

The Oregonian

David Shaff, Portland Water Bureau administrator, is retiring

*By Andrew Theen
March 17, 2015*

David Shaff, the Portland Water Bureau administrator and longest tenured currently bureau director, will retire this summer.

Shaff announced his retirement Tuesday morning in an email to the entire City Council and fellow bureau directors.

"While there have been some bumps and frustrations along the way, I can easily say that I regard my time here as challenging, rewarding, and fulfilling," Shaff said in the email. "However, it's time to move on and look for new challenges, rewards and fulfillment."

Shaff's decade atop the water bureau coincided with some \$279 million in construction projects, a failed ballot measure intended to wrest control of rate setting away from the bureau, and controversial spending on a Rose Festival headquarters building, costly water demonstration house and other projects that prompted a lawsuit against the city.

Commissioner Nick Fish, who oversees the water and sewer bureaus, asked Shaff to stay on until he can name a successor. He plans to retire by June 30, citing the date as the 37th anniversary of his first day as a city employee and 10-year anniversary as the head of the water bureau. He is one of the highest paid city employees.

The planned departure will come months before the water bureau plans to disconnect three reservoirs at Mount Tabor park from the city's water system in response to federal rules, a decision that continues to be controversial and is the topic of a May City Council hearing.

Much of his tenure overlapped with new environmental regulations for cities with open air reservoirs out of concerns related to the waterborne parasite *Cryptosporidium*. Shaff helped direct the bureau's response to those rules, which includes some \$279 million in projects to build underground reservoirs at Kelly and Powell Buttes.

Shaff's retirement means Fish could be tasked with finding a new director to lead both of Portland's utility bureaus, a rarity in city government.

Earlier this year, long-time Bureau of Environment Services director Dean Marriott agreed to resign as part of a legal settlement with the city.

Last year, Shaff and Fish battled the failed ballot measure to remove control of the water and sewer bureaus from the City Council.

Fish, who took over the utility bureaus in June 2013, said he was "surprised" by the news but respected Shaff's decision. Fish promised a national search to find a new director. "I have admired his dedication and professionalism, his willingness to explore new and better ways of doing business, his customer service ethic, and his strong commitment to using ratepayer dollars wisely," Fish said in an email.

Shaff, 60, spent the first quarter-century of his tenure in city government working for the Bureau of Human Resources. Serving as a labor relations manager, Shaff helped negotiate collective bargaining deals with city workers.

Former Commissioner Randy Leonard appointed Shaff to his political staff as a part-time policy adviser in 2004, then pegged Shaff as interim water administrator in 2005. He was made a permanent director the following year.

"My entire career at the City of Portland has been incredibly fulfilling and rewarding, but these last ten years have been the most special," Shaff said in the email.

His current salary is \$199,160 per year.

Shaff didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

The Portland Tribune

Caleb steps up to challenge Novick for council seat

*By Jim Redden
March 17, 2015*

The first Portland City Council race of 2016 is underway. Nick Caleb, who lost to incumbent Commissioner Dan Saltzman in the 2014 May primary election, says he will challenge Commissioner Steve Novick next year. Novick told the Portland Tribune last week that he will run for re-election.

Although Novick is widely considered to be one of the most progressive members of the council, Caleb says Novick is not progressive enough.

"Time and again, when Novick has the chance to do the most progressive thing, he backs down," says Caleb, a part-time Concordia University professor.

As an example, Caleb criticizes Novick for not including the most progressive personal income tax in his latest street fee proposal. Instead, Novick, who is in charge of the Portland Bureau of Transportation, called for a charge based on estimated gas consumption. Discussions on the fee are on hold during the 2015 Oregon legislative session.

"The only form of a street fee I will support is a progressive income tax. I think taxing people who are already either living in extreme poverty or barely maintaining a working class household is absurd and immoral," Caleb says.

Caleb received around 20 percent of the vote and came in second in the four-candidate race, which Saltzman won by receiving more than half the vote. Caleb believes his showing was respectable, considering he only campaigned for about two months and raised less than \$4,700 because he limited contributions to \$50.

For his race against Novick, Caleb already has a Facebook page and says he will begin actively campaigning soon, more than a year before the election. And he will not limit contributions this time, although he has not yet set a campaign budget.

Caleb has been involved in a number of progressive issues in recent years, including raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour. In addition to teaching, he also works part-time for Our Children's Trust, a nonprofit that educates young people about climate change.

Novick is serving in his first term on the City Council.

"There are a number of issues I'm working on, any one of which could keep me busy until 2017 and beyond," Novick said when announcing his re-election plans.

Novick's announcement means all three council members up for re-election next year will run again. Mayor Charlie Hales told the Portland Tribune editorial board on March 6 that he will seek re-election. Commissioner Amanda Fritz announced for re-election several weeks ago.

