

Readers Guide

Glossary of Terms

- **ACCRUAL BASIS OF ACCOUNTING** - all flows of resources (and thus all changes in net assets) during the year are recorded regardless of whether they involve cash flowing in or out of the government.
- **ACTIVITY** - a summary level budget organization which has a specific purpose or intention and is comprised of one or more operational units identified in decision packages which have common goals or objectives established to attain the activity's stated purpose. Activities often correspond to formal organizational divisions within an agency or budget unit.
- **AMENDMENT** - a revision of the adopted budget that, when approved by the legislative body, replaces the original budget. Amendments to budgets occur frequently throughout the fiscal year as spending priorities shift.
- **ANNUAL BUDGET** - a budget applicable to a single fiscal year.
- **APPROPRIATION** - a legal authorization granted by a legislative body to make expenditures and to incur obligations for specific purposes. An appropriation is usually limited in amount and time it may be expended.
- **ARBITRAGE** - the reinvestment of the proceeds of tax-exempt securities in materially higher yielding taxable securities.
- **ASSESSED VALUE** - the valuation set upon the Town's real property using 70% value as a base.
- **ASSETS** - resources owned or controlled by a government, as a result of a past transaction or other event, that have a recognizable monetary value.
- **ASSIGNED FUND BALANCE** – the portion of fund balance that reflects the Town's intended use for a specific purpose.
- **AUTHORIZED POSITIONS** - employee positions, which are authorized in the adopted budget, to be filled during the year.
- **AUDIT** - a comprehensive review of the manner in which the Town's resources were actually utilized. The main purpose of an audit is to issue an opinion on the fair presentation of the financial statements and to test the controls over the safekeeping of assets while making recommendations for improvement where necessary. The Town's annual audit is conducted by independent auditors.
- **BALANCED BUDGET** - all of the Town's estimated sources of revenues, including uses of fund balances, equals expenditure appropriations for the fiscal year.
- **BALANCE SHEET** - the financial statement disclosing the assets, liabilities and equity of an entity at a specified date in conformity with GAAP.

□ **BASIS OF ACCOUNTING** - a term used to refer to when revenues, expenditures, expenses and transfers - and the related assets and liabilities are recognized in the accounts and reported in the financial statements. Specifically, it relates to the timing of the measurements made regardless of the nature of the measurement. The Town of Seymour uses the modified accrual basis.

□ **BOARD OF EDUCATION** - the Board of Education is the elected body responsible for developing educational policy for the Seymour Public School system. It is a nine-member body whose members are elected every four years.

□ **BOARD OF FINANCE** - the Board of Finance is the elected body responsible for selecting the Town's independent auditor, reviewing budgets from the Board of Education and Town Departments, soliciting public comments on these budgets, and recommending separate budgets for each to be sent to referendum for a town vote, as well as reviewing appropriation transfers and additional appropriations.

□ **BOARD OF SELECTMEN** – the Board of Selectmen is the elected body led by the First Selectman responsible for the administration of the general Town government, working under Connecticut General Statutes and local ordinances. Responsibilities include management the day-to-day operations of the town, the hiring and supervision of town employees, and appointment of electors to boards and commissions. The Board brings policy recommendations to Town Meeting for approval.

□ **BOND** - a written promise to pay a specified sum of money (called the face value or principal amount), at a specified date or dates in the future, i.e. maturity date(s), together with periodic interest at a specified rate. Sometimes, all or a substantial portion of the interest is included in the face value of the security.

□ **BOND ANTICIPATION NOTE** - short-term interest bearing note issued by a government in anticipation of bonds to be issued at a later date. The notes are retired from proceeds of the bond issue to which they are related.

□ **BUDGET** - a financial plan for a given fiscal year showing revenues and expenditures for different funds of the Town.

□ **BUDGET DOCUMENT** - the instrument prepared by the Finance Director's office based on Board of Education and Town Departments' requests to present a comprehensive financial program to the Board of Finance for consideration to be sent to referendum for a town vote.

□ **BUDGET YEAR** - the fiscal year of the Town which begins on July 1 and ends on June 30.

□ **CAPITAL ASSET** - land, improvements to land, easements, buildings, building improvements, vehicles, machinery, equipment, infrastructure and all other tangible or intangible assets that are used in operations and that have initial useful lives extending beyond a single reporting period.

