BURNET COUNTY BUDGET POLICY

The stewardship of public funds is one of the greatest responsibilities the Commissioner's Court is tasked with. Therefore, the establishment and maintenance of budget policy is critical to ensure County officials protect public interests and promote citizens' confidence in County government...

I. General Policies

1. Burnet County will operate on a fiscal year which begins on October 1st and ends on September 30th.

2. Burnet County will continuously identify areas within the County for evaluation in order to improve efficiency and manage costs.

3. Cost/Benefit studies will be conducted, where appropriate and applicable, on non-recurring and recurring expenditures as well as capital projects.

4. Approved annual budgets, with amendments as approved by the Commissioner's Court, are the management control device utilized by the County. Annual appropriated budgets are adopted for the General, Road and Bridge and Debt Services Funds and lapse at fiscal year end.

5. Each department should make every effort to manage expenditures in a fiscally prudent manner. All programs should be monitored on a regular basis to ensure viability, necessity and efficiency.

6. Proposed expenditure recommendations shall include the following:

    a. General Fund operating and maintenance expenditures
    b. Road and Bridge Fund operating and maintenance expenditures
    c. Debt Service Fund expenditures
    d. Any additional information as requested by the Court

7. Technology requests should increase the efficiency of County government by improving the delivery of service, reducing duplication of data, increasing the accuracy of data, consolidating data entry efforts, reduce the necessity to add staff in future years or be required because of a new statutory requirement.

8. In order to maintain efficient and cost-effective services to the citizens of Burnet County, all budget requests are recommended to be prepared from the modified zero-based budgeting process justifying the proposed expenditures as well as utilizing the most current information and trend analysis.

II. Revenue and Transfer Policies

1. Burnet County will establish user charges and fees as permitted by law at a level related to the cost of providing that service to include direct and indirect costs.

2. When necessary, Burnet County will permit increases or decreases in user charges and fees. These charges and fees should be monitored and re-evaluated annually by each department head and/or elected official.

3. The County shall continuously seek public and private grants as well as other outside funding sources.

4. Road and Bridge increases in revenues will be allocated based on the methodology approved in a regular session of commissioners' court dated, July 25, 2017. That allocation is based on a combination of 50% of the revenue an even disposition of 25% to each precinct and the other 50% based on the current years taxable value per precinct.

5. Burnet County allows a department head, appointed/elected official or his/her designee to request line item transfers within their departmental budget throughout the fiscal year as outlined in section 6. Commissioners Court approval for all line items below $500 will not be required, transfers within operating sub-categories will not be required, unless deemed necessary by the County Auditor. Pursuant to Local Government Code Section 111.070, the Commissioner's Court may spend County funds only in strict compliance with the budget. The Commissioner's Court by order may amend the budget to transfer an amount budgeted for one item to another budgeted item without authorizing an emergency expenditure.

6. There will be no line item transfers approved from the following funds:
    a. Salaries (except to other salary line items, if it follows county policy)
    b. Fringe benefits (FICA, Retirement, and Health Benefits)
    c. Gasoline
    d. Cell Phones
    e. Utilities
    f. Contracts and Agreements
    g. Capital Expenditures

7. It is the responsibility of each elected official/ department head to stay within their allotted budget (LGC111). Anytime a line item exceeds the budgeted amount a line item transfer must be immediately prepared from allowable line items within the department's budget and submitted to the court for approval. (LGC 111.070c). In the event that the department does not act, the County Auditor shall present a recommended line item transfer to the Commissioners Court to assist in the efficient and effective operations of the county by performing certain budget transfer activity which will aid the Commissioner's Court in assessing needs to appropriateness of fiscal activity. (GA-0154)

III. Reserve Policies

1. Burnet County will maintain at least a 25% level of fund balance in the General and Road & Bridge funds and 20% in Debt Service fund to mitigate current and future risks, maintain an exceptional bond rating, and for long-term planning.

2. It is imperative that all department heads as well as elected officials continuously review expenditures to ensure fiscal responsibility.

IV. Budget Amendment Policies

1. Pursuant to Local Government Code, Section 111.070 (b), the Commissioner's Court may authorize an emergency expenditure as an amendment to the original budget only in case of a grave public necessity to meet an unusual and unforeseen condition that could not have been included in the original budget through the use of reasonably diligent thought and attention.

2. All budget amendments must be placed on the regular agenda for consideration by the Commissioner's court and any amendments creating an increase in budgetary commitment for the next fiscal year shall be specifically noted.

3. The re-appropriation at the beginning of a fiscal year of funds committed under a valid purchase orders issued prior to August 31st issued but unspent by September 30th of the prior fiscal year may require a budget amendment. These budget amendments have no net effect on spending but simply change the accounting year for expenditures.

