

MAYOR

Wilmington's 1739 colonial *Charter* called for two Burgesses to manage the affairs of the Borough of Wilmington. When Wilmington's Charter was revised in 1832, creating a City, the powers and duties of the First Burgess of the Borough were vested in a Mayor. Since the time of the original *Charter* was granted, various City officials had been elected or appointed to assist in seeing that its provisions were carried out, but as the City functions became more complex, a number of Board and Commissions were established to carry out certain functions in the City. In the latter nineteenth century, there was a trend to establish departments rather than Boards and in 1907, the Mayor formed an Executive Committee made up of the Presidents of all of the Departments. This would mark the beginning of the process of centralizing the administration of the City under the Office of the Mayor. In 1965, when the City was granted home rule, the current governmental structure was established. Today, the Office of the Mayor is assisted in the administration of the City by eleven departments and a number of City offices. The Departments include: [Auditing](#), [Finance](#), [Human Resources](#), [Law](#), [Licenses and Inspections](#), [Parks and Recreation](#), [Planning and Development](#), [Public Works](#), [Real Estate and Housing](#), and the [Office of Public Safety](#) which includes the [Police Department](#) and [Fire Department](#), and the Offices of the [Fire Marshal](#) and [Emergency Management](#). The Mayor's Office has also established City offices to advise it on specific functions; these offices currently include [Constituent Services](#), [Cultural Affairs](#), [Economic Development](#) and [Management and Budget](#). A Mayor's Office of Community Affairs, which was in existence between c. 1950-c. 1995, has been disbanded. The Wilmington Arts Commission which was formed as a 501(c)(3), but whose Board was appointed by the Mayor, and the Greater Wilmington Development Council, another 501(c)(3), which focused on implementing solutions to Wilmington's economic, social, educational, and governmental problems, have both been disbanded.

Office of the Mayor (1907-current)

- Advisory (Executive) Board Minutes (1907-1922) 5100-000-135
- Administrative Files (1905-1972, 1990-2003) 5100-001-033
- Administrative Files (1993-2008) 5100-B01-033
- Project Files (1950-1965) 5100-001-035
- Subject Files (1963-1987) [includes files of Mayor's Admin. Assts.] 5100-000-053
- Subject Files (1973-1988) 5100-000-187
- Subject Files concerning Community Development (1975-1993) 5100-000-305
- Files of the Administrative Assistant to the Mayor (1967-1976) 5100-000-058
- Files of the Administrative Assistant to the Mayor (1994-1995) 5100-000-424
- Speeches (1973-1984) 5100-000-189
- Correspondence (1977-1984) 5100-000-252
- Chronological and Correspondence Files (1985-1993) 5100-000-170
- Newspaper Clippings (1977-1984) 5100-000-417
- Newspaper Clippings (1984-1992) 5100-000-418
- Public Information Officer's Files (1979-1987) 5100-000-329
- Photographs of Events (c. 1980-1990) 5100-000-420
- Program Files, Mayor's Committee on People with Disabilities (1987-1992) 5100-001-429
- Files related to Special Events (1990-1992) 5100-000-180
- Correspondence related to Special Events (1991-1995) 5100-000-416

Mayor's Office of Community Affairs (c. 1953-c. 2004)

- Program Files (1953-1995) 5100-000-179
- Subject Files (1972-1993) 5100-001-184
- Correspondence Files (1991) 5100-000-185
- Enterprise Community Program, Meeting Minutes (1995-1999, 2003) 5100-001-451
- Enterprise Community Program, Executive Board Minutes (1995-2002) 5100-001-450
- Enterprise Community Program, Executive Board Minutes (2002-2004) 5100-001-449
- Enterprise Community Program, Administrative Files (1995-1998) 5100-001-452

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enterprise Community Program, Reimbursement Reports (1996-2004) 	5100-001-448
Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs (OCA) (c. 1975-current)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office of Cultural Affairs Files (1985-1988) Summer in the City (1987-1988) 350th Anniversary Celebration (1988) 	5100-000-330 5100-000-186 5100-000-188
Wilmington Arts Commission (1976-c. 1995)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrative Records (c. 1976-1989) Policy and Program Records (1978, 1989-1992, 1995) 	5100-000-339 5100-000-419
Greater Wilmington Development Council (1960-1985)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General Administrative Files (1962-1980) 	5100-000-286

CITY COUNCIL

The 1739 *Charter* of Wilmington called for five assistants to aid the two Burgesses in managing the affairs of the Borough. By the end of the seventeenth century, the assistants were more formally recognized as a Council and in an 1810 *Charter* revision, the Borough was incorporated as "The Burgesses and Borough Council of the Borough of Wilmington." The thirteen-member Council operated as a legislative body charged with adopting ordinances to further the good governance of the Borough in accordance with the provisions and powers specified in the *Charter*. In 1832, when Wilmington became a City, the Borough Council became a City Council, with responsibilities that remained largely unchanged. In 1841, the City was divided into five wards with three Council members representing each ward. Initially a Council President was chosen from among the elected members, but by the 1860s, this became a separate official to be elected at-large. As the City grew, the number of wards would increase and the number of Council members representing each would decrease. Today, the City Council consists of twelve members, one representing each of the City Council districts (formerly wards), as well as the President of the Council.

Borough Council (1739-1832) / City Council (1832-current)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minutes of the Council (1771-1805, 1810-2004) Roll Call Books, 1882-1883, 1910-1969) Minute Books of Council Voting Record (1910-1996) 	5100-003-028 5100-003-011 5100-003-028-001
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrative Files (1809, 1848-1894, 1930s-1960s) City Ordinances (1833-1930, 1942-1983, 1994, 1961-2016) Oath of Office Books (1883-1887, 1909-1964) Minutes and Correspondence (1883-1972) Resolutions (1891-1987, 1994-2008) General Correspondence Files (1914-1957, 1960-1961) City Council Election Tally Sheet (1941) Administrative Files (1951-1956, 1985-2008) City Council Files on Zoning Changes impacting the Comprehensive Plan (1960-2006) Reports, Studies and Surveys prepared for City Council (1972-1996) Administrative Files (1973-2006) Minutes of Committee Meetings (1976-2008) Correspondence (1976-2008) City Council Files on Zoning and Re-zoning (1980-2007) Correspondence and Communications (1985-1996) Records of City Council Boards, Committees and Commissions (1986-2000) Videotapes of City Council Meetings (1990-1992, 1998-2006) Videotapes of City Council Committee Meetings (1998-2009) 	5100-000-107 5100-003-027 5100-000-013 5100-000-111 5100-003-029 5100-000-046 5100-000-244 5100-003-054 5100-003-463 5100-003-456 5100-003-455 5100-003-081 5100-003-423 5100-003-462 5100-000-422 5100-003-456 5100-003-421 5100-003-421-001

- Videotapes of Special Events (1997, 2002-2005) 5100-003-421-002
- Plans and Studies (no date) 5100-001-444

Clerk of the City Council and City Clerk (1832-current)

- Administrative Records of the Clerk (1770, 1820-1850, 1951-1960) 5100-000-091
- Election Records (1923-1943) 5100-000-038
- Accident Reports (1925-1940) 5100-000-092
- Administrative Files (1942-1967) 5100-000-065
- General Records (broad range of topics) (1946-1976) 5100-000-263
- Dog License Books (5 vols.) (1947-1954) 5100-000-059
- Inspector's Statement of Canvas for Election of 1953 (1953) 5100-000-258
- Employee Accident Records (1960-1962) 5100-000-049

CITY TREASURER

First appointed to serve in a 1772 law, the City Treasurer has been an independently elected City official since 1809. In its early history, the Treasurer, along with the City's Auditor, were solely responsible for all financial matters in the City, but with the creation of a Department of Finance in the 1950s, the duties of the City Treasurer were changed. In the 1840's, the City Treasurer became responsible for the City's Sinking Fund and for managing the City's municipal bonds. For over a hundred years, between 1855 and 1959, there were separate Commissioners assigned to vary out these tasks, but since that time, the management of the Sinking Fund has again been assigned to the City Treasurer. Today, the City Treasurer's Office is responsible for safeguarding the financial resources for all of the City's governmental, fiduciary and business-type activities. In addition to its Administrative Division, the Treasurer's Office also contains a Pension Division which is responsible for managing all City pension programs.