Novick says he will resume working on the street fee after the Legislature adjourns. He hopes Salem lawmakers will pass a transportation funding package that includes additional money for other cities. But he does not believe it will be enough to eliminate the city's nearly \$1 billion maintenance backlog or fund needed safety improvement projects.

"I obviously hope that we will adopt a transportation tax or fee by the end of 2016, but assuming we succeed, I would want to be around to make sure the money goes to the right places," Novick said.

The street fee could be Novick's greatest vulnerability. He and Hales first proposed it last May. At the time, they assumed Fritz had agreed to be the third vote to enact the fee without referring it to the voters. When that turned out to be wrong, they spent months rewriting the proposal to secure Fritz's support, without luck. Many Portlanders criticized their efforts, while some community groups voiced support for the safety projects they intended to fund.

Hales and Novick agreed to suspend work on the fee during the 2015 legislative session at the request of former Gov. John Kitzhaber and Kotek. Discussions could resume as early as this summer.

Other issues Novick mentioned to the Portland Tribune include: requiring that unreinforced masonry buildings be retrofitted to protect them from collapsing during earthquakes; building public support for starting public school at 9 a.m. because research shows teenagers need nine to 11 hours of sleep;

crafting city rules to require developers to include affordable units in their multifamily housing projects, assuming the 2015 Legislature repeals the law against so-called inclusionary zoning; continuing to work on two new high-capacity transit lines currently being planned; fixing the Portland Building so that it doesn't continue to leak in the rain and will survive an earthquake; better coordinating public and private utility work in the streets; and reforming the system of responding to 911 calls to eliminate unnecessary ER visits.

Novick first ran for the council in 2012. He has about \$112 in his campaign account.

Water Bureau director to retire

*By Jim Redden
March 17, 2015*

Portland Water Bureau Director David Schaff has announced he plans to retire on June 30, his 37th anniversary as a city employee. He has agreed to stay on while Commissioner Nick Fish, who is in charge of the bureau, conducts a national search for his replacement.

Fish said he was surprised by the decision and praised Schaff for his years of service.

"Since I was assigned to lead the City's two utility bureaus in June 2013, I have admired his dedication and professionalism, his willingness to explore new and better ways of doing business, his customer service ethic, and his strong commitment to using ratepayer dollars wisely. David has been instrumental in recruiting and developing a high performance team at the bureau," Fish said.

Schaff has served the last 10 years as water bureau director.

"I cannot describe how proud I am to have worked for the Portland Water Bureau these last ten years. My entire career at the City of Portland has been incredibly fulfilling and rewarding, but these last ten years have been the most special," Schaff said.

Schaff has been director during some of the bureau's most turbulent years. During his tenure, the City Council agreed to comply with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency rules and replace the open reservoirs in Mt. Tabor and Washington Square with underground storage tanks, despite some vocal public opposition. The council is scheduled to hold a hearing on whether to issue a permit from disconnecting the Washington Park reservoirs on May 14.

He has also been required to issue several boil water alerts in recent years because of contamination detected at various locations in the distribution system, although no one has proven they were sickened by any of the incidents.

And repeated increases in the combined water and sewer bill inspired a ballot measure that would have removed the water bureau and Bureau of Environmental Services from City Council control. Although it was overwhelmingly defeated at the 2014 May Primary Election, the council responded by creating new appointed board to review and comment on the agencies budgets and rate increase requests.

Willamette Week

Portland Water Bureau Chief David Shaff is Retiring

*By Aaron Mesh
March 17, 2015*

Portland Water Bureau director David Shaff, who oversaw controversial spending and successfully defended the city's utilities from a coup by business customers, is retiring.

Shaff announced his departure, planned for this summer, in an email to Portland City Council this morning.

"I cannot describe how proud I am to have worked for the Portland Water Bureau these past ten years," Shaff writes. "While there have been some bumps and frustrations along the way, I can easily say that I regard my time here as challenging, rewarding, and fulfilling."

City Commissioner Nick Fish says he is "surprised" by Shaff's decision, "but I respect his choice." Fish will conduct a national search for Shaff's replacement—the second simultaneous search for a utility director. (Bureau of Environmental Services director Dean Marriott resigned under duress in January.)

Former City Commissioner Randy Leonard appointed Shaff, a staffer in his office, to oversee the Water Bureau in 2005. Shaff implemented a series of Leonard's pet projects—many, like a rehab of the decrepit Rose Festival building, with little or no connection to water.

Shaff later conceded much of this spending was a mistake. "I wouldn't have done the Rose Festival building," Shaff told WW last year. "If it were entirely up to me, I would have bulldozed the thing. That wasn't Council's finest hour."

