

## CHAPTER 9: LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

<http://www.ipa.udel.edu/directory/links/muni-sites.asp>

Local governments were present in Delaware before the formation of the state and have always been a major factor in the evolution of American political life. In Delaware county governments were the most important and handled functions that were taken over by the state only within the last quarter century. County structure was brought from England and existed in Delaware in 1664. The boundaries, as well as the names, of the three counties and the names of their seats of government are clearly stated in the constitution.

All local governments, including counties, municipalities and special service districts, are legal creatures of the state and have all powers which, under the state constitution, the General Assembly may grant and which are not denied by statute. This includes the power to set the tax rate on real property in the county. The county may not enact private or civil law concerning civil relationships nor may it define or provide punishment for felonies.

County governments may perform and finance functions jointly with other states and their agencies or with the federal government and its agencies.

### County Row Offices

The state constitution mandates that each county elect four specific officers who are paid by the counties and serve four-year terms. The offices held by these four elected officials are:

**Clerk of the Peace** - issues licenses and accepts filing fees of candidates for political offices, performs marriage ceremonies.

**Recorder of Deeds** - records and indexes deeds and mortgages; assigns and satisfies mortgages; handles federal tax liens and releases; and releases security instruments and armed services discharges.

**Register of Wills** - oversees and administers all decedents' estates, sits as probate judge in contest of wills.

**Sheriff** - receives dockets, serves and returns all civil and criminal actions from all courts, holds sales of property as ordered by the court, escorts people to the state hospital when necessary. In 1981, the sheriff was placed on salary instead of income from fees collected for services.

A **Register in Chancery** was elected by each county until a constitutional change in 2001. The register is now appointed by the court.

### Counties

#### Kent County

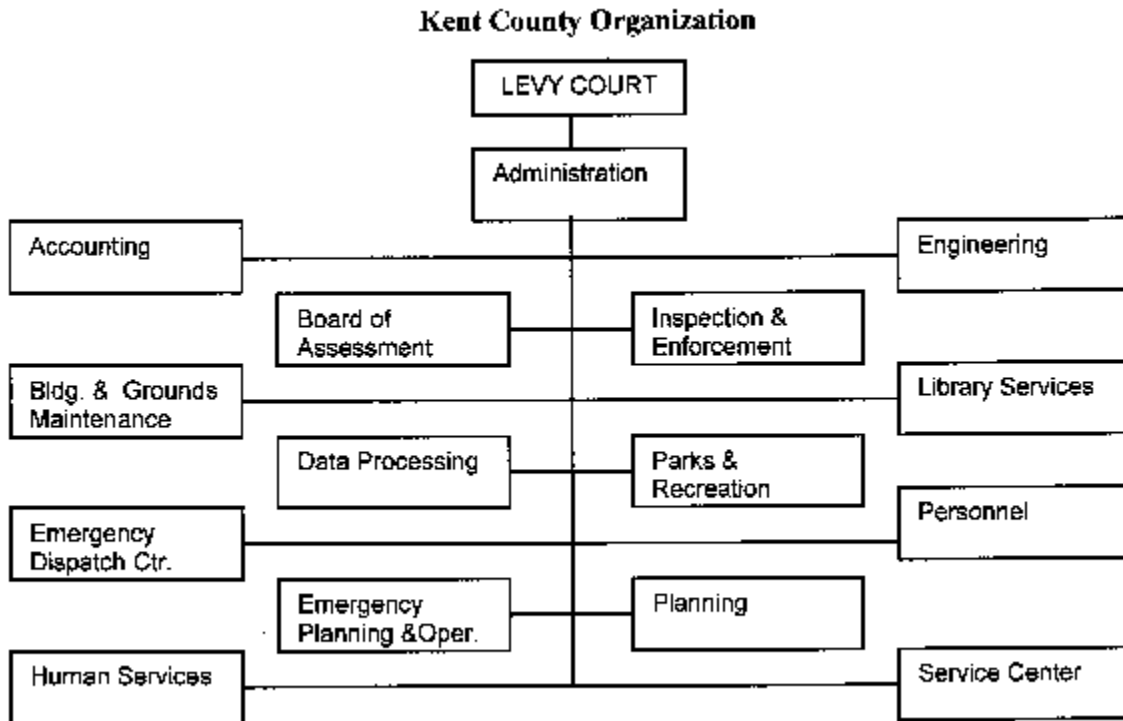
<http://www.co.kent.de.us/>

Kent, Delaware's middle county bounded on the east by the Delaware River and Bay, has a flat level terrain less than 100 feet above sea level and rich agricultural fields.

Kent County was originally established November 17, 1680 as the Court and County of St. James when John and Richard Walker petitioned Governor Andros of New York for a court closer than the one established in Lewes. It was renamed Kent County by William Penn on Christmas Day 1682. In 1968 the General Assembly granted Kent County Levy Court limited home rule.

