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Beyond Data + Decisions:
Driving Budget Engagement in Colerain Township, OH

Speakers

Jeff Weckbach
Assistant Administrator
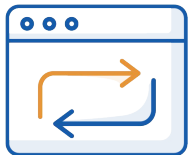Colerain Township, OH

Mark Welch
Solutions Architect
OpenGov

Are you seeing increased demand from your community for greater detail around the budget/finances?

❏ Yes

❏ No

❏ I don't know

Key learnings from Colerain Township, OH

Better Budgeting

How a quest for greater transparency led to a more efficient and strategic budget process

Storytelling with Data

What does it mean to transform your government to focus on transparency and providing context

Online Budget Book

How an interactive online budget book can improve stakeholder and community understanding and engagement
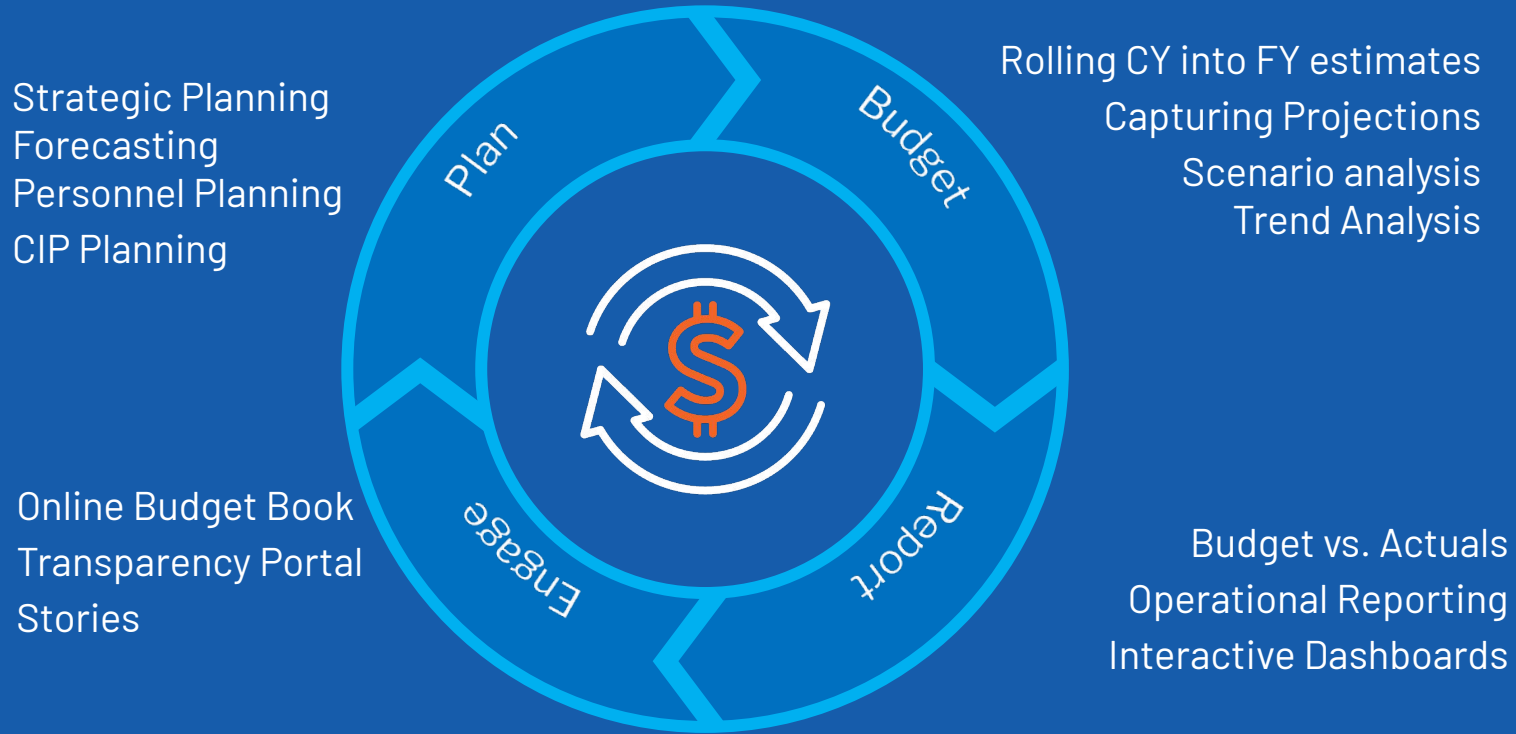
More Meaningful Reports

a pulse check on how you're doing shared quarterly with stakeholders and public provides clarity and builds greater alignment

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Reaching a transparency pivot point

How an accusation of fraud drove a series of investments in improving data and analytics, strategic budgeting, and transparency and communications.

