

CITY OF CHESTER, SOUTH CAROLINA
Notes to the Financial Statements
June 30, 2015

Note 1 – Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

A. General

The City of Chester is a municipality in the state of South Carolina that was initially incorporated on December 18, 1840. The City adopted the Council-Mayor form of government pursuant to the Home Rule Statute, Act No. 283 of 1975. The Certificate of Incorporation was issued by the Secretary of State on October 28, 1975. The City provides services as authorized by its charter for public safety, public works, planning and development, streets and sanitation, licensing and regulation, recreation and general administrative services.

The financial statements of the City of Chester have been prepared in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America as applied to governmental units. The Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) is the accepted standard-setting body for establishing governmental accounting and financial principles. The City also applies Financial Accounting Standard Board (FASB) statements and interpretations issued on or before November 30, 1989, to its governmental and business-type activities and to its proprietary funds provided they do not conflict with or contradict GASB pronouncements. The most significant of the City accounting policies are described below.

In June 1999, the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) unanimously approved Statement Number 34, *Basic Financial Changes – and Management's Discussion and Analysis – for State and Local Governments*. Certain significant changes in the Statement include the following:

- A Management Discussion and Analysis (MD&A) section providing an analysis of the City's overall financial position and results of operations.
- Financial statements prepared using full accrual accounting for all of the City's activities, including infrastructure (roads, bridges, etc.).
- A change in the fund financial statements to focus on major funds.

These and other changes are reflected in the accompanying financial statements (including notes to financial statements).

B. Financial Reporting Entity

The City's basic financial statements include the accounts of all City (the Primary Government) operations. The criteria for including other organizations as component units within the City's reporting entity, as set forth in Section 2100 of GASB's *Codification of Governmental Accounting and Financial Reporting Standards*, include whether:

- the organization is legally separate (can sue and be sued in their own name)
- the City holds the corporate powers of the organization
- the City appoints a voting majority of the organization's board
- the City is able to impose its will on the organization
- the organization has the potential to impose a financial benefit/burden on the City
- there is fiscal dependency by the organization on the City

Based on this criteria, the City has determined that no other governmental organizations operating within its city limits are deemed component units of the City of Chester.

CITY OF CHESTER, SOUTH CAROLINA
Notes to the Financial Statements -- continued
June 30, 2015

C. Basis of Presentation

The City's basic financial statements consist of government-wide statements, including a statement of net position and a statement of activities, and fund financial statements that provide a more detailed level of financial information.

Government-Wide Financial Statements

The statement of net position and the statement of activities display information about the City as a whole. These statements include all financial activities of the primary government, except for the fiduciary funds. The effect of interfund activity has been removed from the statements. The statements distinguish between those activities of the City that are governmental and those that are considered business-type activities.

The statement of net position presents the financial condition of the governmental and business-type activities for the City. The statement of activities presents a comparison between direct expenses and program revenues for each program or function of the City's governmental activities and for the business-type activities of the City. Direct expenses are those that are specifically associated with a service, program or department and therefore clearly identifiable to a particular function. Program revenues include charges paid by the recipient for the goods or services offered by the programs, grants and contributions that are restricted to meeting the operational or capital requirements of a particular program and interest earned on grants that is required to be used to support a particular program. Revenues that are not classified as program revenues are presented as general revenues of the City, with certain limited exceptions. The comparison of direct expenses with program revenues identifies the extent to which each business segment or governmental function is self-financing or draws from the general revenues of the City.

This government-wide focus is more on the sustainability of the City as an entity and the change in City's net position resulting from the current year's activities.

Fund Financial Statements

The accounts of the City are organized and operated on the basis of funds. A fund is an independent fiscal and accounting entity with a self-balancing set of accounts. Fund accounting segregates funds according to their intended purpose and is used to aid management in demonstrating compliance with finance-related legal and contractual provisions. The minimum number of funds is maintained consistent with legal and managerial requirements. There are three categories of funds: governmental, proprietary and fiduciary.

Governmental fund types are used to account for the government's general government activities. Governmental funds include the following fund types:

The **general fund** of the City is used to account for all financial resources except those required to be accounted for in another fund. All property taxes, intergovernmental revenues, charges for services, fines, forfeits and miscellaneous revenues are recorded in this fund except amounts that are specifically collected to service debt or for which the City Finance Director collects taxes and other funds in a fiduciary capacity.

Operational expenditures for general government, public safety, public works and other departments of the City are paid through the general fund. Governmental accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America require the presentation of a combined statement of revenues, expenditures and changes in fund balance - budget and actual for general and special revenue funds. As no budget is legally adopted for the City's special revenue funds, only general fund information is included in the aforementioned statement.

The **special revenue fund** is used to account for the proceeds of specific revenue sources (other than major capital projects) that include special projects requiring separate accounting because of legal or regulatory provisions and/or administrative action.

CITY OF CHESTER, SOUTH CAROLINA
Notes to the Financial Statements -- continued
June 30, 2015

The **debt service fund** is used to account for the accumulation of resources and the payment of general long-term debt principal, interest and any related costs. The City has no debt service fund as its policy is to pay its long-term debt from the general fund.