City Treasurer (1772-current) [City financial records are also listed under the Auditing Dept. and the Dept. of Finance]

- Treasurer's Ledgers (1769-1800, 1814-1826, 1840-1871, 1878-1879, 1883-1889) 5100-018-002
- Receipts/Disbursements Day Book (1814-1825, 1901-1907) 5100-015-101
- Journals (1817-1837, 1862-1867) 5100-000-098
- Ledger of John Duncan, Treasurer (1836-1843) 5100-018-001
- Checkbook (1840-1842) 5100-015-008
- Tax Collector's Receipt Book (1857-1866) 5100-000-360
- Interest Book (1861-1871, 1909-1935) 5100-018-132
- Fire Company Appropriations (1872-1886) 5100-000-131
- Board of Health Account's Ledger (1886-1916) 5100-000-130
- Cash Expenditure and Receipt Books (1893-1906) 5100-000-117
- Cash Book M (1906-1923) 5100-000-117
- Administrative Records (1911-1955) 5100-000-039
- Payroll Journal (1918-1927) 5100-000-362
- Deposit Stubs (1928-1935) 5100-000-278
- Monthly Financial Reports (1929-1953) 5100-000-315
- Retirement Fund Files for Teachers, Firemen, Police, Mayor & Council (c. 1935-52) 5100-000-064
- U.S Bond Record (1942-1944) 5100-000-227
- Monthly Reports from the Street & Sewer Department to the City Treasurer (1950-1958) 5100-000-116
- Cash Receipt Book (1953-1957) 5100-000-227
- Expenditure Ledger for Mayor and Council (no date indicated) 5100-000-381

Municipal Bonds

- Municipal Bond Books (1821-1823, 1825-1827, 1835-1837) 5100-000-021
- Municipal Bond Books (1822-1857, 1887-1913) 5100-000-012

- Certificates Issued for Municipal Bonds (1825-1837, 1855-1873) 5100-000-106
- Transfer of Municipal Bonds Books (1845-1910, 1930-1935) 5100-000-110
- Water Bonds & Wilmington Building Commission Bonds (1907-1924) 5100-000-117
- Municipal Bond Record Book (1913-1916) 5100-000-090
- Municipal Bond Ledger (1915-1934) 5100-000-117
- Destroyed Bond Record Book (1920-1935) 5100-000-277
- Coupon Accounts, Registered Bonds (1923-1934) 5100-000-227
- Sinking Fund Bond Record Book for City Schools (1924-1931) 5100-000-384
- Municipal Court Bond Books (1988) 5100-000-196

AUDITING DEPARTMENT

By the mid-nineteenth century, the City of Wilmington had appointed an Auditor. In a 1859 City ordinance, the City Auditor was directed to examine all City bills to determine that they were correct; examine all orders for payments made by the City Council to ensure that they had been approved; examine the accounts of the City Treasurer for any irregularities; examine the accounts of the Collector of Taxes; report annually on the amount of bonds issued by the City and the amount unpaid; examine the lien book and reporting the amount owed the City to the Finance Committee of the City Council and provide the Committee with a monthly accounting of all monies received or collected; and keep a book of accounts in which showed both debtors and creditors were entered. In 1881, the City Auditor became an elected rather than an appointed position which was described in an 1883 law as the City's Accountant, charged with examining and countersigning all bills presented to the City Treasurer for payment, and withholding approval if the draft was made without the sanction of law or without any appropriation, drawn against the wrong fund or shows evidence of fraud in addition to all of the duties described in the 1859 ordinance. In 1907, the City Auditor reverted to an appointed position. As part of the City's 1965 *Charter* revisions, an Auditing Department was created of which the City Auditor was the Director who continued to be subject to a term limit until 2004. When the City created a Finance Department in the mid-twentieth century, the Auditing Department was continued to ensure that the City is properly collecting all revenue to which it is entitled, and that the revenue is adequately safeguarded and properly accounted for; that City expenditures are properly authorized, made for legitimate purposes, and properly accounted for; that City assets are adequately safeguarded and are periodically reconciled to an independent source; and that the City is compliant with relevant laws and regulations. Today, the Auditing Department continues to independently examine the City's internal control systems in order to determine whether adequate controls exist to help ensure the accomplishment of the City's objectives in an effective and efficient manner.

City Auditor (1859-current) [Below are records attributed to the City Auditor; other financial records listed under the City Treasurer and the Department of Finance]

- Ledgers (1825-1848, 1868-1877, 1971-1979) 5100-000-018
- Appropriations and Expenditure Books (1858-1879) 5100-000-115
- Register of New Certificates (Bonds) (1859-1879) 5100-000-017
- Index to Lien Ledger (c. 1860-c. 1900) 5100-000-020
- Salary Ledger (1867-1873) 5100-000-077
- Journal (1868-1873) 5100-000-015
- Index to Lien Ledger (c. 1868-c. 1900) 5100-000-019
- Day Book/Bill Book (1871-1874) 5100-000-116
- Fire Company Appropriations (1872-1886) 5100-000-131
- Invoice Book (1874-1887) 5100-000-227
- Journals (1874-1908) (5 vols.) 5100-000-220
- Invoice Books (9 vols.) (1874-1963) 5100-000-220
- City Appropriations (1885-1886) 5100-000-227
- Board of Health Accounts Ledger (1886-1916) 5100-000-130
- Cash Book (1887-1908) 5100-000-221
- Expenditure Ledger (1889-1896) 5100-000-227

• Expense Ledger for Sewer Lines (1891-1895)	5100-000-227
• Cash Book (1895-1903)	5100-000-220
• Ledger F (1905-1907)	5100-000-220
• Cash Book, Board of Education (2 vols.) (1905-1942)	5100-000-220
• Loan Interest Ledger (1906-1917)	5100-000-220
• Revenue Ledger (1907-1920)	5100-000-390
• Expenditure Ledgers (2 vols.) (1907-1920)	5100-000-220
• Sewer Lien Ledger (3 vols.)	5100-000-221
• Rent and Compensations Ledger (1908-1915)	5100-000-220
• Bank Ledgers (3 vols.) (1909-1935)	5100-000-220
• Southern Pennsylvania Traction Company, Lease Agreements (1910)	5100-000-227
• Sewer Connection Liens - Board of Health (1911)	5100-000-221
• Curb and Sidewalk Liens (1911-1930)	5100-000-221
• Account Ledger (1913-1916)	5100-000-227
• Appropriation Ledgers (17 vols.) (1913-1930)	5100-000-080
• Budget Appropriation - Mayor and Council and Board of Education (1915-20, 1920-25)	5100-000-220
• General Journals (3 vols.) (1915-1928)	5100-000-220
• "Trial Balance" Journals (6 vols.) (1915-1932)	5100-000-220
• Expenditure Ledger - Street and Sewer Department (1918-1927, 1925-1926)	5100-000-221
• Expenditures Ledger - Mayor and Council (1920-1925)	5100-000-220
• Distribution/Expenditure Ledger (1920-1925, 1927-1928)	5100-000-221
• General Ledgers (1920-1928)	5100-000-220
• Expenditure Ledger - Public Safety (Fire and Police)	5100-000-220
• Expenditure Ledger - Water Department (1925-1929)	5100-000-220
• Board of Public Education Deposit Stub Book (1925-1943)	5100-000-279
• Delaware County Transportation Company, Operating Ledger (1926-1927)	5100-000-227
• Cost Distribution - Mayor and Council (1927-1928, 1928-1930, 1930-1932)	5100-000-220
• Appropriation Ledger (1928-1929)	5100-000-405
• Hospital Journal [documenting payments] (1928-1936)	5100-000-414
• Budget Appropriation - Mayor and Council and Board of Education (1928-1929)	5100-000-220
• Budget Expenditures -Mayor and Council and Board of Education (1929-1930)	5100-000-220
• Revenue/Disbursement Ledger (1929-1945)	5100-000-220
• Bank Ledger (1929-1949)	5100-000-302
• Bureau of Police's Monthly Reports to City Auditor (1929-1958)	5100-000-292
• Board of Health's Monthly Reports to City Auditor (1929-1958)	5100-000-295
• License Bureau's Monthly Reports to City Auditor (1929-1958)	5100-000-298
• Municipal Court's Monthly Reports to City Auditor (1929-1958)	5100-000-299
• Public Building Commission's Monthly Report to City Auditor (1929-1958)	5100-000-300
• Harbor Commissioner's Monthly Reports to City Auditor (1929-1959)	5100-000-254
• Monthly Report – Budget Expenditures (1929-1954)	5100-000-410
• Monthly Reports of the Municipal Court to the Auditor's Office (1929-1958)	5100-000-298
• Delaware Electric Power Company, Monthly Accounts (1930)	5100-000-227
• Appropriations Ledger (1931-1943, 1957-1958)	5100-000-382
• Journal Entries of Financial Records of Various City Railway Companies (1933-1940)	5100-000-227
• Southern Pennsylvania Bus Company, Accounts Book (1936-1937)	5100-000-227
• Debit/Credit Memoranda Book (1939-1953)	5100-000-401
• Correspondence (1940-1949)	5100-000-242
• Records of Audit (1944)	5100-000-250
• Delaware Electric Power Co., Delaware Bus Company Operating Analysis (1950)	5100-000-227