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# Better Budgeting: What does an ideal cycle look like?

Plan
Strategic Planning
Forecasting
Personnel Planning
CIP Planning

Budget
Rolling CY into FY estimates
Capturing Projections
Scenario analysis
Trend Analysis

Engage
Online Budget Book
Transparency Portal
Stories

Report
Budget vs. Actuals
Operational Reporting
Interactive Dashboards

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What do you see as the biggest challenge to adopting an interactive budget? (Check all that apply)

- ❏ Administrator buy in

- ❏ Perceived high level of effort

- ❏ We do not have a solution for easy, code-free web publishing

- ❏ Data challenges that needed to be solved for first

- ❏ That we still need to publish a paper copy

- ❏ Other _____

Better Budgeting: What's so hard about being strategic?
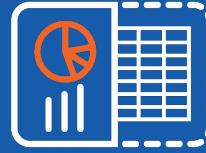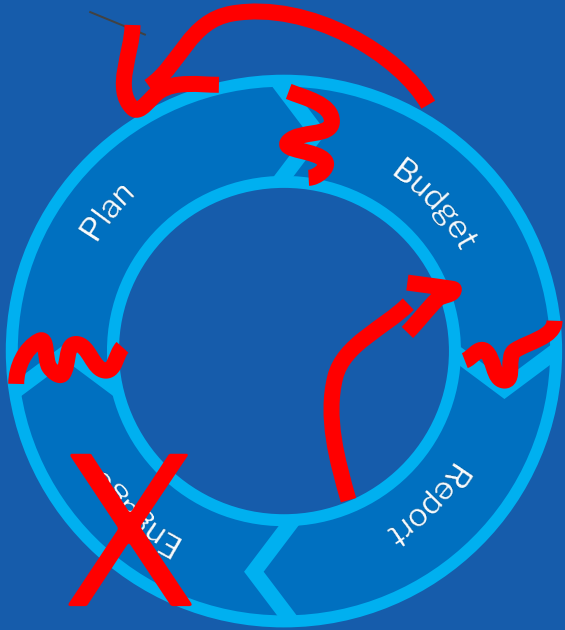
No Systems

Top-Down decision making

Misunderstanding of what was driving numbers

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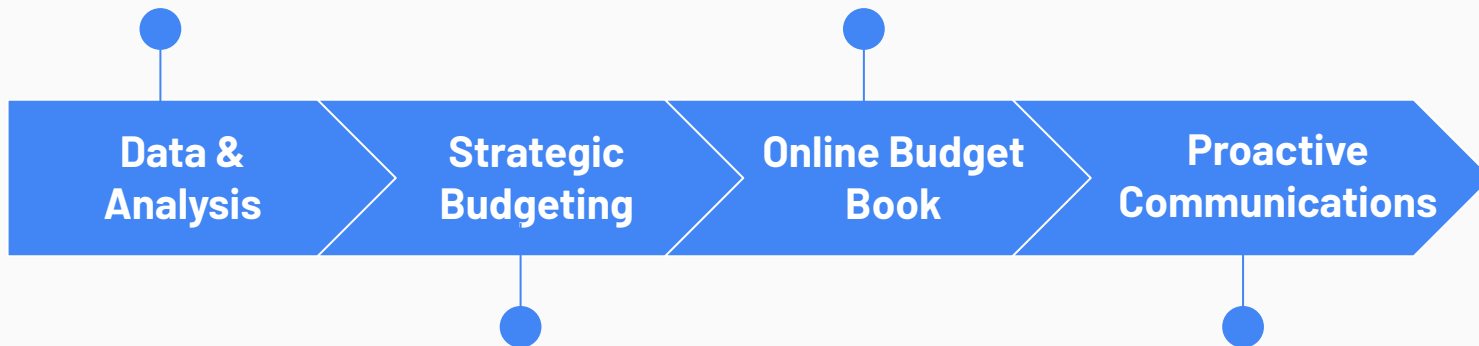# Storytelling with Data: Finding Ways to Communicate Effectively

Past

Data → Analysis → Budget → Communications

Public facing transparency portal and Stories

Online Budget Book (under development)

Current

Data & Analysis → Strategic Budgeting → Online Budget Book → Proactive Communications

Collaborative Budgeting and Reporting/Dashboards

Continuously improving communications with Stories

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Storytelling with Data: How to change up the narrative