Kent County is governed by the Levy Court, composed of seven elected commissioners (six elected by representative districts, one at large, each for four-year terms). The commissioners have both legislative (policymaking) and executive powers and are responsible for county finances, facilities, personnel and rural zoning. They approve an annual budget, determine tax

levies, issue bonds for county capital improvement, buy and sell land and buildings, manage real and personal property, manage facilities for sewage, develop recreational and employment programs, and provide necessary county buildings. The Levy Court meets in Dover at the Kent County Administrative Complex, 555 Bay Road, at 7:00 PM each Tuesday. All meetings are open to the public. The county departments and functions are as follows:



**Administrative Office** is responsible for administering the policy directives of Levy Court. Included are the Levy Court Office, Data Processing and Personnel. The County Administrator supervises all appointed department managers and coordinates the activities of all departments on behalf of the seven elected Levy Court Commissioners. Also supervised are payroll, archives and the mailroom. Included are the following offices and departments: Information Technology provides management responsibility for the county's computing activities which by contract are carried out by Affiliated Computer Services. Its mission is to analyze the information management needs and recommend and implement investment projects.

Personnel covers employee recruitment and training, payroll services, labor relations and pension plan administration.

Department of Community Services consists of three divisions:

Library Services operates the Kent County Library and the Bookmobile. Library Services is a liaison with the libraries, plans and administers countywide programs, works with the Library Advisory Committee, prepares the library budget and grants applications.

Parks is responsible for the planning, construction, and maintenance of all county parks.

Recreation offers year-round cultural, physical, therapeutic, educational and nature activities for all ages including day camps, personal enrichment classes, and day trips.

**Department of Finance** keeps financial records for all county funds, prepares reports, financial statements and the annual budget, and manages county investments. The department also supervises the purchase order system.

Assessment Office is responsible for administering all assessment functions relative to real property and improvements; maintains records of all property sales and transfers of ownership; administers elderly and disability tax exemption programs; and assists with problems relative to assessment and property identification through property mapping records.

**Department of Planning Services** provides planning, zoning, and land use recommendations to the Levy Court as well as to developers and landowners. It oversees the following sections: Community Development Section is responsible for providing housing assistance in the form of grants and low-interest loans for repair of owner-occupied houses for low-and-moderate income persons and to landlords for repair of tenant-occupied houses. These grants are administered in conjunction with the Delaware State Housing Authority, Community Development Block grants and Farmer's Home Administration Housing Preservation Grant programs.

Current Planning is responsible for processing re-zonings, site plans, subdivisions and recordation of plans. It holds pre-application meetings with the public, works with the state when reviewing site plans and subdivisions, helps develop the comprehensive long-range plan and zoning ordinances, is secretary to the Board of Adjustment, is staff to Regional Planning Commission and works with the Development Advisory Committee.

Geographic Information Systems/Mapping/911 Addressing Section maps new subdivisions including 911 addressing for emergency dispatching.

Historic Preservation Section provides information to citizens about funding and the architectural history of their homes, rehabilitation methods and materials, and the history of their town, hundred and county.

Inspections and Code Enforcement Division is responsible for issuance of building permits, inspection of buildings and enforcement of building and housing codes and ordinances. Building permits are issued after applications are completed and approved by the Department of Planning.

Long Range Planning is responsible for coordinating and planning for long-term growth by predicting future needs for roads, schools, sewers, etc. The 20-year plan is updated every five years. This section creates and amends development ordinances that govern land use and growth including historic preservation.

Manufactured Housing Section assists in the placement and removal of manufactured homes. The program carries out demolitions of unsafe, unsightly manufactured houses and collects delinquent taxes on manufactured houses.

**Department of Public Safety** consists of three divisions.

Emergency Communications operates the 911 dispatching center for fire, ambulance, paramedic, and police services.

Emergency Management is responsible for emergency planning and disaster preparedness 24 hours a day.

Emergency Medical Services provides county-wide paramedic services including delivery of life-support services.

**Department of Public Works** administers the county's sanitary and drainage codes, is responsible for construction and maintenance of the county's entire sewer system, manages trash collection and street light districts, and provides engineering guidance to the Levy Court. It also operates the wastewater treatment plant.

Facilities Management provides custodial, security and general maintenance for all county buildings.



Kent County Court House The Green, Dover

Elected Offices in Kent County:

Clerk of the Peace keeps minutes of Levy Court meetings and countersigns warrants drawn on county funds, issues marriage licenses, and conducts civil ceremonies.

<http://www.co.kent.de.us/Departments/RowOffices/ClerkofPeace/index.htm>

Comptroller audits all Levy Court and row office accounts, reviews financial records of agencies receiving appropriations from the county, countersigns all warrants drawn for payment and communicates with local banks regarding county funds.

<http://www.co.kent.de.us/Departments/RowOffices/Comptroller/index.htm>

Receiver of Taxes and Treasurer collects county property taxes, school, library and ditch taxes. He also enforces liens, and trash, street light and sewer fees and serves as treasurer.