□ **CAPITAL BUDGET (CB)** - the Capital Budget is the first year of a five-year Capital Improvement Program. It includes all equipment or facility improvements or modifications for both the Town Government and Board of Education costing more than \$10,000 and having a life expectancy of more than one year.

- **CAPITAL EXPENDITURES** - Expenditures that result in the acquisition of or addition to capital assets
- **CAPITAL PROGRAM** - a plan for capital expenditures to be incurred each year over a fiscal period of years to meet capital needs arising from the long-term work program or other capital needs. It sets forth each project or other contemplated expenditure in which the government is to have a part and specifies the resources estimated to be available to finance the projected expenditures.
- **CAPITAL PROJECT** - a Capital Improvement Program project or equipment costing more than \$100,000 and having a life expectancy of more than five years.
- **CASH ACCOUNTING** - a basis of accounting under which transactions are recognized only when cash is received or disbursed.
- **COMMITTED FUND BALANCE** - The portion of fund balance that represents resources whose use is constrained by limitations that the Town imposes upon itself.
- **CONTINGENCY** - a budgetary reserve set aside for emergencies or unforeseen expenditures not otherwise budgeted for. When required, funding transfers to departmental function areas are approved by the Board of Selectmen and/or Board of Finance.
- **DEBT** - an obligation resulting from the borrowing of money or from the purchase of goods and services.
- **DEBT LIMIT** - the maximum amount of outstanding gross or net debt legally permitted.
- **DEBT SERVICE** - the amount of money the Town is required to expend for interest and principal payments on its outstanding bonded debt.
- **DEFERRED REVENUE** - Liabilities representing resources received by a government that do not yet qualify to be recorded as revenue.
- **DEPARTMENT** - an administrative agency of the Town having management responsibility for an operation or a group of related services within a functional area.
- **DEPRECIATION** - expiration in the service life of fixed assets, other than wasting assets, attributable to wear and tear, deterioration, action by physical elements, inadequacy and obsolescence.
- **EMPLOYEE BENEFITS** - for the purpose of budgeting, this term refers to the Town's cost of health insurance, pension contributions, social security contributions, life insurance premiums, workers' compensation and unemployment costs.
- **ENCUMBRANCES** - commitments related to unperformed contracts for goods or services. Used in budgeting, encumbrances are not GAAP expenditures or liabilities, but represent the estimated amount of expenditures to result when unperformed contracts in process are completed.
- **ENTERPRISE FUND (PROPRIETARY FUND)** - a fund established to account for operations financed and operated in a manner similar to private business enterprises. The Town maintains an Enterprise Fund for the WPCA.

- **ENTITLEMENT** - the amount of payment to which a state or local government is entitled pursuant to an allocation formula contained in applicable statutes.
- **EXPENDITURE** - decreases in net financial resources. Expenditures include current operating expenses requiring the present or future use of net current assets, debt service, capital outlays, intergovernmental grants, entitlements and shared revenues.
- **EXEMPTION** - a person or business that does not have to pay a certain liability due to meeting certain criteria as set forth by an authorized agent.
- **FISCAL YEAR** - a 12-month period to which the Operating Budget applies, at the end of which the Town determines its financial position and its results of operations. The Town's fiscal year runs from July 1 through June 30.
- **FIXED ASSETS** - long-lived tangible assets obtained or controlled as a result of past transactions, events or circumstances. Fixed Assets include buildings, equipment, and improvements other than buildings and land. In the private sector, these assets are referred to most often as property, plant and equipment.
- **FTE** - full time equivalent. In other words, the number of authorized personnel on a fulltime basis working for a particular Department or Division (Activity) within the Town.
- **FIDUCIARY FUNDS** - Funds used to report assets held in a trustee or agency capacity for others and which therefore cannot be used to support the government's own programs. This includes pension (and other employee benefits) trust funds, investment trust funds, and agency funds.
- **FUNCTION/DEPARTMENT/DIVISION OR ACTIVITIES** - *the Town of Seymour's Operating Budget expenditures are divided into a hierarchy.*
 - A *Function* is a group of related activities aimed at accomplishing a major service or regulatory program for which a government is responsible. Expenditure functions relate to the principal purpose/service for which expenditures are made.
 - A *Department* is an organizational or budgetary breakdown within many Town funds. Each department serves a specific function or functions within the given fund entity.
- **FUND** - a fiscal and accounting entity with a self-balancing set of accounts in which cash and other financial resources, all related liabilities and residual equities or balances, and changes therein, are recorded and segregated to carry on specific activities or attain certain objectives in accordance with special regulations, restrictions or limitations.
- **FUND ACCOUNTING** - the core of governmental accounting is the fund, which is an accounting entity consisting of a set of self-balancing accounts. Individual funds are typically earmarked for particular purposes or activities.
- **FUND BALANCE** - the portion of fund equity available for appropriation.
- **FUND EQUITY** – the difference between a fund's assets and liabilities. An adequate fund balance is necessary for numerous reasons, such as to have funds available in case of an emergency or unexpected events, to maintain or enhance the Town's financial position and

