



Farmersville, Texas Streamlines Budgeting and Performance with OpenGov

TYPE
City

POPULATION
3,400

ANNUAL BUDGET
\$12M

Challenge

Farmersville struggled with the amount of time it took to develop their budget and the inability to easily fix errors and pull reports for constituents.

Solution

OpenGov Budgeting and Performance

Results

- ✓ Time savings of at least 50% for budget development
- ✓ Reduced resources used to create the budget book, which is now online and not in print
- ✓ Ability to easily fix mistakes and change data on the fly
- ✓ Reports and data **automatically** update daily



About Farmersville, TX

Farmersville is expecting rapid growth in terms of both new residents and businesses planting their roots in the city. Located at the intersection between two major state highways, Farmersville is the planned location for a new Collin College campus, which will create opportunity for the residents and businesses as the city continues to build a name for itself. Situated on the edge of the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex, Farmersville's close proximity to the highways is a benefit, bringing more development to the community through new residents and businesses.

As this wave of new opportunity rises, "we're getting the word out that this is a great place to live and work," explained City Manager, Ben White. He added that this new spurt of growth has caused them to want to get business and financial metrics online so people can understand trends and what's happening in the community.

Why OpenGov?

Daphne Hamlin, the City's Financial Director, knew that something had to change when Farmersville lost the State of Texas financial transparency award in 2018. She began to look at other governments to see how they were bringing transparency to the forefront of their budget development. Hamlin found that the nearby City of McKinney's online budget, powered by OpenGov, was easily accessible and demonstrated that they really knew what they were doing.

The Struggle Is Real

White highlighted a few of the major pain points that accompanied their old budget process. Three times a year, he would meet with Hamlin to review long spreadsheets and try to interpret the data, only to find errors that would have to be painstakingly corrected before the next review. Their process of using Excel spreadsheets made it very difficult to identify mistakes and make updates in the moment.

Not only did this system cause Hamlin to spend a frustratingly long amount of time making sure the budget draft was correct, it also made it very difficult to report on financials for the City Council in their monthly meeting. She had to additionally make sure she had enough physical copies of the financials so that everyone could review at once.

