

**NEW
FILTERS
MEAN
PFAS FREE
WATER**

**BRIDGING
THE DIGITAL
DIVIDE**

**MILLIONS
INVESTED IN
AFFORDABLE
HOUSING**

THE WILMINGTON CURRENT

**PROGRESS REPORT:
UPDATES
ON MAJOR
PROJECTS**

**APIARY
NOW OPEN
AT HALYBURTON PARK**

W CITY OF
WILMINGTON
NORTH CAROLINA

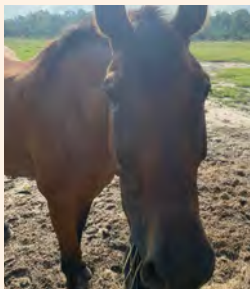
**PUBLIC INFORMATION REPORT
FALL 2022**

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHTS

Finance Officer Saves Colleague's Life

In June, a staff member began to choke. While other staff members called 911, David Blue performed the Heimlich Maneuver. In doing so, he successfully cleared his colleague's airway so he could breathe again. David was honored during a City Council meeting for his quick actions, which helped to save his coworker's life. ■

David Blue receiving an award from Mayor Bill Saffo for his heroic actions.



Wilmington Police Department Mounted Unit on the Mend

In late August, an impaired driver hit one of the WPD Mounted Unit horses, "Officer Elton," in downtown Wilmington. Elton, a Percheron, sustained injuries to his left leg, and thankfully his handler was not injured. Elton is now in the recovery process, taking pain medication and going through hydrotherapy. Help us wish Elton a speedy recovery and keep up with his progress on WPD's social media. ■

Elton, a WPD Mounted Unit Percheron

WILMYWOOD SHINES

The local film industry is going strong with numerous productions getting underway, wrapping up, or premiering. Between January and September of 2022, the City of Wilmington has awarded 181 film permits. ■



Rx restaurant acting as "Earl's All You Can Eat" in the film of the same name currently shooting in Wilmington

STREET OUTREACH TO THE UNHOUSED

City, County Launch Joint Pilot Program to Connect Homeless Population to Support Services and Shelter

The City of Wilmington and New Hanover County have partnered to launch a pilot program to help connect individuals experiencing homelessness with much-needed resources. The outreach teams, comprising of social workers from the county's Health and Human Services Department and officers from the Wilmington Police Department, will partner with local nonprofits and other agencies who provide needed services and connect people with the assistance and support they need. They will also collaborate with Wilmington Downtown Inc.'s Block By Block street outreach coordinator and participate in the Cape Fear Council of Government's Tri-County Homeless Interagency Council and Coordinated Entry process.

The partnership will allow a coordinated approach to addressing those experiencing homelessness with wrap-around support services and case management. Funding for the pilot program is made possible through the American Rescue Plan Act, in accordance with federal and state authorizations. ■

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ALLOCATIONS

The City of Wilmington is putting its allocation of ARPA funding back into the community. Here's how we're spending **\$13.5 million** in economic and community assistance.

- Awarded 84 local businesses grants for a total **\$1.91 million**
- Awarded 38 local non-profits grants totaling **\$700,000**
- Launched a pilot program for job training and placement in the film industry for a total of **\$400,000**
- Supported entrepreneur assistance providing **\$100,000** to Genesis Block
- Ensured our tourism economy is thriving with a **\$750,000** grant to the Wilmington Tourism group
- Collaborated with Northside Food Co-Op and Feast Down East to address food insecurity in identified food deserts with grants totaling **\$200,000**
- Contributed **\$590,000** toward the construction of the MLK Center's community kitchen
- Helped combat substance abuse with a grant of **\$100,000** to Coastal Horizon, who oversees the Quick Response Team
- Preserved naturally-occurring affordable housing through a partnership with Cape Fear Collective, which received a **\$250,000** grant
- Added nearly 300 units of affordable housing in city limits by providing **\$3.5 million** in gap financing to Starway Village
- Partnered with New Hanover County to help connect people experiencing homelessness with needed services for a total of **\$1.6 million**
- Created a job training program to help bridge the digital divide by training and connecting residents to higher paying careers for **\$2.5 million**

