

# History of Mayors ~ Bristol, Connecticut





*Bristol has been fortunate to have had hard-driving individuals serve as Mayor, beginning with John F. Wade in 1911 to our current leader, Jeffrey Caggiano.*

*There have been different personalities, methods of obtaining results and views on every day and specific problems, but in each case, the people who have held the top seat in Bristol politics have given a stalwart effort. All should be praised for such, regardless of their political beliefs or background.*

*The biographies in this booklet briefly outline the lives of these Bristol Mayors and their contributions. These backgrounds help explain how we've gotten to where we are today as a city and to appreciate better those who led us here.*

*This booklet is a small tribute to these leaders for their invaluable and tireless service provided to the Bristol community.*

*Bristol Mayoral Picture/Plaque Committee, First Published in 1998  
Councilman Gerard Couture, Chairman  
Linda Libbey, Bob Montgomery, J. Harwood Norton, Jr.*



The biographies of the earlier Mayors have been edited and abridged and are from the "Builders of Bristol" series originally published in The Bristol Press during the years 1975-1978 in celebration of the nation's Bicentennial.

"Builders" authors included Stephanie and Stephen Allaire, LeRoy A. Anderson, Lou Bachman, Carlyle and Wallace Barnes, Robert Barrett, Frederick Beach, Jarre Barnes Betts, Henry Brophy, Mike Cavalieri, Celia Critchley, Thomas and William Doyle, Dainey Driscoll, Janet Dibble Elton, Michael Epstein, Josephine Errico, Marcella Finan, Melanie Fletcher, Muriel M. Gardner, Ruth A. Goodrich, Dave Greenleaf, Dorothy Hannum, Mrs. Calvin P. Haviland, Helen Heffernan, Jeffrey Heyne, Angela Irwin, Albert Jabs, Carolyn Jennings, Albert and Charity Jerman, Beryl P. Josephson, Margaret Large, Dorothy Manchester, Robert Maynard, May Lipson Meyerson, Hazel Norton, Kyrie O'Connor, Mona O'Hara, George R. Perry, Nancy Peck Quinlan, Kathy Barnes Rivard, Margaret Sullivan, H. Jack Winters and Oscar Wulff.

The more recent biographies were organized from articles and editorials from the files of *The Bristol Press*. Written by Don Gordon, Dick Warner, Alex Lieber, Edmund Mander, Bob Brown, Bill Sarno, Frank Keegan, Mark Anderson, Deborah Robbins, Gary Kleebatt and James O'Keefe.

*The Mayor's Office combined with Tom Dickau, of The Bristol Historical Society, have updated the book about Bristol's Mayors. Thank you to Tom, for providing the original and new biographies and also, thank you to Jenn Lishness of the Mayor's Office for updating and redesigning the book.*

## JOHN F. WADE

1911-1913, 1921-1929

---

John F. Wade occupies a unique position in Bristol history as the city's first Mayor in 1911. After an eight-year absence from office, he also won in 1921, 1923, 1925 and 1927, but died in 1927 shortly after being elected to his fifth term, just before his fourth had concluded.

In a time when the office of Mayor was a part-time job, Wade combined a role in industry with his public duties to become one of Bristol's most respected and influential citizens.

Wade was born on June 29, 1890, in Georgia. He grew up on a cottage farm and left at age 21 to pursue a career in business and industry in Florida and, later, Texas.

From the time he came to Bristol, he was interested in public affairs and in political activities. A friendly and outgoing man, he was held in high regard by friends and associates.

The first city election campaign was exciting under the non-partisan form of government in effect until 1933. It saw four primary for office of Mayor and the finals had Wade pitted against a young but fiery George W. Hull. Wade won by 10 votes.

Much of his first term concerned the measures necessitated by the transition to the new form of government. Many issues were handled and created controversy and as one might expect, much was directed at the Mayor.

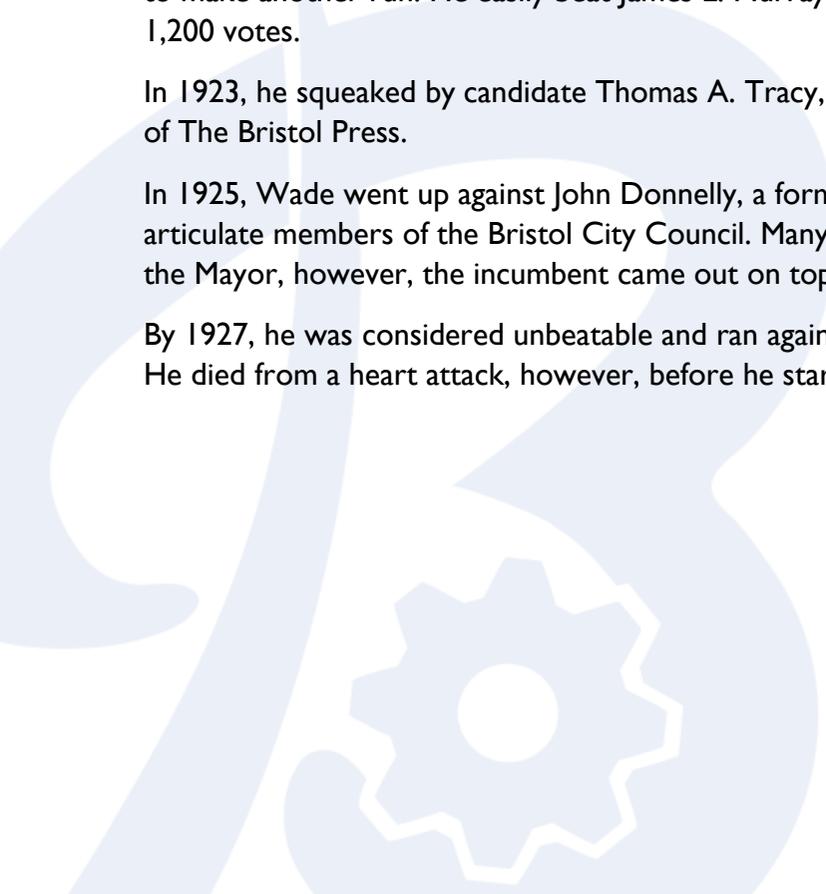
Because of this, James J. Cray, a young, popular news reporter, defeated him by 262 votes in Wade's re-election bid in 1913.

After Cray's single term ended, Joseph F. Dutton was elected in 1915, 1917 and 1919. When Dutton decided against running again, at the insistence of his still large number of supporters, Wade agreed to make another run. He easily beat James L. Murray, proprietor of a Main Street news store, by 1,200 votes.

In 1923, he squeaked by candidate Thomas A. Tracy, one of Bristol's most loved citizens and city editor of The Bristol Press.

In 1925, Wade went up against John Donnelly, a formidable opponent who had been one of the most articulate members of the Bristol City Council. Many felt the challenger had a good chance of beating the Mayor, however, the incumbent came out on top by a comfortable 603 votes.

By 1927, he was considered unbeatable and ran again where he was declared the unanimous victor. He died from a heart attack, however, before he started his fifth term.



## JAMES J. CRAY 1913-1915

---

Bristol's second Mayor was James Cray, a native of New Hampshire who was elected in 1913 by defeating the formidable incumbent, John F. Wade. When his term ended, Cray declined to run for the top office but did agree to serve on the Bristol City Council and for many years and terms was the only man to become a council member after being No. 1 in the city government table of organization. He was also one of only two bachelors to be elected Mayor, the other being Joseph F. Dutton.

Cray was born in High Ridge, N.H., on June 4, 1873, and as a boy moved to Illinois with his family. He came to Bristol in 1893 and for a number of years was employed as a bookkeeper.

