

## **KENOSHA, WISCONSIN ALDERMAN ART DEBAERE III**

Art DeBaere serves as the District 17 alderman on Kenosha, Wisconsin's Common Council. DeBaere is the owner of Champions Sports Bar in downtown Kenosha and has served as a district director for the Tavern League of Wisconsin since 2023. DeBaere has also served as president of the Kenosha City Tavern League since 2021. He is a graduate of Western New England University.

Key findings:

**DeBaere is a Trump supporter who has praised Trump frequently on social media and attended a rally in 2020.** A review of DeBaere's Facebook page found multiple posts in support of President Trump. In November 2020, DeBaere touted a MAGA rally in Kenosha, writing, "Welcome back to Kenosha, Mr. President!" In September 2020, DeBaere thanked Trump for coming to Kenosha and criticized the mayor and county executive for not appearing alongside Trump. "Thank you Mr. President for coming to our city. Missing from the photo is our mayor and county executive. What an absolute disgrace. Please let me know when the recall happens," DeBaere wrote. In January 2020, DeBaere posted photos of himself and his son at a Trump rally in Milwaukee.

**DeBaere called Biden "sleepy" and "senile" in online posts.** In a November 2020 Facebook post, DeBaere made fun of "sleepy" Biden's appearance at a press conference. DeBaere wrote, "Could somebody fill me in on what is his favorite color? what is favorite dog is? What day of the week it is? And I think he was asked what is his favorite ice cream flavor?" In January 2020, DeBaere seemingly called Biden a "senile goofball."

**In 2020, on the same day of the Kyle Rittenhouse shooting, DeBaere called on local businesses to "arm up" and "protect your own business."** On August 25, 2020, DeBaere posted on Facebook, "I guess if the police and National Guard cannot protect your local businesses it is time to arm up tonight and go down and protect your own business. I guess the curfew and the stupid BLM posters didn't work." In other posts that day, DeBaere joked about booby trapping his house in case rioters showed up and complained about "looters" that he believed wanted to destroy Kenosha. While no direct comments from DeBaere on the Rittenhouse trial or verdict were found, DeBaere posted "not guilty" on Facebook on the day Rittenhouse was acquitted and during the trial, DeBaere posted a meme making light of the trial.

**2021: DeBaere posted "Unvaccinated Lives Matter" and joked about not getting vaccinated.** On September 13, 2021, DeBaere shared a post that showed a flag emblazoned with the phrase "Unvaccinated Lives Matter." In a September 9, 2021 post, DeBaere wrote, "After listening to sleep Joe speak, I am going to rush out and get vaccinated right away!!!! No, I'm kidding, go F\*ck Yo\*rself!"

**As alderman, DeBaere was accused of ignoring resident complaints about a hazardous debris from a house fire.** In May 2025, Kenosha County Eye's Kevin Mathewson reported that city officials, including DeBaere, failed to take action and ignored local residents' complaints about a hazardous pile of debris that sat for nearly four months following a house fire. Kenosha County Eye reported, "Since then, neighbors in the Whitecaps subdivision say they've been left to live next to a health hazard—complete with raw sewage, toxic ash, and mold—while city officials, including Mayor David Bogdala and Alderman Art DeBaere, fail to take meaningful action."

**DeBaere had a \$3,251 Illinois tax lien which was released in July 2022.** A public records review found that in February 2018, the state of Illinois filed a tax lien against DeBaere for \$3,251. The lien was released on July 20, 2022.

## **BACKGROUND**

**DeBaere was originally from Riverside, Illinois.** According to his Facebook profile, DeBaere is originally from Riverside, Illinois. [Facebook, accessed [12/4/25](#)]

## **PROFESSIONAL CAREER**

**2024- Present: DeBaere is a member of the city of Kenosha’s Common Council.** [Website, City of Kenosha, accessed [12/3/25](#)]

- **DeBaere is a member of the Council’s Finance Committee.** [Website, City of Kenosha, accessed [12/3/25](#)]
- **April 2024: DeBaere was sworn in as alderman of District 17.** “Members of the City Council were also sworn in Tuesday evening. They work together to determine city policies and ordinances. One council member is elected from each of the 17 districts in the city for a two-year term. Newcomers include Ald. Peni Keeling, of District 8; Ald. Kenny Harper, of District 14; and Ald. Art DeBaere, of District 17.” [Kenosha News, [4/17/24](#)]
- **DeBaere ran unopposed.** “Art DeBaere III is running unopposed to represent District 17.” [Kenosha News, [1/2/24](#)]

