

EMERGENCY

City of Cincinnati

CNS

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An Ordinance No. 24

- 2026

AUTHORIZING the policy of managing the Stabilization Funds for the City of Cincinnati.

WHEREAS, Ordinance No. 253-2015 established a policy to manage the fund balance reserves now referred to as the Stabilization Funds; and

WHEREAS, Ordinance No. 213-2019 amended Ordinance No. 253-2015 to better comply with Government Finance Officers Association (“GFOA”) recommendations on maintaining adequate reserves; and

WHEREAS, Ordinance No. 56-2022 amended Ordinance No. 253-2015 to better utilize any year-end surplus to not only maintain reserve balances but to address critical priorities by funding affordable housing development, the City’s pension, and capital needs; and

WHEREAS, the GFOA recommends a minimum of two months (approximately 16.7 percent) of prior-year General Fund operating revenues in fund balance reserves, but also encourages municipalities to consider their individual circumstances in setting a minimum reserve balance level; and

WHEREAS, due to the careful financial management of the City since 2022, the City has been able to achieve and then exceed the target minimum policy reserve balance of 16.7 percent and achieved a reserve balance of 17 percent of prior-year General Fund operating revenues from FY 2024; and

WHEREAS, this reserve level provides for a healthy balance to address unforeseen expenses that arise and mitigates risk against fluctuations in income tax receipts, the City’s primary General Fund operating revenue; and

WHEREAS, this ordinance is intended (1) to recognize the excellent progress that the City has made in establishing a healthy reserve balance at 17 percent by formally establishing the target minimum General Fund Contingency Account minimum policy balance as 2.3 percent of prior-year General Fund operating revenues, and (2) to better define parameters for allocation of the remaining carryover balance, once the financial reserve balances are achieved;

WHEREAS, due to the multiple amendments to the prior policy of managing the Stabilization Funds of the City, Council desires to fully replace the Stabilization Funds policy, established in Ordinance No. 253-2015 and amended by Ordinance Nos. 213-2019 and 56-2022, with this ordinance; now, therefore,

BE IT ORDAINED by the Council of the City of Cincinnati, State of Ohio:

Section 1. The Stabilization Funds of the City shall include: the General Fund Carryover Balance; General Fund Contingency Account; the Working Capital Reserve; and the Economic Downturn Reserve Account.

Section 2. That the General Fund Carryover Balance is required for cash flow purposes, offsets seasonality of revenues, and shall have a minimum policy level of 1.50 percent of prior-year General Fund operating revenues.

Section 3. That the General Fund Carryover Balance is not intended to be used for purposes other than cash flow management within a fiscal year and, if used, the City will replenish the funds used on a dollar-for-dollar basis in the next fiscal year to the extent funds are available.

Section 4. That the Working Capital Reserve Fund balance shall have a minimum policy level of 8.20 percent of prior-year General Fund operating revenues.

Section 5. That the Working Capital Reserve Fund shall only be used in the event of an emergency or a catastrophic need of the city and, if used, the City will replenish the funds used on a dollar-for-dollar basis in the next fiscal year to the extent funds are available.

Section 6. That the General Fund Contingency Account shall have a minimum policy level of 2.30 percent of prior-year General Fund operating revenues.

Section 7. That the General Fund Contingency Account shall only be used for one-time unfunded events and, if used, the City will replenish the funds used on a dollar-for-dollar basis in the next fiscal year to the extent funds are available.

Section 8. That the Economic Downturn Reserve Account shall have a minimum policy level of five percent of prior-year General Fund operating revenues.

Section 9. That the Economic Downturn Reserve Account shall only be used for unforeseen economic events or circumstances that cause unexpected drops in General Fund Income Tax

Revenues which result in a budgetary imbalance that cannot be resolved through immediate budgetary adjustments and, if used, the City will replenish the funds used on a dollar-for-dollar basis in the next fiscal year to the extent funds are available.

Section 10. That, first, if any of the Stabilization Funds above are used, the City shall replenish such use as per the sections above.

Section 11. That, second, if any of the Stabilization Funds are not funded at their minimum policy levels, a “Waterfall Funding Mechanism” shall be applied to the use of year-end General Fund Surplus.

Section 12. That the “Waterfall Funding Mechanism” shall allocate 100 percent of year-end General Fund Surplus to achieve the minimum policy level in the General Fund Carryover Balance until its balance achieves the minimum policy level.

Section 13. That the “Waterfall Funding Mechanism” shall next allocate any and all remaining General Fund Surplus to achieve the minimum policy level in the General Fund Contingency Account until its balance achieves the minimum policy level.