Capital project funds account for financial resources to be used for the acquisition or construction of major capital facilities.

Proprietary fund types

Proprietary funds account for operations that are financed and operated in a manner similar to private business enterprises where the intent of the City is that the costs (expenses, including depreciation) of providing services to the general public on a continuing basis are financed or recovered primarily through user charges. The City has no proprietary fund operations.

Fiduciary fund types

Fiduciary funds are used to account for assets held by the City on behalf of other organizations or activities not considered an activity of the City. The City's fiduciary funds consist of a trust fund for the perpetual care of its cemetery and agency funds.

Trust Funds are used to account for assets held by the City in a trustee capacity. When the objectives of a trust fund can be achieved by spending both the principal and the earnings of the fund, the fund is referred to as an expendable trust fund. The City accounts for certain revenue from the cemetery care fees and expenditures for the cemetery in this fund.

Agency Funds are custodial in nature (assets equal liabilities) and do not involve measurement of results of operations.

The emphasis in fund financial statements is on the major funds in either the governmental or business-type activities categories. GASB Statement Number 34 sets forth minimum criteria (percentage of the assets, liabilities, revenues or expenditures/expenses of either fund category or the governmental and enterprise combined) for the determination of major funds. Since by definition, the City has no major funds except the general fund, no distinction between major and non-major funds is reflected in the fund financial statements.

The City's fiduciary funds are presented in the fiduciary fund financial statements by type (the City has a trust fund and four agency funds). Since by definition, these assets are being held for the benefit of a third party (other local government or other entity) and cannot be used to address activities or obligations of the City, these funds are not incorporated into the government-wide financial statements.

D. Measurement Focus

Government-wide financial statements

The government-wide financial statements are prepared using the economic resources measurement focus. All assets and liabilities associated with the operation of the City are included on the statement of net position. All internal activity is eliminated on the government-wide statement of activities.

Fund financial statements

All governmental funds are accounted for using a flow of current financial resources measurement focus. With this measurement focus, only current assets and current liabilities are generally included on the balance sheet. The statement of revenues, expenditures and changes in fund balance reports on the sources (i.e., revenues and other financing sources) and uses (i.e., expenditures and other financing uses) of current financial resources. This approach differs from the manner in which governmental activities of the government-wide financial statements are prepared. Therefore, governmental fund financial statements include reconciliations with brief explanations to better identify the relationship between the government-wide statements and statements for governmental funds.

CITY OF CHESTER, SOUTH CAROLINA
Notes to the Financial Statements -- continued
June 30, 2015

Like the government-wide statements, all proprietary fund types are accounted for in a flow of economic resources measurement focus. All assets and liabilities associated with the operation of these funds are included on the statement of net position. The statement of changes in fund net position presents increases (i.e., revenues) and decreases (i.e., expenses) in total net position. The statement of cash flows provides information about how the City finances and meets the cash flow needs of its proprietary activities.

Fiduciary funds are reported using the economic measurement focus.

E. Basis of Accounting

Basis of accounting determines when transactions are recorded in the financial records and reported on the financial statements. Governmental-wide financial statements are prepared using the accrual basis of accounting. Governmental funds use the modified accrual basis of accounting. Proprietary and fiduciary funds also use the accrual basis of accounting. Differences in the accrual and the modified accrual basis of accounting arise in the recognition of revenue, the recording of deferred revenue and the presentation of expenses versus expenditures.

Revenues – exchange and non-exchange transactions

Revenue resulting from exchange transactions, in which each party gives and receives essentially equal value, is recorded on the accrual basis when the exchange takes place. On a modified accrual basis, revenue is recorded in the fiscal year in which the resources are measurable and become available. Available means that the resources will be collected within the current fiscal year or are expected to be collected soon enough thereafter to be used to pay liabilities of the current fiscal year end.

Non-exchange transactions, in which the City receives value without directly giving equal value in return, include property taxes, grants, entitlements and donations. On an accrual basis, revenue from property taxes is recognized in the fiscal year for which the taxes are levied. Revenue from grants, entitlements and donations is recognized in the fiscal year in which all eligibility requirements have been satisfied. Eligibility requirements include timing requirements, which specify the year when resources are required to be used or the year when use is first permitted; matching requirements, in which the City must provide local resources to be used for a specified purpose; and expenditure requirements, in which resources are provided to the City on a reimbursement basis. On a modified accrual basis, revenue from non-exchange transactions must also be available before it can be recognized.

Under the modified accrual basis, the following revenue sources are considered to be both measurable and available at year end: delinquent taxes collected within sixty days of fiscal year end, sales tax, grants, interest, fees and charges for service.

Deferred revenue

Deferred revenue arises when assets are recognized before recognition criteria have been satisfied.

Property taxes for which there is an enforceable legal claim as of June 30, 2015 (all property owned by taxpayers are assessed as of December 31, 2014), but which were billed in October 2014 to finance fiscal year 2014-15 operations, have been recorded as revenue. That portion not expected to be collected within one year has been recorded as deferred revenue. Grants and entitlements received before the eligibility requirements are met have also been recorded as deferred revenue.