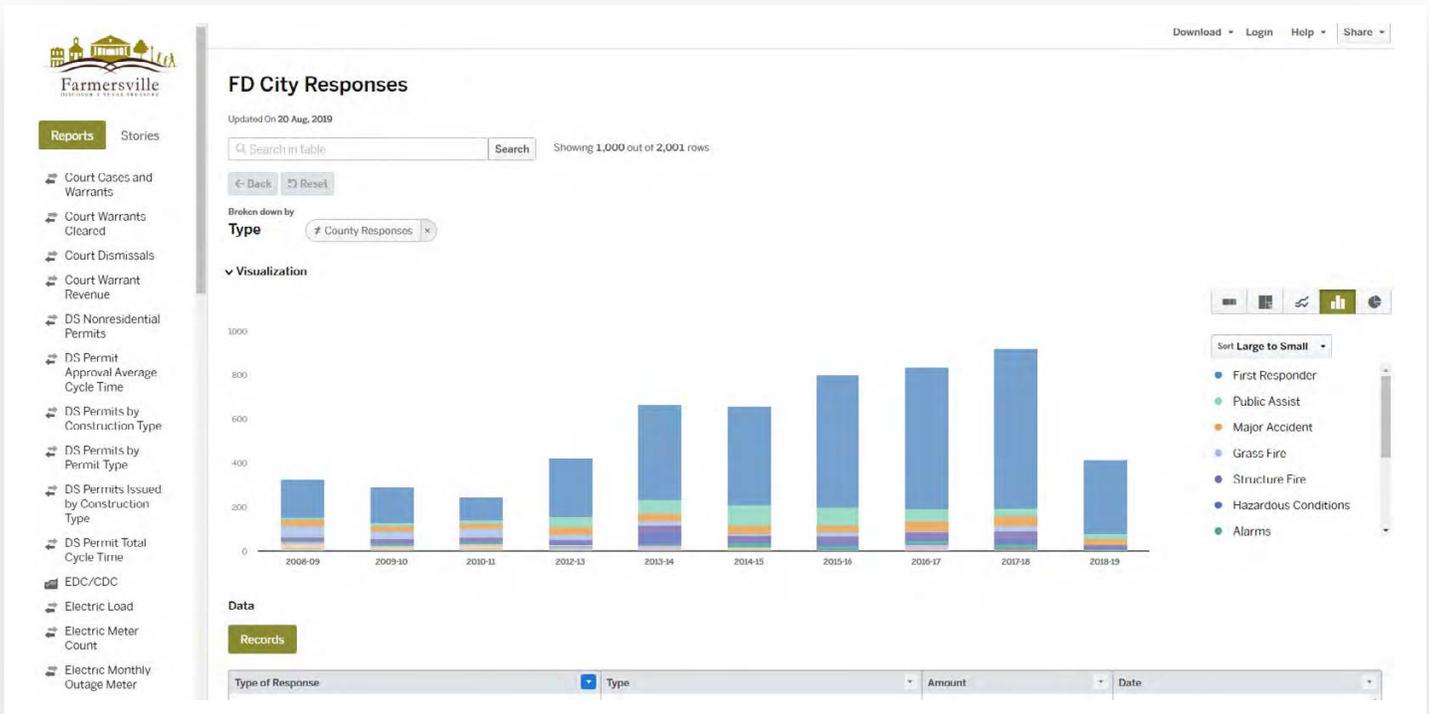
There Has to Be Another Way

After implementing OpenGov Budgeting, the City witnessed massive growth in efficiency and transparency. Much of Hamlin's time that was previously spent on developing, reviewing, and correcting the budget was freed up for other pressing projects that required her focus.

White, who has a Six Sigma certification and is a self-proclaimed lover of data, commented on Farmersville's unique dual implementation, which combined non-financial and financial data. This means that not only is budget information at his fingertips, valuable police data and other non-financial information is as well, allowing them to make informed decisions based off of actionable insights. White added that his staff loves using the non-financial data with OpenGov. "We don't do things based on emotion, we do things based on data," he clarified. This data-driven mindset for reaching impactful outcomes has streamlined their process and widely increased efficiency.

"I've been doing the budget here for 20 years, and this year has been the easiest budget yet. I've had no issues."