- Annual Reports (1950-1957, 1962-63, 1965, 1969-76, 1978-79, 1981, 1983-1993) 5100-008-453
- Department of Building Inspector's Monthly Reports to City Auditor (1956-1958) 5100-000-301
- Revenue Ledger of Mayor and Council (1957-1958) 5100-000-220
- General Journal/Voucher Journal (1958-1959) 5100-000-411
- Annual Budget Books (1968-1981, 1986-1994) 5100-008-454

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

Until the mid-twentieth century, the duties and responsibilities associated with the financial matters of the City including assessment and taxation were managed by three separate City offices, those of the City Treasurer, the City Auditor, and the City Assessor/Board of Assessment. The assessment of taxes with which to pay the debts of the Borough of Wilmington and to repair and regulate its streets was first authorized in 1772 in a law which directed that an Assessor, elected annually, was to determine the rate of assessment. However, by 1809, the Council was vested with the responsibility for determining how much money was needed to meet the needs of the Borough through tax assessment while Assessors continued to carry out the actual process of determining assessments of property and to serve as Tax Collector. In order to ensure a fair and accurate assessment process throughout the City, by the mid-nineteenth century, the Finance Committee of the Council appointed a Board of Revision which was to produce rules and regulations for carrying out the assessment process. During this period specialized assessments began to be carried out in support of the City's schools and for undertaking City improvements, such as street paving. In 1877, the Board of Revision was replaced by a Board of Assessment, Revision and Appeal which in addition to ensuring a fair and complete assessment was also to hear appeals of and revise, as necessary, an assessment made by the City's Assessors, tasks which had previously been carried out by the City Council. The City Council's role in the assessment process was limited to determining the overall annual financial need for City government and then establishing the rate of assessment to meet that need by applying the rate per \$100 of the estimated value of each taxable City property. The Board of Assessment, Revision and Appeal was abolished in 1915 and replaced by a Board of Assessment whose duties included all matters related to the assessment process except those assigned to City Council; also, at this time, the City Assessor position was abolished. In the mid-twentieth century, the City's taxation process was assigned to a newly formed City Finance Department. In addition to overseeing the City's taxation responsibilities, this Department also assumed many of the duties previous assigned to both the City Treasurer and the City Auditor. When it was formed, the duties of the new Finance Department included the establishment of a general accounting system for City government; the maintenance of an inventory of City property; the approval of the purchase of equipment, material, and supplies for City departments; the approval of contracts to be carried out by the City; the preparation of an annual City budget; the submission of accounts payable to the City Auditor for approval; the performance of cost analyses; and the receipt of monies for property taxes, water and sewer rents, and license fees. Today, the [Finance Department](#) remains in charge of many of the City's financial functions including maintaining the City's financial records; billing and collecting amounts due to the City; procurement; the budget; and various administrative services. It is headed by a Director of Finance who is the City's Chief financial, accounting, and budget officer.

City Assessors/Collector (1772-1915) / Board of Assessment, Revisions and Appeals (1877-1915) / Board of Assessment (1915-current)

- Tax Collector's Receipt Book (1857-1866) [filed in City Treasurer's records] 5100-000-360
- Assessment Records (c. 1881-1884, 1910-1915) 5100-025-119
- Tax Records (1860, 1900-1902) 5100-000-007
- Real Estate Assessment Books (c. 1909-1916) 5100-000-391
- City and School Taxes Delinquent Roll (1909) 5100-000-293

Board of Assessment and Collectors of Taxes (1915-c. 1955)

- Tax Lists (1915) 5100-000-009
- Capitalization/Poll Tax (1915, 1921) 5100-000-010
- Tax Ledgers (2 vols.) (1916-1929) 5100-000-055
- Horse Tax Book (1916-1930) 5100-000-398
- Paving Tax Records (1916, 1922-1925) 5100-000-240

- City and School Taxes Delinquent Roll (1916-1957) 5100-000-293
- Assessment of Tax Roll (1916-1974) 5100-000-379
- Assessment Rolls (178 vols.) (1916-1971) 5100-000-378
- Wilmington Assessment Rolls (1918) 5100-000-244
- Paving Tax Delinquent Roll (1918-1927) 5100-000-399
- Paving Tax Assessment (1919-1928) 5100-000-395
- Assessment Records (1922-1954) 5100-025-119
- Assessment of Real Estate (1922-1955) 5100-000-397
- Tax Ledger (1923-1927) 5100-000-403
- City and School Tax Journal (1924-1932) 5100-000-073
- Tax Assessment, Wilmington Hundred (1924-1936) 5100-000-256
- Horse Tax Receipt Book (1929-1930) 5100-000-276
- Cash Receipts Register for Northern District (1929-1954) 5100-000-294
- Monthly Reports of Gross Receipts for Northern and Southern Districts (1929-1957) 5100-000-297
- Sheriff's Sales (1943-1952) 5100-000-109
- Tax Receipts (1940-1955) 5100-000-275
- Supplemental Tax Role (1947) 5100-000-407

Finance Department (1950s-current)

- Monthly Report of Gross Tax Receipts for City and School Taxes (1957-1958) 5100-000-237
- Tax Resolutions (1957-1960) 5100-000-121
- Monthly Report of Delinquent Tax Payments (1958-1959) 5100-000-400
- Annual Budgets (1967-1977) 5100-000-163
- Property Tax Correspondence Files (1970-1992) 5100-000-178
- Workmen's Comp Claim Files (1973-1991) 5100-015-427
- E.E.O.C. Affirmative Action Plan Files for Finance Department (1975-1984) 5100-000-248
- Tax Assessments and Exemptions (1975-1987) [filed with Law Department records] 5100-002-336
- Sheriff's Sales Files (1989-1991) [filed with Law Department records] 5100-002-426

LAW DEPARTMENT

The City Solicitor position was established in 1832 at which time Wilmington was incorporated as a City and its *Charter* first included a judicial responsibility. The Solicitor was to prosecute cases in the City's courts and was to serve as legal advisor to all departments within the City. Initially an appointed position, it became an elective office in 1881. As City government began to expand beginning in the last half of the nineteenth century, the City Solicitor was made legal advisor to all City departments, and by the early twentieth century, he was charged with handling all of the City's legal business. Over time, two additional solicitors were appointed to assist in carrying out these tasks. As part of the Wilmington *Charter* revisions in 1965, a [Law Department](#) was established. Often referred to as the City Solicitor's Office, it continues to be responsible for providing legal advice to the Mayor, City Council and all City departments, boards, and commissions and for representing the City, its departments, and employees in litigation. It also prepares legislation; enforces the City Code; prepares and reviews all contracts and other written instruments; and oversees cases related to the collection of debts and taxes due the City.

City Solicitor (1832-current)

- Deeds, Agreements, Contracts and Mortgages (?-1960's) 5100-000-050
- Legal Correspondence (1920-1945) 5100-000-043
- Sheriff's Sales (1934-1937) 5100-000-060
- Administrative Records (1935-1936) 5100-000-061
- Proceedings against Delinquent Taxpayers (Monitions & Correspondence) (1935-1940) 5100-000-124
- Case Files (1936-1954) 5100-000-125
- Sheriff's Sales (1943-1952) 5100-000-109

- Foreclosure Files for Tax Delinquency (1951-1988) 5100-000-425
- Leases and Easements (1958-1990) 5100-000-168
- Subject Files (1959-1975) 5100-000-266
- Files on City or School Properties Sold, Transferred or Leased (1972-1989) 5100-000-167
- Housing Code Files (1969-1972) 5100-000-264
- Legislative Files (1974-1990) 5100-000-335
- Tax Assessments and Exemptions (1975-1987) 5100-002-336
- Administrative Files related to Municipal Bonds (1979-1985) 5100-000-169
- Sheriff's Sales Files (1989-1991) 5100-002-426

CITY MUNICIPAL COURT (eliminated)