NEW TREE WELLS UNVEILED DOWNTOWN

The City of Wilmington upgraded nearly 200 tree wells from metal grates to Flexi-Pave, a highly porous substance made of recycled rubber. It's a safer and more durable option that still allows trees to grow in a healthy way. The upgrades were funded through the Municipal Services District. Scan to watch this video and learn more! ■



BRIGHT LIGHTS, PEACEFUL NIGHTS

Street Lights Installed as Part of Community Safety Initiative

Let the light shine! The City of Wilmington teamed up with New Hanover County's

Port City United and Duke Energy to install four new streetlights in a previously unlit area as part of PCU's "Bright Lights, Peaceful Nights" initiative. Part of PCU's outreach to the community includes making sure all residents know how to address potential safety issues at the neighborhood level, like broken or missing streetlights. ■



CAPITAL PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT



Completed this year

Wrightsville Avenue Sidewalks Gaps were filled between Castle Street and Independence Boulevard to provide a continuous sidewalk on the north side of the road.

Park Avenue Trail The trail now extends from Kerr Avenue to Independence Boulevard, where it connects to the Cross-City Trail.

Pedestrian Crossing at Military Cutoff Road and Town Centre Drive This now connects Mayfaire to the Multi-Use Path across Military Cutoff Road.

HVAC Upgrades in City Hall/Thalian Hall A complete system overhaul improves efficiency and air quality in this heavily used public facility.

DC Fast Charging Stations Two fast electrical vehicle chargers were installed at the Market Street Parking Deck.

Portia Mills Hines Park Improvements The project added new restrooms, lighting, parking, sidewalks, and a pavilion to the park.

1898 Park Improvements A new monument sign was installed at the park, which also serves as a visible gateway to downtown.

Under construction

Clear Run Branch Drainage There is a massive project underway that, when complete, will reduce chronic flooding in the vicinity of New Centre Drive and College Road, improve water quality in Bradley Creek, and enhance the natural habitat.

Racine Drive Right Turn Lane The new lane will alleviate congestion approaching New Centre Drive and provide a safe pedestrian crossing at this busy intersection.

nCino Sports Complex Upgrades The project includes adding a restroom building and four new turf fields, converting an existing field to an artificial turf field, and adding lighting to multiple fields, which will provide more multi-sport fields for community use.

Greenfield Lake Spillway Major repairs are now underway to this aging structure, through which water exits Greenfield Lake.

Oleander Sidewalks This will connect Wooster Drive to Mimosa Place and includes a pedestrian crossing at Dawson Street.

2nd Street Parking Deck Repairs The project includes repairing concrete, steel, brick, and the exterior surface throughout the structure, which was built in 1992.

WMPO Office Building The former Thomas Grocery building on North 4th Street is being restored and converted for use as offices for the Wilmington Metropolitan Planning Organization.

North Front Street Improvements This is a joint project with CFPWA to replace utilities and enhance the streetscape along Front Street between Chestnut and Grace streets.

Bijou Park Renovations Extensive upgrades will promote safety and aesthetics in this signature open space that connects Front Street to River Place and Water Street.

Riverwalk Visitor Information Center Renovations include lighting, better views of the river, observation stools, railings, and signage.



Will start construction in 2023

Riverlights Fire Station The new facility will serve the growing Riverlights neighborhood and vicinity.

Hooker Road Multi-Use Path, Hinton Avenue Multi-Use Path, Greenville Avenue Sidewalks These projects will provide pedestrian amenities in the Seagate area.

Pine Grove Drive Improvements Intersection improvements at MacMillan Drive, at Oleander Drive, and a roundabout at Greenville Loop Road will improve traffic flow and safety along Pine Grove Drive.

