



# Town of LYNNFIELD

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## BOARD OF SELECTMEN

November 28, 2017

Mr. Sean R. Cronin  
Senior Deputy Commissioner of Local Services  
Division of Local Services  
PO Box 9569  
Boston, Massachusetts, 02114

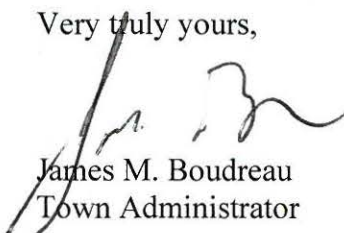
Dear Mr. Cronin:

This letter is to inform you that the Town of Lynnfield (the "Town") has completed the Transparency Best Practice funded through the Commonwealth's Community Compact.

The Town installed "Open Checkbook" a MUNIS Citizen Transparency program that takes live financial data from the Town's accounting software and displays it in a meaningful way for the typical end user. This tool allows residents and other users to dive deeply into the Town's finances and actually see where the Town spends the taxpayers' money. Overall the tool allows for the type of data analysis that static data cannot provide. It strengthens the connection between residents and Town Government and gives them a better understanding of where the money goes. The fact that the program uses live data from our accounting system means that visitors to the site are getting up to date information in real time, not waiting for the Town to update the system periodically. The response from the residents to date has been overwhelmingly positive.

The Town would like to thank Governor Baker and Lieutenant Governor Polito for establishing the Community Compact and providing the funding for this and so many other worthwhile projects across the Commonwealth. We would also like to thank you and your staff for your support and help throughout the process. If you need any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Very truly yours,



James M. Boudreau  
Town Administrator



## Lynnfield, MA – Transparency Best Practice

Office of Municipal & School Technology

EOTSS | Executive Office of Technology Services & Security



Image: Old Meeting House<sup>1</sup>

## Executive Summary

The Town of Lynnfield adopted the Transparency best practice as part of a Community Compact agreement signed with the Baker-Polito Administration in December of 2016. The Town leveraged Community Compact grant funds to work with Tyler Technologies and launch a new version of Tyler's Citizen Transparency, a financial transparency tool that integrates directly with the Town's MUNIS financial management system. This tool will give users a way to analyze the Town's financial data in a more interactive way compared to static PDF charts and graphs.

### COMMUNITY PROFILE

The Town of Lynnfield is located in Essex county just east of Reading, Massachusetts. During the 2010 US census, Lynnfield's population was 11,596 and the median household income \$118,828. Today, the Town is well known for its civically engaged community and friendly citizens. It is primarily a residential community with business districts located along the area's two major highways. Town leadership believes in providing accessible, quality information to its citizens. This initiative is a clear demonstration of their attentiveness to constituents' interests and goals.

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<sup>1</sup>Darlene Foley. Massachusetts Office of Tourism and Travel. "Old Meeting House -1714-Lynnfield." *Flickr.com*. Creative Commons License. Accessed November 11, 2017. <http://bit.ly/2B1TkIB>



# Project Process

## THE CHALLENGE

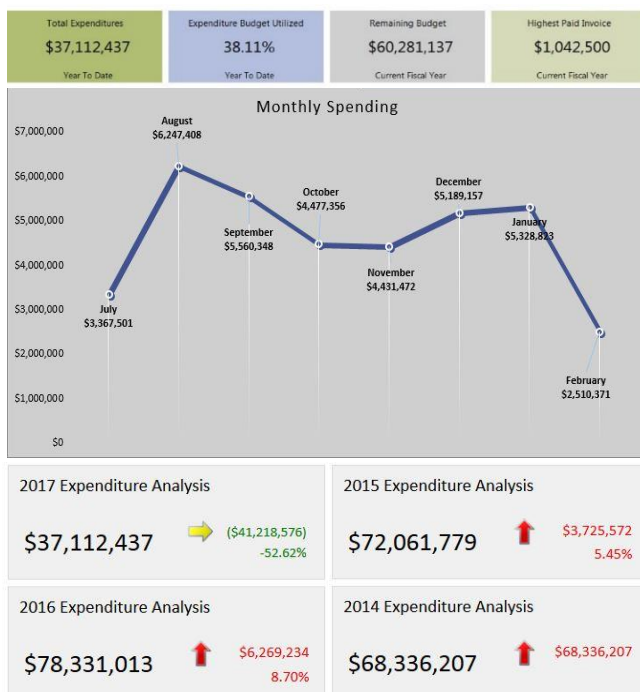
As cities and towns work to stretch every tax dollar further, residents are increasingly expecting their local government to be transparent about where these funds are being spent. Telling the complete story of municipal finance can be challenging and many Towns are looking at ways to become more transparent and provide more data to their residents in a responsible way.

## THE SOLUTION

Lynnfield leveraged grant funding to work with Tyler Technologies and become the first Massachusetts community to leverage the new version of Tyler Citizen Transparency, a financial transparency solution which integrates directly with the Town's finance system. This allows for automated reporting of the Town's financial data.

## THE RESULTS

The Citizen Transparency tool allows visitors to take a deep dive into municipal finances. Graphs and charts are available alongside the hard numbers, making the data more meaningful to the typical public user. In the Expenditures category, for example, users can see not only how much money the Town has spent year to date, but also what percentage of the overall budget has been spent, how much is left in the budget, and what the highest paid invoice has been. Users can also view trends in the data by month, year and even across fiscal years. They can see transaction totals per month combined with a trend line that indicates spending throughout the year.



For example, the data can show that spending peaks in the summer, dips in the fall, rises again in the winter, and dips again in late winter and early spring. Green arrows indicate a trend of less spending; red arrows indicate a trend of increased spending; and yellow arrows indicate that the data has plateaued.

Overall the tool allows for the kind of data analysis that static charts and graphs on a PDF can't provide. It strengthens the connection between residents, visitors, and the Town government; and builds a trusting relationship. To access the Town of Lynnfield's Financial Transparency tool, go to: <http://transparency.tylertech.com/lynnfield/pages/default.aspx?PageView=Shared>.