Such projects drew the wrath of water customers, as water rates climbed more than 43 percent over the past five years.

In 2011, ratepayers filed a \$127 million lawsuit challenging bureau spending. Last year, some of the city's largest industrial water users joined forces with activists to try to wrest the Portland's water and sewer utilities from City Hall with a ballot initiative.

During that campaign, Shaff was often the target of invective from activists opposed to the bureau's most costly project: disconnecting the open-air reservoirs at Washington Park and Mount Tabor and replacing them with underground tanks.

But Shaff successfully fought back the coup. Last May, voters crushed by 73 percent to 26 percent a measure transferring rate-setting authority to an elected board.

The Portland Mercury

Water Bureau Head David Shaff is Retiring

*By Dirk VanderHart
March 17, 2015*

Water Bureau Administrator David Shaff, for 10 years the head of the Portland Water Bureau, announced this morning he'll retire on June 30, the end of the fiscal year. That will spawn a national search for a replacement, says water Commissioner Nick Fish, at a time the water bureau is enjoying less controversy than it has in years.

"While there have been some bumps and frustrations along the way, I can easily say that I regard my time here as challenging, rewarding, and fulfilling," Shaff wrote in an email to city staff this morning. "However, it's time to move on and look for new challenges, rewards and fulfillment."

He didn't mention specific plans after June 30, but said he'd stay on with the city if a replacement hasn't been found.

Shaff's been with the city for far longer than a decade. Prior to serving as water bureau administrator, he worked as a labor negotiator for the city, hammering out contracts with unions. He also worked as a policy adviser in then-Commissioner Randy Leonard's office before Leonard installed him atop the water bureau in 2005. What began as an interim appointment has lasted until today.

The waters haven't always been placid in that time. Shaff, Leonard, and city council as a whole caught heat from a ratepayers group in 2011 for spending money from water bills on things like the infamous "water house" and the Portland Loos—projects that critics said weren't explicitly tied to getting Portlanders water, as required by the city charter. A lawsuit around those and similar expenses is still playing out in Multnomah County Circuit Court.

And last year, some of the same faces—along with a bevy of big industrial interests—launched a campaign to snatch the water and sewer bureaus away from city hall. A measure that went down in flames in May 2014 would have put the bureaus in the hands of a new volunteer utility board.

Shaff has also had to contend with the furor that resulted from a decision to disconnect drinking water reservoirs on Mt. Tabor—a move city leaders have said is required by the federal government, but which activists think is unnecessary.

There have been other fun predicaments, too—such as the question of what to do with millions of gallons of drinking water after a teen peed in the Mt. Tabor reservoir.

All that aside, that water bureau has been seen as a safe bet by Wall Street, meaning Portland is able to borrow money for water-related projects at cheaper rates than other cities. Hit the jump for emails from Shaff and Fish, regarding today's announcement.

Shaff's email to city hall staffers:

Mayor Hales, Commissioners Fritz, Novick and Saltzman, Auditor Hull-Caballero, and Fellow Bureau Directors,

I recently let Commissioner Fish know that I intend to retire effective June 30, 2015, my 37th anniversary as an employee of the City of Portland and my 10th anniversary as the Administrator of the Portland Water Bureau.

Commissioner Fish has asked me if I will stay on beyond June 30th if necessary while he and his staff conduct a search for a new director and I have said that I would.

I cannot describe how proud I am to have worked for the Portland Water Bureau these last ten years. My entire career at the City of Portland has been incredibly fulfilling and rewarding, but these last ten years have been the most special.

I have enjoyed my collaboration with each of you over the past ten years and am confident the City of Portland is in good hands. While there have been some bumps and frustrations along the way, I can easily say that I regard my time here as challenging, rewarding, and fulfilling. However, it's time to move on and look for new challenges, rewards and fulfillment.

June 30th is a ways away yet, but I suspect the time will fly. I will do my best to keep you informed about next steps, and hope to be able to connect with many of you in person between now and then.

*David G. Shaff, Administrator
Portland Water Bureau*

Fish's email to city hall staffers:

Dear Colleagues,

Today, Portland Water Bureau Director David Shaff announced his decision to retire after 37 years of service to the City.

While I was surprised by David's decision, I respect his choice and am grateful that he has committed to work with me and the bureau on a transition plan.

Since I was assigned to lead the City's two utility bureaus in June 2013, I have admired his dedication and professionalism, his willingness to explore new and better ways of doing business, his customer service ethic, and his strong commitment to using ratepayer dollars wisely. David has been instrumental in recruiting and developing a high performance team at the bureau

I intend to launch a national search for his successor, and look forward to working with David to ensure a smooth transition.

Please join me in thanking David for his 37 years of service to our City.

Thank you,

Nick Fish