In 1832, when Wilmington was re-incorporated as a City, its executive officers, the Mayor and the Alderman along with the President of the City Council, were vested with the authority to hear, try, and determine in accordance with the laws of the State of Delaware, all larcenies, assaults and batteries, riots and unlawful assemblies, nuisances and other offenses if committed within the City, as well as offenses committed against the laws, ordinances, and regulations of the City, and to punish those convicted of these offenses in the Mayor's Court. The City Solicitor was to serve as the prosecuting attorney, and the Clerk of the City Council was to serve as the Clerk in the Court. Ten years after it was formed, State law declared that the Mayor's Court was not to have common law jurisdiction but was to continue as a magistrate's court. In 1883, as part of a major revision to Wilmington's *Charter*, the City abolished the Mayor's Court and established a Municipal Court which was vested with jurisdiction to inquire of, hear, try, and determine all those criminal matters and offenses committed in Wilmington that were enumerated in the fifteenth article of the sixth section of Delaware's amended Constitution of 1831 and to punish those convicted of these offenses. In addition, the Municipal Court was to adjudicate for offenses committed against the laws, ordinances, and regulations of the City of Wilmington, and to punish those convicted. Rather than having the Mayor and other City officials preside over this court, Delaware's Governor was to appoint a lawyer as City Judge; the City Solicitor continued to serve as the prosecuting attorney, and a Clerk, appointed by the Judge, was to oversee court records, record court proceedings and receive all court fees. An 1885 law clarified the jurisdiction of the Municipal Court by stating that the City Judge was able to exercise all power and jurisdiction within Wilmington as that exercised by the Justices of the Peace in criminal cases for New Castle County, and in addition, was to prosecute breach of an ordinance, law, or regulation of the City of Wilmington. Various twentieth century laws revised sections of the law over which the Municipal Court had jurisdiction, and by 1965, when the City revised its *Charter* after being granted home rule, it indicated that the Municipal Court only had jurisdiction to determine offenses associated with City Council inquiries and investigations. All court functions were eliminated from Wilmington City government in 1998.

Mayor's Court (1832-1883)

- Dockets (1832-1866, 1868-1883) 5100-000-022

Municipal Court and Clerk of the Court (1883-1998)

- Court Records, A to G (1883-1912) 5100-000-349
- Court Dockets (1883-1913) 5100-000-226
- Judge's Commitments to the Home for Friendless and Destitute Children (1885-1895) 5100-000-306
- Witness Fee Book (1903-1917) 5100-000-354
- Clerk's Fee Book (1910-1914) 5100-000-353
- Cash Book (1914-1929) 5100-000-383
- Clerk of the Court's Docket (1917, 1933-1937, 1939-1950, 1952-1956) 5100-040-223
- Monthly Reports of the Municipal Court to the Auditor's Office (1929-1958) 5100-000-298
- Judge's Dockets (1933-1937, 1939-1956) 5100-000-230
- Cash Receipts Register for Court Fines (1935-1940) 5100-000-392
- Index to Stenographer's Notes (1942-1963) 5100-000-307
- Police Warrants (1946-1950) 5100-000-355
- Legal Phraseology Reference Book (1950's) 5100-000-404

- Court Reference Materials incl. Ordinances & Regulations used in Court (1953-1967) 5100-040-460
- Appeal Records (1966) 5100-000-249
- Informational Records (1974-1979) 5100-040-440
- Case Files (no dates listed) 5100-040-459

DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING AND INSPECTIONS

Wilmington began to license businesses as early as 1833, with the Clerk of the City Council in charge of issuing licenses; a License Bureau was created about 1920. Certain aspects of building construction were regulated by 1772; however, it was not until 1883 that the City appointed three surveyors to oversee the City’s building regulations. When Wilmington adopted a Building Code in the 1930s, it required that a Building Inspector be appointed. In 1965, a [Department of Licenses and Inspections](#) was created. It had the power and duty to carry out administer and enforce all statutes and regulations for the protection of persons from hazards related to the erection, alteration, maintenance, repair, sanitation, removal, and demolition of buildings and structures, as well as property, equipment and outdoor signs; to enforce zoning ordinances and also to issue and receive the fee for any City license; to carry out inspections to determine compliance with City statues, ordinances, and regulations; and to oversee the City’s the enforcement process which could result in revoking, suspending or cancelling licenses, as appropriate.

License Bureau / Board of Adjustment (c. 1920-1965)

- Amusement License Stub Books (1899-1910, 1928-1937) 5100-000-430
- Decisions of the Board of Adjustment (1924-1964) 5100-000-434
- Monthly Reports to the Auditor (1929-1958) 5100-000-298
- Minutes of the Board (1936-1966) 5100-000-432
- Junk Dealer’s Licenses (1941-1955) 5100-000-213
- License Fees (1945-1946) 5100-000-347
- Business Licenses (1946-1955) 5100-000-281
- Inspection Record, Brandywine Hundred (1948) 5100-000-232
- City License Stub Bool (1954-1955, 1957-1958) 5100-000-083
- Cement Worker’s Licensing Stub Book (1958) 5100-000-351
- Business License Files (1959-1971) 5100-000-082

Department of Building Inspector (c. 1936-1965)

- Building Applications and Permits (1914-1965; also, in L & I) 5100-023-433
- Building Plans (1927-1969; also, in L & I) 5100-023-172
- Monthly Reports of Permits Issued and Fees Collected (1932-1935) 5100-000-394
- Plumbing and Heating Inspectors – Oil Burners (1948-1964) 5100-000-352
- Monthly Reports to the Auditor (1956-1958) 5100-000-301
- Building Specifications for Construction and Renovation (1959-1964; also, in L & I) 5100-023-171

Department of Licenses and Inspections (1965-current)

- Certificates for Utility Work (1964-1970) 5100-000-261
- Building Applications and Permits (1965-1990) 5100-023-433
- Building Permits (1966-1969) 5100-023-260
- Building Specifications for Construction and Renovation (1971-2002) 5100-023-171
- Building Plans (1972-2006) 5100-023-172

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

In 1883, a Board of Park Commissioners was created and charged with making recommendations related to the purchase or acquisition of parkland; making improvements to and overseeing the maintenance of park land; and supervising the expenditure of monies to accomplish this work. In 1935, a Wilmington Park Trust Fund Commission was established to receive and hold in trust for the Board any lands or rights in lands, and/or any gift of money or

other personal property given for the purpose for which the Board was established. During the early twentieth century, a Parks Department was created as additional land within the City was devoted to both passive and active park land. When the City was granted home rule 1965, the Parks Department was renamed as the [Department of Parks and Recreation](#). Today, the Department has oversight of seventy parks and recreational areas.

Board of Park Commissioners – Parks Department (1883-1965)

- Administrative Files (1865-1965) 5100-021-466
- Deeds (1832-1965) 5100-021-465
- Maps and Drawings of Parks (1864, 1896-1967) 5100-021-066
- Annual Reports (1883-1965) 5100-000-243
- Board Minutes (1883-1967) 5100-021-153
- Index to Board Minutes (1883, 1905-1907, 1944-1967) 5100-000-155
- Treasurer’s Journal (1884-1907) 5100-021-207
- Property Conveyance Book (1886-1887) 5100-021-207
- Contracts and Specifications (1889-1897) 5100-021-070
- Correspondence (1889-1900, 1919-1920, 1934-1935) 5100-000-133
- Interoffice Correspondence re Maintenance, Renovations and Usage of Parks (1893-1927, 1930-1933) 5100-000-148
- Correspondence, Reports & Property Convenances (1890s) 5100-021-207
- Pay Book (1895-1899) 5100-021-207
- Executive Committee Minutes (1896-1967) 5100-000-152
- Superintendent’s Diaries (1897, 1904, 1907-1913) 5100-000-067
- Maintenance Journal (1899-1900) 5100-021-207
- Index to Executive Committee Minutes (1905-1907, 1944-1967) 5100-021-154
- Activity Records Books (1897, 1910-1916) 5100-000-069
- City Engineer’s Field Book (c. 1885-1914) 5100-000-071
- Time Books (1898-1907) 5100-000-088
- Account Books (1900-1918) 5100-000-086
- McKinley Monument Committee Minutes (1901-1903) 5100-021-207
- Cash Books (1902-1922) 5100-000-085
- Wilmington Free Zoo Assn., Board of Managers Minutes (1905-1908, 1925) 5100-000-158
- Index to Work Orders (1906-1907) 5100-021-467
- Park Police Captain’s Dairies (1909-1916) 5100-000-084
- Rent Ledger (1914-1918) 5100-000-087
- Calculation and Planning Workbooks (1914-1929) 5100-000-159
- Maintenance and Improvement in Parks (1925-1944) 5100-000-288
- Maintenance and Improvement Accounts (1925-1946) 5100-000-290
- Monthly Reports (1929-1956) 5100-000-412
- Bancroft Parkway Project (1930) 5100-021-207
- Canby Park Newspaper Articles (1931) 5100-021-207
- Contracts and Specifications (1931-1935) 5100-021-207
- Oath Book (1931-1966) 5100-000-246
- Journal (1934-1937, 1944-1945) 5100-000-289
- Motor Vehicle Maintenance (1938-1943) 5100-000-291
- Wilmington Recreation Survey (1938-1939) 5100-000-247
- Scrapbook (1943-1945) 5100-000-244
- Federal and State Tax Withheld for Employees (1943-1945) 5100-000-308
- Monthly Financial Reports (1956-1958) 5100-000-220