DAPHNE HAMLIN
Financial Director, City of Farmersville, Texas

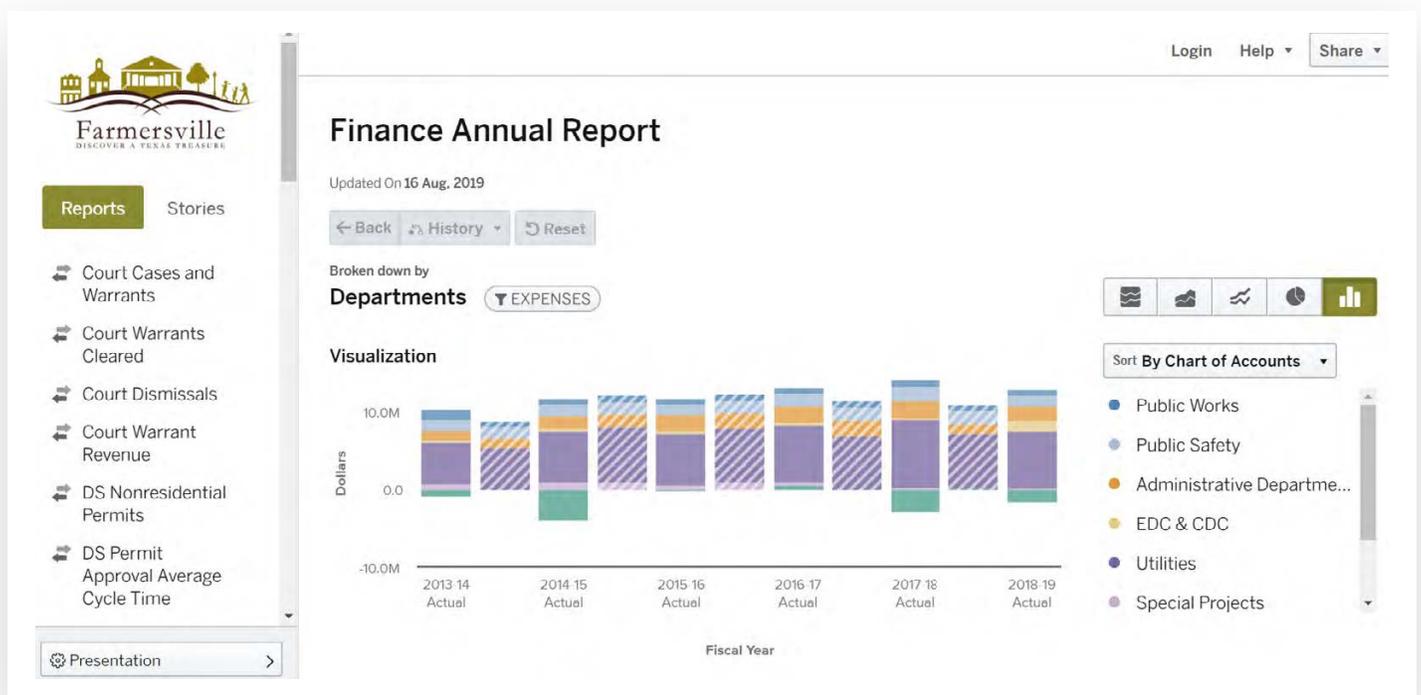


Visualization of the City's Fire Department Response Data

As the above image suggests, the city's management personnel are able to have a full understanding of the health and progress of various operations within the city, even including such granular details as the types of incidents the fire department has responded to. Other non-financial data the city is able to track includes court cases and warrants, electric meter count (residential, commercial, public, etc.), and library usage. Through this extensive use of the platform, the city is able to maximize the value of their partnership with OpenGov and leverage critical non-financial data as a method of operating their government.

Another key benefit Farmersville experienced is how easily they can provide visibility to the city council. The monthly financial report can be easily accessed online, eliminating the need for hard copies of reports and data visualizations. Each month, instead of worrying about the right number of copies, they simply add a note in the council agenda, telling the members to go online and review the budget there.





Farmersville's Online Reports

Hamlin appreciates OpenGov because it illustrates the exact condition of the city's financials. "I didn't realize how inconsistent our financial information was," Hamlin revealed. "[OpenGov] forced me to clean up. Now its the best thing that's ever happened to us. Any time anyone wants to look at [financials], they can."

"50% time savings have freed my staff up from drudgery, enabling them to focus on things to help move this city forward!"

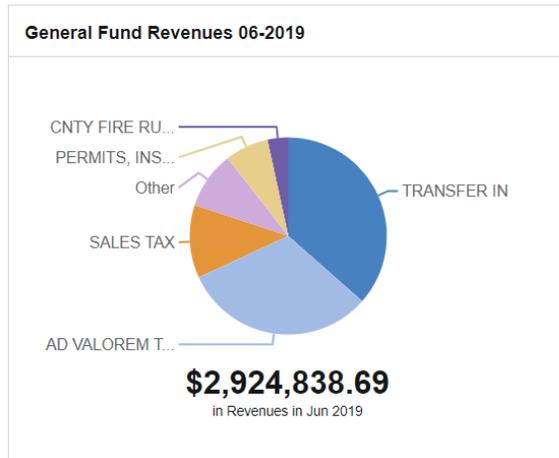
BEN WHITE
City Manager, City of Farmersville, Texas



Budget Reporting for June 2019

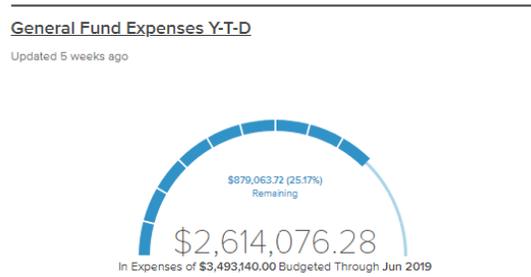
The major operating funds that are a part of the annual operating budget for the City of Farmersville are the General Fund, the enterprises funds which represent the Water&Wastewater Fund, Refuse Fund, and Electric Fund. Interest and Sinking Fund represents tax collected for debt. Below information represents on how these funds are performing. As a benchmark for comparison, we'll bear in mind that as of the end of June 9/12 months or 75% of the fiscal year has passed. For revenues and expenditures occurring evenly throughout the year, we expect to have used or collected close the 75% level, and to have 25% remaining budget for the remaining of the year.

General Fund Revenues



In the pie chart above it represents the different types of revenues collected in the General Fund. As of June 2019 City has collected 83.80% of the budgeted amount. To view budget please click above chart for more information

General Fund Expenses



In the above graph it represents expenses in the General Fund. As of June 2019 City has expended 75.33% of budgeted amount. To view budget please click above chart for more information

Example of Farmersville using OpenGov Stories

Fostering a Culture of Change

White and Hamlin shared how they have found incredible success with OpenGov and offered the following advice to budget directors and government financial leaders who may be new to their journey with OpenGov: "If you're interested in efficiency and transparency, it's all there," they explained. "You have to have a culture of change."

The City of Farmersville certainly embodies this culture of change, not only from a perspective of physical growth with new residents and businesses but also with regard to establishing itself as a progressive and forward-thinking government. As White and Hamlin demonstrated, their city is one that understands the necessity of embracing new ways to drive accountability and effectiveness.

