



JOSH MANDEL

STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

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By Kelly Cantwell
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The Ohio Treasurer's Office announced on June 10 that the city of Milford and the village of Felicity have joined OhioCheckbook.com.

The "online checkbook," which was launched in 2014, is a user-friendly database that allows the public to see how tax money is being spent. Information is searchable by category, vendor and agency.

Users can view charts, graphs and individual checks, compare expenses between multiple municipalities and export data.

Milford is the first city and Felicity is the third village in Clermont County to join OhioCheckbook.com, said Frank Kohstall, deputy director of public affairs for the treasurer's office.

The largest challenge with bringing any entity to OhioCheckbook.com is transferring the data. It was easy to get Milford online, however, because the city uses Software Solutions, which works with enough government entities that the company decided to partner with the Ohio Treasurer's Office to create a way to easily transfer data, Kohstall said.

Felicity uses Uniform Accounting Network, so it took minutes to transfer the village's data to OhioCheckbook.com, fiscal officer Heather McIntyre said.

During the presentation, Kohstall highlighted the ease of using the website, which he said is adding new features all the time. He also showed how items can be showed in great detail, but also with less detail so a user can get an overall sense of spending.

"Folks are using this in council meetings, trustee meetings, school board settings," Kohstall said.

He added, "It's 24-7 access."

The city wanted to join OhioCheckbook because they wanted to be transparent.

"This is essentially the taxpayers' money so they should have a right to see where their money is being written to and how it's been used at the click of a button," Howland said.

She appreciates the state's efforts with OhioCheckbook.com and likes that the website is so user friendly.

"It's kind of exciting, it's kind of neat. I like all the graphs," Howland said.



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Daniel Burke, director of finance for Milford, has been working with the state for a few months to transfer all the data. The city has put information, such as annual and monthly financial reports, on the website for years but it was more in aggregate data and a viewer couldn't see the detail that they can on OhioCheckbook.com.

"For the city it's a step forward in the sense that now you'll be able to see the detail," Burke said.

If OhioCheckbook.com did not exist, putting data online in that format would have been difficult and expensive, Burke said.

Felicity's council members voted to join to make the village more transparent, McIntyre said.

"From my perspective it's always important for the taxpayers to know where their money is being spent," McIntyre said.

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