In 1908, Cray became a reporter for the Hartford Times and was the paper's Bristol correspondent. He was also engaged in real estate and the insurance business, an activity he carried on while Mayor.

He was the last man to serve as clerk of the old Board of Burgesses, holding that post until the shift to the city form of government in 1911.

Although Wade was generally regarded as a highly efficient chief executive and might have defeated a lesser man with ease when he sought re-election in 1913, Cray was a strong opponent and won by 268 votes. Thus, there ensued one of the most memorable Mayoral terms in Bristol history.

Cray had developed a great affection and allegiance for his adopted town. This feeling was evident in many of his public pronouncements. For instance, he once declared that much of the success of Bristol industry at that time might be attributed to the fact that most Bristol plants were Bristol owned. He also remarked on several occasions that the people who owned and operated Bristol industrial concerns were residents of the city.

Cray chose not to run for re-election as Mayor. However, this unusual politician did agree to run for the Bristol City Council. He was only one of 41 candidates on the ballot but when the votes were counted, his name led all the rest. This surely was singular recognition for the man who had served the city so ably and well during his brief stint as its first citizen.



## JOSEPH F. DUTTON

1915-1921, 1931-1935

---

Joseph F. Dutton served as Mayor for five terms, beginning when he was 36 years old in 1916. Born in Forestville on October 31, 1879, Dutton attended the Forestville grammar school and put in two years at Bristol High before withdrawing to work in the Forestville factories. After several years, he was admitted to Yale Law School without any prior college preparation. He was a member of the Yale baseball teams in 1908 and 1909 and became Yale's foremost debater at the time.

In 1915, Dutton entered the primary for Mayor in a four-way race when the city election was a nonpartisan affair. In the 1915 primary, Dutton and contractor George Linstead emerged as the top vote getters and were paired in the election to succeed James Cray, who decided not to run for a second term. Dutton emerged victorious, polling 1,293 votes to Linstead's 1,262.

Dutton took office as Bristol's third Mayor early in 1916 and continued to serve, running unopposed in the next two elections.

In 1920, Dutton decided to seek a new challenge, giving up a relatively safe job to run for the U.S. Congress. It wasn't a good year for the Democrats, however, and Dutton was swept aside in the Warren G. Harding landslide victory that year.

He decided not to seek re-election as Mayor in the election of 1921 and former Mayor John Wade was returned to the Mayor's office rather handily.

During the next decade, he continued his law practice and served a time as a court prosecutor while remaining active in the Democratic politics of the city. He made another bid for the congressional race in 1922, again losing by a wide margin.

Dutton was Bristol's Depression Mayor and it was in that role he was forced to take on the job of Mayor on a full-time basis.

The voters were apparently happy with Dutton's efforts as he was easily returned to office for his fifth term, defeating Republican Willard E. Hough and Socialist Floyd E. Ayer in the city's first partisan election. He returned to the Mayor's office in 1931 by defeating incumbent W. Raymond Crumb.

Dutton's biggest contribution to the city during the Depression was his negotiation of a loan, with the considerable assistance of DeWitt Page, then a vice-president of General Motors, to save the city from financial crisis. One of the conditions of that loan was that the city establish a Board of Finance.

Dutton finally met his match in 1935 when he was defeated by more than 1,100 votes by Deputy Sheriff Joseph W. Harding.

## W. RAYMOND CRUMB

1929-1931

---

The first man in the history of the city to be appointed to the office of Mayor, W. Raymond Crumb took office amidst a controversy. Yet, he served two successful terms before Depression unemployment worries got the best of him.

Crumb was born in Forestville on June 5, 1896, and later attended the Forestville School and was graduated from the Phillips Andover Academy in Andover, MA. He enrolled at Dartmouth, but his education was interrupted by World War I. During the war, Crumb attended the U.S. Naval Academy in Indianapolis, MD, and was commissioned an Ensign.

Crumb graduated Dartmouth in 1919 and went to work as a bond salesman for a Wall Street firm, eventually working his way up to manager of the company's offices in Rhode Island. He returned to Bristol several years later and established the Trinity Dye Works on Main Street, which he operated for three years.

In 1925, Crumb made his first run for public office and was handily elected to the City Council in the nonpartisan city election. By 1927, he had been appointed acting Mayor and was elected to the council as Mayor Wade won his sixth term.

However, on Nov.7, 1927, just one month after the election, political life in Bristol was suddenly thrust into turmoil as Wade died unexpectedly of a heart attack. The task of replacing a Mayor who died in office was unprecedented in the city's history and the issue was further complicated by the fact that Wade had not been sworn in as Mayor for the new term to begin January 28.

On November 15, 1927, Crumb was unanimously elected by the council and was sworn in to fill Wade's remaining time. The new term was to begin on January 28, but when the day came and passed, no new Mayor had been sworn in and crumb remained in office.

The new City Council was sworn in on January 3, but the newly elected Councilman Crumb did not take the oath. Instead, he continued to chair the meetings and, after some discussion from the audience over the council's right to do so, was unanimously elected to the council to fill the unexpired term of Mayor Wade.

After leaving the Mayor's office, Crumb became an executive with the New Departure Division of General Motors, heading the firm's public relations department. He left Bristol in 1945 to join the industrial corporation, North American Aircraft in Los Angeles.

While in Bristol, Crumb was active in numerous civic affairs. He headed the 1926 Community Chest drive and was also active with the American Legion and Franklin Lodge of Masons. He also served as a secretary and director of the North Side Bank and Trust Co.

## JOSEPH J. HARDING

1935-1939

---

Joseph J. Harding was born in Hartford on May 20, 1894. He moved to Bristol at a young age, graduating from the South Side School in 1908. Soon after he became a deputy sheriff, he married Mildred Day on October 21, 1925. Except for a brief period when the couple lived in Hartford when he was Hartford County Sheriff, they resided in Bristol until his death in 1947.

From the time that he was appointed deputy sheriff and constable, Harding grew in stature not only with friends, but also with everyone he came in contact with. He had a big heart and when it came time to collect on past due bills from the public, gave people sound advice and helped them stay out of further financial trouble. This was strikingly brought home to the citizens of Bristol and later to all the people of Hartford County.

On October 8, 1935, citizens of Bristol awoke under the atomic shock of the election of Harding to the office of Bristol Mayor. His popularity and respect accorded him the record majority of 1,152 votes and he was the first Mayor of Bristol to carry all of the town's voting districts.

Mayor Harding outlined in his inaugural message his plans to deal with problems that included parks, schools, public safety, police, fire, finance, public works, cost-of-living increases for city employees and attraction of new industry to Bristol.

Harding was re-elected Bristol Mayor in 1937 and his name as a winner eventually got him nominated and later elected as Hartford County High Sheriff in the 1938 campaign.

He elected to continue to serve out the remainder of his second term as Bristol Mayor and gave close attention to and most successfully solved most of Bristol's problems until his term expired on December 31, 1939. He was re-elected sheriff in 1942 and 1946.

Harding was also one of the most prominent and popular golfers in the Central Connecticut Golf Association, a very successful circuit during the 1930s and 1940s. In addition, he captured several city and Pequabuck Golf Club championships during this illustrious career.

As Bristol Mayor, Harding was remembered for his daily attention to every complaint and suggestion of the citizens of Bristol. His influence and suggestions improved the operations of every city department and conserved the tax payments of its citizens. The image of Bristol was tremendously enhanced as a result of his alert planning.



## JAMES P. JENNINGS

1939-1941

---

Never known for tact, James P. Jennings nevertheless was one of Bristol's most efficient and conscientious Mayors. The lanky, white-haired Democrat held office from January 1, 1940, to early November 1941.