Department of Parks and Recreation (1967-current)

- Annual Reports (1965-1983) 5100-000-243
- Deeds (1965-1985) 5100-021-465
- Administrative Files (1965-1986) 5100-021-466
- Maps and Drawings of Parks (1967-2006) 5100-021-066
- General Files (1967-1977) 5100-000-265

Wilmington Youth Development Corporation (WYDC) [Established in 1982, and disbanded c. 1990, the WYDC was replaced in 1995 by a [Wilmington Youth Leadership Commission \(WYLC\)](#) which has similar goals. (*Wilmington City Charter*, § 2-131)]

- Administration & Records of the WYDC (1982-1990) 5100-000-190

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Shortly after Delaware first enacted a law to authorize the State’s municipalities to adopt zoning regulations, the City of Wilmington established a Zoning Commission to determine zoning districts within the City and recommend appropriate regulations to be enforced within these district. A Board of Adjustment was also to be appointed which could hear appeals and make exceptions to the applicable regulations. In a 1953 law, all municipalities were authorized to establish Planning Commissions, tasked with developing comprehensive development plans identifying zoning districts for which specific zoning regulations would be adopted, and immediately thereafter, a Wilmington’s Planning Commission was established by City ordinance. In 1960, the Mayor of Wilmington combined the City’s Zoning and Planning Commissions to form the Wilmington Commission on Zoning and Planning which was to have the same functions, rights, powers, duties, and liabilities as those vested in the Commissions it replaced. Just five years later, when Wilmington’s governmental structure was re-organized, the enforcement aspects of zoning, including the Zoning Board of Adjustment, were transferred to a newly created Department of Licensing and Inspection and a City Planning Commission was created as was a Department of Planning and Development. Today, the City’s [Department of Planning and Development](#) is responsible for preparing, modifying, and maintaining neighborhood comprehensive development plans, land use regulations, economic development strategies, and demographic and social impact studies, and for serving as the principal liaison between city government, community organizations and planning councils working in partnership with these groups to develop neighborhood plans, assist in the identification of community needs, and determining governmental priorities.

Zoning Commission (1923-1960) / Zoning Board of Adjustment (1923-1965) [In 1965, this Board is transferred to the Department of Licensing and Inspection]

- Minutes of the Zoning Bd. of Adjustment (1924-1934, 1935-1940, 1949-50, 1952-1953) 5100-000-127
- Zoning Commission Applications and Board of Adjustment Appeals (1925-1950) 5100-000-032

Planning Commission (1953-1960) / Planning and Zoning Commission (1960-1965) / City Planning Commission (1965-current)

- General Files (1954-1967, 1970) 5100-000-313
- Minutes (1962-1993) 5100-011-436
- Subject Files (1963-1980) 5100-000-323
- Community Renewal Project Maps and Statistics (1965) 5100-000-023

Department of Planning and Development (1965-1979) / Office of Planning (1982-1993) / Department of Planning (and Development) (1993-current) [Contains records related to urban renewal and housing prior to establishment of Real Estate and Housing Department in 1979]

- Maps and Plans (1940s-1960, 1972-1993) 5100-000-140
- Zoning Commission Applications (1962-1993) 5100-000-032
- Urban Renewal Project Files (1968-1978) 5100-000-222
- Project Files (1968-1984) 5100-000-324
- Correspondence and Office Files (1962-1976) 5100-000-325
- Reports in Census and Land Use (1966-1975) 5100-000-201
- Housing Code Files (1969-1972) 5100-000-264

- Community Development Program Files (1969-1982) 5100-000-205
- Administrative Files (c. 1972-1976) 5100-000-337
- Community Development Project and Program Files (1972-1979) 5100-000-358
- Community Development Public Hearing Tapes (1974-1975) 5100-000-151
- Review of Wilmington Medical Center (c. 1974-1978) 5100-000-328
- Community Development Property Acquisition Files (1976-1984) 5100-000-202
- Surplus Property Files (c. 1976-1981) 5100-000-322
- Housing Appraisals for Urban Renewal Projects (1969-1970) 5100-000-197
- Homestead Program Files (1972-1978) 5100-000-200
- Design Review Commission Minutes (1975-1991) 5100-000-443
- Re-zoning Applications (1977-1986) 5100-000-165
- Wilmington Metropolitan Area Planning Coordination Council (WILMAPCO),
Minutes of the Handicapped Advisory Group (1980) 5100-011-444
- Construction Drawings, Seventh Street Extended (1985-1986) 5100-011-464

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

Wilmington's 1739 *Charter* indicated that proper gutters, channels, and conduits for the streets were to be laid out and that the streets were to be regulated so as to ensure that they were free of nuisances and encroachments. By the end of the eighteenth century, the Borough of Wilmington was installing footways, curbs, and gutters and the criteria for the extent of street paving; the height of curbs; the setbacks of steps and cellarways from the curb; and the ascents and descents of the streets were being regulated. As the town began to grow, another critical need of the Borough was providing adequate clean water for all citizens, many of whom did not have access to private wells. In 1799, Wilmington was authorized to take possession of all pumps and wells which were located in the streets, and by 1810, the City had purchased a private water company creating its own Water Department. In the nineteenth century, Wilmington would greatly expand both its water and its street systems. By 1857, guidelines for extending, widening, or opening streets, as well as regulations related to the paving and maintenance of streets, and sidewalks and curbing had been enacted with the work was to be carried out under the direction of the Street Committee of the City Council. An 1866 law authorized the City to have jurisdiction over and control of drainage, and required that all gutters, drains, and sewers be regulated and maintained. In 1883, oversight of Wilmington's water system was vested in a Board of Water Commissioners, tasked to provide a permanent and adequate system of water distribution for the City and to control all matters related to the City's water supply, management of the waterworks, supervision of the water distribution system, and the collection of all revenues related to providing water to the City as well as to oversee all employees of the City's Water Department. In 1887, the City's responsibilities related to jurisdiction and control over the City's streets, squares, lanes, and alleys; its drainage; and the removal of ashes, dirt, and other rubbish was assigned to a municipal corporation created as an agent of the City named the Street and Sewer Department, and the City's Chief Engineer and Surveyor, as well as all those currently employed by the City in caring for its streets and sewers, were assigned to be employees of this Department. By 1891, the Street and Sewer Department had prepared a plan for a comprehensive sewer system for Wilmington; and by 1911, the Department's responsibilities had been expanded to include the authority to regulate the steps, porches, cellar doors or other inlets into buildings which were located in the streets and sidewalks; full power and authority over all trees planted or to be planted in the streets, and for their care; and oversight of the City's curbside markets. In 1953, the Street and Sewer Department was granted jurisdiction over the collection and disposal of garbage as well as that of maintaining and operating City crematories, and in 1961, the City's Street and Sewer Department was renamed the Department of Public Works. When Wilmington's government was re-structured in 1968, as part of being granted home rule, both the Water Department and the Department of Public Works were listed as one of the thirteen departments in the City. Added to the functions which had been previously included in the Public Works Department were the responsibilities of the City's Department of Motor Vehicles, which had been created in 1955 to maintain, repair and store all City vehicles, and property management responsibilities including the care of the City-County Building which housed the offices of both Wilmington and New Castle County governments. In 1979, the Water Department ceased operating as an independent Department and its duties and responsibilities were assumed by the Department of Public Works. Today, the [Department of Public Works](#) provides a variety of services which include monitoring and maintaining the integrity of

the drinking water distribution system and protecting the source water supply; oversight of the storm sewer system; sanitation activities including all trash collection and snow removal; operating an Urban Forestry Program which is responsible for all street trees; regulation of traffic; oversight of City construction projects; the care of City buildings and oversight of City construction projects; and the location of wireless telecommunication equipment within the City.