Eastwood Road Median A new landscaped median from Rogersville Road to Cavalier Drive will improve safety and aesthetics.

Althea Gibson Tennis Complex Improvements This project includes rehabilitation of eight courts at the city's premier tennis facility.

Pedestrian HAWK Beacon at Market Street and 21st Street This will provide a safe crossing of Market Street.

MLK Center Gym Expansion and Community Kitchen The project includes a new high school gymnasium, restrooms, equipment storage, and a community kitchen.

17th Street Sidewalks New sidewalks will connect Wooster Drive to Greenfield Street.

Masonboro Loop Trail The 1.4-mile multi-use path will run along Masonboro Loop Road from Pine Grove Drive to Navaho Trail.

Dock Street Pedestrian Access This will provide improved ADA-compliant Riverwalk access at the foot of Dock Street.

Greenville Loop Trail This Multi-Use path will begin at Park Avenue and run the entirety of Greenville Loop Road, then along Pine Grove Drive and Holly Tree Road to connect with the recently completed Central College Trail at Holly Tree Road.

Wrightsville Avenue Sidewalks New sidewalks will run from College Road to Hawthorn Drive and from Independence Boulevard to 44th Street.

Oleander Drive Sidewalks New sidewalks will run from Hawthorn Road to 42nd Street, including pedestrian crossings at Independence Boulevard, Floral Parkway, and 41st Street.

Dawson/Wooster Streetscaping The project will improve aesthetics between 5th Avenue and 15th Street and add crosswalks at 8th Street.

Wrightsville Avenue/Wallace Avenue Roundabout This project will improve traffic flow and safety.

5th Avenue Street Rehabilitation In coordination with CFPWA, this project will upgrade utilities, add bike lanes and on-street parking, improve sidewalks, and resurface 5th Avenue from Greenfield Street to Market Street. The project will also replace numerous trees in poor health with new trees and landscaping. Public engagement on the project will be underway soon. ■

BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

The Cape Fear region continues to add new jobs across many different sectors, many of which involve technology. The City of Wilmington is taking steps to make sure our residents have the skills necessary to join our growing digital workforce.

Recently, Wilmington City Council unanimously voted to award \$2.5 million of American Rescue Plan Act funding* to launch DigitalBridge Wilmington, an innovative partnership with nonprofits and employers to create a digital upskilling, re-skilling, and job pairing program. The funding will support the program for two years, at which point it is expected to be self-sustaining.

DigitalBridge Wilmington will provide training, access, and connection to in-demand jobs for Wilmington residents who want to transition to careers in the digital economy. While open to anyone, it will focus recruitment on high opportunity, high need census tracts, with the goal to enable all segments of the population to benefit from the digitization of the local economy.

This initiative follows several other strategic investments by the City of Wilmington's American Rescue Plan funding, including \$3.5 million in affordable housing, \$2 million for small business recovery, \$700,000 for local nonprofits providing critical and cultural services, \$400,000 in workforce training, and \$200,000 to combat food insecurity. These allocations reflect the city's priority to invest \$9 million from the American Rescue Plan directly into economic and community assistance. ■

*All ARPA allocations are given in accordance with U.S. Treasury ARP guidance and NC General Statute authorization.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING IS

Wilmington City Council is making historic investments in affordable housing, which represents more than two decades of financial commitment from the city. That commitment is bearing results.



From Fire Station to Permanent Supportive Housing

The former site of Wilmington Fire Station 6 will transform into permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless adults with disabilities thanks to a partnership between the city and Good Shepherd Center – the largest provider of homeless services in the region – for the purpose of providing up to 33 safe, affordable housing units paired with intensive case management services to those in need.

Increasing Housing Supply with ARPA Funds

Wilmington City Council unanimously voted to make an historic investment in affordable housing by utilizing \$3.5 million of American Rescue Plan funding for gap financing to develop 278 housing units. The units will be affordable to households that make 60 percent of the area median income.