**Since 2010, DeBaere was the owner of Champion’s Sports Bar.** [Kenosha News, 11/19/23; LinkedIn, accessed [12/4/25](#)]

- **DeBaere said living in Boston during the run of TV show “Cheers” inspired him to open Champions- along with being a “die-hard” sports fan.** “What inspired you to open Champions Sports Bar? Art: Living in Boston during the TV Cheers Show run, and having a sports background both playing and die-hard fan. I wanted to open a place where everybody would know your name and have a place to watch, discuss, argue sports topics. [...] Champions opened in November 2010. I originally had a partner, have been solo for the past 11 years. This business has evolved into a family, where Champions is home for many people.” [Go Downtown Kenosha, [4/23/24](#)]

**2023- Present: DeBaere was a First District Director for the Tavern League of Wisconsin.** [Website, Tavern League of Wisconsin, accessed [12/3/25](#); LinkedIn, accessed [12/4/25](#)]

- **DeBaere said, as a representative for the Tavern League, voices local members’ concerns and questions to the state and relays information and issues back to members.** In an interview, DeBaere said, “I was elected to represent Kenosha City and Kenosha County Tavern League members on a state level by representing the 1st District on the Wisconsin State Tavern League Board of Directors. My duties are to deliver and voice our local member’s concerns and questions to the state, and present the state Messages and issues back to our members to keep the communication lines open.” [Go Downtown Kenosha, [4/23/24](#)]

**2021- Present: DeBaere was also president of the Kenosha City Tavern League.** According to his LinkedIn profile, DeBaere has also served as president of the Kenosha City Tavern League since 2021. [LinkedIn, accessed [12/4/25](#)]

**2019-2022: DeBaere worked as a supply chain and logistics specialist at ArcBest.** According to his LinkedIn profile, from March 2019- April 2022, DeBaere worked as a supply chain and logistics specialist for ArcBest in Milwaukee. [LinkedIn, accessed [12/4/25](#)]

**2019-2022: DeBaere worked as a field sales account manager for ABF Freight.** According to his LinkedIn profile, from March 2019- April 2022, DeBaere worked as a field sales account manager for ABF Freight in Milwaukee, WI. [LinkedIn, accessed [12/4/25](#)]

**2015-2019: DeBaere worked as a field sales manager for Saia Inc in Grayslake, Illinois.** According to his LinkedIn profile, from July 2015- March 2019, DeBaere was a field sales manager for Saia, Inc in Grayslake, IL. [LinkedIn, accessed [12/4/25](#)]

**2004- 2015: DeBaere worked as a senior sales executive for FedEx services in Chicago.** According to his LinkedIn profile, from August 2004- June 2015, DeBaere worked as a senior sales executive for FedEx Services in the greater Chicago area. [LinkedIn, accessed [12/4/25](#)]

## EDUCATION

**1994: DeBaere graduated from Western New England University.** According to his LinkedIn profile, DeBaere graduated with a degree in 1994 from Western New England University. [LinkedIn, accessed [12/4/25](#)]

## PHILOSOPHY

**DeBaere described his start in politics: “I have always been drawn to politics, whether being elected as president of my college dorm my 1st two years of college, to running as president for my local HOA the past 10 years, and being the Kenosha City Tavern League President the past 3 years.”** In an interview, DeBaere said, “I have always been drawn to politics, whether being elected as president of my college dorm my 1st two years of college, to running as president for my local HOA the past 10 years, and being the Kenosha City Tavern League President the past 3 years. I was fortunate to live in the 17th District, where for the past 16 years, we have had great representation on the City Council of David Bogdala. I worked very closely with him in our community by attending his local Townhall Meetings, to voicing our concerns in the neighborhood and Tavern League Issues. There are big shoes to fill as Dave moves to the Mayor’s office. I am looking forward to the new chapter and challenge representing the 17th! I do not have any agenda or want to change the city. Just represent my District 1st, and City 2nd, be a voice for my constituents for their needs and concerns.” [Go Downtown Kenosha, [4/23/24](#)]

