

# Q & A With The Mayor



Since my swearing in on January 4<sup>th</sup>, I have been asked many questions by friends and neighbors. I thought I would take this opportunity to answer some of the most frequently-asked questions.

## **What exactly is the job of Mayor?**

The primary role of the Mayor is to provide civilian oversight of the administration of the West Chester Police Department. In addition, the Mayor participates in Borough Council deliberations and may break a tie or cast a veto. Of course, the Mayor represents the Borough as its ceremonial head. Each Mayor brings their own special skills, leadership and vision to the job.

## **How do you like your new job as Mayor?**

I love being Mayor of West Chester! What is not to like about being Mayor of one of the "world's most perfect small towns"? I find the job of Mayor to be challenging, diverse and energizing. It is very satisfying to be in a position where I can help bring people together to improve the community.

I am very proud to oversee the administration of the WCPD, the premier municipal law enforcement agency in Chester County, and to do what I can to support the mission of the WCPD: "The mission of the WCPD, a law enforcement agency dedicated to the highest standards of professionalism and integrity, is to protect and serve our diverse communities by forging collaborative relationships. The Mayor is in a unique position to help build those "collaborative relationships".

## **Have you had any surprises as a new Mayor?**

I had done my homework, shadowing Mayor Yoder, talking with former Mayors DeBaptiste and Chambers, and talking extensively with Chief Bohn, so I had a pretty good idea what to expect. I think the most surprising thing to date is the diversity and exceptional skill level of our police officers. I knew our police department had a stellar reputation, but I didn't know that many of our officers have both undergraduate and graduate degrees - some you would expect like criminal justice, but some are also geologists and experts in other fields; some officers do special training for other PD's in the state; some are members of the County SWAT and MIRT; some are volunteer paramedics in addition to their police jobs; some have a remarkable sense of humor. All are highly competent and dedicated. I have found myself thinking on a number of occasions, "I would trust my life to this officer."

# Q & A Cont'd

## **What is a typical day being Mayor?**

There is NO typical day being Mayor! Every day is different: meetings with constituents, businesses, BC members and WCU; ribbon cuttings; lunch with students; ceremonies, speeches and issuing "keys to the city"; parades; weddings; ride-alongs with the WCPD and briefings with the Chief - to name a few activities. I also must balance my responsibilities as Vice President and CFO of a town planning business in the Borough and as member of the Executive Board of a non-profit organization affiliated with the United Nations, focusing on health and environment issues.

## **What is your salary?**

The Mayor, like Borough Council, is paid an annual salary of \$4000. The positions are essentially volunteer.

## **What is your greatest challenge as Mayor?**

The greatest challenge is always how to find the resources to meet our needs in the Borough. There are so many needs and so little revenue sources! The Borough has few legal options for raising taxes (real estate taxes are the only tax over which we have any control.) County and state money are tight right now, as we all know. This leaves the challenge of providing necessary public safety and public works services (trash, recycling, road repairs, etc.). In the words of a wise architect who came before Borough Council a couple of year ago, "the future is partnerships": public/private partnerships, partnerships between municipalities, partnerships between the Borough and the University, and the valuable partnership we have with our many community volunteers. We need to build those collaborative partnerships, sharing resources and costs in order to thrive in the new economy.

## **What's new?**

The WCPD website: Check out the newly launched WCPD website! Many thanks to the Borough's Chief Information Officer, Bill Mann, for building this excellent new site. Click the link: [www.west-chester.com](http://www.west-chester.com) or go to [www.westchesterpolicedepartment.com](http://www.westchesterpolicedepartment.com)

Past Mayor's can now perform weddings! It's a new PA law as of February 2010.

"Borough/University Joint Sustainability Task Group". At our Earth Day celebration, President Weisenstein and I were proud to announce the formation of this historic venture including Borough residents and University representatives, including a student. Stay tuned as they hold their first meeting in June.

If you have a question, a concern or an idea you would like to share, please contact me at [mayor@west-chester.com](mailto:mayor@west-chester.com). I look forward to hearing from you!