<http://www.co.kent.de.us/Departments/RowOffices/ReceiverTaxes/index.htm>

Recorder of Deeds is responsible for indexing and maintaining copies of legal documents pertaining to land, mortgages, appointments, and election certificates.

<http://www.co.kent.de.us/Departments/RowOffices/Recorder/index.htm>

The Register of Wills records all wills and documents pertaining to estate matters in the county. He is responsible for overseeing the appointments of personal representatives and for administering estate proceedings. This office is also held accountable for making sure that the

estates are in compliance with the Delaware law. All estate matters are maintained as permanent records. <http://www.co.kent.de.us/Departments/RowOffices/Wills/index.htm> Sheriff's Department issues warrants and conducts sheriffs' sales for properties with delinquent taxes and mortgage foreclosures.

<http://www.co.kent.de.us/Departments/RowOffices/Sheriff/index.htm>

### **New Castle County**

<http://nccde.org>

New Castle is Delaware's smallest county with 22% of the state's land area or 437 square miles. However, it is the most industrial and urban county with 64% of the population, estimated at 532,034 for 2007.

The county is divided into two distinct topographical regions. The Fall Line, which passes through the cities of Newark and Wilmington, separates the crystalline rocks of the Piedmont, the northern quarter of the county, from the unconsolidated sediments of the Coastal Plain, the balance of the county and state. Elevations in the county range from sea level to the state's highest point - 447.85 feet above sea level near Ebright Road. The climate is moderate the year round with average monthly temperatures ranging from 36 to 74.3 OF. Average annual rainfall is 44.4 inches. The frost-free growing season is 170 to 200 days.

Prior to 1967, New Castle County was governed by a three-person Levy Court. With the growth in population and in the complexity of government, the Levy Court system was no longer the most efficient means of governing. Therefore, in 1967 the state General Assembly approved an Executive/Council form of government for New Castle County. The County Executive is elected to a four-year term and can serve only two terms.

#### County Council

<http://www2.co.nccde.org/home>

Effective with the November 2004 election, County Council was expanded from seven to thirteen members. Twelve of the Council members are elected from twelve Council districts for four-year terms, staggered so that some elections are held every two years. The presiding Council president is elected at large for a four-year term. Council members serve four-year terms and the terms are staggered so that half of Council comes up for reelection every two years (except following redistricting). There are no term limitations for Council members. Official action takes the form of ordinances (which require a public hearing) and resolutions (not requiring a public hearing). Regular and special meetings, except those involving personnel, are conducted in public.

Regular meetings of the council are held on the second and fourth Tuesday nights of each month at 7:00 PM in the Council Chambers located on the first floor of the Louis L. Redding City/County Building, 800 North French Street in Wilmington. Agenda of all meetings are advertised online and in the legal notices column of The News Journal paper the preceding Saturday. Notice of all action taken by the Council is advertised, with title and number, in the same legal notices. Council minutes also appear online.

Ordinances for rezoning are first introduced in the Council and are then assigned to the Department of Planning and the Planning Board for study. These agencies hold public hearings, advertised in advance, and return their recommendations to the Council, which schedules its own public hearing before taking final action.

The New Castle County Council determines tax rates with one rate applicable for all property owners in unincorporated areas and varying rates for property owners within municipalities. The county makes reductions when a municipality provides services which would otherwise be provided by the county. County Council has the power to authorize issuing bonds enabling the county to finance the cost of any program not prohibited by law. Limitations for incurring indebtedness are clearly specified by state law.



New Castle County Government Center  
County Executive

<http://www2.nccde.org/home>

The County Executive is elected at large and is limited to no more than two four-year consecutive terms. He is responsible for the executive and administrative duties performed by all county departments, agencies and offices. The Chief Administrative Officer, appointed by the County Executive, is charged with the general supervision of executive and administrative functions and provides managerial assistance to the Executive.

#### Departments and Duties

Five departments and two offices perform the functions of county government:

**Administration Department** consists of the Offices of Law, Administrative Services, Finance and Human Resources. These offices provide support to the Office of the County Executive, County Council, line departments and row offices. In many areas, these offices are the only contact constituents have with New Castle County.

Office of Finance provides the members of County Council with an ongoing record of the County's finances including monthly fiscal reports, comprehensive annual budget summaries and financial reports. It provides county residents with information about county property and school taxes. <http://www.nccde.org/countyfinances/home/webpage1.asp>

Office of Human Resources offers information about county employment, benefits and applications. <http://www2.nccde.org/contact/HR/>

#### Human Resources

**Community Services Department** directs citizen services including recreational programs, services and centers for senior citizens, parks, sports and athletics. It also operates twelve public libraries. <http://www2.nccde.org/communityservices>

The Division of Community Development and Housing delivers housing rehabilitation, down payment and settlement loan assistance to approximately 300 county households each year. The division directs the Section 8 housing program, delivering rental assistance to approximately 1,700 households each year.