Water Department (1810-1979) [Became a part of the Department of Public Works in 1979]

- Administrative Files (c. 1860-1900) 5100-000-062
- Plant Ledger - Distribution System (1875-1937) 5100-000-209
- Correspondence Book (1877-1878) 5100-016-446
- Cement Testing Record Book (1877-1882) 5100-016-445
- Board of Water Commissioners Correspondence and Reports (1883-1960) 5100-000-112
- Ledger (1884-1907, 1921-1929) and Invoice Book (1884-1889) 5100-000-210
- Patent Ferrules (1886-1915) 5100-000-212
- Service Register of Main to Curb (1897-1903) 5100-000-211
- Payroll Record Book (1904-1907) 5100-016-024
- Subject Files (1909-1976) 5100-000-147
- Service Number Register (1910-1915) 5100-000-204
- Photographs (1916, 1926-1960, 1969) 5100-000-149
- Expenditure Ledgers (3 vols.) (1925-1929) 5100-000-220
- Contracts Awarded (1929-1936) 5100-000-150
- Chief Engineer's Minutes (1930-1962) 5100-000-156
- Annual Reports (1944-1965) 5100-000-317
- Lantern Slides of Water Filtration Plant on Concord Pike (c. 1953) 5100-000-114
- Annual Reports (1965-1975) 5100-000-317

Street and Sewer Department (1887-1961) [Renamed Department of Public Works in 1961]

- Miscellaneous Record (1870) 5100-000-317
- Administrative Records (1873-1877, 1894-1906) 5100-000-045
- Daily Journal (1875-1899) 5100-000-385
- Ledgers (1875-1941, 1887-1907, 1894-1907, 1907-1929, 1908-1910) 5100-000-214
- Record of Street Work (1877-1886) 5100-000-287
- Shipley Street Sewer Company Minutes and Account Book (1883-1897) 5100-000-402
- Lien Dockets (1885-1915) 5100-000-214
- Financial Records, Contracts and Specifications (1886-1958) 5100-000-326
- Invoice Books (1887-1908) 5100-000-214
- Minute Books (1887-1946, 1948-1966) 5100-016-164
- Cash Book (1887-1908) [from Auditor's Office Records] 5100-000-221
- Journals (1887-1895, 1907-1929, 1907-1920) 5100-000-214
- Expense Ledger for Sewer Lines (1891-1895) 5100-000-227
- Sewer Assessments (1893-1909) 5100-000-251
- Annual Reports and Data (1894-1937, 1945-1957) 5100-000-042
- Employee Time and Payroll Sheets/Books (1897-1961) 5100-000-283
- Rules, Resolutions and Regulations (c. 1897-1963) 5100-000-173
- Job Fee Book (1900-1902) 5100-000-075
- Newspaper Clippings (1904-1935) 5100-000-225
- Sewer Lien Ledger (1908-1927, 1914-1929) [filed with records of City Auditor] 5100-000-221
- Curb and Sidewalk Liens (1909-1929) 5100-000-409
- Street Paving Book (1909-1917) 5100-000-076
- Sewer Lien Book (1909-1921) 5100-000-214

- Lien Book for New Curb and Sidewalk (1911-1930) [filed with records of City Auditor] 5100-000-221
- Ledgers (1915-1919) 5100-000-361
- Paving Tax Records (1916, 1922-1925) 5100-000-240
- Street Paving Tax - Delinquent (1918) 5100-000-406
- Street Paving Tax (1918-1927) 5100-000-396
- Paving Delinquent Tax Roll (1918-1927) [file with records of Board of Assessment] 5100-000-399
- Expenditure Ledger (1918-1927), 1925-1926) [filed with records of City Auditor] 5100-000-221
- Paving and Lien Ledger (1919-1929) 5100-000-408
- Paving Lien Books (1919-1957) 5100-000-214
- Distribution Ledger/Expenditure Ledger (1920-1925,1927-1928) [see City Auditor records] 5100-000-221
- Street Paving Cost Data (1921-1948) 5100-000-126
- Administrative Files and Correspondence (1923-1928) 5100-000-333
- Jobbing Account Ledgers (1927-1928, 1931-1932, 1934-1939, 1941-1959) 5100-000-078
- Assessment Improvement Cost Ledger (1929-1939) 5100-000-387
- Jobbing Sales Costs (1931-1941) 5100-000-388
- Minutes (1931-1948) 5100-000-041
- Traffic Survey of Wilmington (1932) 5100-000-139
- Stock Record Book - Inventory of Materials and Supplies (c. 1942-1950) 5100-000-393
- Miscellaneous Records (1937-1971) 5100-017-014
- Contracts (1948-1958) 5100-000-215
- Monthly Reports to the Treasurer (1950-1958) 5100-000-116
- Miscellaneous Records (1951-1952, 1957-1960) 5100-000-317
- Sewage Treatment Records (1951-1953) 5100-000-218
- Complaint Book (1953-1955) 5100-000-319

Chief Engineer and Surveyor (Created c. 1871) [Responsibilities transferred to the Street and Sewer Dept. in 1887]

- Book of Plans of City Streets (no date) 5100-000-415
- Order Book of the City Engineer (1871-1874) 5100-000-074
- Survey Record (1881-1905) 5100-016-350
- Letter Book of Chief Engineer (1889-1890) 5100-000-255
- Street Maps (not dated but probably early 1900s) 5100-000-438
- Plot Book (survey of property) (c. 1920-c. 1940) 5100-000-089
- Maps and Plans (1940s-1960, 1972-1993) 5100-000-140

Farmer's and Trucker's Curbside Market (Established 1885) [Became part of Street and Sewer Department in 1917]

- Farmer's Market Oath Book (1926-1967) 5100-000-052
- Administrative Records for Clerk of the Market (1927-1954) 5100-000-040
- Administrative Records for Sealer of Weights and Measures (1933-1955) 5100-000-031
- Applications for Space (1954-1965) 5100-000-094
- Permits Issued (1960-1964) 5100-000-093

Wilmington Building Commission (1913-1916) / **Public Building Commission** (1915-1968) [Responsibilities transferred to Department of Public Works, Division of Public Property in 1968]

- Administrative Records (1913-1917, 1943) 5100-000-312
- Specifications for New Municipal Building (1913-1915) 5100-000-122
- Correspondence (1914-1916) 5100-000-036
- Architectural Drawings (1914-1955) 5100-000-334
- Special Orders (1915-1916) 5100-000-128

- Journal (1916-1932) 5100-000-037
- City Vouchers (1927-1938) 5100-000-129
- Monthly Reports to the Auditor's Office (1929-1958) 5100-000-300
- Vault Storage Inventory (1931-1961) 5100-000-318

Motor Vehicle Department (1955-1968) [Became part of the Dept. of Public Works, Div. of Public Property in 1968]

- Monthly Reports on Cash Receipts and Disbursements (1956-1958) 5100-000-386

Department of Public Works (1961-current)

- Audit Reports (1960-1976) 5100-000-162
- Miscellaneous Records (1961-1970) 5100-017-014
- Minute Books (1961-1966); Executive Session Minutes (1962-1963) 5100-016-164
- Executive Session Meetings (1962-1963) 5100-000-327
- Highway and Street Reports (c. 1965-1978) 5100-000-338
- Capital Improvements Program and Capital Budget Reports (1969-1977) 5100-000-161
- Annual Reports (1970-1976, 1979) 5100-000-175

REAL ESTATE AND HOUSING DEPARTMENT

In 1965, when Wilmington's government was re-structured under a new home rule *Charter*, no Department was established that specifically addressed housing issues; these remained in the hands of the City's Department of Planning and Development and the Wilmington Housing Authority, an independent housing agency established in the late 1940s. In 1979, Wilmington's Planning and Development Department was re-structured creating a Planning Department, an urban renewal agency, and a Real Estate and Housing Department. The newly formed Department was given the power and duty to acquire, maintain, rehabilitate, and dispose of properties; to provide government assistance to families and businesses relocated as a result of government real estate activities; to execute all housing assistance programs and services provided by the City including the neighborhood rehabilitation loan, grant, and householder education programs; and to manage federal housing programs for the City. Today, the [Department of Real Estate and Housing's](#) responsibilities include increasing the supply of affordable housing; improving housing markets and the quality of existing housing stock; and promoting self-sufficiency and engaging in activities to revitalize City neighborhoods.

