

THE GIBSONVILLE MUSEUM AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

VOL. 10 NO. 1 ~ WINTER 2020

A Chronicle of Town Managers

Everyone knows the Mayor and Alderman from the news. The unsung hero of municipalities and a local leader not often in the headlines is the Town Manager. Their primary role is to implement the policies of the elected officials for whom they work. To do this, the town manager assumes responsibility for preparing the annual budget, hiring and firing personnel, and directing day-to-day operations. This position is similar to a corporation's president or a chief executive in that they are responsible for the overall performance of their organizations. As the top administrator, the manager organizes and directs a team of department heads, supervisors, technicians, and support staff to implement programs and deliver public services. Our Town Manager works a traditional work week, is at Town Hall daily, and all in all ensure the township is sailing smoothly.

Gibsonville's Town Manager include:

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jerry S. Nix, *President*
Deleno Flynn, *Vice-President*
Jim Ezekiel, *Treasurer*
Anne Manuli, *Secretary*
Howard Hendricks, *Curator*
Lethe Yow Walters, *Docents*
Sandra Moulton, *Membership*
Craig York, *Nominations*
Karen York, *Projects*
Sean Dowell, *Publications*
Elise "Tootie" Burke, *At Large*
Edna Jo Hackett, *At Large*
Boyce Johnson, *At Large*

- October 1922 – December 1924: Mr. Henry R. Story. Gibsonville's first full time 'Town Clerk.' He served until his health no longer allowed him to do so.
- 1924 – 1925: Joe T. Allen. A local attorney and temporary replacement.
- 1925 – 1926 or 27: Melvin Odell Wyrick. Served for 13 months.
- 1926 or 27 – 1928: J. A. Nuckols. Served for 16 months.
- 1929 – 1972: Melvin O. Wyrick. Forty-three years.
- 1972 – 1978: Phil Price.
- 1978: Don Brookshire. Acting manager until the appointment of a replacement.
- 1979 – 1988: John Bain. Ten years in this position.
- 1988: Jack Varklett
- 1989 – 1991: Chris Rath
- 1991 – 2007: Deleno Flynn. Sixteen years of service.
- 2007 - Present: Ben Baxley. Our current town manager. Twelve years in this position.

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The longest serving town managers have been Melvin. O. Wyrick (43+ years), Deleno Flynn (16 years), and our current town manager Ben Baxley (12 years and counting).

A Chronicle of Town Managers

Melvin Odell (M.O.) Wyrick



Melvin (M.O.) Wyrick. Gibsonville's longest serving town manager (43+ years)

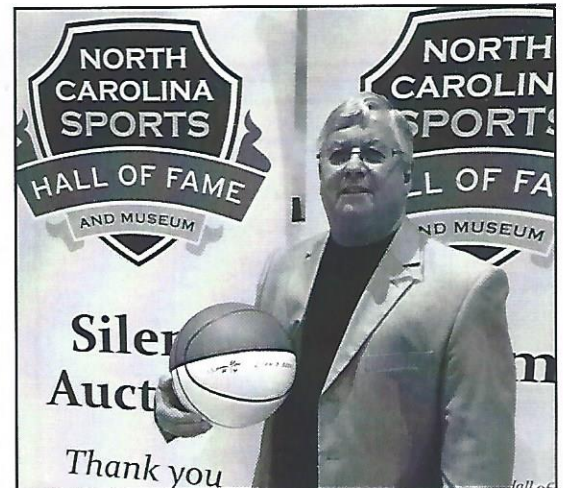
According to his December 25, 2004 obituary in the News & Record, "Melvin Wyrick was the son of the late John Alfred and Luzena May Wyrick and was married to the late Ruby Huffines Wyrick. He was a native of Gibsonville, graduating from Gibsonville High School as valedictorian of his class and later attended Elon College. He was town clerk for the town of Gibsonville for 43 years [and served under seven Gibsonville Mayors]... In 1995, he was honored by the Gibsonville Board of Aldermen for his long and dedicated service by naming the assembly room in the city hall the "Melvin O. Wyrick Board Room" and hanging his portrait in the room. He was a member of Sharon Lutheran Church where he served as Sunday school superintendent, teacher, president of the church council, treasurer and choir member for over 50 years. He was the last active charter member of the Gibsonville Lions Club and the only member of that club to receive the prestigious "Melvin Jones" award. In 1999, he was named one of the top 150 people who helped shape Alamance

County in the first 150 years. He wrote a history of the Town of Gibsonville for its centennial celebration in 1971. [Mr. Wyrick's town history is available at www.gmhsi.org at our History He also wrote a history of his life when he was 80 years old entitled, "80 and Counting." He passed December 24th, 2004 at 96 years of age.

Deleno Flynn

Per a recent interview with GMHSI personnel:

- Education: A lifetime resident of Gibsonville, Mr. Flynn attended all twelve formative years at the old Gibsonville School. After high school, he attended Wingate College and NC State University. He received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Engineering in 1969 from NCSU.
- Experience: Approx. 18 years in construction and real estate experience prior to working for Gibsonville. From 1991 – 2007, Mr. Flynn served as town manager under Mayors Moricle, Moulton, and Williams.
- About Being Town Manager: "In my first week on the job, the Town received a letter from the State Treasurer that the town's Fund Balance was negative 5% and that they would raise our tax rate if we didn't correct the problem. Correcting that took about three years. I'm proud of that but prouder of how our staff worked hard helping me make tough decisions about how the town could be more efficient... [Ultimately significant capital improvements for trash collection and more efficient water metering freed up personnel to improve other services. With these improvements,] I'm convinced that our little town was probably the most efficient community in the state. Now, with all the growth that Gibsonville has experienced, the dividends are no increase in personnel in the public works department."
- A Personal Accomplishment: "When I first became Town Manager there were only two subdivisions in progress and both were over 50% complete. Before I retired there were thirteen (13) subdivisions being developed and several big ones in the making. My engineering and construction background came in very helpful while working with these developers."

