

Mike Meyers

Nominated by Don Schnitzler

Former Marshfield Mayor Mike Meyers' interest in community affairs has led to a 45-year record of meaningful public and political service. During these years his efforts as a private citizen, alderman, and mayor have significantly impacted the quality of life throughout the greater Marshfield community.



His first "official" community service began with an appointment in May 1978 to the Marshfield Parks and Forestry Committee. Just a year later, he was elected and served as the committee's chairperson.

During his tenure, the committee developed a long-range plan for Wildwood Park and Zoo, worked with the Wildwood Park Zoological Society to fund the addition of a wolf pen at the zoo, and recommended playground equipment for Marshfield's growing list of neighborhood parks.

In April 1982, Meyers made his first attempt at elected office when he ran for the 7th Ward Alderman seat against incumbent Dennis Schulhauser. Voting was close, 273 to 269, with Meyers losing out by just four votes.

Despite the loss, then Mayor Marilyn Hardacre, recognized Meyers' interest and commitment to the community with an appointment to the Marshfield Fire and Police Commission. At the time, the commission was managing a disagreement about manpower needs and implementation of a paid-on-call (POC) system at the fire department, and, at the police department, installation of a new computer system -- a printer and two computer terminals -- for recording police calls.

As the 1985 Spring election approached Meyers threw his hat in the ring a second time, this time seeking the office of city clerk. Again, running against an incumbent, City Clerk Gerold Michaelson, proved unsuccessful.

The following year, 7th Ward Alderman Dennis Schulhauser announced that he would not seek re-election. Meyers, the only person to return nomination papers, was on the ballot unopposed, elected, and seated as 7th Ward alderman at the organizational meeting of the city council in April 1986. Meyers represented the 7th Ward through 1992 when he chose not to seek re-election, and then again between 1994 and 2002.

As a "new" alderman, Meyers considered the pros and cons of moving city offices from the original Marshfield City Hall on East Second Street to the Central Plaza (former Marshfield

Clinic building) on South Central Avenue; supported the ordinance creating the position of city administrator; served on the selection committee for the hiring the city's first administrator, Randy Allen; and eventually reconsidered the fate of the old City Hall and its ultimate sale to a developer rather than being razed.

A 1992 referendum approving the construction of a near east boulevard through central Marshfield was passed, so when Meyers returned to the common council in 1994, agenda items frequently included planning, financing, remediation and construction issues related to seeing the boulevard completed. As an alderman, he supported a Wildwood Park Road Improvement Project, promoted safety concerns by arguing against silencing railroad whistles as trains passed through town, and, following several unprecedented rain events, listened to concerned citizens who had experienced basement backups, and then worked through the public works department to find a solution preventing future similar occurrences.

In January 1998, Meyers spurred a push for the city to have a presence on the World Wide Web telling the Finance, Budget, and Personnel Committee that the city was behind the times when it came to communication. "We're missing the boat as far as communicating with the outside world (by not having a web page)," he said. Within a few months that shortcoming was corrected though, as the city prepared for the next millennium with its own presence on the internet.

Meyers and three other candidates ran for the office of Mayor in 2002. Normally, city primaries were held when needed only in conjunction with other county-wide primaries. For this election though, the Common Council unanimously supported holding a special primary election during February to narrow the field of candidates from four to two.

When the primary returns came in, Meyers and incumbent Mayor Chris Jockheck stood as the top two vote getters, advancing them to the April general election. At that election Marshfield voters chose Meyers for his first term as city mayor. Then again in 2004 and 2006 they granted him second and third terms. After six years as Mayor, he decided not to run again in 2008.

During Meyers' six years as mayor, the boulevard project (Veterans Parkway) was completed. In his dedication remarks, Meyers said, "Today, we are all together to mark the most significant, in fact, the most spectacular development our city has ever experienced in its history, save perhaps the rebuilding of our city after it was totally destroyed by the Great Fire of 1887." As intended, the boulevard, realigned Oak Avenue, and Peach Avenue underpass significantly improved traffic in and through Marshfield.

Under Meyers' stewardship as mayor the city successfully negotiated the development of the Holiday Inn and Conference Center, 750 South Central Avenue. That development included ninety-one additional hotel rooms, an indoor water park, restaurant, and large conference spaces. As final preparations were being made for its opening, the new Pick 'n Save Grocery Store, 641

South Central Avenue, opened and began providing Marshfield's Southside residents with a convenient grocery store location.

Developments often have ripple effects throughout the community and these two 2004 projects were no exception. As Holiday Inn construction continued, the owners of Best Western Clearwaters Hotel and Convention Center completed a \$2 million expansion and upgrade project at their facilities. On the northside, meanwhile, Festival Foods completed an expansion and remodeling project reported as a \$3 million investment.

After leaving the mayor's Office in 2008, Meyers served as the general manager at Mueller Publishing. He has since retired. He also was a community representative on the Marshfield News-Herald Editorial Board, and he was reappointed to the Marshfield Police and Fire Commission.

In 2015, Meyers joined the North Wood County Historical Society Board of Directors, serving two terms as its president. He has been an advocate for the society throughout the community and written and given multiple history presentations on some of his favorite interests; Marshfield Schools, Marshfield Fire Department, and Marshfield Telephone Company (just to name a few). He also continues to serve on the Wood County Civil Service Commission since first being appointed in 1986, and as chairman since 1988.

Meyers' stewardship of the mayor's office was good for the community. As a member of the Marshfield Common Council he was known as an outspoken leader, and today -- as in the past -- private citizen Mike Meyers continues to be an advocate and cheerleader for the city, its people, and its history.