APPENDICES

PENDER COUNTY
FISCAL POLICY

The overall goal of the County's fiscal policy is to improve upon and maintain effective and efficient management of the public's resources. The policy statements that follow provide the "building blocks" for achieving this goal. The four categories include: budgeting, expenditure control, investment of idle funds, and preservation of general fund balance.

Budgeting

A comprehensive budget will be prepared annually for all funds to be expended by the County in accordance with North Carolina General Statue 159-8-13. The budget will be prepared in such a manner as to facilitate its understanding by citizens and elected officials. In addition to required public hearings, the Commissioners will hold work sessions on the budget that will be open to the public. Budgetary emphasis will focus on providing the maximum level of basic services, to the most citizens, in the most cost-effective manner, with due consideration being given to all costs and benefits - economic, fiscal, and social. The budget will provide for adequate maintenance of capital, plant and equipment and for their orderly replacement. Reports comparing actual revenues and expenditures to budgeted amounts will be prepared monthly and distributed to the Board of Commissioners. Revenue estimates will be incorporated into the annual budget document and will be conservative. The County will not balance the budget on unrealistic revenue projections.

Expenditure Control

County management will employ tools designed to control expenditures to keep the property tax rate at its lowest possible level, while maintaining sufficient resources to operate effectively. Formal approval (by resolution) from the Board for all "non-routine" expenditures exceeding $5,000 is required. All such requests for approvals shall be accompanied by a representative of the agency or persons making the request. This approval will be obtained in addition to the normal budget process. Routine expenditures are construed to be utility bills, legally required advertising, postage, fuel, and so forth. Emergency approval of purchase orders exceeding $5,000 may be conveyed by the County Manager after consultation with the Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners and subsequent notification of the Board. An "emergency" is defined as a condition where non-action to correct a problem will cause a major disruption in services or inconvenience to the public. Vehicle insurance settlements may be accepted by the County Manager to repair vehicles when the amount of settlement is less than the value of the vehicle. The County Manager has the authority to approve a purchase order, capped at $6,000, to repair such a vehicle that meets those conditions. Any insurance settlement involving a total loss of a vehicle would be brought before the Board of Commissioners for consideration.

County management will also require a purchase order for any purchases over $500, allowing management to scrutinize the expenditure prior to commitment of County funds. Other controls include departmental approval and review by the Manager and/or Finance Officer for all travel exceeding $100.

Property Controls

The County is required to maintain a fixed asset listing for financial and insurance records. Detailed inventory records will be maintained of assets at costs of $500 and higher. The capitalization threshold, for financial reporting purposes, increased to $5,000 effective July 1, 2001. The County Manager will be allowed to declare property as surplus and allow proper and legal disposal for property with a value of $2,500 or less. This would not apply to vehicles or to any property that has been assigned a property identification number since 1999. Disposal of real or personal property shall be in compliance with the general statutes.

Investment of Idle Funds

The County will invest its idle funds in accordance with G.S. 159-30, into CDs issued by banks using the pooled method of collateralization, and in the North Carolina Capital Management Trust - Cash Account. As CDs mature, the Finance Officer will call for quotes to ensure a competitive rate of return. The Finance Officer will manage these investments and determine the appropriate terms, percentage distributions, and rates. Board approval will be sought prior to committing to new investment options. The County uses a central depository system to manage its funds and allow the Finance Officer to maintain only the amount necessary to cover expenses in the demand account and to invest the remaining funds to achieve a greater return.

Preservation and Use of General Fund Balance

The Board of Commissioners recognize the financial strength of the County is measured largely by its available undesignated general fund balance. The goal of the County is to maintain an undesignated general fund balance of no less than 30% of the current fiscal year expenditure level for the following reasons:

- to ensure that sufficient operating funds are available in light of a County's erratic revenue cycle
- to provide for adequate funds for immediate relief in case of natural disaster (i.e. hurricanes, floods, etc.)
- to provide interest income through the wise investment of these funds to help stabilize the tax rate
- to reduce the cost of debt issuance by establishing a strong financial history

The Board of Commissioners may designate amount above this threshold (defined as excess fund balance) for one-time funding purposes. The Board recognizes that excess fund balance is a one-time funding source, and thus should only be used for one-time expenditures.

The use of excess fund balance to meet recurring operational or working capital expenditures shall be prohibited, other than for expenditures deemed emergencies by the Board of Commissioners. The Board shall make appropriations in the annual operating budget in order to pay for recurring operational, working capital and recurring capital replacement needs.

The Board of Commissioners shall avoid using excess fund balance for tax rate stabilization or reduction purposes. In the event excess fund balance is used for such purpose, the Board shall identify a future funding source other than fund balance at the time the fund balance is appropriated, to meet future expenditure needs.