Born March 31, 1891, he served three terms on the City Council and for a time after his term as Mayor was City Comptroller. A graduate of Bristol High School, he worked for many years in the printing department of the New Departure Division of General Motors Corporation. He died on April 24, 1971.

As Mayor, he succeeded Joseph Harding, who became high sheriff of Hartford County. Jennings defeated Rebelle Carpenter.

Jennings was literally a man of letters. A frequent visitor to The Bristol Press, his communications often urged city fathers to reconsider or re-route their decisions.

The new charter provided for a November installation of the new Mayor.

The "firebrand from the third ward," pledged himself to be "Mayor of all the people of Bristol."

Highlight of his three terms as councilman was his participation in a mammoth City Charter revision project. Ironically, Jennings, as a result of the new charter to which he had contributed a great deal, served the shortest term of any Bristol Mayor. Under the old charter, a "lame duck" Mayor could serve from Election Day, the first Monday of October, until New Year's Day.

Jennings took some hard falls. On March 6, 1940, he vowed not to sign paychecks for Daniel Davis, whose appointment as City Assessor he hotly opposed. Guess who defeated Jennings in his bid for re-election?

Perhaps the best municipal watchdog in Bristol's history, Jennings decided to make one more run for Mayor in 1943. He lost the nomination to Thomas P. O'Brien, who also was defeated by Davis.

It was Jennings who saw a need for more mechanized facilities and less reliance on human muscle in the Public Works Department.

Jennings was terse, but eminently quotable. "So long as I am in office, the flag will always be respected and honored."



## DANIEL DAVIS

1941-1947

---

Political confrontations often have a habit of making leaders and this is what happened in 1940 when Mayor James P. Jennings found a need to replace the veteran City Assessor, Daniel Davis.

Going before the City Council, Jennings submitted the name of the executive aide in the Mayor's office for the assessor's job, but the council refused to approve the appointment. Jennings left the meeting and, in his absence, Republican Councilman Horace Staples took over. A relatively unknown, Daniel Davis, a Republican, was appointed assessor by the council.

The subsequent furor made Davis a household name and he finally won approval of his appointment through a Superior Court ruling. When the assessor's term ended, Jennings refused to re-appoint Davis and the council refused to name a replacement, so Davis held on to the job until 1941 when he was named by the Republican Party as its nominee for Mayor. Davis beat Jennings in the election by a margin of 107 votes.

One month after he took office, the Japanese invaded Pearl Harbor and Davis became one of Bristol's best-known Mayors as leader of a city booming under wartime economy. Housing was Bristol's biggest problem in those days, but Davis was a leader in bringing federally subsidized housing to the city. Victory Heights was first built and settled, then Davis Drive. Also, one of Davis' primary duties during that period was to preside over monthly dinners for draftees before they left for military induction.

Davis was re-elected handily in 1943 by a wide margin of over 800 votes over Thomas P. O'Brien and repeated in 1945 against Frank Kirchgessner in a low-key campaign.

Two years later, Davis lost his job as Mayor to a young state representative by the name of Jim Casey, by 2,905 votes.

Davis was the seventh man to be elected Bristol Mayor and first to do so in a full-time capacity. He was born in Lansford, Pa., and moved to Watertown at a very early age. At 17, he took a job in the office of a Waterbury brass firm, but quickly switched to the casting shop where more money was to be made.

He came to Bristol in 1921 to work in the A.J. Muzzy store and later joined the real estate firm of Davis and Rowe, operated by his brother Thomas and Rolfe E. Rowe, who later served more than 30 years as town and city clerk. Eventually, he became sole owner of the business.

Davis was also very active in the Girl Scout movement and spent over 20 years as a member of the State Jury Commission. He died at age 75 on March 4, 1978.

**JAMES P. CASEY**  
1947-1951, 1953-1959, 1963-July 1965

---

It was July 21, 1965, and word spread quickly that Bristol's first citizen, James P. Casey, had died. Scarcely 24 hours earlier he had been nominated for an un-precedented 10th consecutive time to be the Democratic standard bearer for Mayor. He was only 47 and had served six terms as Mayor, longer than anyone else.

His entry into politics at the age of 23 came when the third district Democratic caucus had been called in March 1941, to fill a vacancy council seat and Casey showed up with a band of supporters who managed to outmaneuver the machine in a lengthy meeting. He won a full term in the fall election and at 23, was the youngest member of any municipal body in the nation.

At 26, he won a seat in the State Legislature and from that post, built his bandwagon for a try at the top spot in Bristol. He collected support from many Democrats, but few, except Casey, thought he could defeat incumbent Dan Davis, a Republican three-term Mayor. Three weeks short of his 30th birthday, the Casey steamroller carried the entire city by an amazing 2,905 votes. It was 1947. In 1949, after a successful first term, he won re-election against Finance Board Chairman, Charles R. Anderson.

In 1955, a devastated city had rallied behind its Mayor as flood waters from Hurricane Diane wreaked havoc here. He won by the largest margin ever over the Republican challenger, Willis Hart. In 1957, his endorsement of the new Bristol Eastern High School helped support his win over opponent Edward P. Gustafson.

Bristol voters were ready for a change and elected his first cousin, Walter J. Murphy, in 1959 and again in 1961. Then Casey returned in 1963 to defeat Republican Ed Wozenski and Independent Art Farrar for his last political victory.

Bristolites agreed his two greatest accomplishments were keeping New Departure in Bristol and retaining the old ND Ordinance Plant on Emmett Street for industrial use.

Casey was the key in the decision by General Motors to build the new ND plant on Chippens Hill. As soon as the news broke in January, 1965, Casey mobilized all of Bristol's civic and political resources to guarantee that ND stay here with its 25 million dollar payroll.

His most unpleasant task was the authorizing and directing of a drawn out investigation of the Bristol Police Department. As a result, 10 officers either quit or were dismissed.

After he died, it was said, "He loved Bristol. He was a student of its history. He knew every part of the city and understood its problems. And Bristol loved him."

## DANIEL J. DONOVAN

### 1951-1953

---

He came to Bristol in 1912 to build Farmington Avenue and liked it so well here that he stayed on and devoted the rest of his life to his adopted city.

Daniel J. Donovan was born in Pittsfield, Massachusetts on January 26, 1887. In 1905, he went to work under his father for the O.T. Benedict Construction Company, one of the largest of such firms in New England. In that capacity, he came to Bristol to supervise the state authorized road construction project through the northern end of the city.

In 1914 he made the move to Bristol permanent, taking a position as assistant superintendent of public works and spending the next 36 years upgrading the quality of roads and sewer systems throughout Bristol.

He took over as superintendent of public works in 1932 and remained in that capacity until 1951 when, at the urging of friends and anti-administration men who feared the rise of a "Casey dictatorship," he entered the political-ring for the first time.

Donovan never registered with a political party in Bristol and it was the newly-formed Independent Party that he launched in his bid for public office in 1951. But the GOP recognizing the potential of the popular Donovan and having no viable candidate of their own, endorsed him and the coalition of parties made their man a winner.

Donovan's brief two years as Mayor were regarded as prosperous ones. As Mayor, he was able to cut taxes and still give municipal employees the largest wage increase they ever had up to that point in time. Major building projects were completed, including the construction of the Louisiana Avenue Bridge, municipal parking lots and an improved street lighting system. He started an insurance plan for city employees and moved the city's Public Works Department to new headquarters on Lake Avenue.

It was during his years as superintendent of public works, however, that Donovan was the happiest. There, he was always on hand to help the men, whom he called "his boys," with personal problems. Yet, he always demanded, and got, a fair day's work from all of them.