On governmental fund financial statements, receivables that will not be collected within the available period (which is defined as within 60 days of year end) have been reported as deferred revenue.

CITY OF CHESTER, SOUTH CAROLINA
Notes to the Financial Statements – continued
June 30, 2015

Expenses/expenditures

On the accrual basis of accounting, expenses are recognized at the time they are incurred.

The measurement focus of governmental fund accounting is on decreases in net financial resources (expenditures) rather than expenses. Expenditures are generally recognized in the accounting period in which the related fund liability is incurred, if measurable. Allocations of cost, such as depreciation and amortization, are not recognized in the governmental funds.

F. Assets, Liabilities and Equity

Cash and investments

For purposes of the Statement of Net Position, cash includes all demand, savings accounts and certificates of deposits of the City. For the purposes of the proprietary fund Statement of Cash Flows, "cash and cash equivalents" includes all demand and savings accounts, certificates of deposit or short-term investments (including restricted assets) with original maturity of three months or less.

Investments are carried at fair value, which is based on quoted market price.

Receivables and payables

All trade and property tax receivables are shown net of an allowance for uncollectible amounts. The allowance for trade accounts receivable is computed based upon an estimate of collections within each aging category. The allowance for property taxes receivable is based upon a composite average of each delinquent tax year's collections to the outstanding balance at the beginning of the fiscal year.

Property taxes become a lien on real estate and certain personal properties owned on the preceding December 31 of each City fiscal year ended June 30. These taxes are levied on or before October 31 and are due without penalty through January 15. Penalties are added to the taxes depending on the date paid as follows:

January 16 through February 1	3% of tax
February 2 through March 15	10% of tax
March 16 and thereafter	15% of tax plus collection cost

The lien and collection date for motor vehicles is the last day of the month in which the motor vehicle license expires. The City bills and collects its own real property taxes. Chester County bills and collects vehicle property taxes and payments in lieu of taxes and remits to the City its collections monthly following the month received. Property tax revenue is recognized when past due and collectible within the current period or soon enough thereafter (defined as sixty days) to pay liabilities of the current period. An allowance is provided for an estimated amount of taxes billed that may ultimately prove to be uncollectible. Deferred revenue (property taxes) represents that portion of property taxes which is deemed not available to pay current expenses.

Interfund receivables and payables

Short-term amounts owed between funds are classified as "Due to/from other funds." Interfund receivables and payables between funds within governmental activities are eliminated in the government-wide financial statements.

CITY OF CHESTER, SOUTH CAROLINA
Notes to the Financial Statements -- continued
June 30, 2015

Due from other governments

Amounts due from state and federal grants represent reimbursable costs that have been incurred by the City but have not been reimbursed by the grantor agency. Costs under grant programs are recognized as expenditures in the period in which the City incurs them.

Inventories

The general fund of the City has no significant inventories. The cost is recorded as expenditures at the time individual inventory items are purchased.

Capital assets

Capital assets, which include property, plant, equipment and infrastructure assets (e.g., roads, bridges, water & sewer systems, and similar items), are reported in the applicable governmental or business-type activities columns in the government-wide financial statements. The City defines capital assets as assets with an initial individual cost of more than \$1,000 and an estimated useful life in excess of three years. Such assets are recorded at historical cost or estimated historical cost if purchased or constructed. Donated capital assets are recorded at estimated fair market value at the date of donation.

Because City of Chester qualifies as a small governmental entity as defined by GASB 34 (governments with annual revenues less than \$10 million), the City has elected not to capitalize its infrastructure retroactively as large governmental entities are required to do. Prior to June 30, 2003, City of Chester has not capitalized infrastructure. Infrastructure with an initial individual cost of more than \$5,000 and an estimated useful life in excess of three years is being capitalized beginning July 1, 2003 and thereafter.

The costs of normal maintenance and repairs that do not add to the value of the asset or materially extend asset lives are not capitalized.

Major outlays for capital assets are capitalized as the projects are constructed. Interest incurred during the construction phase of proprietary capital assets is included as part of the capitalized value of the assets constructed.

All reported capital assets, except land, are depreciated. Improvements are depreciated over the remaining useful lives of the related capital assets. Depreciation is computed using the straight-line method over the following useful lives:

Land improvements	15 years
Buildings	30 to 50 years
Building improvements	15 years
Vehicles	5 years
Furniture and equipment	3 to 10 years
Machinery and equipment	5 to 10 years
Public domain infrastructure	40 years

Compensated absences

City employees earn from one day to two days each month, depending on longevity, for vacation and one day a month for sick leave. If an employee leaves the employment of the City, he/she is entitled to be paid for up to six weeks of unused vacation. There is no liability for sick pay since it is the City's policy to only pay sick leave when it is used. The entire compensated absence liability is reported on the government-wide financial statements. Expenditures for these fringe benefits are recorded at the time the benefits are paid for governmental fund types and accrued currently for proprietary fund types.