Section 14. That the “Waterfall Funding Mechanism” shall next allocate any and all remaining year-end General Fund Surplus as follows:

- a. 34 percent of the remaining General Fund Surplus to the Economic Downturn Reserve Account until its balance achieves the minimum policy level. To the extent that the Economic Downturn Reserve Account minimum policy level is met and the Working Capital Reserve Fund minimum policy level is not met, then any portion of the 34 percent not needed to meet the Economic Downturn Reserve Account minimum policy level will be dedicated to the Working Capital Reserve Fund until its minimum policy level is achieved;

- b. 33 percent of the remaining General Fund Surplus to the Working Capital Reserve Fund until its balance achieves the minimum policy level. To the extent that the Working Capital Reserve Fund minimum policy level is met and the Economic Downturn Reserve Account minimum policy level is not met, then any portion of the 33 percent not needed to meet the Working Capital Reserve Fund minimum policy level will be dedicated to the Economic Downturn Reserve Account until its minimum policy level is achieved; and
- c. 33 percent of the remaining General Fund Surplus aggregated with any additional funding available pursuant to Section 15 of this Ordinance, distributed as follows:
 - i. The lesser of (1) fifty percent of the available amount or (2) \$5,000,000 as a one-time contribution to the City's Affordable Housing Trust Fund.
 - ii. The lesser of (1) 33 percent of the available amount, (2) \$2,000,000, or (3) the amount needed to address any remaining unfunded liability of the pension trust and health care trust, to be utilized as a one-time contribution to address the City's pension obligations as follows:
 - A. First, all available funds contributed as a one-time employer contribution to the pension trust, until the pension trust has no unfunded liability;
 - B. Second, if the above is achieved and the healthcare trust has an unfunded liability, then all remaining available funds to the healthcare trust until the healthcare trust has no unfunded liability.
 - iii. The lesser of (1) 8.5 percent of the available amount or (2) \$500,000 shall be contributed to the Operating Budget Contingencies Account, to be utilized as

a contingency reserve for subsequent appropriation for one-time, unforeseen operating needs that arise during the remainder of the ongoing fiscal year.

- iv. The lesser of (1) 8.5 percent of the available amount or (2) \$500,000 shall be contributed to the Special Events Support Account, to be utilized to support special events with one-time operating support to enhance the vibrancy of the City and generate positive economic impact.
- v. Finally, (1) fifty percent of any remaining amount shall be contributed to an Infrastructure and Capital Project Reserve for subsequent appropriation by Council for identified one-time infrastructure and capital projects for City-owned assets, including but not limited to fleet and other equipment, facilities, and technology, and (2) fifty percent of any remaining amount shall be contributed to a Housing and Economic Development Capital Project Reserve for subsequent appropriation by Council for capital or permanent improvement projects supporting housing and economic development projects.

Section 15. That, if all the Stabilization Funds are fully funded at their respective minimum policy levels, then any additional General Fund surplus shall be aggregated with and distributed in the same manner as provided in Section 14(c) of this ordinance.

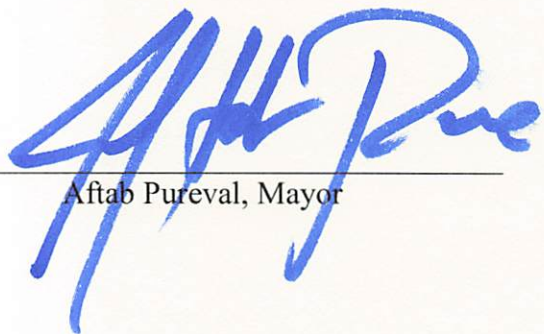
Section 16. That, if all the Stabilization Funds are not fully funded to their respective minimum policy levels and the Required Aggregate Reserve Balance is not met, the City shall identify and redirect other funding sources to the Stabilization Funds until the aggregate is at least equal to ten percent of prior-year general operating revenues.

Section 17. That this ordinance shall supersede all terms of Ordinance Nos. 253-2015, 213-2019, and 56-2022

Section 18. That the proper City officials are authorized to do all things necessary and proper to implement the provisions of Sections 1 through 17.

Section 19. That this ordinance shall be an emergency measure necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health, safety, and general welfare and shall, subject to the terms of Article II, Section 6 of the Charter, be effective immediately. The reason for the emergency is the immediate need to implement a City policy establishing the percentage target of the City's Stabilization Funds, per the policy recommendation of the Government Finance Officers Association.

Passed: February 4, 2026

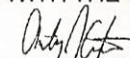


Aftab Pureval, Mayor

Attest: 

Clerk

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT ORDINANCE NO 28-2024
WAS PUBLISHED IN THE CITY BULLETIN
IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CHARTER ON 2/17/2026


CLERK OF COUNCIL