Donovan married Elizabeth Downing of Manchester in 1913 and the couple had three daughters. He was active in numerous civic, fraternal and religious affairs, such as serving as a trustee of St. Joseph's Church and as a member of the Knights of Columbus, Elks, Red Men and the Exchange Club. He was also active in civil engineering and road, highway and municipal construction organizations.



## WALTER J. MURPHY, JR.

1959-1963

---

Shortly after he returned from the service, Walter J. Murphy, Jr., who served as an air force pilot with 18 months tactical combat in the European Theater in World War II, became involved in local politics.

He was active in the 1951 campaign of Daniel Donovan, who upset incumbent James P. Casey.

Murphy was appointed chief assessor and remained in the post until he left to accept an appointment with the Federal Housing Administration.

It was in 1959 when the Republicans were seeking a candidate to unseat the Casey administration that they asked Murphy to register with their party and run as a candidate for Mayor. He complied and also received the endorsement of the Independent Party and defeated Casey, his first cousin, by a wide margin.

Always deeply interested in urban renewal and redevelopment, Murphy revitalized a moribund agency, which had been started by his predecessor, and got a comprehensive program underway.

Two years later, running for re-election, Murphy carried four of six voting districts to win the election. But his liberal stance undoubtedly cost him many conservative votes. He managed to salvage a 3-3 tie on the council which provided him with the deciding vote in case of a party split.

Dissatisfied with the progress made by the Redevelopment Agency, Murphy took over as director. But, the program of redevelopment didn't go as smoothly as planned. A new City Hall and firehouse were completed on North Main Street, but the Centre Mall across the street fell on bad times. The developer went bankrupt and the building activity ceased. The project had already been stalled because of the rivalry between the two groups who were bidding for the job.

Early in 1963, Murphy announced he would not seek a third term as Mayor. The Republicans put up Edward Wozenski, who had edged endorsement from Arthur Farrar. Farrar then ran on a third-party ticket and back into office went James P. Casey.

Redevelopment was considered Murphy's premier achievement, but he also involved himself in other areas, intensive elementary school programs, keeping Ingraham Co. in Bristol, introduction of yellow school buses, housing units for the elderly and conversion of the old Center/Summer streets high school to a senior citizens center. He also saw six accelerated public works programs, funded by the federal government, that improved city roads, sewer programs and site preparation for the Ingraham Co.

## HENRY WOJTUSIK

July 1965-1969, 1975-1977

---

New Departure-Hyatt's shipping room supervisor became the 11th man to serve as Bristol's chief executive on a July 26, 1965 vote of the City Council five days after the death in office of Mayor James P. Casey.

Wojtusik a five-term councilman (1955-65) from the third district, won an overwhelming victory at the polls that same October after completing Casey's term.

Extending his administration to four years was a much rougher task, however, as Wojtusik's election in the fall of 1967 was decided by just 143 votes over Republican J. Harwood Norton.

Two years later, Wojtusik's bid for re-election to a third full term drew opposition from within the Democratic Party. Although successful in a primary for his party's support, he was unable to muster sufficient strength from within the huge 2-1 Democratic enrollment buldge to return to City Hall.

Wojtusik's four years and three months as Bristol's chief executive came during peak industrial production. With the war in Vietnam spawning increased citizen involvement, virtually every local issue became mountainous.

Reflecting back on his time in office "Long meetings" and the chief executiveship becoming, "more than a full-time job," were two comments made in an interview.

"We accomplished many things, brick and mortar wise," Wojtusik said at the time. He singled out the new Forestville sewage treatment facility, Central High School and the Mountain View and Ivy Drive Elementary Schools and two new firehouses as examples.

Asked about his biggest "plus" while in office, Wojtusik was quick to mention the huge construction and expansion programs involving the New Departure-Hyatt Division of General Motors and the Wallace Barnes Division of Associated Spring Co. Mayor Casey had completed much of the ground work on the ND move to Chippens Hill, but senior City Councilman Wojtusik was involved, too.

Another project was the city's purchase of the 50-acre Pine Lake open space parcel in Forestville.

A U.S. Navy veteran of World War II and a member of the American Legion, Bristol Lodge of Elks, Knights of Columbus and the Polish American Citizens Club, Wojtusik was a longtime parishioner of St. Stanislaus Church.

A former supernumerary policeman in Bristol, Wojtusik registered his disappointments in office as being redevelopment delays, including the Centre Mall and Middle Street Industrial Park.

## J. HARWOOD "STRETCH" NORTON, JR. 1969-1971

---

J. Harwood "Stretch" Norton, Jr., was Bristol's 12th Mayor, serving from 1969-71. He lost his re-election bid to Frank Longo, but went on to become Bristol's senior politician for many years before losing his long-held seat on the City Council in 1997.

Although a lifelong Bristol resident, he was born in Willimantic where his mother's doctor lived and practiced. That was on June 7, 1922, but Norton was back at his parent's Lake Compounce homestead in Bristol within 10 days.

Norton attended local schools, graduating Bristol High just a few days after his 17th birthday. He then attended Williston Academy in East Hampton, Mass., for a year before enrolling at the Sheffield Scientific Academy School at Yale where he earned an engineering degree.

He served 19 months in the Pacific during World War II, including Okinawa and occupation duty in Japan and China. After three years of service, he was separated into Ready Reserve where he went on as an officer for years at the Naval Air Station in Quonset Point, Rhode Island.

He returned to Bristol and worked at the family business, Lake Compounce, until 1949, before joining the Wallace Barnes Division of Associated Spring Corp.

As a youth, Norton was a popular figure in athletics, later playing semi-pro basketball and softball. He was president of several softball leagues.

He was also active in community affairs and in 1955, served as chairman of the Flood Relief program for the city. He also served in various capacities in a number of civic and charitable groups.

Norton's active political career began formally in 1959 when he was elected to the Bristol City Council. He was defeated in re-election for a second term but returned in 1963 to win back his seat. In between those two terms, he served as chairman of the Board of Public Works. In 1967, he made his bid for Mayor but lost to Henry J. Wojtusik by 143 votes.

Up to this point, Norton had run for office as an independent candidate. But in 1969 he registered as a Republican, winning in a primary before going on to defeat Wojtusik by 2,151 votes.

Norton's contributions to Bristol over the course of many years have been numerous. He made more friends than foes and was widely respected in both local and state political circles.

## FRANK J. LONGO

1971-1975

---

"If Frank Longo went to heaven and found no place reserved for him, he would force a primary," said an anonymous politician after Longo lost in November 1975 after serving two terms as Bristol Mayor. He was a fighter.

Born on June 25, 1918, in New London, Longo moved to Bristol as a youngster and spent the rest of his life here, passing away at age 75 in 1994.

Prior to his involvement in politics, he was the owner of Longo Sports Mart, retiring in 1985 after 50 years. He was heavily involved in sports and was a multi-sport athlete in early days before coaching St. Anthony's High School and St. Anthony's Elementary School basketball teams to a number of honors between the 1940s-1960s. He also placed himself in the community as an effective councilman and member of the Board of Tax Review.

Longo, an honest politician who truly loved Bristol, began his first session as Mayor after being elected in November 1971. His second term followed after a win at the polls in 1973.

One of the town's most colorful politicians ever, as a candidate one year, he took a horse to a meeting to show that he wasn't horsing around and once hopped on the back of a city sanitation truck and collected garbage. He aroused national attention another time when he declared a racist reason for not building public housing.

His accomplishments, such as keeping revaluation away for nearly two decades and saving taxpayers money, were many, but the manner in which he obtained results caught up with him. Like many before him, his friends came and went, but enemies accumulated. He lost re-elected in 1977 and never again held office.

He was very knowledgeable about the city, reciting statistics pertaining to elevation, area, miles of streets, water mains and sewers, population density, tax rate, expenditures, or whatever. He could also provide an accurate verbal history of Bristol past.

