

Ohio GFOA Conference Session

Social Media & Financial Transparency



Introduction

- City of New Albany, Ohio's Communication & Marketing Specialist
- Previous Miss Ohio & Social Media Strategist for Stanley Steemer International
- Marketing & Psychology Degrees with vested interest in consumer behavior
- Almost failed finance courses in college
- Fully believed RITA was a person for like two months





Overview

- Importance of financial transparency and public engagement
- Collaboration between finance and communications teams
- Visual storytelling techniques
- Tips for creating accessible, digestible social media content



Takeaways

- Learn effective methods for translating financial information into public-facing social media content
- Understand how to collaborate with communications teams to develop consistent, informative messaging
- Apply storytelling to promote transparency in financial reporting





Financial Transparency and Public Engagement

Without using your job title, tell me what you do.





Financial Transparency and Public Engagement

On a scale from 1 to 5, how comfortable is your community with its understanding of your work?





Financial Transparency and Public Engagement

Where do you feel there is a lapse in understanding between your
finance department and the community?





Financial Transparency and Public Engagement

- **Transparency as the Foundation:** Transparency is the necessary first step.
 - You can't have meaningful public engagement on financial matters if the public doesn't have clear, understandable information to begin with.
- **Engagement as the Action:** Engagement is what makes transparency impactful.
 - It's the process of taking that information and using it to foster a dialogue, gather input, and build collaborative relationship between the government and its citizens.
- **The Outcome:** The goal is to create a government that is not only financially responsible but also deeply connected to and trusted by the community it serves.
 - This is achieved by making financial transparency a dynamic, engaging, and ongoing conversation.





Financial Transparency and Public Engagement

- It's human nature not to trust something we don't fully understand.
- Consider where your residents are finding their information about your department (AND where you would ideally like them to go).





Financial Transparency and Public Engagement

- Easy ways to make your work accessible to the public:
 - Discuss it on social media using simple (and I mean simple) terms.
 - Update your website forms, pages, and information.
 - This will take at least a few hours, but it's worth it.

Financial Transparency and Public Engagement

- Where are people trying to get their information?

- Google? Sure...
- SOCIAL MEDIA
- AI

The screenshot shows a Google search interface with the query "what is the local income tax rate for new albany". The search results are displayed in a clean, modern layout. At the top, there's a "Google" logo and a search bar. Below the search bar, there are tabs for "AI Mode", "All", "News", "Images", "Shopping", "Videos", "Web", and "More". The "All" tab is selected. The search results are organized into sections. The first section is titled "AI Overview" and provides a summary of the local income tax rate for New Albany, Ohio, which is 2.0%. It also includes additional details about the tax, such as tax credits and exclusions. The second section is titled "Taxes - City of New Albany, Ohio" and provides a link to the City of New Albany's website. The third section is titled "Ohio Taxes Explained: A Complete Guide to State and Local Tax Rates" and provides a link to a guide from Symmetry Software. The search results are displayed in a clean, modern layout with a white background and blue accents.

what is the local income tax rate for new albany

AI Mode All News Images Shopping Videos Web More Tools

AI Overview

The local income tax rate for New Albany, Ohio, is **2.0%**. The tax applies to all individual earned income and corporate net profits.

Additional details about the tax:

- **Tax Credit:** New Albany residents receive a 100% credit (up to 2.0%) for income taxes paid to another municipality. This credit prevents double taxation if you work in a different Ohio city that also has a local income tax.
- **Income Exclusions:** The tax does not apply to investment earnings and retirement income.

Show more

City of New Albany, Ohio
<https://newalbanyohio.org> Community Resources

Taxes - City of New Albany Taxes

New Albany has an income tax rate of 2.0% on all individual earned income and corporate net profits. Please note that the tax does not apply to investment ...

Regional Income Tax Agency
<https://www.ritaohio.com> Home MemberPage

RITA Municipality - New Albany

View Tax Rates, Ordinances, Rules, Special Notes or special Tax Rules for Member Municipality, New Albany.

Taxes - City of New Albany, Ohio
Income Tax Rate. New Albany has an income tax rate of 2.0% on all individual earned income a...
City of New Albany, Ohio

Ohio Taxes Explained: A Complete Guide to State and Local Tax Rates
Mar 12, 2025 — If you're an Ohio resident who works in another state (or vice versa), Ohio...
Symmetry Software



Financial Transparency and Public Engagement

- How can I control what AI is pulling about the finance department in our City?
 - Think like a resident. Ask your team what type of questions they commonly field from residents and provide that information on your City's website.
 - Organize information in the order of importance to residents.
 - Provide links that direct to the sites and sources you reference (e.g., RITA, uploaded guides, forms, awards).
 - Do not wait to update online information about new policies and procedures

You all love an audit- so audit the information you can find online about your organization and its services!





