

Mayor Bruce Wahl's Announcement to NOT Seek Re-election (July 21, 2016)

At the recent Maryland Municipal League Convention, I was honored to receive the League's Lifetime Achievement Award, after being privileged to serve the league for nearly two decades and the town for seven terms (twenty-eight years). This is a fitting capstone for my municipal government career, as I am announcing tonight that I will not be running for re-election as Mayor of Chesapeake Beach.

So you might ask the question, "Why did Bruce make this decision now?"

- Certainly, there are personal reasons - for example, wanting to spend time doing fun things with my family instead of town business.
- I also want to carve out more time to spend with my church family, and to serve in new and different ways in our community.
- My position at NPR is once more heating up, with an entirely new satellite distribution system being developed and deployed over the next three to four years. This will be the fifth time in fifty years that I have participated in designing and constructing the nationwide system of delivering NPR's programs to radio stations all across the country and thus to the millions of public radio listeners in our country.
- Above all - I love this town, and I want to give the citizens of Chesapeake Beach ample opportunity to reflect upon what kind of leadership they want in the Mayor's office and who might be able to provide it. There are just about two months before the filing deadline to run for office. Seek out good candidates for Mayor and Council and encourage them to run!
- Candidly, I'm truly ready to move on.

This town government has made so many accomplishments over the years. With the support of the Town Council, and with a great staff, here is a list of some of the great things we've done together:

- Property tax rate decreases: In my twenty-eight years, there have been eleven property tax rate reductions, and there has never been an increase. I may have lost count how many times we've decreased the rate!
- The town's beautiful landscaping - something to be proud of
- Utilities:
 - We finally adopted a water and sewer rate structure that reflects reality.
 - This year, we implemented a \$0.05 per 1000 gallon decrease in the sewer rate, and likewise, a \$0.05 decrease per 1000 gallons in the water rate
 - We concluded last fiscal year in the black, and this year will also be in the black. This is the result of private investors that have faith in the town and are willing to make significant business investments. This series of events points out the importance of the town's economic development efforts.
 - The town infrastructure is in great shape
 - Completed the new Chesapeake Village water tower
 - WWTP ENR upgrade nearly complete
 - Automated utility billing
 - SCADA system - my first Christmas eve as Mayor was spent at the Richfield Station pump station - nevermore
- The Chesapeake Beach Railway Trail:
 - This project took 22 years to get done from start to finish. It has become one of the premier attractions to our beautiful town.
 - The greatest benefit of the trail is CBOCS. I'm incredibly proud that every fifth-grader in Calvert County now has two field trips to the trail, and they are learning a great deal from our volunteers, from Chespax and their teachers - who have now included oyster recovery and wetlands ecology in the curriculum.
- We renovated and upgraded Kellam's Field. We went from being the worst athletic field in the

- county to one of the best. The kids are the beneficiaries - and that's great!
- Wonderful services:
 - Reliable trash pickup
 - Curbside recycling since 1991!
 - Road repairs are excellent
 - Excellent snow removal and sidewalk clearing
 - The town's fiscal position is solid, and that did not happen by accident.
 - The unprecedented growth from the 1980's until the recession began in 2008/2009 created a large reserve fund
 - The town's reserve funds have been preserved, but this council refuses to use it for appropriate investments.
 - The town's indebtedness is managed well
 - Law enforcement in Chesapeake Beach is great, the best in the county
 - Veterans' Park is finally getting repaired and will be rededicated in September, its fifteen anniversary and the anniversary of 9/11
 - Fantastic Holiday decorations
 - Marvelous fireworks
 - Terrific events throughout the year

Here are a few things yet to do:

- Implement the new finance system
- Implement a GIS System
- Water Park - it is aging, and needs repair
- The infrastructure is never finished
- Take advantage of great staff

At the November 8th election, there will be two non-binding ballot questions for the town voters to express their opinion: whether to pay the Town Council members \$3,000 per year for their service, and whether to pay the Mayor \$18,000 per year for his or her service. I encourage you to support these initiatives, as I think it will help to create a more diverse pool of candidates for these important offices. The council will formally vote on these issues at the November meeting.

The timing of my announcement tonight was chosen to encourage good candidates to file to run for office. As I mentioned previously, there are about two months until the filing deadline. I hope and pray that a good leader will emerge to run for this office, and that they will be successful. We need someone who will seek the office to serve the citizens of Chesapeake Beach, and does not seek it for their own personal gain or to satisfy their ego. A "Servant Leader" is needed. There should be good candidates out there. Please step up and run!

My term as mayor and as a Chesapeake Beach elected official ends at the December 15th council meeting, five months from now. I look forward to serving you during that period, and to try to correct as many deficiencies as I can during the remainder of this term.

I appreciate your attention, and the opportunity to have served you for these 28 years. With the cooperation of the Town Council, I look forward to many significant accomplishments during the remainder of this term.

I offer this challenge to the citizens of Chesapeake Beach: "You need to be a part of the leadership to select your next leaders."

Thank you!