Records associated with Real Estate and Housing (1930-1980)

- Deeds and Bonds (1930-1981) 5100-000-146
- Property Appraisal Reports (1939-1976) 5100-000-341
- Mayor's Survey Report on Local Housing Conditions (1949) 5100-000-079
- House to House Surveys by the WHA Slum Clearance Redevelopment Auth. (1952-54) 5100-000-344
- Temporary Loan Notes (1952-1957) 5100-000-274
- Urban Renewal Project Files (1954-1978) 5100-000-342
- Urban Renewal Administrative Files (c. 1962-1973) 5100-000-375
- Urban Renewal Demolition Projects (c. 1962-1976) 5100-000-343
- Wilmington Housing Service and Relocation Office Records (1965-1975) 5100-000-314
- City Property Searches (c. 1968-1972) 5100-000-359
- Housing Committee Files (c. 1978-1980) 5100-000-345

Real Estate and Housing Department (1979-current) [Records related to housing issues which pre-date 1979 can be found in the Department of Planning and Development]

- Correspondence of the Director of the RE&H Department (1978-1985) 5100-000-160
- Administrative Files (1979-1984) 5100-022-199
- Community Development Program, Rejected Requests for Housing (1979-1987) 5100-000-208

OFFICE OF PUBLIC SAFETY

One of the few public officials names in Wilmington's 1739 *Charter* was the High Constable, signifying the importance within this Borough of keeping the peace. By 1809, the appointment of additional Constables was authorized in order to ensure compliance with Borough ordinances. By the 1880s, Wilmington's *Charter* contained references not only to Constable but also to Patrolmen, of which there were over forty. In 1891, Delaware enacted a Metropolitan Police Act which assigned duties that had been previously held by a High Constable and other Constables to a Police Commission overseen by a Board of Police Commissioners. Wilmington's Police Commission was established to preserve the public peace; prevent crime and arrest offenders; protect the rights of persons and property; guard the public health; preserve order during elections and on all public occasions; prevent and remove nuisances; and provide proper protection for firemen and property during fires as well as to enforce the laws of the State and the regulations of the City properly enforceable by Police. The Commission was authorized to employ a permanent police force consisting of a Chief of Police, two captains of police, as many sergeants as deemed necessary for each police district, and forty-four police officers. Over the course of the nineteenth century, the Police Commission would expand and professionalize. In 1921, the Board of Police Commissioners was abolished, and a Department of Public Safety was established with the Chief of the new Department becoming the Police Commissioner. In addition to policing, the Department of Public Safety was charged with establishing a professional department responsible for fire protection throughout the City. When City government was re-organized in 1965, thirteen Departments were created; one of these was the Department of Public Safety and another, which also focused on public safety concerns during emergencies or disasters was the Department of Civil Defense. When the City's *Charter* was re-written in 1979, both the Department of Public Safety and the Department of Civil Defense were eliminated; separate Departments were formed for the Police and Fire and an emergency management office was formed within the Mayor's Office. In 1992, an [Office of Public Safety](#) was created to address all public safety concerns. It consists of four sections, the [Wilmington Police Department](#), responsible for law enforcement and investigative services; the [Wilmington Fire Department](#), which maintains six engine companies and two ladder companies and a marine firefighting force; the [Fire Marshal's Office](#), formed in 1958 as a Division of the Wilmington Fire Department and tasked with formulating fire codes, inspecting to ensure compliance with these codes, investigations to determine the origin and cause of fires, and educating the public regarding fire safety by developing and implementing special fire safety programs; and an [Office of Emergency Management](#), assigned to maintain and administer Wilmington's Emergency Operation Plan as well as to coordinate the efforts of all City Departments and the at-large community in the event of a declared emergency.

Board of Police Commissioners (1891-1921)

- Police Notices (1885-1887) 5100-000-057
- Prisoner's Docket (1888-1891, 1898-1917) 5100-000-030
- Minutes (1891-1914) 5100-000-003
- Officer's Disciplinary Record Book (1891-1913) 5100-000-367
- Police Time Books (1893-1916) 5100-000-253
- Order, Rules and Regulations Issued by the Chief of Police (1893-1901) 5100-000-368
- Scrapbook (1893-1906) 5100-000-137
- Criminal Records (Police Pedigrees) (1895-1921) 5100-000-267
- Police Department Property Record Book (c. 1897-1918) 5100-000-365
- Police Employee Enrollment Record Book (1901-1921) 5100-000-366
- Police Case Files (1912-1921) 5100-000-268
- Board of Examiners Record Book for Police Applicants (1914-1924) 5100-000-371

Department of Public Safety (1921-1979)

- Ambulance Record (1919-1938) 5100-000-025
- Appointment of Directors of the Department of Public Safety (1921-1939) 5100-000-369
- Expenditure Ledgers for Police and Fire Bureaus (1921-1929) 5100-000-220
- Motion Picture of Dept. of Public Safety Parade - Police and Fire Bureaus (1922) 5100-000-138
- License Records of the Board of Examining Engineers (1923-1939) 5100-000-141
- Scrapbook (1925-1953) [also includes information from 1893-1906] 5100-000-137

• Appropriation Ledger (1941-1951)	5100-000-063
• Miscellaneous Records (1952-1960)	5100-000-284
• Proposed Changes in Rules and Regulations for the Dept. of Public Safety (c. 1957)	5100-000-372
• Scrapbooks (1958-1963, 1973-1975)	5100-000-380
• Internal Department Accidents and Property Damage Reports (1961-1964)	5100-000-271
• Sectional Maps (73 sections) of the City (1975)	5100-019-441
Police Bureau of the Department of Public Safety (1921-1979)	
• Patrol Wagon Service Book (1920-1938)	5100-000-026
• Police Employee Enrollment Record Book (1921-1937)	5100-000-366
• Police Case Files (1921-1938)	5100-000-268
• Criminal Records (Police Pedigrees) (1921-1947)	5100-000-267
• Record of Arrests (Police Blotter) (1929-1935)	5100-000-373
• Prisoner's Docket (1929-1938)	5100-000-030
• Monthly Reports of the Police to the City Auditor (1929-1958)	5100-000-120
• Pistol Instructions (1930-1957)	5100-000-285
• Traffic Dockets (1932-1935, 1937-1938, 1940-1941)	5100-000-356
• Police Statistics Book (1933-1939)	5100-000-374
• Record of Arrests (Police Blotter) (1935)	5100-000-363
• Police Time Books (1937-1939)	5100-000-253
• Detective Division Records (1938-1955)	5100-000-269
• Order, Rules and Regulations Issued by the Chief of Police (1946-1947)	5100-000-368
• Frequenters of Gambling Houses (1947-1948)	5100-000-370
• Traffic Accident Reports Involving Fatalities (1950-1956, 1961-1962)	5100-000-272
• Traffic Accident Reports (1955-1957, 1961-1964)	5100-000-273
• Traffic Division Records (1956-1965)	5100-000-270
• Crime Investigation Reports (1962-1964, 1967)	5100-000-357
• Wilmington Youth Service System Administrative Files (c. 1973-c. 1976)	5100-000-068
Police Department (c. 1979-1992)	
• Police Complaint Records (1980-1985)	5100-000-439
• Scrapbook (1988)	5100-000-380
Fire Marshal (1958-current)	
• Fire Marshal's Investigation Files (1958-2003) [CONFIDENTIAL] 004	5100-017-458-
• Fire Marshal's Investigation Files (1958-2003) [CONFIDENTIAL] 004	5100-017-458-
• Fire Marshal's Investigation Reports (1978-2002) [CONFIDENTIAL] 002	5100-017-449-
• Sprinkler and Alarm Plans (1991-2002) [RESTRICTED] 002	5100-017-447-
World War II Civil Defense Records	
• Wartime Fire Protection Plan (c. 1942)	5100-000-377
• Governor's Emergency Orders (1943)	5100-000-108

DEPARTMENT OF ELECTIONS (abolished)

While in the colonial period, public officials in Wilmington were appointed by the colonial Governor, a process to elect these officials would be adopted soon after 1776, but it was not until 1845 that a more comprehensive outline of

Wilmington's election process was adopted into law, and the first City election officials were named. The law divided Wilmington into five wards from which representatives to the City Council as well as Assessors were elected while other City officials were elected at large; initially elections were held annually but over time, this would change to every two or three years. By 1887, as part of a major revisions to the City's elections laws, Wilmington established its own Department of Elections. In 1898, Wilmington's Department of Elections was re-constituted, and a new section was created for it in the *Revised Code of Delaware*. In 1939, the Department of Elections for the City of Wilmington was abolished and oversight of elections in Wilmington was transferred to the Department of Elections for New Castle County (RG-2220).