Financial Transparency and Public Engagement

- It may seem a bit overwhelming, but here's how we've structured it.

– Finance Page

- Department Role & Transparency Portal
- City Budget
- Monthly Financial Condition Reports
- News posts with Finance Tags

– Taxes

- Income Tax Rate
- Filing Requirements
- Filing Deadlines
- Address Search
- Property Taxes





Collaboration between Finance and Communications

How many of you are tasked with handling the communication via
your municipality's social media?





Collaboration between Finance and Communications

How many of you have a comms person?





Collaboration between Finance and Communications

Do you actually talk to your comms person?





Collaboration between Finance and Communications

- The earlier you can tell the comms team = the better
 - Gives us time to learn, ask questions, develop strategies, collect assets.
 - Allows for extensive reviews and edits to be made to captions, copy, and creatives.
- Loop in the Comms team on emails pertaining to upcoming policy changes, action plans, or big budget adjustments so that our plans can change with yours.
- At the end of the day, the earlier you catch us up, the more options we have to communicate to the public.





Visual Storytelling Techniques

- Video
 - **External:** For residents. Simple, confident, and effective.
 - **Internal:** Morale-boosting, collaborative, and fun.



Visual Storytelling Techniques

- Video Examples - External
 - Year in Review Video (3:27-3:55) <https://vimeo.com/1113259683?share=copy>
 - Economic Development Week <https://vimeo.com/942449156?share=copy>
- Annual Report
 - Finance Quick Facts
 - Income Taxes
 - Property Taxes
 - General Fund Revenue vs. Expenses
 - General Fund Quick Breakdown

Visual Storytelling Techniques

NEW ALBANY

ORGANIZATIONAL GOAL #4

Excellent Stewardship of Public Funds

The New Albany Finance Department functions include overseeing fiscal operations, debt issuance, providing an accurate accounting of receipts and disbursements, managing financial investments and coordinating the annual audit. New Albany's general obligation rating from Moody's Investors Service is Aaa and from Standard & Poor's is AAA, the highest ratings possible by those agencies. New Albany is one of very few Ohio cities to obtain this "double triple" rating.

2024 FINANCE QUICK FACTS

- New Albany's 2023 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting, the highest form of governmental accounting recognition from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA).
- New Albany's 2024 budget also received GFOA's Distinguished Budget Award.
- New Albany received the 2024 cashvest® 90+ Award, which is the benchmark and banner for public entities that are earning and saving at the highest levels on taxpayers' resources.
 - Achieved score of 100 for the first time during the 2nd quarter of 2024 and received it for the 3rd and 4th quarters of 2024.
- Finance staff also received the Ohio Auditor of State Award with Distinction for financial reporting in 2022.
- New Albany's bond rating: Moody's – Aaa; Standard & Poor's – AAA
- 2023 Single Audit – In compliance
- 2024 Bond Anticipation Notes rated 'SP-1+' (short-term rating)
 - Highest rating possible
 - 'AAA' (long-term) rating confirmed

Income Taxes

In 2024, local income taxes accounted for approximately 80% of New Albany's general fund operating revenue. In Ohio, income taxes are typically paid to the community where people work. Most New Albany residents pay no income tax to New Albany because they are provided a 100% credit for income taxes they pay to the communities in which they are employed. This is why it is so critical to create jobs inside New Albany borders. New Albany levies a 2% local income tax on gross wages, salaries and other personal services compensation. This tax is also levied on net profits of corporations and smaller businesses based here.

Property Taxes

Property taxes constituted 4.14% of general fund operating revenues for City services. These taxes, which are based on the local tax rate (in mills) and the taxable value of the property, are critical to schools, townships and county-wide service agencies. For 2024, the Franklin County Auditor determined annual property taxes for City of New Albany households to be \$2,177.48 per \$100,000 fair market value based upon the mills for Tax District 222 – City of New Albany, Franklin County, New Albany Plain Local Schools, Plain Township Fire. *(This millage rate does not include the 1.7 mills paid by most New Albany residents to the New Albany Community Authority for debt on the New Albany High School building, Fodor Road improvements, and fire station improvements and equipment.)*