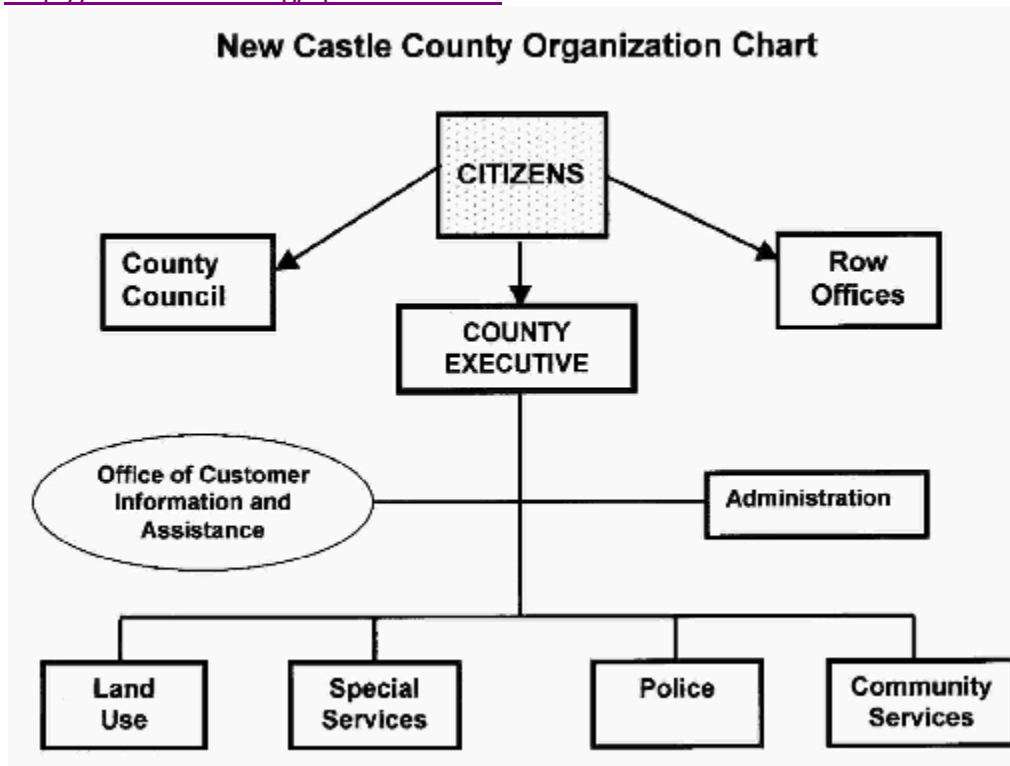
**Land Use Department** administers all aspects of the land use and development process, including zoning and development plans, issuing building permits, inspecting sites and conducting the property assessment process.

<http://www2.nccde.org/landuse>

**Public Safety/Police Department** provides protection and safety for citizens of the county and maintains emergency communications, emergency medical services, crossing guards, paramedics and 911 communications. <http://www2.nccde.org/police>

**Special Services Department** maintains and develops county facilities and land including recreational facilities and parkland. It maintains county vehicles, buildings, and sewers and provides facilities design and development. Special Services is comprised of four divisions that manage different aspects of all county assets: Engineering and Environmental Services, Environmental Operations, Internal Services, and Administration.

<http://www.nccde.org/specialservices>



#### **Elected Row Offices in New Castle County**

- Clerk of the Peace issues marriage licenses and conducts marriage ceremonies.

<http://www.nccde.org/clerk>

(302-395-7780)