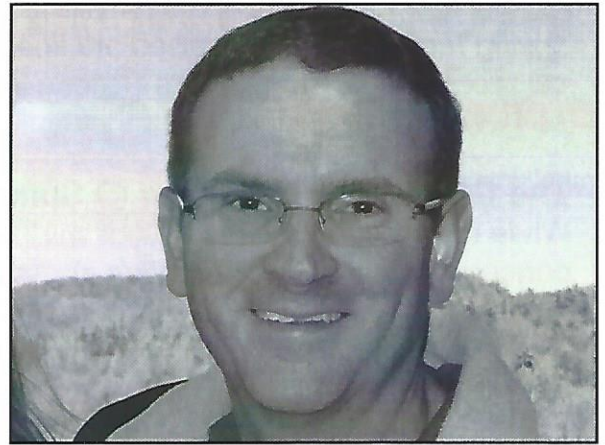


Deleno Flynn, our second longest serving town manager (16 years)

Ben Baxley

Per a recent interview with GMHSI personnel:

- Education: Mr. Baxley graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a B.A. in Public Policy Analysis (1998). In 2000, he also earned a Masters Degree in Public Administration from Appalachian State University (2000).
- Experience: Mr. Baxley was prior assistant town manager / planning director for the Town of Elizabethtown, NC (2000 – 2003) as well as town administrator for the Town of Springdale, SC (2003 – 2007). Since 2007, he has served as the town manager for Gibsonville. Mr. Baxley is Gibsonville's third longest serving town manager. He has served under Mayor Williams, our town's longest Mayor as of this term (2001 – present).
- About Being Town Manager: "The town manager's job is not an easy one. The demands are significant, but the personal satisfaction is great. Town managers play a crucial role in the life of their communities. The major character trait is "wanting to make a difference." That is important. The advantage of working in town government is that you see the results immediately; they are tangible. If you don't get the garbage collected, streets plowed, or the potholes filled, the effects are immediately visible."
- Favorite Memory: "My favorite memory as town manager is the day a preschool aged boy and his mom visited my office. The boy shook my hand, introduced himself, and said that he saw the Town's garbage truck picking up his garbage can and that he wanted set up a time to visit the garbage truck. That was a request that I was glad to assist with."



Ben Baxley, our third longest serving and current town manager (12 years and counting)

Twenty+ Year Town Staff

We would recognize all of our town staff for their diligent efforts, but don't have the space. That said, allow us to note the staff with an over twenty year commitment to Gibsonville. These include and have included (in alphabetical order): Melanie Allen, Wayne Joiner, Josie Kivett, Coy May, Paul Eugene (Buddy) Sipe, Robert Tickle, Roy Williamson, Kenny Wood, and Laurie Yarbrough.

Thanks & Further Efforts

We have not recognized Alderman, staff, and other town leaders in above. This does not mean their contributions go unnoticed. The GMHSI thanks all of these individuals for their leadership and contributions.

Also the GMHSI has continued interest in information on town leaders. Should you have information to add or artifacts you would like to contribute, please email us at info@gmhsi.org.

GMHSI Calendar (2020): Our 2020 "Welcome to Gibsonville. Welcome Home" calendars are available for sale at Gibsonville Antiques. This is located at 106 East Railroad Avenue in downtown.

Our photography contest winners for this calendar include Sherry Gresham, Laurie Yarbrough, Keith O'Leary, Christina Miller, Deleno Flynn, Joseph Barry Lemons, George W Siple, and Sandra Whitesell. Our runners up were Amanda (AK) Treadwell, Trinity Taylor, Casey Taylor, Edna Jo Hackett, Isobella Moulton, Mark Gresham, and Lori Lacassagne. The GMHSI thanks these individuals and all whom contributed to our photo contest.

Support for the Gibsonville Museum & Historical Society Inc (GMHSI)

Annual membership, the Gibsonville Car Show, and the below calendar are the GMHSI's primary fundraising methods. Funds raised are financial support of the Gibsonville Museum and/or related, historical preservation efforts of this Historic Society. For more information on this local worthy organization, see www.gmhsi.org.

The Gibsonville Car Show @ Summer 2020.

While typically in April, this event will be rescheduled to a summer date due to COVID-19 safety concerns. For more information about advertising at, participation in, and/or for general inquiries, please contact us at info@gmhsi.org.

GMHSI Calendar (2021) See details below:

- *Theme:* Now & Then, Gibsonville @ 150 Years.
- *Advertising:* Space is today available for advertising in our 2021 calendar. Contact us now for your spot in this quality, annual publication.
- *Photography Contest Details:* High resolution quality vertical or horizontal photographs can be submitted as early as July 2020. There are 24 chances to have your photography in this calendar: a) one for each of the 12 months and also b) in our 12 runners up.
- *Voting:* Photographs with the most online votes will win this contest. Votes are \$1 each, tallied at minimum of 5, and are donations to the GMHSI. Voting will end 60 days after starting.
- *Prizes & Announcement:* A \$100 honorarium will be awarded to the cover winning photograph. A \$25 honorarium will be awarded to the top eleven (11) other winners. Winners will be announced at the 2020 Fall Festival.
- *Full Details:* To be made available through our website, www.gmhsi.org.