PROGRAMS

- City of Wilmington Community Development and Housing repairs homes and improves safety of homes that have hazards and deterioration, works with local banks to help working families purchase their first home, and works with non-profits and other developers to provide a variety of affordable housing opportunities throughout the city.
- The city offers several housing rehabilitation program options designed to address housing repairs, improvements and/or remove health and safety hazards of low-to-moderate homeowners within the corporate city limits of Wilmington.
- The city offers a \$200,000 maximum loan at zero percent interest to finance the creation of affordable rental housing in existing residential homes in need of rehabilitation, or for new construction on in-fill lots through the Rental Rehabilitation Incentive Loan program.
- The City of Wilmington, in partnership with five local banks, offers the Home Ownership Pool (HOP), a loan program for low-to-moderate income households looking to become home owners. HOP provides up to \$25,000 in down payment assistance or up to \$75,000 in assistance for homes eligible for rehabilitation.

OUR PRIORITY TOO



It Takes a Village

The city donated proceeds from the sale of Optimist Park to support Eden Village, which will provide 32 tiny homes to those experiencing chronic homelessness. The city also contributed funding toward the infrastructure of Eden Village.

Surplus Property Becomes Affordable Housing

City Council voted in October to donate three parcels of land that were declared as surplus property to Cape Fear Habitat for Humanity for the non-profit to construct homes for local families in an investment totaling \$84,200 toward affordable housing.

STATISTICS

- The city's current investments in affordable housing have yielded **1241 affordable housing opportunities**, including both affordable home ownership and affordable home rentals.
- A total of **713 Wilmington families are homeowners** because of the city's new homebuyer and owner-occupied home rehabilitation programs.
- The city code allows bonus opportunities for residential projects that voluntarily provide affordable housing opportunities within their projects. **In the new code's first five months, 57 affordable housing opportunities entered the pipeline** at no cost to public funds, simply through smart adjustments in the city's development code.

- The city has provided **\$3 million in rental rehabilitation and gap financing programs**, which develop new housing options with affordable rents. These investments have yielded **528 affordable rental housing opportunities**. ■

NOTE: These statistics are accurate as of February 2022 and do not reflect the donations to Habitat for Humanity or Good Shepherd, nor does it include the gap financing funded through the American Rescue Plan Act.

PUTTING DOWN ROOTS

Seed Library Gets a Green Thumbs Up

Maides Park now offers a seed library, which is exactly what it sounds like.

It's a library that "loans" seeds to gardeners. Gardeners "borrow" seeds from the library at planting time. At the end of the growing season, gardeners save seeds from the plants and are encouraged to return a portion of the seeds to the library. The city will repackage your harvested seeds and put them into circulation so that everyone can try their hand at growing them. Each "library cardholder" may check out up to three packets of seeds per visit. ■



i Fill out your membership form online at wilmingtonnc.gov/parks

HERE WE GROW

Homeschool Students Receive Hands on Education

Earlier this year, city hosted a first-of-its-kind program at its greenhouse facility. The five-week class gave homeschool students hands-on experience in horticulture.

"We teach them how to grow seeds, and then we step them up each week, and we allow the kids to see the progression of the plants," said City of Wilmington horticulturist Jerry Bell.

Approximately 20 kids participated in the inaugural course, learning how to grow a variety of vegetables and flowers. Each week they monitored the progress, moving the seedlings to larger containers when necessary.

"We grew carrots, radishes, 17 of the 20 kids got to try sugar snap peas for the first time and most of them loved them," Bell said. "That was probably the most enjoyable part, was letting them see what they started, what it would do when it came to fruition."

At the end, each student got to take home a pollinator kit, a flowerpot, and vegetable plants that they can continue to grow throughout the season. ■



Hear what the kids had to say about the special experience by watching this video.