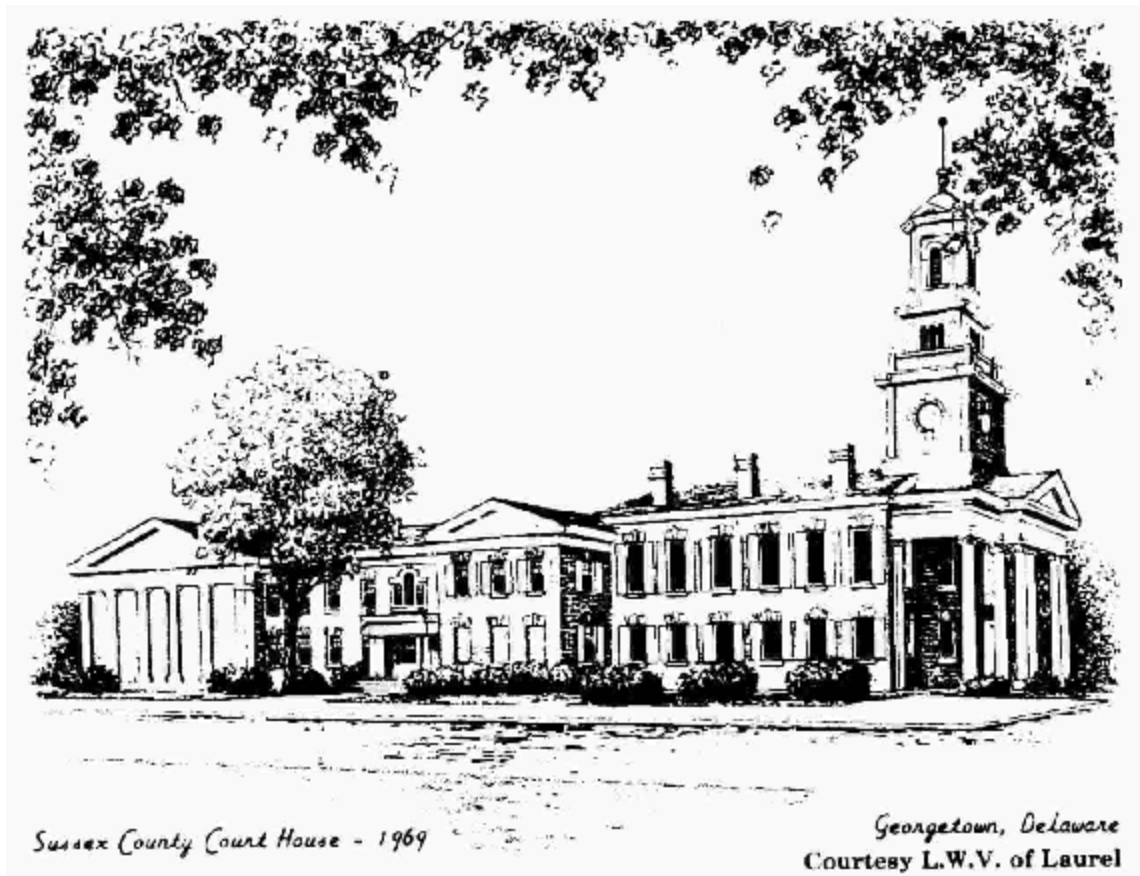
- Recorder of Deeds is the repository for all land transaction records, corporate filings and financing statements in New Castle County. This includes recording, processing and delivering deeds, deed restrictions, easements, mortgages, assignments federal tax liens and plot plans in addition to other responsibilities. <http://www.nccde.org/deeds> (302-395-7700)
- Register of Wills probates wills when a death occurs, holds wills for safekeeping for a small fee and has available for public use genealogy records back to the 1600s. <http://www.nccde.org/wills> (302-395-7800)
- Sheriff serves writs and subpoenas for county courts and departments. He also holds auctions offering personal or business property foreclosed upon for personal or business debt and detains and transports prisoners. <http://www.nccde.org/sheriff> (302-395-8450)

### **Sussex County**

<http://www.sussexcountyde.gov/>

Both Delaware and Sussex County colonial history began with the settlement of the Dutch near what is now Lewes on the Delaware Bay in 1631, but permanent settlement there did not come until 1658. Taking control over the area from the Dutch in the 1660's, the English called both the county and county seat "Deale." After being granted control over what became known as "The Lower Counties upon the Delaware" in 1682, the Quaker, William Penn, changed the name of "Deale" to "Sussex" after his native Sussex in England. In 1775 the size of the original Sussex County was nearly doubled by the addition of parts of neighboring Maryland counties as a result of the Mason-Dixon survey. The original county seat at Lewes was inconvenient for those new areas, and in 1791 the General Assembly passed an act to purchase land near the center of the county, naming it Georgetown in honor of George Mitchell, one of the commissioners delegated to buy the land. The first courthouse was built in 1792.

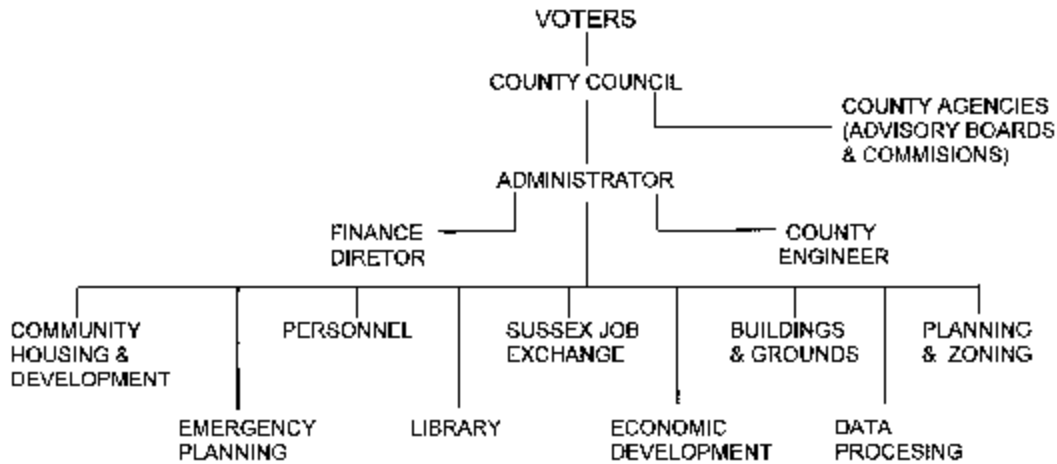




Sussex, with 979 square miles, is the largest of Delaware's three counties. Most of the county is flat terrain with a beautiful coastline of beaches on the Atlantic Ocean and Delaware Bay. Known as the birthplace of the broiler chicken industry, Sussex County is mainly agricultural and is responsible for the major part of the state's farm fruit and vegetable crops. It has a large tourist industry on beaches along the Atlantic coast. There are 24 municipalities. The population of Sussex County in 2006 was 180,288.