City of New Albany Finance Staff

2024 Net Annual Tax Estimate: \$2,117.48 per \$100,000 of value

Source: Franklin County Auditor's Office

Tax District: 222

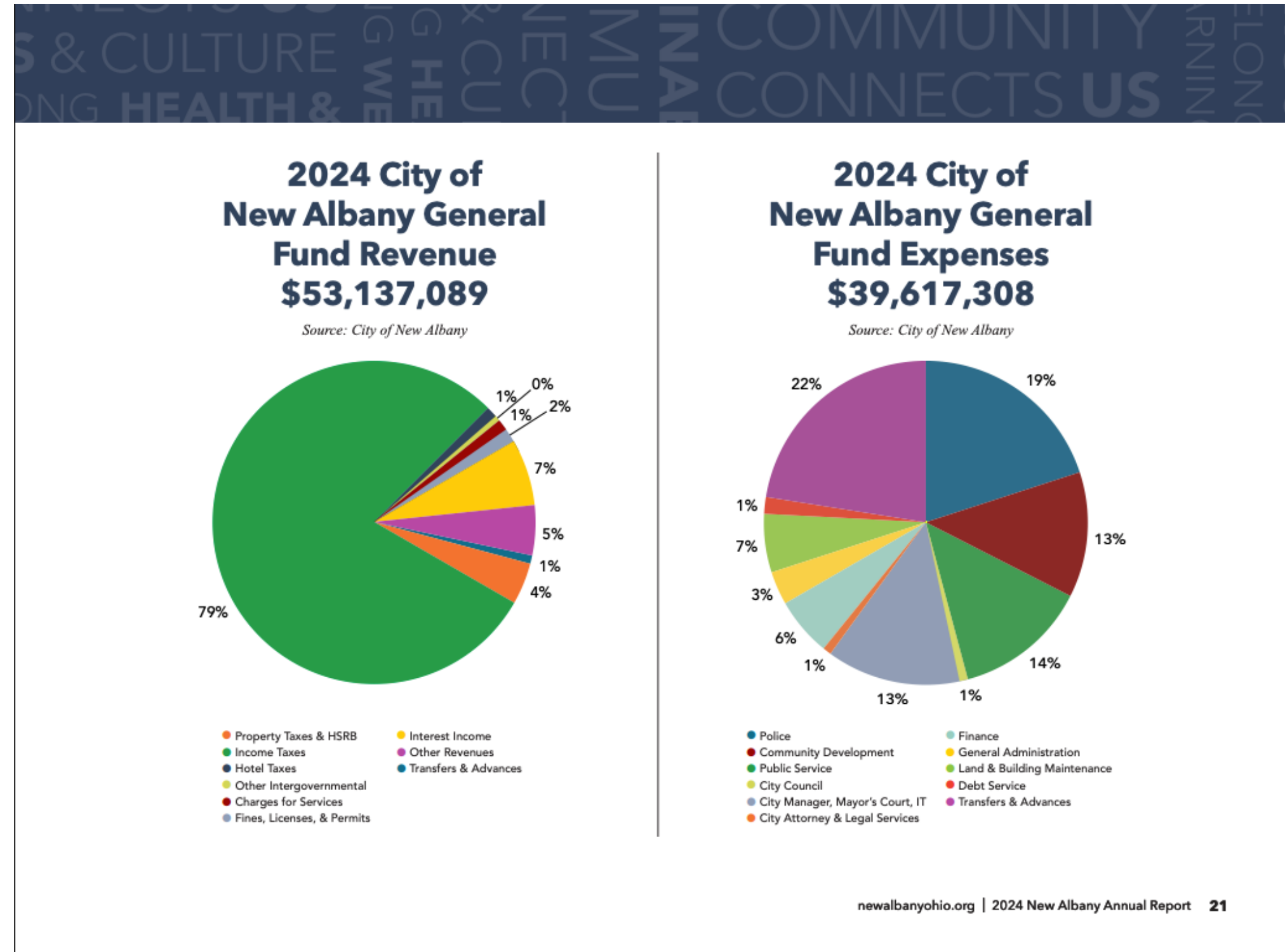
Market Value: \$100,000

Property Class: Residential

Owner Occupied: Yes

New Albany Plain Local School District.	\$1,194.43
FCBDD.....	\$112.41
Children Services.....	\$99.01
ADMH.....	\$51.42
County General Fund.....	\$45.02
Senior Options.....	\$29.16
Metro Parks.....	\$19.58
Zoo.....	\$11.20
Plain Township.....	\$310.91
Columbus Public Library.....	\$80.68
Eastland Joint Vocational School	\$61.25
City of New Albany	\$59.41
New Albany Joint Parks District	\$91.80
Columbus State	\$11.20
	\$2,117.48