A fighter who never sought just the middle ground, in all, his name appeared seven times on the Mayoral ballot. He petitioned his way onto the gubernatorial ballot one year and was arrested in 1989 for trespassing by the Torrington postmaster when he sought petition signatures for a spot on the ballot for U.S. Senator. Charges were dismissed a year later and Longo sued so politicians wouldn't be arrested for gathering signatures in most public places.

Although in frail health in his last years, he continued to make his thoughts known with timely comments to the Readers' Corner of The Bristol Press. He was his own man.

## MICHAEL J. WERNER

1977-June 1984

---

After serving one term as Republican councilman, Mike Werner was elected Mayor in November 1977 as the youngest to do so at age 27, beating incumbent Henry Wojtusik by 1,500 votes in a heavily Democratic city.

In elections in 1979 and 1981 the margins increased, proving his initial victory wasn't a fluke. By 1983, after skeptics said opponents were weak because the Democrats split their ticket, he won easily as one of Bristol's most popular leaders ever.

The likable Werner was said to have been a nice guy from start to finish and kept himself accessible to the public during his terms in office. He was described as a straight shooter and a good politician who made his issues easily understood.

Other attributes were his constant appearances at civic and charitable functions and a good memory of names. Most important, was the fact he was an advocate for Bristol and applied ceaseless efforts in attracting new business and industry to town.

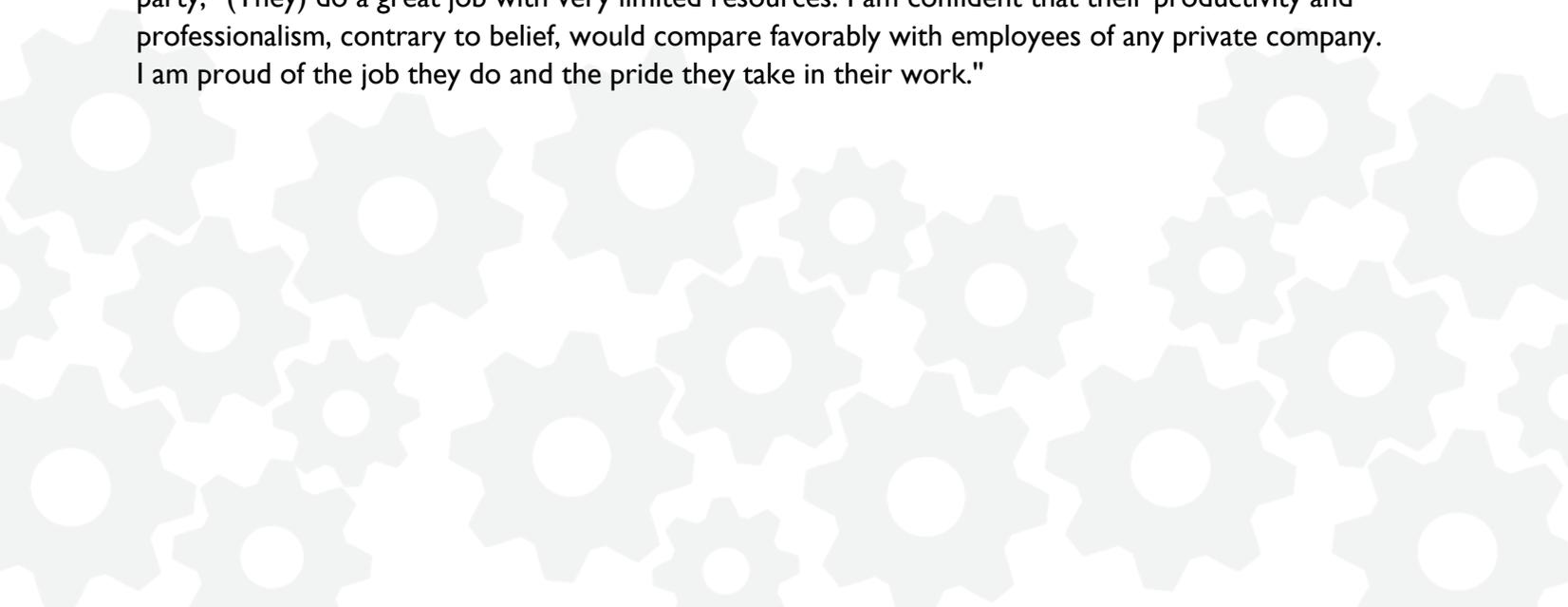
Despite a terrible economy when he took office and for a good part of his terms as Bristol's leader, Werner, who grew up in Bristol, saw the expansion of the Barnes Group, addition of ESPN and many smaller companies, the revitalization of the Centre Mall and development of the North Side and Middle Street Industrial Park.

There were also defeats, such as Krueger Printing and other businesses leaving town and the failure to progress with Rt. 72. Overall, though, his successes and efforts overshadowed the negatives.

On June 1, 1984, just seven months into his fourth term, Werner announced his resignation as Mayor to take the job of executive director of the Greater Bristol Chamber of Commerce. Many agreed the state and city lost one of its brightest Republicans.

A graduate of Southern Connecticut State University, Werner, in addition to politics, was active in a number of church and community groups, including as a member of the Board of Directors of the McCabe-Waters Little League.

In his final day in office, June 30, Werner said this about city employees to an audience at a farewell party, "(They) do a great job with very limited resources. I am confident that their productivity and professionalism, contrary to belief, would compare favorably with employees of any private company. I am proud of the job they do and the pride they take in their work."



## **RALPH G. PAPAZIAN**

April 1984-August 1984

---

Ralph Papazian, a city councilman, was selected to fill the vacancy left by the departure of Mayor Mike Werner when he took the job of executive director of the Greater Bristol Chamber of Commerce in July 1984, after serving seven months of his fourth term in office.

Papazian, born in Worcester, MA on Jan. 21, 1939, moved to Bristol in 1969 after beginning his teaching career in Danbury in 1961. He became head football coach at Bristol Central and taught physical education. While there, he developed the Cooperative Work Experience Program, was a guidance counselor and served as head coach of the boys track team from 1972-3. He was appointed Bristol's supervisor of athletics and physical education in 1986, a position he held until his death at age 55 in January 1995.

He was active in many statewide committees and in 1993 was inducted into the Connecticut High School Coaches' Association Hall of Fame.

His political career took hold in 1977 when he was elected to the Bristol City Council to represent the 78th District. He was elected five terms and served on over 60 boards and commissions during that period. Of his many accomplishments, the most significant involved the restoration of Bristol's parks, a project he personally championed.

He was an active member of the Democratic Town Committee and Bristol's representative to the Democratic State Central Committee. He also served as local campaign coordinator for the elections of both Sen. Christopher Dodd and Gov. William O'Neil.

Papazian was a trustee of the Bristol Boys Club, a corporator at Bristol Hospital and member of St. Joseph's Church.

During his brief stint as Mayor, he faced a number of challenges in addition to the day-to-day responsibilities of running the city. Taking place early while Mayor was a tornado that hit town on July 5. Other problems involved mold in the police-court complex, asbestos at Stafford School and the breakdown of air conditioning in City Hall.

When he left office, Papazian said, "It was an enjoyable experience - it's not something everyone has an opportunity to do. More than being enjoyable, it was a responsible position, sometimes frequently so."

Upon his death, Papazian was recalled as a popular coach, educator and politician who unselfishly devoted many hours to the betterment of Bristol and its citizens.

**JOHN J. LEONE, JR.**  
October 1984-April 1991

---

Bristol native John Leone, a policeman on leave, served three terms on the Bristol City Council before winning a special election in the fall of 1984 to replace Mayor Michael Werner, who became executive director of the Greater Bristol Chamber of Commerce.