The present Sussex County Courthouse in Georgetown was built in 1846, restored and enlarged in 1914 and again in 1969. On December 9, 1996, the Sussex County government moved its operations from the Sussex County Courthouse to new facilities on the circle in Georgetown. The new county building has incorporated into its architecture the Georgetown Post Office that was built in 1931. The Sussex County Courthouse was sold to the State of Delaware in 1996. In January 1971 the General Assembly replaced a three-member Levy Court with a five-member elected County Council. Each Council member must be a Sussex County resident who represents one of the five county districts and is at least 18-years-old. A Council member serves a four-year term and cannot hold any other county or state office or job until one year after his term ends. Council meetings are held every Tuesday at 10 a.m. with the exception of the second Tuesday of the month which is held at 6:30 p.m. Meetings take place in the Council Chambers, County Administrative Building, 2 The Circle, Georgetown, and are open to the public. All actions of the Council must be passed as ordinances in order to become law. Council adopts the annual budget, sets taxes and other revenue sources to balance the budget. It establishes health and safety policies and plans for development of the county.

## SUSSEX COUNTY ORGANIZATION CHART



For a detailed organization chart go to

[http://www.sussexcountyde.gov/about/structure/gov\\_structure.pdf](http://www.sussexcountyde.gov/about/structure/gov_structure.pdf).

Duties of County Offices:

<http://www.sussexcountyde.gov/departments/index.cfm?id=5>

**Administration** administrates and oversees all county departments.

**Accounting** is responsible for processing all Sussex County records including maintaining departmental budgets. This process includes verifying and paying bills, preparing payroll, depositing money, maintaining contracts, monitoring federal and state grant programs and internal auditing.

**Assessment/Building Code** is responsible for issuing building permits, creating and maintaining assessment records for all properties in the county, drawing and maintaining county tax maps, and enforcing single family, multi-family and commercial building codes in the county.

**Community Development & Housing** provides annual grants and loans to finance housing rehabilitation, community facilities and public works improvements which serve low and moderate income people in Sussex County.

**Data Processing** maintains and secures Sussex County's computers and databases.

**Economic Development** promotes the development of new and existing businesses in Sussex County and expands and diversifies the economic and employment base. It is committed to preserving major industries (tourism, manufacturing, poultry & agriculture) and attracting new businesses with quality jobs and higher wages for the people of Sussex County. Countywide promotion of development efforts includes the Sussex County Industrial Air Park, downtown revitalization, special events, business retention, and promotional advertising.

**Emergency Medical Services** provides emergency medical treatment and is part of the Delaware state-wide paramedic program.

**Emergency Operations Center** responds to natural disasters such as snowstorms, floods, hurricanes, droughts, etc. and technological disasters such as chemical spills. It provides 911 emergency service for the public and dispatches fire companies, ambulance squads and county paramedics.

**Engineering** is responsible for all engineering design, construction and operation and maintenance of public utilities for the unincorporated areas of Sussex County. This includes wastewater treatment and disposal plants, public water systems, Sussex County Airport, Industrial Air Park, lighting districts and suburban community improvements.

**Facilities Management** maintains county buildings and properties.

**Finance** administrates aspects of the county's finances including budget and comprehensive financial reports.

**Information Systems** is responsible for the phone and computer network systems.

**Libraries Administration** <http://www.sussex.lib.de.us> oversees Sussex County's 14 libraries and its bookmobile and works as a system to provide library services to all residents and visitors.

The Sussex County Department of Libraries administers three county libraries and the bookmobile. It also serves all public libraries in the county including the 11 independent libraries by operating a regular delivery service between libraries, operating an interlibrary loan service and providing the services of a Youth Service Coordinator and a Literacy Coordinator. Also provided is Dial-a-Story service (856-3535) with 3 stories changed twice a week. All libraries in the system are part of the unified Delaware Library Catalog.

<http://ilsapp.lib.de.us/uhtbin/cgiirsi/x/x/0/49/>

**Personnel** interprets and administers policies as set by the County Administrator and/or County Council; plans, reviews and recommends changes in personnel policies, position classification plan and employee benefit plans, and maintains personnel files of all County employees. The Personnel Board has three members, who serve 3 year terms, and arbitrates disputes between employees and the county. The Advisory Retirement Board has five members, who serve 2 or 4 year terms, and makes decisions to grant pension eligibility.