In local government, there is a constant need to tell your community what you do and what government is. Colerain focuses on data, dashboards, and storytelling.
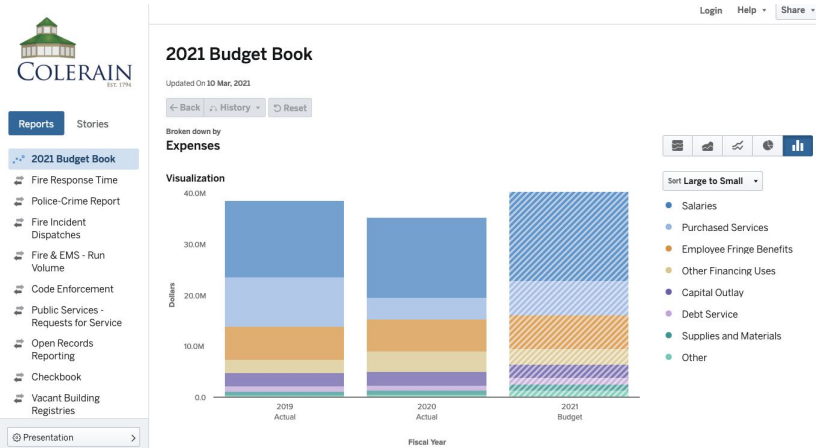
Online Budget Book: Building a better budget online

Building an online budget book makes building an interactive and engaging book easier since it enables connections between data and narrative details.

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More Meaningful Reports

A report for the Board and public to provide a pulse check on how we're doing with year-to-date cash balance compared to target and other details around capital planning, spend, and debt investments.

Colerain Township - Financial Data

Live tracking of the Township's finances compared to key financial policies
For more information on the Township budget and an explanation of key revenues, expenses, policies, and other items, please visit the Township Budget Book.

All Funds - Cash Position

2021 - Cash Position - All Funds

$6,225,489.50
Revenues Less Expenses in 2021

This report shows the net cash position for the current fiscal year, meaning this report shows a summary of revenue received compared against dollars spent.

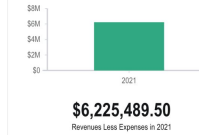Typically the Township draws down cash reserves in the first quarter of the year, as the Township is primarily funded through property taxes. The first half payment of property taxes are typically posted in April or May of the current year.

All Funds - Revenue to Budget

2021 - All Funds - Revenue to Budget
Data Updated 4 weeks ago | Prorated Budget

60.31%
In Revenues of $33,857,000.77 Budgeted (Prorated) through **May 2021**
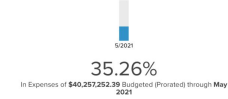
The above chart shows year to date revenue as a percentage of our anticipated revenue budget for the entire Township. The goal is to exceed 1/12th or 8% of our budget per month.

All Funds - Expense to Budget

2021 - All Funds - Expense to Budget
Data Updated 4 weeks ago | Prorated Budget

35.26%
In Expenses of $40,257,252.39 Budgeted (Prorated) through **May 2021**

The above chart shows year to date expenses as a percentage of our approved expense budget for the entire Township. The goal is to be below 1/12th or 8% of our budget per month.

General Fund - Cash Position

2021 - Cash Position - General Fund

-$442,674.48
Revenues Less Expenses in 2021

This report shows the net cash position for the current fiscal year for only the General Fund. The General Fund is the most flexible of Township Funds, as the cash in this fund is unrestricted.

General Fund - Revenue to Budget

2021 - General Fund - Revenue to Budget
Data Updated 4 weeks ago | Prorated Budget

41.84%
In Revenues of $6,545,607.17 Budgeted (Prorated) through **May 2021**

This chart tracks the revenue received by the General Fund, as a percentage of the total budget. Of note, the Township received a dividend from the Ohio Bureau of Worker's Compensation. This unanticipated, one-time revenue has revenues currently outpacing budget.

General Fund - Expense to Budget

2021 - General Fund - Expense to Budget
Data Updated 4 weeks ago | Prorated Budget

45.53%
In Expenses of $6,987,221.80 Budgeted (Prorated) through **May 2021**
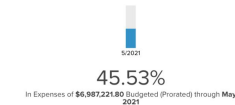
This chart tracks the total expenses of the General Fund, as a percentage of the total General Fund budget. Variances of note will be updated on a quarterly basis.

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Better Public Engagement

A series of web pages containing information on the upcoming levy for the Colerain Township Fire & EMS Department to provide the public with information to make an informed decision.

