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From the Sacramento Business Journal:

<https://www.bizjournals.com/sacramento/news/2016/02/26/debate-about-exit-of-sacramento-city-manager.html>

Behind the scenes, debate about the exit of Sacramento's city manager

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Sacramento city manager John Shirey is scheduled to step down Nov. 18, soon after a new mayor is elected. But some city leaders are raising concerns about that timing — which, according to many accounts, has been orchestrated by Mayor Kevin Johnson.

It makes more sense for a new mayor and council to choose the next city manager, many say. They'd like Shirey to stay on — at least for a transition period.



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"I think it would be smart for us to ask him to stay on for a longer period, at least through the mayoral transition," said City Councilman Steve Hansen. "I hope we will have that conversation."

Several City Hall insiders say the push to replace John Shirey, Sacramento's city manager, came from Mayor Kevin Johnson.

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"We are jumping the gun here," agreed City Councilman Jeff Harris. "The selection of the manager should wait until after the selection of the mayor is final."

Shirey has both friends and foes in Sacramento's business community, as does the mayor. The city manager is credited with helping steer the city into a budget surplus after years of deficits and — like Johnson — wins praise for making a deal for a new Sacramento Kings arena downtown.

"We don't agree 100 percent with Mr. Shirey, but ... we would want to have a conversation" about extending Shirey's contract, said Sacramento Metro Chamber CEO Peter Tateishi. "That's a conversation the city would need to take up."

Shirey is not seeking a contract extension, but has no plans to retire and "would be happy to help out if asked by the council," city spokeswoman Linda Tucker said. She said he had no further comment.

Several City Hall insiders say the push to choose a city manager now, before the election, comes from Mayor Kevin Johnson.

"The mayor wanted to make sure he had the ability to start searching for a new manager," said one official close to the situation who spoke on condition of anonymity. "Without John announcing he wouldn't seek an extension of his contract, the mayor can't start a search process."

The mayor and city manager have long had an uneasy relationship. They disagreed over Johnson's unsuccessful campaign in 2014 for a "strong-mayor" form of government, which would have granted Johnson powers currently held by the city manager.

Insiders say it was the mayor who scheduled the Jan. 19 news conference at which Shirey announced he would not seek to extend his contract beyond Nov. 18. That announcement — also issued as a press release from Johnson's office, not City Hall — cleared the way for the mayor to begin a search for Shirey's successor.

Johnson couldn't be reached for comment. In a statement issued by his office, the mayor praised the city manager, but contended the city must move quickly to replace him.

"John took over during one of the toughest economic times in city history and helped us get our fiscal house in order. There is finally stability thanks to John's work. Our job is to keep Sacramento moving forward. We can't do that by sitting on our hands, waiting for election results, and leaving the city without a CEO for months."

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