related bond rating, to provide cash for operations prior to receipt of property tax revenues, and to maximize investment earnings.

□ **FUNDING SOURCE** - identifies the source of revenue to fund both the operating and capital appropriations.

□ **GENERAL FUND** - typically serves as the chief operating fund of a government. The general fund is used to account for all financial resources except those required to be accounted for in another fund.

□ **GENERALLY ACCEPTED ACCOUNTING PRINCIPLES (GAAP)** - uniform minimum standards and guidelines for financial accounting and reporting. The primary authoritative body on the application of GAAP to state and local governments is the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB).

□ **GOALS** - statements of broad direction, purpose or intent based on the needs of the community. A goal is general and timeless.

□ **GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTING STANDARDS BOARD (GASB)** - the authoritative accounting and financial reporting standard-setting body for governmental entities.

□ **GOVERNMENT FINANCE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION (GFOA)** - an association of public finance professionals founded in 1906 as the Municipal Finance Officers Association. The GFOA has played a major role in the development and promotion of GAAP for state and local government since its inception and has sponsored the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence Programs in budgeting and financial reporting since 1946.

□ **GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS** - funds used to account for tax-supported activities. There are five different types of governmental funds; the general fund, special revenue funds, debt service funds, capital projects funds and permanent funds.

□ **GRAND LIST** - the total assessed value of residential, industrial, commercial, personal property and motor vehicles. Pursuant to Connecticut statutes, values are assessed at seventy percent (70%) except motor vehicles, which are assessed at average trade-in. The applicable date is October 1 each year for the following fiscal year budget.

□ **INFRASTRUCTURE** - assets that are immovable and of value only to the governmental unit such as drainage and sewer systems.

□ **INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVENUE** - the funds received from another governmental entity, such as the Federal, State, and City governments.

□ **LIABILITIES** - amounts a government owes.

□ **LINE ITEM BUDGET** - a budget prepared along departmental lines that focuses on what is to be purchased.

□ **LOCIP** - Local Capital Improvement Program. This program is provided by the State of Connecticut as a grant program. This program is used primarily for the Capital Budget and is a Special Revenue Fund of the Town.

- **LONG-TERM DEBT** - includes long-term liabilities associated with governmental activities. Includes bonds, notes and capital lease obligations.

- **MILL RATE** - rate used in calculating taxes based upon the value of property, expressed in mills per one-thousandth of property value.

- **MODIFIED ACCRUAL BASIS** - the accrual basis of accounting adapted to the governmental fund-type measurement focus. Under it, revenues and other financial resource increments (e.g. bond issue proceeds) are recognized when they become susceptible to accrual, which is when they become both “measurable” and “available” to finance expenditures of the current period. “Available” means collectible in the current period or soon enough thereafter to be used to pay liabilities of the current period. Expenditures are recognized when the fund liability is incurred except for (1) inventories of materials and supplies that may be considered expenditures either when purchased or when used, and (2) prepaid insurance and similar items that may be considered expenditures either when paid for or when consumed. All governmental funds, expendable trust funds, and agency funds are accounted for using the modified accrual basis of accounting.

- **NONSPENDABLE FUND BALANCE** – amount of Fund Balance that are inherently non-spendable, must be maintained intact (endowment fund principal) or other assets (pre-pays or long term receivables).