2020 Fire & EMS Levy Information

This document contains important information regarding the upcoming levy for the Colerain Township Fire & Emergency Medical Services Department.

This series of web pages contains information on the upcoming levy for the Colerain Township Fire & EMS Department. Each image below will link you to additional detail and provide you with information to make an informed decision. Please contact Colerain Township with any questions or additional information that you might need.

Please let the Trustees know your thoughts:
- o   Raj Rajagopal - rrajagopal@colerain.org; 513-923-5008
- o   Dan Unger – dunger@colerain.org; 513-404-3057; 513-923-5004
- o   Matt Wahlert – mwahlert@colerain.org; 513-353-8852; 513-923-5002

Please let the Administration and Fire & EMS Department know your thoughts:
- o   Geoff Milz – gmilz@colerain.org; 513-923-5000
- o   Allen Walls – awalls@colerain.org; 513-245-5732

Financial and Budget Information

This section contains:
- The Five-Year Forecast
- Current Expense Levels
  - At the line item level
- Detail on how the Department has extended the recent 5 Year Levy to last over 10 years
- Revenue options
- The most recent Union Contract

Needs Assessment

This section contains information on various long term, big picture needs for the Department:
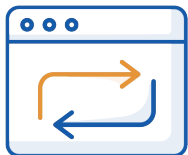- Facility Needs
- Equipment/Vehicle Needs
- Personnel Needs

Impacts

This section provides detail on:
- Our financial analysis tool
- Reduced service options, if failed
- Impact for a homeowner

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Key results for Colerain Township, OH

Strategic Budgeting
60% productivity gains with Budgeting and Planning

Storytelling with Data
Top transparency score from the Ohio State Auditor; many new ways for citizens to engage

Online Budget Book
Delivering an interactive online budget book and monthly financial reports efficiently and effectively

More Meaningful Reports
Efficient and effective quarterly reports published for stakeholders and the public to provide pulse check

How is your government enabling department heads and managers to monitor budget-variances?

❏ Finance creates and delivers monthly reports to responsible individuals

❏ Finance creates and delivers mid-year or annual reports to responsible individuals

❏ Our leaders access their results in real-time OpenGov reports as needed

❏ I'm not sure that we have a good regular process in place

Online Budget Book Basics

New GFOA Distinguished Budget Criteria	Best Practices for Budget Teams
Performance measures and strategic planning are now mandatory criteria.	Link the budget to strategic goals and initiatives and track those explicitly. See how Ukiah, CA does this and watch a video on Ukiah's award-winning budget process.
Table of Contents links are now explicit criteria	Go beyond bookmarking with links directly to interactive charts and graphs and descriptions that provide context and color. See how Roswell, GA and Sandpoint, ID have done this.
An overview should be presented within understandability and usability criteria	Use other forms of communication including videos, social media, etc. to call attention to key elements. See East Providence, RI's "Budget in Brief"
Process narratives are required in many criteria (strategic goals, capital projects, long-range forecasts, etc.) and are a general focus for the award	Make sure your charts and supporting narratives are simple, clear, and well annotated. Read Ashland, OR's succinct descriptions
ADA compliance is a key part of understandability and usability	Meet ADA standards automatically by adopting a platform that ensures your data is shown in ways that it can be consumed. See how Colma, CA ensures compliance.

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Are you considering creating an interactive budget book in the next year?

- ❏   We are already creating an interactive budget book as part of our process
- ❏   We are planning to create an interactive budget book in the next year
- ❏   We are considering creating an interactive budget book in the next year, but have not yet come to a decision
- ❏   We are not considering creating an interactive budget book in the next year

Better CIP Communications

By creating a Story for a Capital Improvement Plan, cities and counties can showcase investments in the community as well as share updated financial information. We also see this being used to communicate long-term planning.

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What financial and non-financial metrics are you interested in showcasing for stakeholders or the public? (Check all that apply)

- ❏ Quarterly financial reports
- ❏ Budget in brief
- ❏ Capital improvement planning and projects
- ❏ Long-term planning
- ❏ Tax levy details
- ❏ Police, resource recovery or other department-level spending
- ❏ Other _____

1. **Necessity is the mother of innovation**: Use key political moments to drive a modernization movement in your government.

2. **With great data comes great obligation**: With the right data (and analysis) leaders can and must push for departments to be more strategic.

3. **Gain Trust & Earn Distinction**: Interactive budgets enable government leaders to link data and add context (and win the GFOA Distinguished Budget Award).

4. **Measure & Track What Matters**: Evaluate performance continuously across the year to identify gaps and stay focused on higher-order strategic goals.

Questions?