**Planning & Zoning** provides zoning information on building permits including setbacks from property lines, building location and accessory use location. It coordinates paperwork and scheduling for public hearings for the Sussex County Planning & Zoning Commission and the Sussex County Board of Adjustments. The Comprehensive Land Use Plan was adopted on 10/21/97.

**Treasury** oversees collection and disbursement of school and county property taxes. Real estate taxes vary according to the school rate, school capitation and school library taxes in each of the six school districts.

Elected Row Offices in Sussex County:

- **Clerk of the Peace** <http://www.sussexcountyde.gov/departments/index.cfm?id=15>
- **Recorder of Deeds** <http://www.sussexcountyde.gov/departments/index.cfm?id=19>
- **Register of Wills** <http://www.sussexcountyde.gov/departments/index.cfm?id=18>
- **Sheriff** <http://www.sussexcountyde.gov/departments/index.cfm?id=42>

#### **Incorporated Municipal Governments**

<http://stateplanning.delaware.gov/information/municipalities.shtml>

The 57 incorporated municipalities in Delaware function under charters granted by the General Assembly enabling them to elect their own governing bodies and to exercise the powers granted under their charters. Many sizable communities or neighborhoods, particularly in populous New Castle County, that range in population from 100 to 15,000 are not incorporated and therefore are not self-governing. They are described as "in the county," which represents their most immediate branch of government.

Elections for municipal officials are non-partisan, except for Wilmington. Some elections are held annually, others in alternate years. The governing bodies are similar. Titles and descriptions are listed below and the corresponding letter appears after each municipality on the following chart.

(M, C) Mayor and Council - all elected.

(M, Com) Mayor and Commissioner - all elected.

(P, C) President and Council – Council elected with the president being elected from among their number at the organization meeting following election.

(P, Com) President and Commissioners, same as in President and Council

(T, TM) Trustees and Town Meeting - Arden, Ardencroft and Ardentown in New Castle County are unique. They have self-perpetuating Boards of Trustees. Upon death of a trustee the remaining trustees elect a successor. Only in Arden can the 'lease-holders' confirm or reject election of the trustee. At the annual town meetings the leaseholders elect the secretary, treasurer, and the various committees

(Mg) The governing bodies of 12 municipalities appoint a city or town manager as administrator.

**Incorporated Municipalities by County and Population**

<p><b>Kent County (147,675)</b> <b>0 – 1000</b> Bowers Beach (M,C) Cheswold (M,C) Farmington (P,Com) Farmington (P,C,M) Felton (P,Com) Frederica (M,C) Hartly (P,Com) Houston (M,C) Kenton (P,C) Leipsic (M,C) Little Creek (M,Com) Magnolia (M,C) Viola (P,C) Woodside (M,C)</p> <p><b>Kent County</b> <b>1,000 – 3,000</b> Camden (P,C) Clayton (P,C) Wyoming (P,C,Mg)</p> <p><b>Kent County</b> <b>Over 3,000</b> Dover (M,C,Mg) 34,735 Harrington (M,C,Mg) 3,263 Milford (M,C,Mg) 7,852 Smyrna (M,C,Mg) 7,837</p>	<p><b>New Castle County (527,027)</b> <b>0 – 1000</b> Arden (T,TM) Ardencroft (T,TM) Ardentown (T,TM,M,C) Odessa (M,C) Townsend (P,C)</p> <p><b>New Castle County</b> <b>1,000 – 3,000</b> Bellefonte (P,Com) Delaware City (M,C) Newport (M,C)</p> <p><b>New Castle County</b> <b>Over 3,000</b> Elsmere (M,C,Mg) 5,731 Middletown (P,C) 10,272 Newark (M,Com,Mg) 30,014 New Castle (M,Com,Mg) 4,963 Wilmington (M,C) 72,826</p>	<p><b>Sussex County (180,288)</b> <b>0 – 1000</b> Bethany Beach (P,Com,Mg) Bethel (P,C) Dagsboro (M,C) Dewey Beach (M,Com) Ellendale (P,C) Frankford (P,C) Greenwood (P,C) Henlopen Acres (M,Com) Millville (M,C) Selbyville (M,C) Slaughter Beach (M,C)</p> <p><b>Sussex County, 1,000 – 3,000</b> Bridgeville (P,Com) Blades (M,C) Delmar (M,C) Fenwick Island (P,C) Millsboro (P,C) Milton (M,C) Ocean View (P,C) Rehoboth Beach (M,Com,M) South Bethany (M,C)</p> <p><b>Sussex County, Over 3000</b> Georgetown (M,C) 4,927 Laurel (M,C,Mg) 3,821 Lewes (M,C,Mg) 3,119 Seaford (M,Com,Mg) 7,080</p>
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## **Dover**

<http://www.cityofDover.com>

Unlike most Delaware towns the state capital of Dover began as a planned community. William Penn issued a warrant to lay out a new county seat on August 11, 1638, and a parcel of land was purchased in 1694. The State Assembly moved from New Castle to Dover in 1777. A town charter granted in 1829 formed the first formal local government and permitted levying of taxes.