Annual Independent Audit

The County will, in accordance with G.S. 159-34, have its financial accounts audited as soon as possible after the close of each fiscal year by a certified public accountant or by an accountant certified by the Commission as qualified to audit local government accounts. The results of the audit shall be presented to the Board of Commissioners annually in an open meeting as soon as it has been reviewed and approved by the Local Government Commission.

Adopted this 17th day of June, 2013.

Fund Structure and Basis of Budgeting

The County Budget is organized on the basis of funds, each of which is considered a separate accounting and reporting entity. The operations of each fund are accounted for with a separate set of self-balancing accounts that comprise its revenues and expenditures, as appropriate. The types of funds include: Governmental Funds (General Fund, Special Revenue Funds, Debt Service Fund, and Capital Project Funds), Proprietary Funds (Enterprise Funds), and Fiduciary Funds (Agency Funds).

All Governmental and Agency Funds are accounted for using the modified accrual basis of accounting, in accordance with G.S. 159-26. Under the modified accrual basis of accounting, revenues are recognized when they become measurable and available as net current assets. Expenditures, under the modified accrual basis of accounting, are generally recognized when the related fund liability is incurred.

The County uses the accrual basis of accounting for the Proprietary Funds. Under the accrual basis of accounting, revenues are recognized when they are earned and expenses are recognized when they are incurred.

Governmental Fund Types

General Fund: This is the primary operating fund of the County and is used for the majority of current operating expenditures of the County Government. This fund provides financing for the operations of other funds, which include the County's School System.

Special Revenue Funds: These funds are used to account for the proceeds of specific revenues that are legally restricted to expenditure for particular purposes. The Revaluation Fund, County-wide Fire Service District Fund, Rescue Districts Fund, Community Development - Housing Fund, Community Development - Economic Development Fund, and School Funds are included in these funds. The revenue sources for these funds include federal grants and special ad valorem taxes and fees.

Debt Service Fund: This is used to account for the accumulation of resources for and the payment of general long-term debt principal, interest, and related costs. This fund's financing is provided primarily by transfers from the General Fund.

Capital Projects Funds: These funds account for the acquisition and/or construction of major capital assets by the County, except those financed by enterprise funds. Financing is primarily funded by bond issues, State and Federal grants, and transfers from the General Fund. The Vehicle Replacement Fund, Capital Improvements Fund, Capital Facilities Reserve Fund, School Capital Project Fund, and Community Development Fund are included in these funds.

Proprietary Fund Types

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 County Commissioners is that the costs of providing goods or services to the general public on a continuing basis be financed or recovered primarily through user charges; or where the Commissioners have decided that periodic determination of net income is appropriate for accountability purposes. The Maple Hill Water District Fund, Rocky Point/Topsail Water & Sewer District Fund, Sewer Fund, Resources Recovery Fund (Solid Waste Management), Section 8 Administration Fund, and Country Court Apartments Fund are included in these funds.

Fiduciary Fund Types

Agency Funds: These funds are used to account for assets received and disbursed by the County Government acting in a trustee capacity or as an agent for individuals, private organizations, other governments and/or other funds. The Deferred Compensation Fund and the Tax Clearing Agency Fund is included in these funds.

BASIS OF BUDGETING

Budgets for all funds are adopted on a basis consistent with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP), applicable to governmental units. Budget ordinances are adopted annually for all funds, except project ordinance budgets which are adopted on a multi-year basis. Included in the budget is a program of capital expenditures to be financed from current operations and a five year capital improvement plan. All annual appropriations lapse at fiscal year end, except for project ordinance budgets, which continue the length of the project.

AMENDMENTS TO THE BUDGET ORDINANCE

Except as otherwise restricted by law, the Commissioners 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 requirements of G.S. 159-8 and 159-13. However, no amendment may increase or reduce a property tax levy or in any manner alter a property taxpayer's liability unless the Commissioners are 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.

The Commissioners, by appropriate resolution or ordinance, may authorize the Budget Officer to transfer moneys from one appropriation to another within the same fund, subject to such limitations and procedures as it may prescribe. Any such transfers shall be reported to the Commissioners at its next regular meeting and shall be entered in the minutes. (1927, c. 146,s. 13; 1955, cc. 698, 724; 1971, c. 780,s. 1; 1973, c. 474, s. 12.)