Visual Storytelling Techniques



Visual Storytelling Techniques

NEW ALBANY

City of New Albany General Fund

Source: City of New Albany

REVENUE	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
Property Taxes, Homestead & Rollback	\$2,202,266	\$1,683,041	\$1,583,892	\$1,477,289	\$1,378,536
Income Taxes	42,155,271	32,774,242	27,156,356	27,390,466	21,965,716
Hotel Taxes	535,885	450,912	431,346	279,607	236,594
Other Intergovernmental	132,192	136,564	200,590	201,166	175,596
Charges for Services	372,010	389,310	147,233	295,299	148,189
Fines, Licenses, & Permits	1,267,192	1,082,272	1,405,942	1,132,329	780,433
Interest Income	3,483,637	2,222,194	557,041	253,024	522,457
Other Revenue	2,642,194	1,515,830	994,563	909,388	1,735,022
Transfers & Advances	346,442	4,304,429	629,937	85,597	275,000
Total Revenues	\$53,137,089	\$44,558,795	\$33,106,900	\$32,024,165	\$27,217,543
EXPENDITURES					
Police	\$7,768,603	\$7,092,956	6,374,625	\$5,514,829	\$5,042,959
Community Development	5,163,093	4,610,195	3,763,598	2,724,727	3,054,819
Public Service	5,393,271	5,712,081	4,710,396	4,311,491	3,729,020
City Council	416,438	384,787	278,532	666,071	862,254
City Manager, Mayor's Court, IT	5,042,985	4,049,787	3,570,908	2,425,195	2,327,447
City Attorney & Legal Services	201,867	210,524	166,872	215,658	275,762
Finance	2,297,799	1,850,046	1,480,722	1,387,894	1,250,923
General Administration	1,215,749	920,989	848,477	682,802	586,683
Land & Building Maintenance	2,710,719	1,838,911	1,766,899	1,293,406	1,471,538
Capital	—	—	—	—	20,581
Debt Service	434,967	433,365	2,051,926	674,091	646,003
Transfers & Advances for Other Purposes	8,971,816	10,206,598	3,594,881	13,397,586	2,222,182
Total Expenditures	\$39,617,308	\$37,310,240	\$28,607,836	\$33,293,750	\$21,490,171
<i>Excess (def) of revenues over expenditures</i>	13,519,781	7,248,555	4,499,064	(1,269,585)	5,727,372
Fund balance at the beginning of year	\$38,722,290	\$30,896,959	\$25,396,201	\$26,131,806	\$19,777,649
Lapsed encumbrances	1,183,015	576,775	1,001,694	533,980	626,785
Fund balance at end of year	\$53,425,086	\$38,722,290	\$30,896,959	\$25,396,201	\$26,131,806

Visual Storytelling Techniques

The City of New Albany has once again been recognized for financial excellence! For the 20th year in a row, the [Government Finance Officers Association \(GFOA\)](#) has awarded the City the Certificate of Achievement in Financial Reporting for our 2023 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report. This prestigious award is the highest form of recognition in governmental accounting and financial reporting.

Why does this matter? Our commitment to transparency and strong financial management plays a key role in maintaining New Albany's "Aaa" rating from Moody's and "AAA" rating from Standard & Poor's—the highest possible ratings. These ratings have helped New Albany realize significant savings on interest costs related to debt issuances over time, keeping project costs lower and freeing up funds for other priorities.

Congratulations to our finance department for spearheading this outstanding achievement! [#NewAlbanyOhio](#)

[Bethany Staats, CPA](#) | [Morgan Joeright](#) | [Ethan Charles Barnhardt, MPA](#) | [Jeremy Gray](#) | [Cindy Powell](#)



with Government Finance Officers Associa...

50

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New Albany, Ohio

6,517 followers

4mo ·

The City of New Albany has been honored with the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) for the 6th consecutive year—a national recognition of excellence in public sector budgeting.

This distinguished award underscores the City's unwavering commitment to transparency, accountability, and excellence in financial planning. Learn more about the City's efforts and the award here: <https://bit.ly/4iOQIHS>

[#NewAlbanyOhio](#)

Pictured: City of New Albany Finance Department members, (Back row left to right) Mike Khoury, [Ethan Charles Barnhardt, MPA](#), [Jeremy Gray](#), Candace Cook (Front row left to right) [Cindy Powell](#), [Bethany Staats, CPA](#), [Morgan Joeright](#), Megan Thomas



60

2 comments · 2 reposts



Visual Storytelling Techniques

- Video Examples - Internal
 - All About the Benjamins
 - Where do we keep the money?



Tips for Creating Content

- **Keep it simple.**
 - The small things you do in your department are often interesting to the public and other teams in your community!
 - **Action item:** Take a photo with your team at this conference and provide a brief write-up about what you learned for your comms team to post.
- **Consider your audience**
 - *LinkedIn*: Other business professionals
 - *Meta, TikTok, Twitter/X, etc.*: Residents.
 - *Intranet, employee newsletters, staff meetings*: Peers
- It's not overly complicated - it just takes a little time and some confidence.



Key Takeaways

- When sharing information, **think like your audience** and organize the information to match the way they think.
- **Work with your communications team early**, allowing time for questions, planning, and content review.
- **Transparency is the foundation** for community engagement. Meet your target audience where they are (social media, website, mailers, e-news).
- **Keep it simple:** Snap a few photos of your team hard at work, celebrate accomplishments, and humanize your department.

Questions?