## Right-Wing Beliefs

### *Pro-Trump*

**November 2020: DeBaere touted Trump’s MAGA rally in Kenosha on Facebook... “Welcome back to Kenosha, Mr. President!!!!”** In a November 2, 2020 Facebook post, DeBaere shared a YouTube link to Trump’s livestreamed rally in Kenosha, WI. In a comment under his own post, DeBaere wrote, “Welcome back to Kenosha, Mr. President!!!!” [Facebook, posted [11/2/20](#)]

- **September 2020: DeBaere exclaimed “MAGA!!!!” in Facebook Post.** In a September 2, 2020 Facebook post, DeBaere wrote, “So let’s see, Trump comes to Kenosha and less than 24 hours later the National Guard is gone and the curfew is lifted. MAGA!!!!” [Facebook, posted [9/2/20](#)]

- **September 2020: DeBaere thanked Trump for coming to Kenosha and criticized the mayor and county executive for not appearing alongside him.** In a September 1, 2020 Facebook post, DeBaere wrote, “Thank you Mr. President for coming to our city. Missing from the photo is our mayor and county executive. What an absolute disgrace. Please let me know when the recall happens”. [Facebook, posted [9/1/20](#)]
- **January 2020: DeBaere posted photos to Facebook of himself at a Trump rally in Milwaukee.** On January 14, 2020, DeBaere posted photos of himself at a Trump rally in Milwaukee. [Facebook, posted [1/14/20](#)]

**DeBaere posted a photo of his son with far-right, pro-Trump Milwaukee Sheriff David Clarke.** On June 27, 2020, DeBaere posted a photo of his son Arthur with former Milwaukee Sheriff David Clarke. In the caption, DeBaere wrote, “Arthur went to the Back the Badge Rally today near Champions in Kenosha. Met with Milwaukee Sheriff David Clarke.” [Facebook, [6/27/20](#); [6/2/24](#); Daily Beast, [3/14/23](#)]

### *Anti- Biden*

**2020: DeBaere made fun of “sleepy” Biden in Facebook post.** In a November 2020 Facebook post, DeBaere stated, “Sorry I missed sleepy Jose press conference where he took questions today. Could somebody fill me in on what is his favorite color? what is favorite dog is? What day of the week it is? And I think he was asked what is his favorite ice cream flavor?” [Facebook, posted [11/10/20](#)]

- **January 2022: DeBaere seemingly called President Biden a “senile goofball.”** In a January 19, 2022 post, DeBaere wrote, “Watching this senile goofball talk on TV, I think I'm living in the Twilight Zone....what world does he see???? even saying the shelves are 90% stocked....yeah, ok!!!” In a comment on his post, DeBaere added, “The best part so far is somebody asked him if kamala is going to be his running mate and he said yes I've put her in charge of several things and she's doing a great job. And then he started laughing ...” [Facebook, posted [1/19/22](#)]

### *Kyle Rittenhouse and 2020 protests*

**August 25, 2020: On the day of the Kyle Rittenhouse shooting in Kenosha, DeBaere called on local businesses to “arm up” and “protect your own business.”** On August 25, 2020, DeBaere posted on Facebook, “I guess if the police and National Guard cannot protect your local businesses it is time to arm up tonight and go down and protect your own business. I guess the curfew and the stupid BLM posters didn't work” [Facebook, posted [8/25/20](#); New York Times, [11/19/21](#)]

- **August 25, 2020: DeBaere joked about booby trapping his house in case rioters showed up.** On August 25, 2020, “Does anybody have a tranchulas spider I could borrow for the night? I booby-trapped my house like in the movie Home Alone in case the rioters come over tonight. Shhh, don't tell them...” [Facebook, posted [8/25/20](#)]
- **August 25, 2020: DeBaere complained about “looters” that he believed wanted to destroy Kenosha.** On August 25, 2020, DeBaere posted on Facebook, “Maybe we should take a page out of the movie Blazing Saddles and erect a carbon copy of Kenosha so all the looters can go and destroy that and be on their way?” [Facebook, posted [8/25/20](#)]
- **August 24, 2020: DeBaere claimed the city forced him to close his business for the riots.** In an August 24, 2020 post, DeBaere wrote, “When the city forces your business closed today for the riots, you grab dinner at the new Mexican Restaurant.” [Facebook, posted [8/24/20](#)]

