

Republican John Kachmar enters mayoral race

The Bethlehem Gadfly Candidates for election, Election, Lehigh Valley Good Neighbors Alliance March 10, 2021

🍷 Latest in a series of posts on candidates for election 🍷

“Lehigh Valley Good Neighbors Alliance is proud to announce that we had a hand in recruiting Marine veteran, Purple Heart recipient, and Republican mayoral candidate John Kachmar. Bethlehem’s Mayoral Race will definitely be more exciting and intelligent with him in it. We certainly wish John all the best with his campaign and commend him for his courage both in his service to his country and in deciding to run for mayor of his hometown.”

selections from Christina Tatu, “Former Lehigh County administrator enters Bethlehem race, hoping to be first Republican mayor in 24 years.” Morning Call, March 9, 2021.

Bethlehem’s race for mayor gained a Republican candidate Tuesday when former Lehigh County Administrator John Kachmar submitted a petition to run.

If elected, Kachmar would be the city’s first Republican mayor in 24 years. [City Council member J. William Reynolds](#) and former [city Administrator Dana Grubb](#), both Democrats, are also running.



In addition to being county administrator from 1986-93, Kachmar was also the chief aide for then-U.S. Rep. Don Ritter, a Republican who represented the Lehigh Valley in Congress from 1979-93.

Kachmar eventually went on to work for the International City/County Management Association, where he served as a city administrator and manager for municipalities across the country from Minnesota to South Carolina and Maryland.

“I’ve been back in Bethlehem for almost four years and quietly enjoying the town I grew up in,” Kachmar said Tuesday evening. “I’ve been watching what’s going on in the city and found some of the things they are doing to be offensive.”

Kachmar said he thinks the city should be more transparent in how it operates and said he disagrees with recent tax increases.

“It’s my hometown. I was born and raised here. I just want to make sure it is run efficiently and it’s fair to the taxpayer,” he said.

Kachmar also served from 2007-14 as the city manager of Johns Creek, Georgia, a city of 88,000 where he was paid \$138,000 to voluntarily resign after a heated argument with a resident, [according to a 2014 article on Patch.com](#).

Kachmar said the situation was politically driven by the mayor at the time, [who was being investigated for allegedly leaking information](#) from closed City Council sessions.

Lee Snover, chairperson of the Republican Committee in Northampton County, said she knows Kachmar will face an up-hill battle in the heavily Democratic city, but she believes he’s more than qualified for the city’s top post.

“I met with him and he’s extremely qualified and very brilliant. He would make an excellent mayor,” she said.

The city’s last Republican mayor was Ken Smith, who served 1987-97.