V. Capital Improvement Policies

1. Capital improvement projects include major equipment, software purchases as well as construction and remodeling requiring extensive funding.

2. Capital improvement projects may be paid from current revenues or bonds. Bonds or other forms of debt will normally be used for capital projects when appropriate.

VI. Personnel Policies

1. It is the priority of the Court to provide adequate and qualified staffing for offices and departments while ensuring efficiency. Requests for staff should be made only for new programs and/or upon demonstrated increases in service requirements that cannot be met with improved technology or changes in procedures.

2. Positions will only be recommended and approved when a verifiable need is demonstrated. Complete documentation to include any applicable and verifiable statistics, metrics, compliance requirements, job description, etc. should be provided at the time of the request.

3. The Court encourages and supports allocating funding to ensure the County's work force is properly trained. It is recommended that all department heads as well as elected officials additionally support reasonable continuing education requests.

4. The Court strives to ensure, where possible and practical, that employee compensation will be competitive with other similarly situated counties and/or local municipalities.

5. **Compensation Plan Guidelines**

   New Hires
   - New *full-time* employees with no previous experience may be started at a Step 1 or 2 for the Group in which their position falls.
   - No new employee may be started at a rate higher than the rate budgeted for their position (calculated as an hourly rate).
   - Full-time employees who are started at Step 1 or Step 2 may be increased to Step 3 at any time during the fiscal year, within compensation plan guidelines.
   - Employees with some previous experience comparable to the hiring position may be started at Step 3.
   - Attorneys with relevant experience may be started at a Step level comparable to current employees with an equivalent level of experience.
   - Employees with more than five years of relevant experience with Burnet County may be started at a Step level comparable to current employees with an equivalent level of Burnet County experience.
   - New *part-time* employees shall be started at Step 1 for the Group in which their position falls.

   Rehires-
   - Rehiring an employee more than one full calendar month, but less than 365 calendar days after the termination date guidelines:
     - Compensation: If the employee is rehired for the same position or a position comparable to the one formerly held, the employee will be eligible to begin at any step up to the step level previously held. Any employee rehired more than one year after the termination date will be treated as a new hire with regard to compensation, leave, and all other terms and conditions of employment.

Current Employees-

- Current full-time employees who are at Step 1 or Step 2 may be increased to step 3 at any time during the fiscal year, within compensation plan guidelines.
- Yearly step increases are not automatic or longevity based. Step increases are merit increases and are dependent upon an acceptable Annual Performance Review.
- If funded by Commissioners Court in the new budget year, eligible employees may roll forward into the new budget year, one (1) step from the step held as of the final pay period in the current budget year.
- The new pay rates, based on the updated step and grade structure, will take effect with the first payroll period in October. Because payroll is processed on a pay-period basis, this adjustment will also apply to workdays completed in late September that fall within the first payroll cycle in October.
- Employees at Step 3 or greater may not increase more than one step per fiscal year.
- All increases are subject to budget availability and must be clearly itemized in the annual budget.

Increases/Promotions/Transfers -

- Current employees who receive a mid-year increase, promote within their current department or transfer to a new department may be started in their new position at a step no greater than the step held in their former position. (Not all positions have an equal number of steps.)
- Increases, promotions and transfers will be effective on the first day of the pay period following receipt of an approved Personnel Action Form in the Human Resources Office.
- All increases are subject to budget availability and must be clearly itemized in the annual budget.

VII. Fleet Policies

1. Vehicle replacement funding will be allocated to each department when necessary. Vehicle replacement recommendations will include the following criteria:

    a. Miles
        i. Active Law Enforcement (Pursuit Vehicles) - 150,000
        ii. Other Law Enforcement (Command, Bailiff, Investigator, Transport Vehicles) - 175,000
        iii. All other Departments - 175,000
    b. Maintenance, records shall be kept by department heads and reviewed during the budget process
    c. No vehicle may be decommissioned without authorization of the commissioners court.
    d. Vehicles will be assigned their classification in the inventory. No changes in classification will be made without approval from the commissioners court.

2. County vehicles are not permitted to be taken home unless prior approval by Commissioners' Court and is in compliance with the Personnel Policy.

Reviewed and approved at the Burnet County Commissioners' Court, September 23, 2025.

Bryan Wilson, Burnet County Judge

Jim Luther, Jr, Commissioner Pct. #1

Damon Beierle, Commissioner Pct. #2

Chad Collier, Commissioner Pct. #3

Joe Don Dockery, Commissioner Pct. #4