GLOSSARY

Accrual Accounting	A basis of accounting which revenues and expenses are recorded at the time they are incurred, instead of when cash is actually received or disbursed.
Ad Valorem Taxes	See Property Taxes.
Appropriation	An authorization granted by the Board of Commissioners to make expenditures and incur obligations for purposes specified in the Budget Ordinance.
Assessed Valuation	A value established by the Pender County Tax Assessor's office for real and personal property that is used as a basis for levying property taxes.
Balanced Budget	When planned expenditures equal anticipated revenues. The North Carolina Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act requires the budget, which is submitted to the Board of Commissioners, be balanced.
Bond	A written promise to pay a sum of money on a specific date at a specified interest rate. The interest payments and the repayment of the principal are detailed in a bond ordinance. The most common types of bonds are general obligation and revenue bonds.
Budget	A plan of financial operation for the County, which includes estimated revenues and expenditures for a specific fiscal year.
Budget Amendment	A procedure used by the County and Board of Commissioners to revise a budget appropriation.
Budget Calendar	A schedule that outlines the process of budget preparation, adoption, and administration.
Budget Document	The official document prepared by county staff and approved by the Board that represents a comprehensive financial program for a specific fiscal year. The document presents policies and budgetary information that reflects Board decisions.
Budget Message	A general discussion of the budget prepared by the county manager that provides the Board of Commissioners and the public with a general summary of the most important aspects of the budget, including changes from previous fiscal years.
Budget Ordinance	A document adopted by the Board of Commissioners which lists revenues by source, appropriations by department or fund and levies taxes for the coming fiscal year.
Capital Outlay	Capital outlay represents expenditures on items such as vehicles, equipment, and furniture that are purchased by the County and have an expected life exceeding one year and a unit cost exceeding $500.
Cash Accounting	Basis of accounting that recognizes revenues when a government receives cash and costs when it disburses cash.
Cash Management	Cash management refers to the activities of forecasting the inflow and outflow of cash, mobilizing cash to improve its availability for investment, establishing and maintaining banking relationships.
Contingency	Funds in this account are set aside for unforeseen emergency expenditures that may become necessary during the year. The Board must approve the use of these funds before appropriation.
Debt Service	An obligation by the County to pay the principal and interest of all bonds according to a pre-determined payment schedule.
Department	A unit of the County government responsible for performing a primary governmental function.
Delinquent Taxes	Taxes unpaid on and after the due date on which a penalty for non-payment is attached.
Encumbrance	The commitment of appropriated funds to purchase an item or service. To encumber funds is to set aside or commit funds for future expenditures.
Enterprise Fund	A fund used to account for activities that are financed and operated in a manner similar to business enterprises and for which a fee for services or the availability of services are charged to completely or partially recover the expenses of the operation. Enterprise Funds typically include water and sewer, and solid waste.
Estimated Revenue	The amount of projected revenue to be collected during the fiscal year. The amount of revenue appropriated is the amount approved by the Board of Commissioners in the Budget Ordinance.
Expenditure	The cost of goods or services received by the County.

Fiscal Year	The time period which indicates the start and finalization for the recording of financial transactions. The Fiscal Year for the County starts on July 1st and ends on June 30th.
Fixed Assets	Assets of a long-term character which are intended to be held or used, such as land, buildings, machinery, furniture, and equipment.
Fund	A fund is a separate fiscal and accounting entity with a separate set of accounting records that governments segregate to carry on a specific activity.
Fund Balance	The cash and investments that remain at the end of the fiscal year that can legally be appropriated to fund expenditures in the upcoming fiscal year. The Local Government Budget Fiscal and Control Act (LGBFCA) limits the amount of fund balance monies which may be appropriated in the next budget year.
GAAP	Generally Accepted Accounting Principals (GAAP) relates to accounting rules and uniform standards for financial reporting representing generally accepted practices and procedures of the accounting profession. G. M P provides a set of minimum standards and guidelines for financial accounting and reporting. Therefore, all GAAP-Basis Financial Statements are reasonably comparable, regardless of the legal jurisdiction or geographic location of the government.
General Fund	A fund established to account for the resources used for the general operation of the County.
General Obligation Bonds	Debt instruments issued by the County backed by the full faith and credit of the issuing government.
Intergovernmental Revenue	Revenue received from another government for a specified purpose.
LGBFCA	The Local government Budget and Fiscal Control Act governs all financial activities of local governments within the State of North Carolina.
Long Term Debt	Debt with a maturity of more than one year after the date of issuance.
Maturities	The dates on which the principal or stated values of investments or debt obligations mature and may be reclaimed.
Modified Accrual Accounting	A basis of accounting in which expenditures are accrued and revenues are accounted for on a cash basis. This accounting technique is a combination of cash and accrual accounting since expenditures are immediately incurred as a liability while revenues are not recorded until they are actually received or are measurable and available for expenditure.
Property Taxes (Ad Valorem	Taxes paid by property owners in the County. These taxes are levied on both real and personal property according to the property's valuation and the tax rate.
Property Tax Rate	The rate at which real and personal property in the County is taxed in order to produce the necessary revenues to conduct vital governmental activities.
Revenue	Income received from a variety of sources and used to finance government or enterprise operations.
Submitted Budget	The budget document made by the County Manager and presented to the Board of Commissioners.
Tax Levy	The total amount of revenue to be raised by property (ad valorem) taxes.