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH (eliminated)

One of the powers assigned to the Borough Council as part of Wilmington's first post-colonial *Charter* was adopting ordinances to preserve the health of the Borough by preventing the introduction of infectious or contagious diseases. Wilmington's Council would serve as its Board of Health during much the early nineteenth century, appointing one Council member to serve as Health Officer, and making the Post Physician a member of the Board. By 1883, the Board of Health became an appointed Board consisting of the Port Physician, two other physicians, one practical plumber and one general businessman and the City's Chief Engineer. As Wilmington began to develop its sewer system, the Board of Health, was authorized to direct property owners to connect to any available public or private sewer so that "all of the sewerage and house drainage, and all stagnant, offensive, or unwholesome water" would be removed from the premises in the interest of public health. In 1907, the Board of Health was awarded full control and management of the City crematory as well as the responsibility to award the contracts for the collection and disposal of the City's garbage. In 1913, when the State Board of Health was charged with the responsibility for recording all vital statistics within the State, Wilmington's Board of Health was appointed to be one of the Local Vital Registration Districts and the City's Registrar of Births, Deaths, and Marriages became a Local Registrar of the Vital Statistics. In 1949, Wilmington's *Charter* was revised to create a Department of Health which was responsible for public health and sanitation within the City, including all power, authority and jurisdiction previously vested in the Mayor and Council of Wilmington with relation to public health and sanitation. When Wilmington's government was restructured under the City's 1968 home rule *Charter*, a Department of Public Health was included; it was afforded the power and duty to protect public health through the administration and enforcement of statutes, ordinances and regulations including those which dealt with air, water, food and drugs, health hazards, and the pursuit of occupations affecting public health and pests; health programs; health facilities; and vital statistics. However, the responsibilities assigned to the Department were soon to be divested to the State Department of Public Health or to other City agencies and by 1979 when the City's *Charter* was next revised, its Department of Public Health had been eliminated.

Wilmington Board of Health (1809-1949)

- Minutes (1840-1846, 1861-1870, 1914-1917, 1934, 1936-1940, 1960) 5100-000-142
- Board of Health Accounts Ledger (1886-1916) [within City Auditor records] 5100-000-130
- Bd. of Health Sewer Connection Liens (1911) [filed with City Auditor records] 5100-000-221
- Correspondence (1912-1913, 1920, 1930-1931, 1959-1963) 5100-000-144
- Plumber's Register (1913-1920) 5100-000-348
- Administrative Files (1921-1924, 1936-1945) 5100-000-145
- Incinerator Blueprints (1925, 1944-1945) 5100-000-262
- Payroll Records (1925-1928) 5100-000-143
- Hospital Journals (payments for services) (1928-1930, 1931-1936) 5100-000-414
- Crematory Payroll (1929-1935) 5100-000-227
- Monthly Reports to the Auditor's Office (1929-1958) 5100-000-295
- Board of Health, Monthly Reports to the Auditor's Office (1929-1948) 5100-000-295
- Daily Record of Milk Examinations (1948-1952) 5100-000-389

Registrar of Birth, Deaths and Marriages (1881-1913)

- Marriage Licenses (1948-1951) 5100-000-034

Wilmington Department of Health (1949-1965)

- Board of Health, Monthly Reports to the Auditor's Office (1949-1958) 5100-000-295
- Test Records (1951) 5100-000-118

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE (eliminated)

In Wilmington's early history, the importance of the City's harbor can be noted by references to wharfs found in various laws. Wilmington's colonial *Charter*, issued in 1739, provided for the streets of the Borough to be regulated and improved, and for wharves to be built into the river; and as part of a 1772 law, Commissioners were appointed to regulate the wharves. In 1883, a Board of Port Wardens was appointed to oversee activities for Wilmington's docks, wharves and harbors, the waters of the rivers, and the ships and vessels within the rivers or at the docks and wharves. The duties assigned to the Board included directing and making rules for the mooring of ships; determining the boundaries of land in the tideway and frontage on the wharf line; establishing new wharf lines; overseeing dredging in the river; issuing licenses for erecting or extending structures in the Christiana or Brandywine Creeks; and if requested, assisting insurance companies by determining the extent of damage to a ship or its cargo. In 1917, a new Board assumed the responsibilities of the Board of Port Wardens. The duties of the Board of Harbor Commissioners included constructing, maintaining, and operating all wharves, docks, piers, slips, harbors, bulkheads, terminals, and warehouses in the port as well as fixing, regulating, and collecting rates and charges for wharfage, tonnage and other services rendered in loading and unloading vessels as well as warehouse and storage charges. The new Board could also enter into joint arrangements with steamship lines, railroads, and other transportation lines, and was to develop a plan to improve the waterfront and to increase the harbor and shipping facilities. In a 1925 law, the Board was charged with preparing a plan for the improvement of the waterfront and increasing the harbor and shipping facilities of the City on or adjacent to the banks or shore of its navigable waters. The plan that was developed by the Board would shift the facilities of the port facilities from the Christiana River to a large tract of land adjacent to the Delaware River which was, at that time, largely unused and was owned by the Lobdell Car Company; the new port facility would open in 1922 with additional expansion through 1928. As part of the restructuring of City government in the 1960s, Wilmington created departments to handle the work previously carried out by various Boards. The Department of Commerce was assigned the power and duty to promote commerce, industry, and the Port of Wilmington as well as oversight of the City's wharf, dock, and harbor facilities to include their maintenance, improvement, repair, and operation, and expansion of the facilities. They were to fix rates and charges for the use of the City wharf, dock, and harbor as authorized by ordinance. In 1972, the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce first recommended that the Port of Wilmington be operated independently, and in 1995, the State of Delaware purchased the Port setting up an independent corporation to manage what had become a full-service, deep-water port.¹⁴

Board of Harbor Commissioners (1917-1965)

- Wilmington Deepwater Tunnel Co. Application for the Delaware River Tunnel (1936) 5100-000-437
- Monthly Reports to the City Auditor (1929-1959) 5100-000-254

Department of Commerce (1965-current)

- HUD Urban Development Action Grant Files (1979-1988) 5100-000-182

BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IN WILMINGTON (eliminated)

In 1852, a *Charter for the Board of Public Education in Wilmington* was enacted, establishing it as an independent corporation charged with oversight of the public education within the City. The duties of the Board were to have charge of education in the public schools of Wilmington and to increase the number and improve the condition of public schools. While the Board was given the authority to rent, purchase, or build schoolhouses, to procure lots of grounds, to employ and dismiss teachers, and do all things necessary to institute and sustain public schools, it had no banking powers to finance this work and was dependent of the City to raise funds both for operations and for funds to erect or renovate schoolhouses. The City's *Charter* indicated that the school tax, created as a means to provide these funds, was for operational needs only but that an additional amount, not to exceed \$20,000 would be appropriated annually for school construction. In 1898, Delaware established a general system of free schools, vesting its supervision and control in a State Board of Education; however, the law specifically stated that its provisions were not applicable to the free schools of Wilmington. An independent Wilmington Consolidated School District under the supervision of the Board of Public Education in Wilmington was created in 1905. The Board was to provide the City

with an estimate of their revenue and costs annually so that appropriate adjustments could be made to the school tax which supported operational costs. There continued to be an annual allowance of \$20,000 of City funds allocated for school construction purposes, but increasingly this was proving insufficient to meet the needs of school construction costs and in 1921, the Board was given the authority to borrow money in order to erect and equip schools as long as the amount, inclusive of its present bonded debt, did not exceed the aggregate of 2% of the assessed value of real estate in the City. Wilmington's ability to support of the needs of the Wilmington Consolidated School District was proving unsustainable and, by the 1940s, Wilmington was receiving funds from the State Board of Education to assist in supporting operational costs. By the late 1960s and early 1970s, in an era of desegregation nationwide, there were those not satisfied with a school district, such as the one in Wilmington, which had predominantly Black students, and in a 1978 federal court opinion, it was determined that the Wilmington School District did not conform to the current federal legislation requiring desegregation of schools and all eleven schools located in New Castle County were ordered to be consolidated into one school district. Within three years, the single school district had been reorganized into four districts each of which contained a portion of Wilmington. The reorganization of the Wilmington Consolidated School District also resulted in the elimination the Board of Public Education in Wilmington.

Board of Public Education in Wilmington (1852-1997)

- Scrapbook (1872-1888, 1917-1919) 8183-000-038
- Committee on Teachers Minutes (1874-1898, 1909-1917) 8183-000-017
- Cash Books (1905-1942) [filed with the records of the Auditing Department] 5100-000-220
- Appropriation Budget (1915-1920, 1920-1925, 1928-1929) [see Auditing Dept. records] 5100-000-220
- Executive Committee Minutes (1923-1926) 8183-000-016
- Board of Public Education Deposit Stub Book (1925-1943) [in City Auditor's records] 5100-000-279
- Photographs (c. 1927-1928) 5100-024-458
- Budget Expenditures (1929-1920) [filed with the records of the Auditing Department] 5100-000-220
- Minutes of the Board (1949-1960) 8183-000-015