

# Transforming Raw Data into Information—How You Can Help Government Succeed in Transparency Initiatives

Transparency in Government  
2019 Citizen Summit

Tammy Havard



CITY OF

**Westfield**

INDIANA

# Where we were – Data without context

## FUND REPORT

April 30, 2019

Fund	Title	Balance Begin of Year	Cash Basis Revenue YTD	Cash Basis Disbursed YTD	Bank Balance
428	Interest 2012B Bond DB Serv Reserve	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	<b>**Subtotal**</b>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
429	2012 Bonds Interest	\$ 41.76	\$ 48,641.85	\$ 48,623.25	\$ 60.36
	<b>**Subtotal**</b>	\$ 41.76	\$ 48,641.85	\$ 48,623.25	\$ 60.36
101	General	\$ 8,866,729.60	\$ 4,784,973.74	\$ 6,686,442.98	\$ 6,965,260.36
435	1st Merchant General Invest	\$ 4,653,403.88	\$ 34,052.87	\$ -	\$ 4,687,456.75
433	General Investment				
434	Investment Gen Money Market				

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# Where we are now – Data is relevant



-   
Maps
-   
No Knock List
-   
What's Happening Here
-   
Report It
-   
Grand Junction Plaza
-   
Pay Your Bill
-   
Agendas
-   
Transparency Portal
-   
Westfield Works

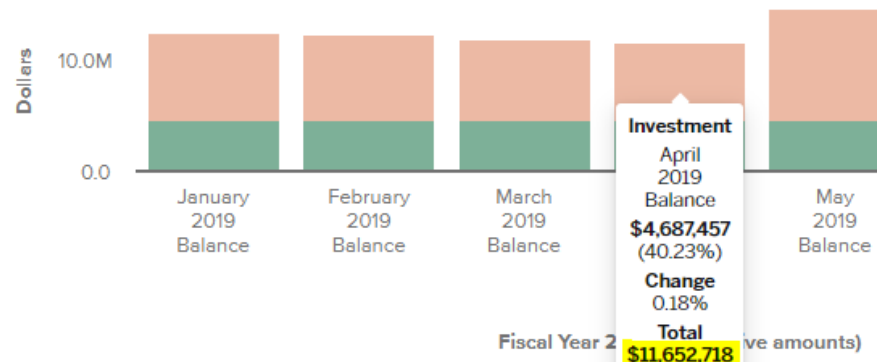
[https://westfieldin.opengov.com/transparency#](https://westfieldin.opengov.com/transparency#/)

Broken down by

Cash

General

Visualization



# How we got here–Backend

- Backend work automating information from financial system to portal
  - Account structure
  - Naming (avoid acronyms!)
  - Configure reports to upload

# How we got here–Beta testing

- Beta testing with citizens
  - Goal to translate government jargon and rules into simple points
  - Citizens brought in to help with transparency initiative
    - Inquisitive
    - Want to help others
    - Interested in government

# Questions to ask beta testers

- ▶ What searches/filters are you doing in the transparency portal when you log into the site?
- ▶ What questions do you want answers to?
- ▶ What descriptions/explanations are missing from the site?  
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- ▶ Did you go to the filters to look up something that wasn't already in a saved view? What was it and do you think it should have a saved view?
- ▶ Is there any wording in the saved views that you could be improved to better reflect what the saved view is showing?
- ▶ Would you order the saved views differently? Please specify.

# How we got here–Launch

- Launch public facing transparency portal
  - Facebook live–how to use portal
  - Video training on website–how to use

## **PRESS RELEASE: City of Westfield Launches Financial Transparency Portal**

**Date:** May 14, 2018

**Contact:** Vicki Duncan Gardner

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**Release:** Immediate Release



### **PRESS RELEASE: City of Portal**

**Westfield, IN** – Today the City of Westfield launched its new Financial Transparency Portal. It allows residents and administrators full, around-the-clock access to the city's financial data. The interactive tool, called OpenGov, enables the user to explore data in various graphical formats.

"We take great care on how tax dollars are spent in Westfield," said Mayor Andy Cook. "This tool allows our citizens to be more educated about how we operate and thereby more engaged."

"I am excited to be a part of the City of Westfield's open data initiative," said Westfield Financial Strategist Tammy Havard. "Government finance can be confusing but with a few clicks in the user-friendly tool, citizens can get a better understanding of the types of revenues and expenses occurring in the city."

Westfield will be one of four Indiana communities on the OpenGov platform. This site provides an opportunity to view, filter, and analyze revenue, expense and balance sheet financial data for the City of Westfield. The portal is accessible at <https://westfieldin.opengov.com>.

OpenGov, a California-based company specializing in financial transparency, pioneered this application for the public to have full access to city finances.

For more information and to visit the portal, [click here](#).

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# How we got here—Continual updates and improvements

- Update data monthly, annually
- Create new views to answer new questions
- Find areas that need explanation and work proactively getting the message out



# Questions?

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