



JOSH MANDEL

STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

Ashtabula Star Beacon
By Justin Dennis
May 4, 2016

GENEVA & Trumbull Township has joined Andover Village and Hartsgrove Township in making their finances viewable online through the state Treasurer's transparency tool OhioCheckbook.com.

"Our fiscal officer and the trustees just think that transparency in local and state government is important," said Ron Tamburrino, trustee board chairman.

Fiscal Officer Marie Rohrbaugh has already submitted 2015's finances, viewable online now at TrumbullTownshipAshtabula.OhioCheckbook.com, and will later decide whether to upload data annually or quarterly, as Treasurer Josh Mandel recommends.

"I believe the people of Ashtabula County have a right to know how their tax money is being spent, and I applaud local leaders here for partnering with my office to post the finances on OhioCheckbook.com," Mandel stated in a release. "By posting local government spending online, we are empowering taxpayers across Ohio to hold public officials accountable."

The site, developed with the help of California-based web developer OpenGov, details all of the state's fiscal data & more than \$517 billion across 142 million transactions in the last eight years. Each participating city, township, school district or other entity gets its own dedicated site. OhioCheckbook.com has been searched more than 523,000 times since launch, according to the treasurer's office.

Each entity's page features interactive charts and graphs that allow users to breakdown spending categories and see individual transactions and the vendors paid. Visitors can also search transactions by keyword, department, category or vendor. They can also compare spending data year-to-year or with other agencies. Checkbook data are also shareable on social media.

In April, the U.S. Public Interest Research Group awarded Ohio the highest possible national ranking in government transparency & a perfect 100 & for the second year in a row, in large part because of the new service. State Auditor Dave Yost called OhioCheckbook.com the "most important transparency initiative since the public records act."

Fiscal officers get 12 hours of state-sponsored training on the new tool, Tamburrino said.

"I think when other communities see how easy it is to use and that it doesn't cost them anything to do it, then they'll join, hopefully," he said.

By the numbers



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Trumbull Township's main spending programs and their percentage of total expenses in 2015, per OhioCheckbook.com:

Other financing uses — including a \$125,000 settlement and legal fees relating to ongoing litigation with Larry Rickard, operator of the Great Lakes Medieval Faire: \$128,652 (85 percent)

Highways: \$15,145 (10 percent)

Administrative: \$4,251 (3 percent)

Zoning: \$1,651 (1 percent)

Town halls, memorial buildings and grounds: \$1,476 (1 percent)

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