**November 19, 2021: DeBaere posted “Not guilty” on the day Kenosha shooter Kyle Rittenhouse was acquitted after killing two protestors.** In a November 19, 2021 Facebook post, DeBaere posted “Not Guilty.” November 19, 2021 was the day Kyle Rittenhouse was acquitted of all charges related to the murder of two protestors in Kenosha, WI. [Facebook, posted [11/19/21](#); PBS, [11/19/21](#)]

- **November 17, 2021: DeBaere posted meme downplaying the Rittenhouse trial.** On November 17, 2021, DeBaere posted a meme that featured a picture of Kyle Rittenhouse during his trial alongside a video purportedly of the incident in Kenosha. The meme included the caption, “Shocking Testimony in Kyle Rittenhouse Trial Reveals That One Year Ago Gas Was \$2.09 & Prosecutor Completely Ignores It.” [Facebook, posted [11/17/21](#)]

## **COVID-19**

**September 2021: DeBaere shared a post stating “Unvaccinated Lives Matter.”** On September 13, 2021, Debaere shared a post that showed a flag emblazoned with the phrase “Unvaccinated Lives Matter.” [Facebook, posted [9/6/21](#)]

**September 2021: DeBaere joked about not getting vaccinated and told President Biden to “Go F\*ck Yo\*rself!!!”** In a September 9, 2021 post, DeBaere wrote, “After listening to sleep Joe speak, I am going to rush out and get vaccinated right away!!!! No, I'm kidding, go F\*ck Yo\*rself!!!!” [Facebook, posted [9/9/21](#)]

**2022: DeBaere referred to the 2022 Winter Olympics as the “China Genocide Games.”** In a February 10, 2022 post, DeBaere wrote, “Although I am boycotting the China Genocide Games, I will still celebrate the athletes, especially former USHL Chicago Steel member Sean Farrell for Team USA who had 5 points vs. China with 3 goals and 2 assists!!!!” [Facebook, posted [2/10/22](#)]

## **Bar industry**

**2025: DeBaere said there was nothing the city council could do about the shortage of liquor licenses for Kenosha businesses.** “If you've been trying to open a bar or restaurant in Kenosha recently, you may have come across one small snag: there's no liquor licenses available. As business development has grown in Kenosha over the past few years, so has the demand for obtaining the right licenses and permits. [...] Alderman for the 17th district Art DeBaere, who is also the president of the Kenosha Tavern League and owner of Champions Sports Bar, said from the Tavern League's perspective ‘there's nothing we can do about it.’ ‘We like growth and competition and to promote our industry. There's that side of it, and there's the other side that people that have licenses – it's a commodity – and you want to protect your value of it,’ he said. DeBaere said he hasn't been asked by anyone about increasing the quota. Rather he's received inquiries about the process of acquiring a license. ‘I've never had anyone call and say, ‘Hey, how can you fix this problem?’’ he said. ‘We've never had anyone at City Council for public comments address it.’” [Kenosha News, [10/5/25](#)]

**2024: DeBaere abstained from voting on city council measure to extend bar hours during the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee.** “City of Kenosha alderpersons voted unanimously against allowing extended bar hours during the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee in mid-July. Alderpersons voted Monday night in support of the second reading of a city ordinance to opt out of extended closing hours during the convention set for July 15-18. [...] Aids. Jack Rose and Kelly MacKay were absent on Monday. Ald. Art DeBaere abstained to avoid a conflict of interest. When questioned about the matter earlier this month, newly installed Kenosha Mayor David Bogdala said he doesn't believe ‘anything good comes from being open that late.’” [Kenosha News, [6/18/24](#)]

**2020: DeBaere urged the City Council to postpone voting on a measure that would make it harder for tavern owners to offer live music. DeBaere: “Never having an issue, why are we being subject to time changes all of the sudden and additional work for security or factors of that nature?”**

“After tavern owners complained a proposed change in the city’s cabaret license requirements would make it tough to offer live music, city officials postponed a vote on the plan. After nearly three hours of discussion at two public hearings, the council on Monday night voted 11-3 to defer a decision on the proposed ordinance until the next Committee on Licenses and Permits meeting on Oct. 14. Bar owners and others who offer live entertainment worried the proposed changes — including limits on hours bands could play and requirements for security and operational plans — were too burdensome. [...] Art DeBaere, owner of Champions Sports Bar, said his tavern has been in business for 10 years and has not had any issues with the city. He called for the council to defer the matter. ‘Never having an issue, why are we being subject to time changes all of the sudden and additional work for security or factors of that nature?’ he said, adding he just received a copy of the proposed revised ordinance on Saturday night. ‘You shouldn’t subject bars or establishments that have never had problems now all of the sudden go into another tier of scrutiny and rules and regulations.’” [Kenosha News, [10/8/20](#)]