He went on to easily win the Mayor's job in 1985, 1987 and 1989, retiring from the police department in 1988.

During a distinguished political career of 12 years, Leone's accomplishments and contributions to Bristol were lengthy. Among them included: bringing Muzzy Field back as one of the best ballparks in the state; bringing about a cleaner Pequabuck River, thanks, in part, to the opening of a new sewage-treatment plant; strong marketing of the technology park - opening of the Quality Inn at the park; ESPN and the Otis Elevator test facility; instrumental in seeing the Eastern Regional Little League Complex here; protection of Nelson's Field; and four years of no taxes, due in part to re-valuation. On the other hand, there were the many complaints on the odor from the sewer plant and of traffic jams from growth.

Critics once said he created new problems by solving old ones, but the old ones were those of a decaying industrial city and the new ones were those of a city with a bright future.

Overall, Leone made Bristol a better place to be.

On April 1, 1991, at the age of 44, Leone, a 1964 Bristol Central High School graduate, left the job of Mayor just seven months before the completion of his term to replace Michael Werner as executive director of the Greater Bristol Chamber of Commerce.

After leaving office both allies and opponents expressed respect for Leone's skill and drive. They agreed he did much for the city, particularly fostering business and development.

In looking back, Leone said, "The art of politics is the art of getting your position across and getting things done. We accomplished a lot of our goals. Did I make mistakes? Probably. But, I did the best job I could."

Leone's contributions to Bristol continued after he was Mayor through his work with the Greater Bristol Chamber of Commerce. A well-connected and organized individual, he helped see Bristol move into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.



## **WILLIAM T. STORTZ**

April 1991-August 1991 Pro-Tempore, August 1991-1993, November 2005-2007

---

Republican Bill Stortz, who was born in New York City in 1936, moved to Bristol in 1969. He became involved in local politics to give back to a community that helped raise money for his son, Timmy, who died of leukemia in 1976. He became chairman of the Republican Town Committee and served in that capacity between 1976 and 1979. He was elected a city councilman in 1979 and held that position for 10 of the next 12 years.

When Mayor John Leone, Jr., stepped down to take the job of executive director of the Greater Bristol Chamber of Commerce in April 1991, Stortz, a councilman who had a B.S. in business from CCSU, was picked to serve the remainder of Leone's term.

Stortz then won a special election two months prior to the 1991 elections and then won the November election to hold on to the job. He had been a strong councilman and during his six months as interim Mayor that year proved to be the candidate in hard times.

During his initial months in office, he dealt with city officials, union leaders and department heads more successfully than expected because of his reputation of saying, "no."

Two years later when preparing to be re-elected against a popular councilman, Frank Nicastro, who like him, was defined as a maverick, Stortz had a strong opponent. Nicastro had been both busy and effective as a councilman.

In his campaign, Stortz claimed he steered through two and a half years of tough times without raising taxes precipitously or cutting services drastically. He negotiated hard with city unions, reversing the "we-must-surrender" despair of the 1980s.

Among a list of accomplishments during his service as councilman and Mayor, Stortz opened the Chippens Hill School, started the review of athletic fields and facilities in town, started the Educational Development Program that allowed grants and financial assistance, brought CIGNA to town with 700 employees and was instrumental in the Waste Water and Water Processing Plant.

Prior to his 1993 loss to Nicastro, the consensus was that both were good choices, it was just a matter of which would get more votes.

Prior to, during and after holding the office of Mayor, Stortz involved himself in a number of civic-minded groups, the Elks, Knights of Columbus, Friends of the Bristol Public Library, United Way, and as a mentor program volunteer. Another role he's filled has been as an eucharistic minister, instructor and lecturer at St. Gregory's Church.

## FRANK NICASTRO

1993--2003

---

There is an old political joke that The Bristol Press updated in an editorial when incumbent Republican Bill Stortz and City Councilman and Democrat Frank Nicastro were preparing to face one another in the 1993 Bristol Mayoral election: A gunman chases a citizen **down** a darkened alley, trapped and alone, the citizen faces the attacker and raises trembling hands. 'Stortz or Nicastro?' the gunman demands. Citizen hesitates and shrugs,

"Shoot," he sighs. This was the feeling among many who would vote in the 1993 Mayoral election because the candidates, both somewhat mavericks, were considered equal in political qualities.

Nicastro won the election and has been deemed an effective and popular Mayor.

He was re-elected in 1995 and 1997 although at first announcing he wouldn't seek a third term. But, Bristol voters made it known he was again needed and he ran and won.

An energetic individual, Nicastro, Bristol born and raised and a military veteran known for his talent and love for playing the trumpet, was City Councilman since 1987 before his run for the city's highest political office.

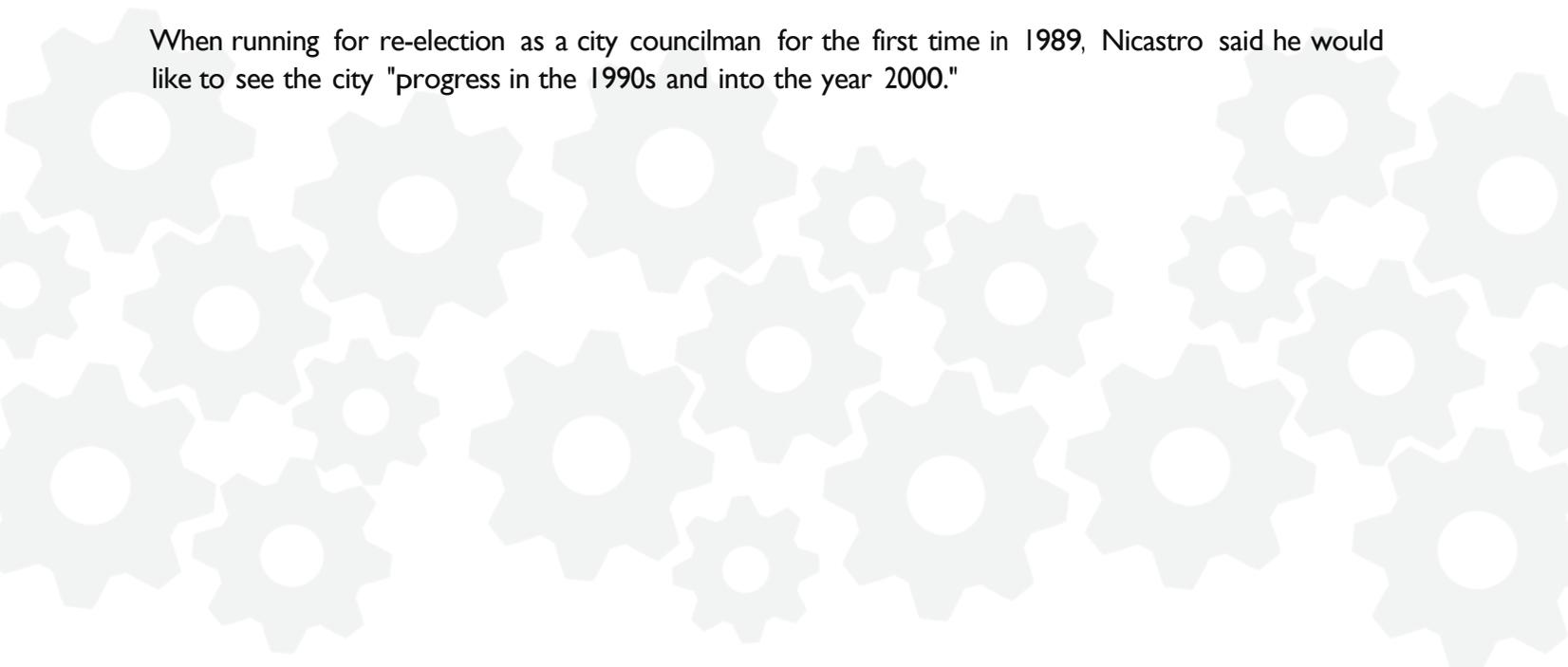
Prior to being elected, he was Bristol attendance officer, beginning in 1978. His other jobs included being: security supervisor, City of Bristol, 1975-78; assistant manager at John Hancock Life Insurance co., Bristol, 1964-75; and supervisor at Pratt & Whitney Aircraft, 1961-64.