FOURTH OF JULY

In Pictures: Thousands Celebrate America's Birthday at Riverfront Park

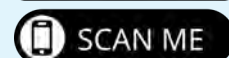
More than five thousand people came downtown for the 2022 Wilmington Pops 4th of July Celebration! The event featured the Wilmington Symphony Orchestra (WSO), which performed patriotic favorites, classical selections, and current pop songs. WSO musicians, guest artist Alexis Raeana, Opera Wilmington artists John and Shannon Dooley, and a quartet from Wilmington Voices, were among the more than 100 local musicians who performed throughout the event. Mayor Bill Saffo served as a guest conductor. ■



Scan here to browse the photo gallery!



Parks & Recreation keeps a full calendar. See what they have upcoming and plan your next activity with the City of Wilmington.

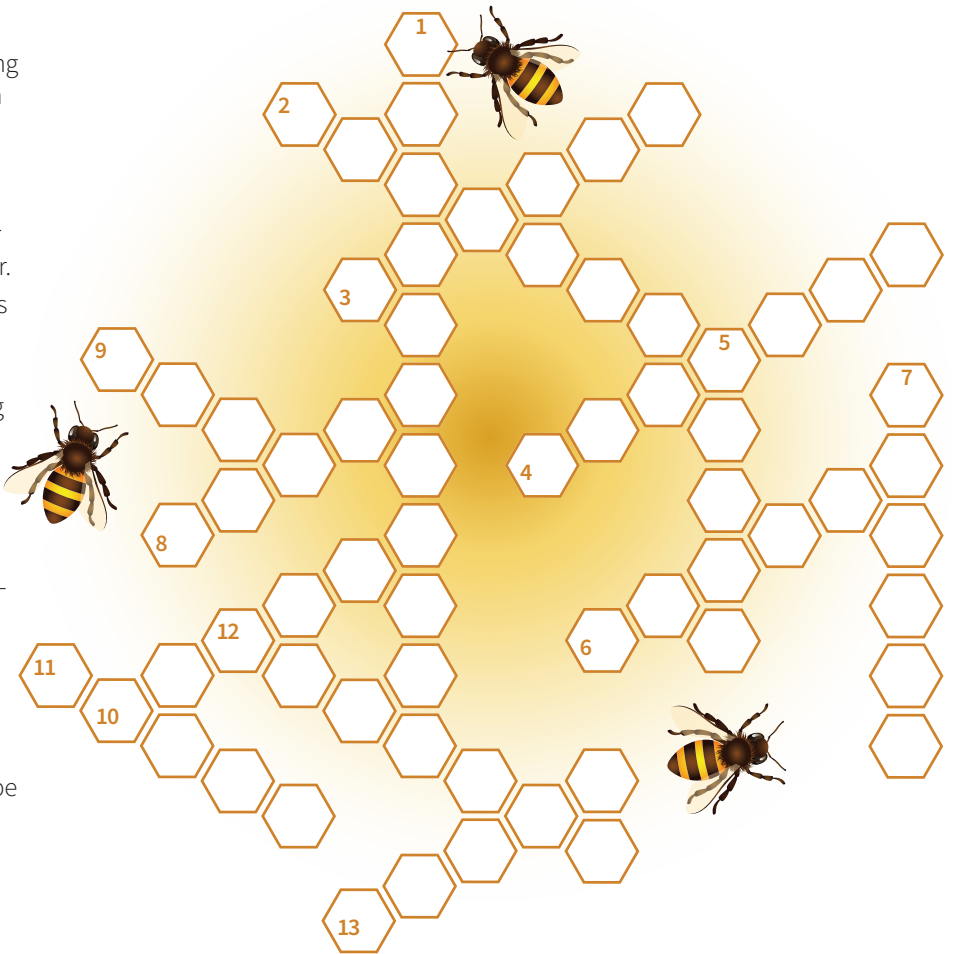


THE BUZZ ABOUT BEES!