### Political Giving

**2022: DeBaere donated \$1,000 to Wisconsin State Rep. Tip McGuire (D).** In September 2022, DeBaere donated \$1,000 to the campaign of Wisconsin Democrat Tip McGuire, who is a member of the State Assembly. [Donor Lookup, OpenSecrets, accessed [12/3/25](#); Ballotpedia, accessed [12/3/25](#)]

### CRITICISM

**2025: DeBaere was accused of ignoring neighborhood complaints about a hazardous, burned out property in need of cleanup.** In an op-ed, former alderman and private investigator Kevin Mathewson wrote, “After four months of health hazards, foul smells, and neighborhood frustration, the burned-out property in the 9400 block of 69th Street is finally being cleaned up. But let’s not pretend this resolution came from a sudden sense of responsibility or civic urgency. This cleanup began only after Kenosha County Eye exposed the City’s failure in a May 7 article that detailed the dangerous and unsanitary conditions left behind after a house fire in January. The piece included testimony from residents who had repeatedly contacted city officials, only to be met with silence and inaction. [...] For weeks—months—residents had been pleading for help. They contacted inspectors, filed complaints, and tried to get answers from Alderman Art DeBaere and Mayor Bogdala. A citation was issued back in March ordering the property owner to clean up the debris within 30 days. That deadline came and went with no enforcement, no follow-up, and no answers. Meanwhile, neighbors were forced to live next to a toxic, hazardous pile of rubble—reporting raw sewage, mold, and dangerous debris. The smell, according to multiple residents, was unbearable. Property values were impacted. So was their quality of life. Then KCE reported on it. [...] Neither Mayor Bogdala nor Alderman DeBaere responded to KCE’s most recent requests for comment. Their silence now mirrors the silence that greeted their constituents for months.” [Kenosha County Eye, [5/16/25](#)]

- **Kenosha County Eye’s Kevin Mathewson: “...city officials, including Mayor David Bogdala and Alderman Art DeBaere, fail to take meaningful action.”** “A wind-tattered, illegible notice flaps on the front fence of a burned-out property in the 9400 block of 69th Street—an enduring symbol of inaction by the City of Kenosha, where residents say their concerns are being ignored. It has been nearly four months since a devastating house fire reduced the home to a foul-smelling pile of debris. Since then, neighbors in the Whitecaps subdivision say they’ve been left to live next to a health hazard—complete with raw sewage, toxic ash, and mold—while city officials, including Mayor David Bogdala and Alderman Art DeBaere, fail to take meaningful action. City Administrator John Morrissey, when contacted by KCE,

acknowledged that the deadline for cleanup has expired and promised to look into the matter. He said he would provide an update by tomorrow. KCE contacted Alderman Art DeBaere for comment, but he did not respond. He apparently didn't respond to his constituents either. Neighbors say even a basic acknowledgment would go a long way. 'This is your district, Alderman,' said one resident. 'Please come out, see what's here, and tell us what's being done to clean it up.' With summer approaching, residents fear the site will become even more hazardous in the heat—and say the time for patience has passed." [Kenosha County Eye, [5/7/25](#)]

## **OTHER VULNERABILITIES AND ADVERSE FINDINGS OF NOTE**

### FINANCIAL AND TAX

A public records review found that in February 2018, the state of Illinois filed a tax lien against DeBaere for \$3,251. The lien was released on July 20, 2022. [Nexis Public Records search, accessed 12/4/25]

### LEGAL

A review of Wisconsin's Circuit Court online records found that DeBaere went through divorce proceedings in 2019. [Wisconsin Circuit Court Access, Case No: 2019FA000461, accessed [12/4/25](#)]

### SEX OFFENDER STATUS

No adverse findings of note. [Department of Justice, National Sex Offender Registry, "Art DeBaere," accessed [12/4/25](#)]

### SOCIAL MEDIA

DeBaere maintained a [Facebook](#) page. No other social media was identified.

### LGBTQ+ DISCRIMINATION,

*No statements on LGBTQ+ were found.*