His involvement in city government included being a member of the Juvenile Commission since 1986 and being a member of the Inland Wetlands Commission from 1983-87.

In being re-elected a third time in 1997, Nicastro had displayed an overall satisfactory leadership, showcasing three straight years of tax freezes, new firefighting apparatus, additional police and a drop in the crime rate, improved scores for local schools and new ownership and occupants for the former New Departure plant on Chippens Hill.

The 1997 electorate expressed a confidence that Nicastro would move the city forward by tackling issues and concerns vital for the long-term prosperity of the city.

When running for re-election as a city councilman for the first time in 1989, Nicastro said he would like to see the city "progress in the 1990s and into the year 2000."



## GERRARD COUTURE

### 2003-2005

---

After Democratic Mayor Frank Nicasastro retired in 2003, he was succeeded by Gerard J. Couture, who had attended St. Anthony High School and was a stellar three sport athlete (soccer, basketball and baseball). After graduation he attended the Hartford School of Accounting. He also served in the United States National Guard.

Prior to his political career he was a city police officer; owner and operator of the Biscayne West Luncheonette for twenty-four years; and worked as a sheriff's deputy and state marshall.

Beginning in 1991, Couture served twelve years on the city council. He was a member of the public works, transportation, veterans and salary committees and a liaison to the Board of Education. Serving on the fire board for twelve years, as Mayor he was instrumental in air-conditioning the firehouses and Senior Center gymnasium. During his term he strove to engage with and assist all constituencies.

Couture's challenger in the election of 2003 was former Mayor William Stortz. After winning the election he faced several obstacles. The nation, state and city were confronting difficult economic times; the second largest city tax payer moved out-of-town; there were several costly and incomplete projects to be resolved; and negotiation would be needed with the fire and police unions as well as resolving the Board of Education budget.

The newly elected Mayor for the first time in city history was provided with a paid, part-time administrative assistant to help with his duties. Couture did not shy away from controversial or backburner issues; to the contrary, he resurrected these and brought them to the forefront. During his term, he pushed an ambitious agenda; the most significant of these being the Downtown Economic and Community Development Project. He felt the timing was right. This planning was the first time since the 1960's that the revitalization of the city's downtown was given a serious chance for successful completion, making Bristol a retail destination and providing an increased tax base. Numerous meetings to increase public awareness were held. With approval of both the city council and board of finance, the city purchased the entire seventeen downtown acres from its private owner, thus giving the city control over its own destiny. With the state promising significant financial support, a multiplex facility was planned after demolition of the nearly abandoned Bristol Centre Mall. This would include the Bristol Boys and Girls Club, a recreation and community center, a multi-purpose field house including a pool, a performing arts center, and a parking garage. With public and private collaboration, retail and commercial space, restaurants, office space, and residential units, as well as a pedestrian friendly plaza would augment these facilities. Detailed studies were conducted regarding future traffic flow and the projected retail growth that could transpire. Although the Downtown Economic and Community Development Project did not transpire during the next administration, it served as a catalyst for the future downtown development.

Four years earlier, land for the 31 acres Southwest Industrial Park off Middle Street, was acquired by eminent domain. Progress languished, contributing to the loss of the city's second largest taxpayer. The city was faced with the impending loss of a \$1.2 million federal grant, unless the court ordered removal of two elderly residents from their lifetime homestead could be completed. Couture and several city

personnel devoted numerous hours resolving this issue to the sisters' satisfaction. The industrial park could now move forward.

Several other areas were addressed during his administration: The Bristol Youth and Family Conference Center moved from City Hall to High Street; the school budget was fully funded two consecutive years, being fully compliant with the "No Child Left Behind" national incentive; planning continued for the extension of Rte. 72 through Forestville to Middle Street; a new parking lot was constructed on Memorial Boulevard to provide improved access for the elderly and former military personnel to Veterans Memorial Park ; the renovation and doubling of space at the Bristol Public Library commenced with construction in 2004; improvements at the F.N. Manross Memorial Library in Forestville were also accomplished; work was completed on the North Main Street streetscape beautification project; dredging of Pine Lake and Birge's Ponds was completed; the Robert's Property Committee discussed appropriate use of this acquisition; Rockwell and Page Parks were improved and more open space acquired; and 25 new businesses were added to the Grand List, as well as 1,000 new jobs.

Mayor Couture was viewed as a compassionate, sensitive and caring Mayor who listened more than he talked. He endeavored to promote a city where the quality of life was second to none and where all residents were treated with dignity and respect.



## ART WARD 2007-2013

---

Mayor Arthur J. Ward was born in Bristol on March 7, 1947. He married Patricia (Cassina) Ward on February 22, 1969. They had three children: Kim Marie, Kevin Michael and Erin Caroline, as well as seven grandchildren.

Ward graduated from Bristol Eastern High School and attended Tunxis Community College. After high school graduation, he joined the United States Marine Corps (1966-1969) and proudly served in Vietnam, and was a recipient of the Purple Heart medal.

He served as Chairperson of the Bristol Zoning Board of Appeals from 1985 to 1993. Beginning in 1993 until 2007, he was elected to seven terms on the Bristol City Council. Elected as Mayor of the City of Bristol in 2007, he served three terms from 2007 to 2013. He was a member of the Bristol Board of Finance during 2014-2015.

Ward vowed to make veterans a priority and accomplished this through his active membership and participation in numerous veterans organizations; his constant advocacy for veterans and his work as a Veteran Service Officer for the Connecticut Veteran's Advisory Committee, having been appointed by Congressman John Larson. He was inducted into the Ct. Veterans Hall of Fame, Class of 2016. He was also a member and later Chairperson of the Bristol Veteran's Council.

As past Executive Committee Chairperson and Commander of the Seicheprey Bristol American Legion Post #2, he was awarded lifetime membership in 1995. He served on its Honor Guard Burial Detail; and was Chairperson of the 2015/2016 Northeast Regional American Legion Baseball Tournament held at Muzzy Field.

He was Vice-President of the Bristol Vietnam Memorial Association and was responsible for the erection of the Vietnam Memorials in Bristol and Forestville. He was also President of the Marine Corps Vietnam Reunion Association.

Ward was a lifetime member of the Marine Corps League, the Purple Heart Association, the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Chapter # 5, the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post #1979 and the Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA). Locally he was a lifetime member of the Bristol Lodge of Elks # 1010, the Bristol Italian Social Club, and the Bristol Polish American Club, as well as a member of Bristol Korean War Veterans and the St. Joseph Polish Society.

Within the community he was chairperson and member of the Board of Directors of the Development Board of the Bristol Boys and Girls Club and Corporator of the Development Foundation and Audit and Compliance Committee of the Bristol Hospital.

Arthur J. Ward's contribution not only to his country through his military service and to the State of Connecticut and City of Bristol certainly attest to his willingness to share his time and energy on behalf of others.

Arthur J. Ward died on June 29, 2022 at seventy-five years of age.

## KEN COCKAYNE

### 2013-2017

---

Kenneth Cockayne was elected to his first term as Mayor of the City of Bristol in November 2013 and was re-elected in 2015. He was only the second Republican to hold this position during the past quarter century.