- **OBJECT OF EXPENDITURE** - an expenditure classification, referring to the lowest and most detailed level of classification such as electricity, office supplies, asphalt, and furniture.

- **OBJECTIVES** - something to be accomplished in specific, well-defined, and measurable terms and that is achievable within a specific time frame.

- **ORDINANCE** - a law set forth by a governmental entity, usually a municipal government.

- **OUTPUT INDICATOR** - a unit of work accomplished without reference to the resources required to do the work (e.g. number of permits issued, number of refuse collections made, or number of burglary arrests made). Output indicators do not reflect the effectiveness or efficiency of the work.

- **PAY-AS-YOU-GO BASIS** - a term used to describe a financial policy by which capital outlay is financed from current revenues rather than through borrowing.

- **PERFORMANCE MEASURES** - used for service efforts and accomplishments reporting.

- **POLICY** - a document that defines a course or method of action to make future decisions based on goals and acceptable procedures.

- **PROGRAM** - a group of related activities performed by one or more organizational units for the purpose of accomplishing a function for which the government is responsible.

- **PROGRAM BUDGET** - a budget which allocates money to the functions or activities of a government rather than to specific items of cost or to specific departments.

- **PROGRAM REVENUE (INCOME)** - program revenues earned including fees for services, license and permit fees and fines.

- **PROJECT** - the basic unit of the Capital Improvement Program. A project is a capital improvement, which generally will span a shorter period of time for completion.
- **RESOLUTION** - a special or temporary order of a legislative body. It is an order of a legislative body requiring less legal formality than an ordinance or statute.
- **REVALUATION** - to establish the present true and actual value of all real property in a town as of a specific assessment date.
- **REVENUE** - this term designates additions to assets, which do not increase any liability, do not represent the recovery of expenditures, and do not represent contributions of fund capital.
- **SCHOOL OPERATING BUDGET** - the budget includes account types that are received and spent by the Board of Education for the Town School System. These account types include: Salaries, Contractual Services, Supplies & Materials, Capital Outlay and Miscellaneous/Other. These categories of expenditures are defined by the State of Connecticut Board of Education, and are uniform for all school systems within the State.
- **SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS** – funds are used to account for and report the proceeds of specific revenue sources that are restricted or committed to an expenditures for specified purposes other than debt service or capital projects.
- **STATUTE** - a written law enacted by a duly organized and constituted legislative body.
- **TAX BASE** - the value of all taxable real property in the City as of October 1 each year as certified by the Assessor. The tax base represents net value after all abatements and exemptions.
- **TRANSFERS IN/OUT** - amounts transferred from one fund to another to assist in financing the services for the recipient fund.
- **UNCOLLECTIBLES** - these represent uncollectible taxes, which could be collectible in future years (with incumbent penalties assessed in accordance with state law), various tax abatement programs authorized by the state for eligible senior citizen, disabled, and handicapped individuals.

Acronym Listing

- **AAL** - Actuarially Accrued Liability
- **ADA** - Americans with Disabilities Act
- **ARC** - Annual Required Contributions
- **ARRA** - American Recovery and Reinvestment Act
- **BOE** - Board of Education
- **BOF** - Board of Finance
- **BOS** - Board of Selectmen
- **CAFR** - Comprehensive Annual Financial Report
- **CB** - Capital Budget
- **CIP** - Capital Improvement Program
- **CNR** - Capital and Nonrecurring Fund
- **DEEP** - Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
- **EDD** – Economic Development Department
- **FT** – Economic Development Commission
- **FT** - Full-time
- **FTE** - Full-time Equivalent
- **GAAP** - Generally Accepted Accounting Principles
- **GASB** - Governmental Accounting Standards Board
- **GFOA** – Government Finance Officers Association
- **GIS** - Geographic Information System
- **GF** - General Fund
- **LOCIP** - Local Capital Improvement Program
- **MBR** - Minimum Budget Requirement for Board of Education
- **MIS** - Management Information Systems
- **N/A** - Not Applicable
- **NTGL** - Net Taxable Grand List
- **P&I** - Principal and Interest
- **PT** - Part-time
- **RFI** - Request for Information
- **RFP** - Request for Proposal
- **SAA** – Seymour Ambulance Association
- **VHS** – Valley Health Services
- **VA** - Veterans' Administration
- **WPCA** - Water Pollution Control Authority