In 1929 Dover incorporated as a city with a mayor-council-manager form of government. Since May 1989 the Council has been composed of nine members, two elected from each of four districts and one elected at-large to serve staggered two-year terms. A non-partisan election for mayor and council members is held the third Tuesday in April. The Council president presides over council meetings with the mayor presiding over annual meetings and open town meetings. Various committees of the Council study and recommend actions to the full Council. The committees currently are: Legislative and Finance Committee, Utility Committee, Safety Advisory Committee, and Parks & Recreation Committee. City Council meetings are held in City Hall on the second and fourth Mondays of each month and are open to the public.

The General Fund is the operating fund of the City of Dover and is used to account for all revenues and expenditures not accounted for in other designated funds. It is financed principally by various tax liens, franchise taxes, licenses and permit fees, fines, fund transfers, and miscellaneous revenue sources. Taxes are the largest revenue source in the budget with transfers from other funds contributing the next largest amount. These funds include returns on investments from the Electric Revenue Fund and the Water/Wastewater Fund.

## **Wilmington**

<http://www.ci.wilmington.de.us>

Wilmington, Delaware's oldest and largest city was first settled in 1638 when a Swedish expedition landed at "the Rocks" on the banks of the Christina River. The primarily agricultural settlement was colonized in 1655 by the Dutch and in 1664 by the English who used it to further their trade and colonization along the Atlantic coast.

In 1731 Thomas Willing developed plans and laid out streets for a large town, "Willington," envisioned as a place of trade and a center for milling and shipping. Willington's strategic location near three rivers - Christina, Delaware, Brandywine - aided its growth and development. In 1739 King George II granted the town a royal borough charter. At this time, the town's name was changed to Wilmington in honor of Spencer Compton, Earl of Wilmington. Not until 1832 did Wilmington get another charter. At that time the General Assembly made Wilmington a municipal corporation with its own mayor and city council. The General Assembly amended the charter on numerous occasions between 1832 and 1964 when the Home Rule Charter was enacted. This charter gave power to run the city to the mayor as the chief administrator and reorganized city council as the sole legislating body.

The mayor is responsible for the executive, administrative, and law enforcement departments. He must submit to the council a proposed operating budget for the ensuing year with recommendations for balancing the budget. He uses his office to improve the government of the city and encourage commercial and industrial development. The city's government consists of the following city offices and departments: City Auditor, Constituent Services, Cultural Affairs, Economic Development, Finance, Information Technology, Law (City Solicitor), Licenses

and Inspections, Management and Budget, Parks and Recreation, Personnel, Planning, Public Safety, Public Works and Real Estate and Housing.

The Wilmington City Council is the legislative body of the City of Wilmington. The council is composed of 12 members and the council president. Eight members are elected from different geographical districts, and four members and the president are elected at-large. Although four are elected, each voter may vote for only three. Each voter chooses from a slate of three Democrats and three Republicans, thus assuring that the fourth at-large member will be from the minority party. Both the mayor and city councilmen are elected to four-year terms.

The duties of council include making the final decision on the budget submitted by the mayor and setting the property tax rate for the city. It may also establish new powers for the executive and legislative branches, but cannot abolish any functioning agency. It also enacts laws for zoning and physical development with recommendations from the Planning Department.

Within the council structure are various committees whose interests correspond closely with the duties of numerous city departments. A large influx of banking operations in Wilmington followed a change in banking laws by the Delaware General Assembly. Renewal efforts continue through tax incentive programs for rehabilitation and new construction as well as loan and grant programs for rebuilding and strengthening city neighborhoods.

The Wilmington City Council meets the first and third Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the Louis L. Redding City/Council Building, 800 French Street, in Wilmington. Meetings are open to the public.

<http://www.ci.wilmington.de.us/commeetings.htm>

**CITY OF WILMINGTON GENERAL FUND BUDGET FISCAL YEAR 2007**

<b>Revenue</b>	\$46,998,125		<b>Expenditures</b>	\$5,560,706
Wage tax			Mayor's office	
Property tax	30,466,500		Council	2,279,062
Other taxes	7,927,333		Treasurer	379,005
Licenses, permits, fees and fines	6,626,500		Planning	1,385,891
Interest	4,365,929		Auditing	548,903
Other revenues	4,372,533		Law	2,280,692
Task Force revenues	4,157,500		Finance	3,811,136
County Seat relief	6,243,807		Personnel	1,512,351
Transfers In/Out	275,000		Licenses & Inspections	4,219,511
			Parks & Recreation	8,820,396
			Fire	17,220,081
			Police	37,721,056
			Public Works	19,535,095

			Real Estate & Housing	1,330,177
			Contingent Reserves	400,000
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$110,709,171</b>		<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$107,004,062</b>



Courthouse at New Castle – Delaware is the only state in the nation with a surviving 18<sup>th</sup> century courthouse in each county.