Mayor Cockayne was raised and educated in Bristol. Prior to his political career, he was self-employed as an insurance agent in a family-owned business.

Cockayne first became involved in city government as a member of the Roberts's Property Committee, formed in 2002. Recognizing the satisfaction derived from serving the community, he ran for the City Council in 2007 and was elected to three consecutive terms. As a councilman, he served on several major boards including the real estate, ordinance, and salary committees, as well as the public works board. He was also engaged as liaison to the Bristol Housing Authority, the Downtown Development Corporation and the Bristol Youth Commission.

His first term as Mayor was centered around creating economic development and enhancing the quality of life for all Bristol residents. He focused on the elimination of blight conditions within the city and improving public safety. He also continued with the long-term goal and ongoing revitalization of downtown Bristol.

During his second term these initiatives were continued in addition to promoting the arts within the city, and working towards more citizen participation with city government through public referendum and streamlining the manner in which businesses and residents interacted with city hall. He was committed to preserving Bristol's reputation as a great place to live for people of all ages. In 2013, he proposed an ordinance to provide an elderly volunteer tax credit, which was adopted and continues to be utilized.

Mayor Cockayne was also engaged at both the regional and state levels with his peers. He was an integral part of the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments (NVCOG) Committee, serving both on its executive board committee and as its secretary. He also met monthly with other Connecticut municipal leaders to discuss regional transportation planning, allocation of resources and regional development, as well as municipally shared services.

Having an avid passion for baseball, Mayor Cockayne served in the past as a t-ball coach and as Past President of the Bristol Slow Pitch Softball League. He was pleased when the Bristol Blues Collegiate Baseball League entry selected Muzzy Field in 2015 as their home field. Since their arrival they have provided excellent entertainment, as well as garnering excellent community support.



## ELLEN ZOPPO-SASSU

2017-2021

---

Ellen Zoppo-Sassu became interested in local government while in elementary school, when she attended city meetings with her father who served on the Board of Finance. After graduating from Providence College in 1990 with a Political Science degree, Zoppo-Sassu in 1992 earned a Master's Degree in Public Administration with a concentration in local and urban government from the University of Connecticut. In 2017 she defeated Republican incumbent Kenneth Cockayne, to become the first woman elected Mayor of the City of Bristol. She was re-elected in 2019.

Prior to becoming Mayor, Zoppo-Sassu, a Democrat, served eight years on the City Council. During that period, she helped organize and served as Chairperson of the Code Enforcement Committee, which coordinated a city policy response to the sub-standard housing issues and blight within the city, including a rewrite of the City's Housing and Property Maintenance ordinances. Within these years the Bristol Public Library renovation was completed on time and under budget; the TEAM (Tourism, Arts, Entertainment and Museum) Committee was created and three city parks renovated. She quickly earned a reputation for getting things done and solving long-standing problems and issues for both the departments with which she interacted and for the citizens of her council district.

While on the City Council, and continuing into her Mayoral administration, she chaired the Task Force to develop a building and construction plan for the re-use of the historic Memorial Boulevard School. The Bristol Arts and Innovation Magnet School and the Rockwell Theater opened in the Fall of 2022 and served as a springboard for additional downtown revitalization efforts including the development of Bristol Health's downtown location; housing by Carrier on Main and North Main Streets, and the construction of Wheeler Health's new corporate headquarters. In addition, a long-awaited realignment of the Rte. 72 and Rte. 69 intersections in the West End was initiated, as well as the planning stages of a new and enhanced gateway entrance for Riverside Avenue including the new Veterans Bridge and a \$2 million Brownfield grant for the Sessions factory. Planning continued for the building and design for a renovated City Hall, which opened in October of 2023.

As Mayor, Zoppo-Sassu also encouraged efficiencies and collaboration among city departments. Under her tenure the Park and Recreation Department merged with the Youth and Community Service Department, and the Water Pollution Control division was moved from Public Works to the Water Department. New initiatives were created including the Task Force on Opioid Prevention, the Arts and Culture Commission, a Diversity Council, and the Senior Tax Relief Committee, which introduced the Senior Volunteer Tax Credit.

In 2020, the Covid -19 pandemic took center stage followed closely by racial unrest following the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis. The Mayor's Office coordinated the city's response to addressing food insecurity; as well as testing and vaccination sites, while ensuring that city services continued. The following year the City of Bristol received \$28 million from the federal government's American Rescue Plan Act. A bipartisan task force was created to administer these funds for city projects, non-profit organizations and businesses. The Parks Master Plan was created and several Public Works initiatives were launched.

Work was done to leverage the resources of the Health District, the Police Department and health care agencies to create pathways for recovery for citizens who were suffering from substance misuse. The City of Bristol Recovery Alliance (C.O.B.R.A.) was founded as a diversionary program for the police to utilize when encountering citizens who were struggling with these issues. The city received the prestigious Silver Telly Award for its work creating a series of Public Service Announcements addressing the city's opioid public health crisis.

The Zoppo-Sassu administration's four-year tenure included a wide range of policies and initiatives: implementation procedures to increase police and fire personnel recruitment, robust educational funding, Community Conversations on diversity, equity and inclusion, the services of the Farmers Market, the Shrub Road open space acquisition, hiring over a half-dozen new department heads, enhancement of city cemeteries and historic preservation efforts. Her administration has left a long-lasting legacy for the City of Bristol.



## JEFFREY CAGGIANO

2021-Present

---

A lifelong Bristol resident, Jeffrey Caggiano was elected Mayor of Bristol in November 2021. Before becoming Mayor, Caggiano's political journey began serving on the Bristol City Zoning Board for two years. He went on to be elected to the Bristol Board of Education for two terms as well as concurrently serving as the chairman of the Republican Town Committee for six years. His commitment to public service and a strong ambition to change Bristol for the better led him to run for Mayor in 2021, which culminated in a Republican sweep of the Mayor's office and city council for the first time in over 120 years.

In his first two years, Caggiano shepherded the start of major downtown revitalization with new projects, most notably the Wheeler Health headquarters, a \$25 million project in Downtown Bristol. This building is a key part of Mayor Caggiano's vision to breathe new life into Bristol's downtown. With over 160 new employees working in downtown, this endeavor will serve as a beacon for further economic development in the City's center and with a unique shared parking arrangement it will encourage new projects to be developed. Mayor Caggiano secured \$6.8 million in state economic development funds and \$12 million in transportation funding to transform the gateways into downtown Bristol as well as improve the roadway and streetscape on Riverside Avenue and Park Street. Caggiano has emphasized private development and job creation in Bristol's neglected downtown district as well as other areas in the city. The number of business registrations surged from 344 in 2020 to 515 in 2021. This trend continued with the number rising to 561 in 2022 then to 595 in 2023.

The growth of new businesses in Bristol has been a testament to Caggiano's efforts to revitalize the city's economy. Tragically, his tenure as Mayor has not been without extreme sorrow. In October 2022, two police officers, Sgt Alex Hamzy and Lt Dustin DeMonte, were murdered in the line of duty. In the wake of the City's devastating loss, Mayor Caggiano led Bristol's response and support for the families of the officers and the Bristol Police Department. He provided steady leadership, comforted a grieving community and worked to continue to ensure the fallen officers are properly honored and remembered.

As Mayor Caggiano looks ahead to the remainder of his second term, he remains committed to building on the progress made in his first three years. A continued focus on downtown development with a new Carrier project adding 104 apartments and 8000 sq ft of retail space focused on restaurants and shops is currently in development. Overall, the future looks bright for the City as Mayor Caggiano works to fulfill his vision of economic growth and building a vibrant new Bristol.