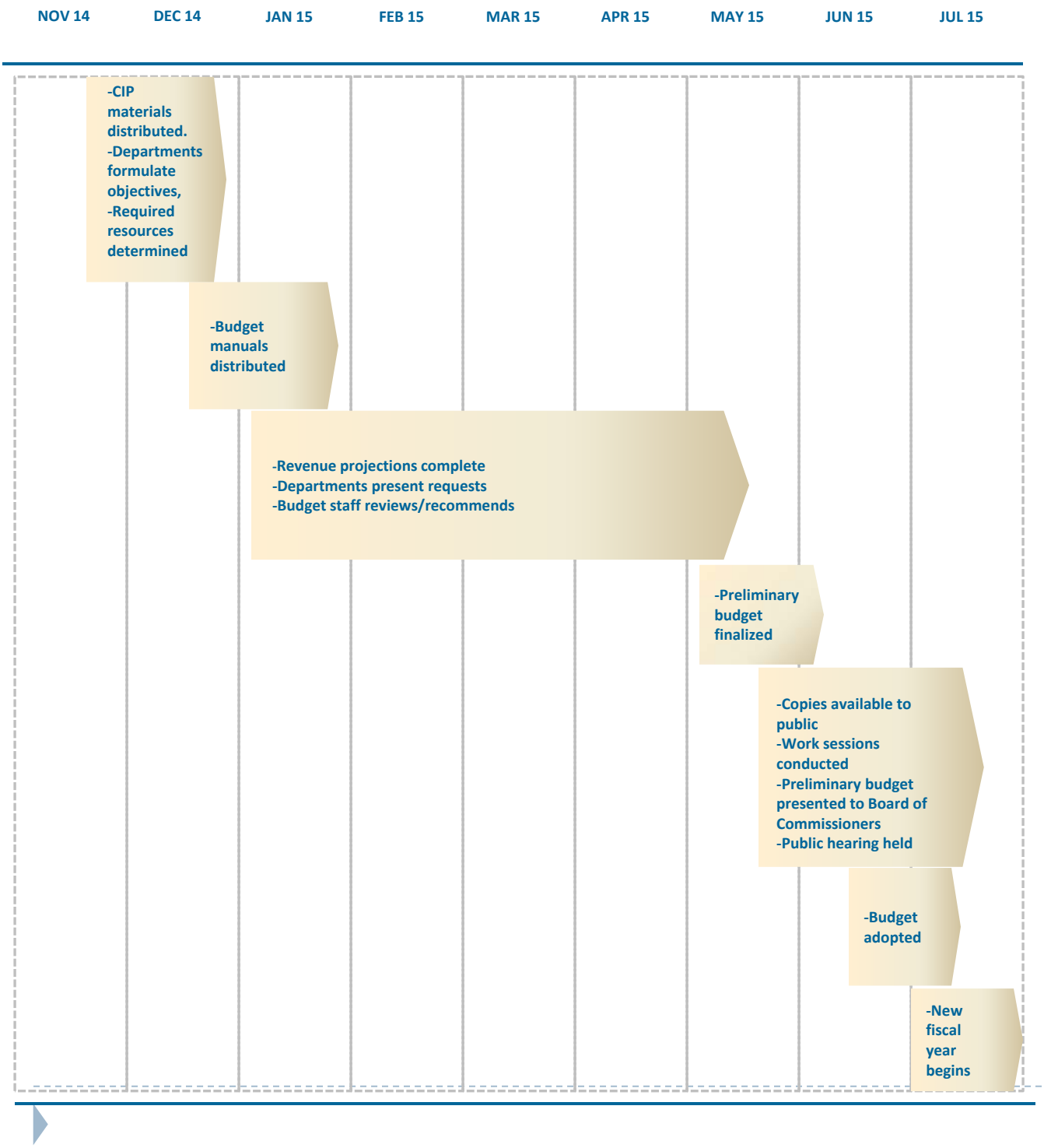
Except as otherwise restricted by law, the Board may amend the budget ordinance at any time after the ordinance's adoption in any manner, so long as the ordinance, as amended, continues to satisfy the statutory requirements. However, except as otherwise provided in this section, no amendment may increase or reduce a property tax levy or in any manner alter a property taxpayer's liability, unless the board is ordered to do so by a court of competent jurisdiction or by a State agency having the power to compel the levy of taxes by the Board.

If after July 1, the County receives revenues that are substantially more or less than the amount anticipated, the Board may, before January 1 following adoption of the budget, amend the budget ordinance to reduce or increase the property tax levy to account for the unanticipated increase or reduction in revenues.

As allowed by statute, the Board has authorized the County Manager and/or Finance Director, or designee to transfer moneys from one appropriation to another or within the same fund, or modify revenue and expenditure projections, subject to such limitations and procedures as it may prescribe. These limitations and procedures are incorporated into the Budget Ordinance, and are summarized in the following paragraphs:

1. The Finance Director may transfer amounts between objects of expenditure within a function.
2. The County Manager may transfer amounts between objects of expenditures and revenues without limitation.
3. The County Manager may not transfer any amounts between funds or from any contingency appropriation within any fund without action of the Board of Commissioners, except as specified below for budget shortfalls and change orders.
4. The County Manager may transfer amounts between contingency funds which are set aside for a specific project for budgetary shortfalls or upon the appropriate approval of a change order.
5. The County Manager is authorized to transfer funds from the General Fund or Capital Reserve Fund to the appropriate fund for projects approved within the Capital Improvement Plan for the current fiscal year.
6. Additional authority is granted to the Finance Director or designee to transfer amounts within and between funds for the sole purpose of funding salary and benefits adjustments consistent with the Cabarrus County Personnel Management Policy and the Cabarrus County Personnel Ordinance.
7. Upon notification of funding increases or decreases to existing grants or revenues, or the award of grants or revenues, the Manager or Designee may adjust budgets to match, including grants that require a County match for which funds are available.
8. The Manager, Finance Director, or designee may create debt financing amendments from estimated projections upon approval by the Board of Commissioners of the debt financing and adjust as needed upon closing.
9. The County Manager may enter into and execute change orders or amendments to construction contracts in amounts less than $90,000 when the appropriate annual budget or capital project ordinance contains sufficient appropriated but unencumbered funds.
10. The County Manager may execute contracts which are not required to be bid or which G.S. 143-131 allows to be let on informal bids so long as the annual budget or appropriate capital project ordinance contains sufficient appropriated but unencumbered funds for such purposes.

11. The County Manager may execute contracts with outside agencies to properly document budgeted appropriations to such agencies where G.S. 153 A-248(b), 259, 449 and any similar statutes require such contracts.
12. The County Manager may reject formal bids when deemed appropriate and in the best interest of Cabarrus County pursuant to G.S. 143-129(a).
13. The County Manager may reduce revenue projections consistent with prevailing economic conditions, and also reduce expenditures correspondingly.

All other changes require the special approval of the Board.

FY2016 BUDGET CALENDAR