CREATIVE CORNER

Hive-Minded Crossword

1. Bees move between flowers transferring pollen grains from one plant to another in a process known as _____.
2. Honey bees live in large groups called _____.
3. The type of _____ the bees take their nectar from determines the honey's flavor.
4. Honeycombs are hexagon-shaped cells made of _____.
5. A _____ occurs when a colony has outgrown its current hive and is preparing to separate into 2 or more new, smaller hives.
6. Female bees in the hive (except the queen) are called _____ bees.
7. Male bees in the hive are called _____ and they do not have a stinger.
8. A colony cannot survive without a _____ bee.
9. An average _____ can hold around 50,000 bees.
10. The bee is the only social _____ to be partially domesticated by humans.
11. The reason bees are so noisy is because they beat their _____ 11,400 times in one minute!
12. Female bees have a _____ for protection, although they only use it if necessary.
13. To make 1 pound of _____, bees collect nectar from 2 million flowers!



1. POLLINATION 2. COLONIES 3. FLOWER 4. BEESWAX
5. SWARM 6. WORKER 7. DRONES 8. QUEEN 9. HIVE 10.
INSECT 11. WINGS 12. STINGER 13. HONEY

ANSWER KEY:



ALL THE BUZZ

Bee-friendly Halyburton Park Opens Apiary

In September, members of the Wilmington City Council and New Hanover County Beekeepers Association unveiled a brand-new apiary at Halyburton Park. The apiary, which is a collection of beehives and is also known as a bee yard, will help keep pollinating bees and the surrounding plant life thriving for

years to come. In 2015, Wilmington was named the nation's 10th Bee City. The Bee City USA certification is both an honor and a responsibility. The Bee City program endorses a set of commitments for creating sustainable habitats for pollinators and encourages city leaders to raise awareness of the contribution bees and other pollinators make to our world. ■



CLEARLY BETTER WATER FOR WILMINGTON

It was a moment five years in the making. On October 11, Mayor Bill Saffo and Councilmembers Charlie Rivenbark and Luke Waddell joined other local leaders at Cape Fear Public Utility Authority's Sweeney Water Treatment Plant, just north of downtown.

CFPUA Board Chairwoman Jennifer Adams led the group in a toast. In one hand, she held a glass of drinking water from Sweeney. In her other hand were results from the most recent tests on water treated at Sweeney. No GenX or other PFAS had been detected in the drinking water.

Five years ago, Wilmington was rocked by news of decades of pollution in the Cape Fear River from an industrial facility upstream. Immediately, work began to

identify the best way to remove these PFAS contaminants from our drinking water and hold the polluters accountable.

In 2018, CFPUA finalized plans to add deep-bed Granular Activated Carbon (GAC) filters to the Sweeney Plant, which provides water to 80 percent of CFPUA's customers. Construction started in November 2019, with the filters coming online in October 2022.

GAC removes PFAS from drinking water through a process called adsorption (with a "d"). When water flows over the GAC, PFAS compounds stick to the carbon's surface area. CFPUA's new filters contain almost 3 million pounds of GAC, with enough combined surface area to cover the state of North Carolina three times.

Building these state-of-the-art filters was

no small feat, and the project had a price tag of \$46 million dollars.

CFPUA and others have filed a lawsuit in federal court to recover these and other costs related to their PFAS contamination.

"The work does not end here. We will hold the polluters accountable for what they have caused in this community," Mayor Saffo said. "This was not the easy and cheap fix. This was a very expensive fix, and we intend to collect every dime of that." ■

 [Learn more about what CFPUA's project means for you and your family at CFPUA.org/Sweeney](https://www.cfpua.org/Sweeney)

SURVEY RESULTS

The Spring 2022 Resident Survey asked respondents to rank their top three concerns when it comes to living in the City of Wilmington. Nearly 500 people responded to the survey, giving the city strong data to help shape policies. ■

Traffic congestion ranked as the most important issue, with more than 60 percent of respondents identifying it in their top three concerns.

Following traffic congestion, **growth and development** came in second with just under 40 percent of respondents marking it in their top three concerns.

The **rising cost of living**, an issue plaguing the nation, was the third most important issue to respondents with over 25 percent of people placing it in their top three.

WILMINGTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

Improved Emergency Response Times

WFD LAUNCHES NEW DEPLOYMENT MODEL

This summer the Wilmington Fire Department launched a new deployment model to facilitate quicker responses to emergency scenes. The change includes adding three quick response vehicles and moving two front-line apparatuses to reserve. Each squad is staffed with two firefighters, an officer, and a Master Firefighter, and are running out of Headquarters on Market Street, Station 3 on Cinema Drive, and Station 8 off Eastwood Road. They will respond to the many same types of calls that their engine counterparts did, like emergency medical calls, structure fires, and rescues. The squads also respond to non-emergency calls like lift assists and home-safety visits. ■



HEART and RHYS are pictured with their handlers and other Wilmington Fire Fighters.

WFD Expands Crisis Response Facility Dog Program

The Wilmington Fire Department added a second Crisis Response Facility Dog to its program with the paws4people foundation. The program began with Crisis Response Facility Dog RHYS at WFD Station 8 on C Shift.

Building on the success of that program, a second dog, HEART, was added to the roster. HEART will report to work with her handler, Firefighter Blake Reynolds, at Station 2 on A Shift. Like RHYS, she will work at the fire station on her shift and go home with her firefighter handler when they are off duty.

RHYS and HEART are part of a larger Mental Health and Wellness program

the department is pushing. The goal of the program is to aid in de-escalation of stress post-call, ease tension at the station, lower anxiety, reduce long-term effects of PTSD, and improve cardiovascular health. In addition, the dogs provide comfort in emergency situations, both at the department and at the scene of an emergency in the community to ease the distress of anyone affected by the trauma.

HEART was presented with her official Crisis Response Facility Dog vest during the department's Back-to-School Open House event at Station 2 at Empie Park. ■

CONTACT

General Information Phone Numbers

City Information.....	910.341.7800
Cape Fear Public Utility Authority.....	910.332.6550
Code Enforcement	910.341.3266
Fire Non-emergency	910.341.7846
Parking.....	910.762.5678
Parks and Recreation.....	910.341.7855
Police Non-emergency	910.343.3600
Street Maintenance	910.341.7879
Stormwater	910.341.4646
Trash and Recycling.....	910.341.7875
Zoning.....	910.254.0900

Wilmington City Council

Bill Saffo, Mayor
 Margaret E. Haynes, Mayor Pro-Tem
 Charles H. Rivenbark, Jr.
 Neil Anderson
 Clifford D. Barnett, Sr.
 Kevin Spears
 Luke Waddell

City Council Meetings

City Council meetings are generally held on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. in Council Chambers. Meetings are streamed live on:

- GTV8 (Spectrum channel 8)
- wilmingtonnc.gov/gtv
- youtube.com/user/cityofwilmington

Previous meetings are available on-demand on:

- wilmingtonnc.gov/gtv

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- thewilmingtoncurrent.com



NEW DEPUTY CITY MANAGERS NAMED



Chad McEwen

The City of Wilmington recently selected Chad McEwen and Mary Vigue to serve as Deputy City Managers.

McEwen oversees the Fire Department, Emergency Management, Planning and Development, Economic Development, and Downtown Services. He received his Master of Public Administration from UNC-Wilmington.

Vigue oversees internal services, which includes Finance, Internal Audit, Budget, Information Technology, and Human Resources. She holds a Master of Public Administration from UNC-Chapel Hill.

“Both Chad and Mary bring a wealth of experience to the City of Wilmington and will undoubtedly help advance our organization and service delivery for residents,” City Manager Tony Caudle said. “I am pleased to bring these talented and highly qualified professionals on board and look forward to working with them and learning from them as we serve the City of Wilmington.”

Thom Moton, who joined the City of Wilmington as Deputy City Manager in 2017, will continue to oversee Community Services, Public Services, Engineering, and the Wilmington MPO. ■



Mary Vigue