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Perris Unveils New Financial Transparency Website

The City of Perris has unveiled a new digital platform that provides residents greater access to its budget, spending and municipal finances, allowing the public to monitor municipal spending closer than ever.

The OpenGov platform, launched Nov. 13, resulted from a City Council initiative designed to increase transparency by allowing access to current and previous Perris budgets, monthly check dispersals, the capital improvement program and other financial reports.

Users can view historical revenue and expenditure trends, explore multiple views of financial data for all departments and discover how taxpayer money is collected and utilized while transforming complex financial data into an interactive digital format.

The platform can be accessed by visiting www.cityofperris.org and clicking on the “City Financials” icon on the home page.

Perris Mayor Michael Vargas said the OpenGov initiative is “all about trust and being open with our constituents.”

“People have got to know how taxpayer money is being spent,” Vargas said. “We all need to be held accountable.”

Vargas noted that the City has for years made public its annual budget and has received awards from the prestigious Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada. But the OpenGov platform represents “an extension of what we have previously been doing.” “It gives our residents a sense of being part of the process,” he said. “It’s the peoples’ money. We have to spend it wisely and they have a right to see how we spend it.”

Mayor Pro-Tem David Starr Rabb said the City’s commitment to increased transparency makes for a more educated, informed and enlightened populace.

“It’s important to keep our residents cognizant and knowledgeable about the City’s spending decisions,” he said. “It helps keep us more prudent in our spending choices.”

The OpenGov initiative grew originated in the City’s Ways and Means Subcommittee. City Councilwoman Tonya Burke, a member of that committee, said that the new platform allows residents to view and analyze spending with a click of their computer or mobile device.

“It’s a win-win situation all the way around,” Burke said.

Burke noted that the City continues expanding its outreach through English and Spanish facebook pages, websites, twitter and Instagram feeds and bi-lingual videos. OpenGov continues the transparency, she said. The City of Perris acted on its own initiative to create the platform, which Burke said “allows residents to see first-hand where the City money is spent.”

“It’s easy to access and the information is easy to digest,” she said. “It’s an easy way to access the City’s budget, fiscal policy and see first-hand where the City’s money is spent.”

City Councilman Malcolm Corona said the new initiative “brings more transparency to our Perris residents.”

“We continue to be proactive in our efforts to be transparent and in how we spend the taxpayers’ money,” he said.

City Councilwoman Rita Rogers, another member of the Ways and Means Subcommittee, said it is the hope of elected representatives to create a more knowledgeable and engaged constituency.

“It’s very important for residents whose tax dollars support the City see how those dollars are spent,” she said. “This technology allows residents to track each department’s budget and see where each dollar goes. It provides a deeper understanding of how our City functions financially.”

The link to the OpenGov platform is found at www.cityofperris.org/city-hall/ft-home.html

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