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Pani Martin
Township Treasurer

PRIMARY OBJECTIVE:

Get timely fiscal data into the hands of residents and internal stakeholders so everyone can make better informed decisions

CHALLENGE:

In 2015, freshly minted Township Treasurer Pani Martin inherited a budget she couldn’t balance. Back in the mid-1990s, the Township had eliminated the real estate millage. Unfortunately, what seemed like a fiscally prudent decision at the time, proved problematic 20 years later when East Fallowfield could no longer make ends meet by relying primarily on earned income tax for revenue.

Martin proceeded to gather the fiscal facts necessary to make her case (to both the board and the community) for reinstating what would certainly be an unpopular millage. She manually compiled comparative data from neighboring communities and tried to present the facts in a way that made sense to everyone. It was a tedious and time-consuming process, and a very tough sell.

In the end, Martin managed to successfully convince all key stakeholders that the numbers just didn’t add up and something would have to give. The Township implemented a small real estate millage to make ends meet in the short term and has since upped the tax and diversified their revenue sources to ensure sustainable funding for essential community services well into the future.



SOLUTION:

In 2017, the Township established a Financial Transparency Center, powered by ClearGov. The public-facing, infographic-based site presents East Fallowfield’s financials in an interactive format that anyone can understand. Martin says she wishes she had ClearGov back in 2015, “It would have helped us tremendously to be able to automate the benchmarking process and present our findings to the Board of Supervisors and the community with more compelling and meaningful visuals.”

Today, the Township is doing that and much more with their ClearGov subscription. Martin uses the benchmarking tool to identify peer communities that resemble her own, so she can compare apples to apples. And, shortly after launching the Transparency Center, she began using ClearGov’s budgeting solution to create her annual budget and engage in more accurate long-term planning.

Martin says, “With ClearGov’s built-in forecasting tool, we can better assess how budget decisions made today will impact both revenues and expenditures for our community in the future and plan accordingly. Best of all, once we complete either a proposed or a final annual budget, we can automatically post that information directly to our Transparency Center for all of our residents to see.”

“Before we used ClearGov, residents who wanted to learn more about where their tax dollars actually go had to attend a public meeting. Now, residents who want to be more involved, but might not be able to attend a meeting, can view this information on the township’s ClearGov Transparency Center site in real time. The ClearGov tool has proven itself to be a powerful tool to drive community awareness and civic engagement.”



Pani Martin
Township Treasurer

CLEARGOV PROFILE

EAST FALLOWFIELD WEBSITE



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ClearGov Profile

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East Fallowfield Website

Martin says, “Being proactively transparent sends citizens the right message. We want to be an open book and ClearGov helps us communicate our finances right down to the check level.”